

Urban Nature Program Super-Proximity in Practice, Delivering Urban Nature at Neighborhood Scale

Webinar Summary

The second webinar hosted by the City of Paris as part of the Urban Nature Network brought together the cities of [Paris](#) and [Barcelona](#) to explore how urban nature strategies can be translated into tangible neighborhood-scale interventions. Building on the previous session, which focused on long-term planning and citywide strategies, this webinar examined how both cities are delivering greener, cooler, and more biodiverse neighborhoods through the redesign of streets, public spaces, parks, and school environments.

Despite their different governance contexts, Paris and Barcelona highlighted remarkably similar approaches. Both cities emphasized that urban nature should be planned as an interconnected system rather than as isolated projects, using ecological connectivity, equitable access to green space, and climate resilience as guiding principles. Speakers demonstrated how citywide biodiversity and nature strategies are translated into neighborhood investments that improve everyday public spaces while strengthening ecological networks.

A central theme of the discussion was the **reallocation of public space**. Through examples from both cities, the speakers showed how road space and on-street parking are being transformed into tree-lined streets, small parks, playgrounds, school streets, and pedestrian-friendly public spaces. These interventions simultaneously improve thermal comfort, support active mobility, reduce traffic impacts, and create opportunities for biodiversity. Both cities stressed that political leadership, long-term planning, and sustained public engagement are essential to implementing these transformations successfully.

The webinar also highlighted that increasing green space alone is not sufficient. Paris and Barcelona are placing growing emphasis on **ecological quality and biodiversity**, including the creation of biodiversity refuges, ecological corridors, native planting, naturalized management practices, community gardens, and the gradual elimination of chemical pesticides. Both cities noted that maintaining biodiversity requires new management approaches as well as clear communication with residents to explain why public spaces may look and function differently than in the past.

During the discussion, participants explored several implementation challenges, including balancing competing demands for limited street space, financing urban nature investments, preventing biodiversity loss and invasive species, and coordinating across municipal departments. Speakers emphasized that successful implementation depends on strong cross-sector collaboration—bringing together urban planning, transport, environment, public works, and public health—while maintaining a long-term vision that extends beyond individual projects.

The webinar concluded by reinforcing that urban nature is no longer simply an environmental objective, but a core component of resilient, healthy, and livable cities. By combining strategic planning with neighborhood-scale implementation, Paris and Barcelona demonstrated how integrated urban nature investments can deliver multiple

benefits, including climate adaptation, biodiversity conservation, public health, improved public spaces, and a higher quality of urban life.

Key Takeaways

- Urban nature strategies are most effective when they connect citywide planning with neighborhood-scale implementation.
- Streets, school environments, and underused public spaces provide major opportunities to expand urban nature while improving daily life.
- Biodiversity should be considered alongside climate adaptation, mobility, and public space design rather than treated as a separate objective.
- Long-term political commitment, cross-departmental collaboration, and meaningful public participation are critical for delivering lasting urban transformation.
- Communicating the purpose and benefits of ecological management helps build public understanding and support for urban nature interventions.