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Hamburg‘s urban green diversity - Promises and limitations

Rainer Fehr University of Bielefeld, Medical Faculty OWL

Stefan Zerbe University of Hildesheim, Institute of Geography and
University of Applied Sciences and Arts (HAWK), Göttingen



Urban green and blue in Hamburg City

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1 Context and objectives

Context:

- International **UrbGreen Network** to promote urban green and health in science and practice: implementation, governance, cooperation, etc.

Presentation objectives:

- Sketching the relationship of urban green and health, from a governance perspective
- Outlining urban green frameworks – both, on the (inter-) national level and in the City State of Hamburg
- Fostering the debate, and outlook on further challenges.



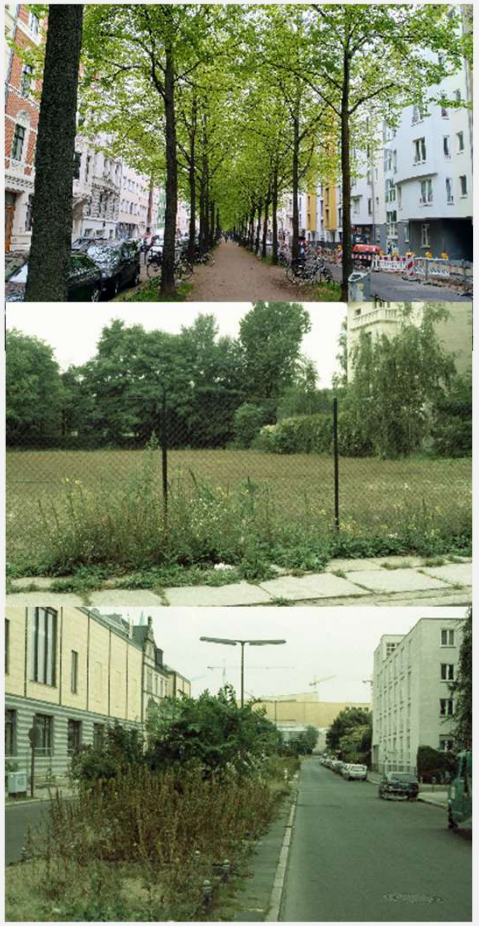
Emscher Landscape Park

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2 Urban green & health: Some basics

- Urban green diversity – incl. parks, sports facilities, street trees, edible green infrastructure, etc.: a key resource for urban resilience (e.g., climate change), environmental sustainability, and human health
- Health-positive services and health-negative disservices of urban green: increasingly understood and recognized
- However, the visibility of “urban green & health” as a topic in curricula and handbooks both, in Public Health and in Landscape Architecture, is still low.



Cologne and Berlin

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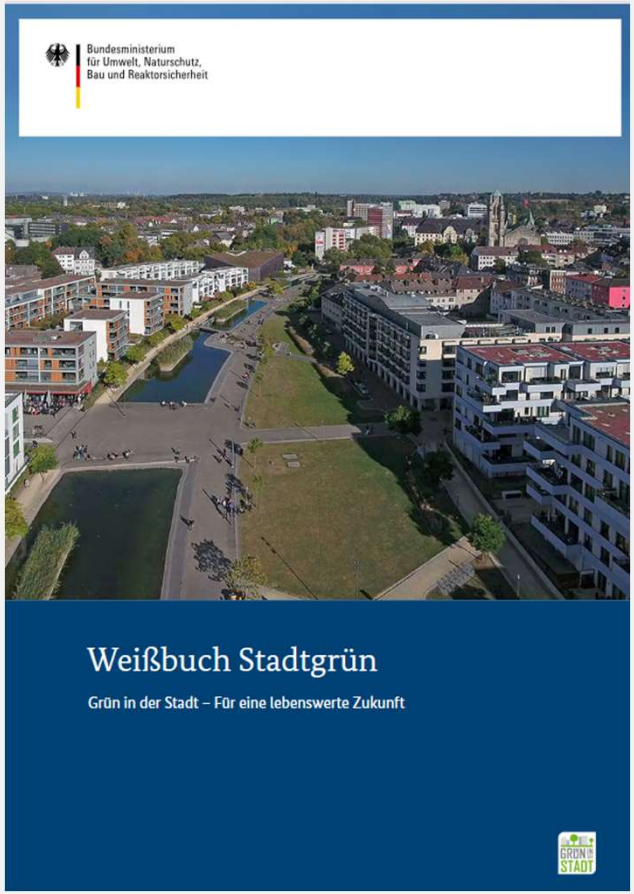
3 Selected frameworks

National level (Germany):

- Federal Nature Conservation Act (*Bundesnaturschutzgesetz*), Federal Building Code (*Baugesetzbuch*), etc.
- BMU (2017): *Weißbuch Stadtgrün*
- BMWSB & BBSR (2024): *Agenda Stadt grün-blau*
- UBA (2026): *Auf dem Weg zur grünen Stadt.*

International level (Europe, global):

- New Leipzig Charter (2020)
- One Health (2003ff), Planetary Health (2015ff), Urban Health
- European Nature Restoration Law (2024).



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4 Hamburg - Urban green

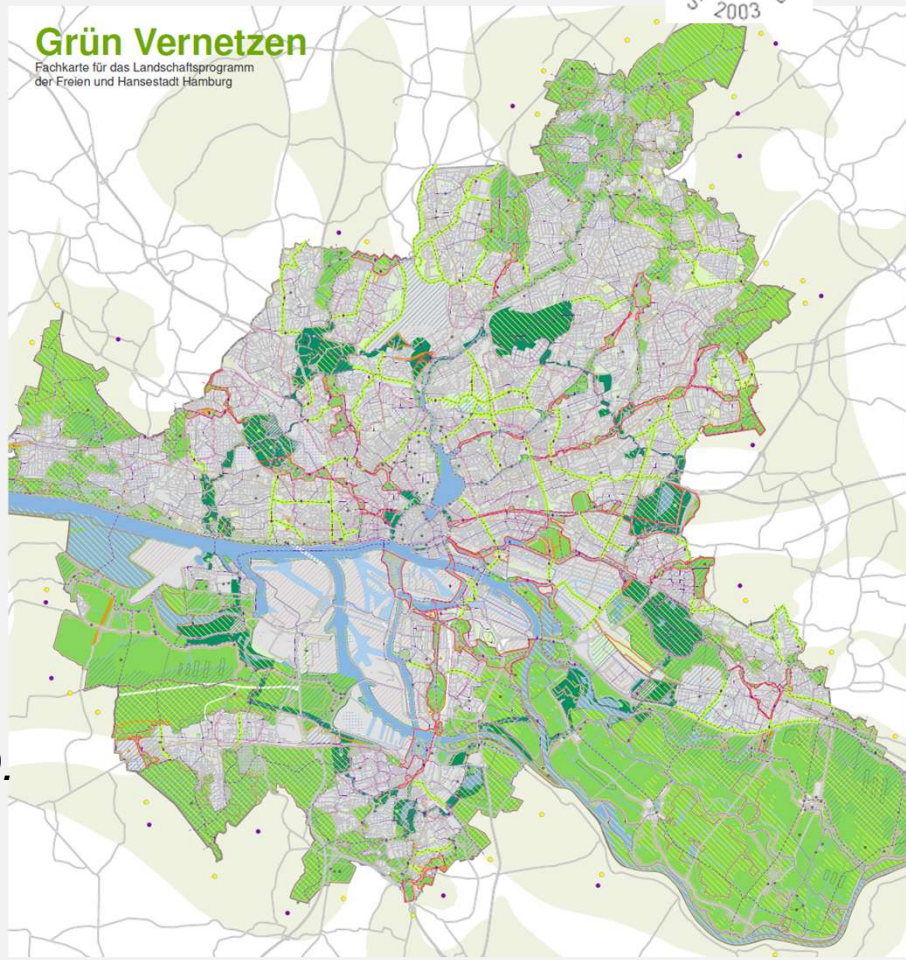
Key concept: "**Green web**" (*Grünes Netz***)**, incl. 2 green belts, 12 landscape corridors, additional parks and connectors.

Status information

- 2025 *Digitaler Grünplan – Kataster öffentlicher Grünanlagen*
- 2025 *Hamburger Stadt-Umland-Atlas.*

Legal framework, incl.:

- Federal law, partly with local Implementing Acts / *Ausführungsgesetze*
- State law, e.g. Hamburg Public Green Spaces Act / *Hmb. Grünanlagengesetz*
- Hamburg Tree Protection Ordinance / *Hmb. Baumschutz-VO.*



Source**: FHH-BUE 2018**, https://www.hamburg.de/politik-und-verwaltung/bezirke/altona/themen/planen-bauen-wohnen/stadtplanung/karte-gruen-vernetzen-52266

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5 Hamburg - Urban green governance

The **major approaches** (addressing “human health” only occasionally and in rather general terms):

- 2014 Green roofs / *Gründachstrategie*
- 2017-31 Major nature conservation project / *Naturschutz-Großprojekt “Natürlich Hamburg”*
- 2019 Contract for Hamburg’s urban green spaces / *Vertrag für HH’s Stadtgrün*
- 2020 Vertical Green / *Fassadenbegrünung*
- 2026 **Green Compass**, including the Open Space Strategy 2035+ / ***Grüner Kompass*** *incl. Freiraumstrategie 2035+.*



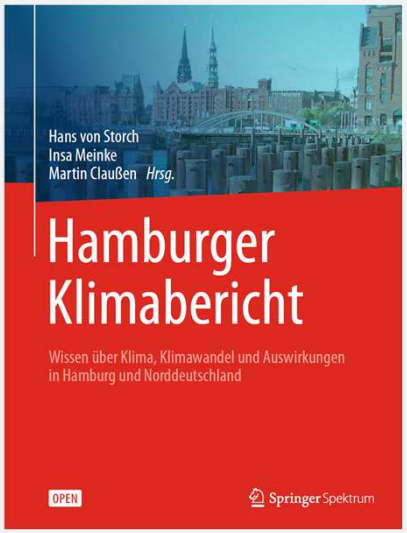


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6 Hamburg – Related *other* approaches

Selection of *other* governance approaches, touching upon urban green & health:

- 2018 Hamburg climate report / *Hamburger Klimabericht*
- 2022 “Active City” strategy
- 2025 Strategy for Adapting to Climate Change / *Strategie zur Anpassung an den Klimawandel*
- 2025 Heat-health action plan / *Hitzeaktionsplan*.





In these documents, topics include:

- Health-positive services, e.g., walkable routes; shady, cool (and spirit-lifting) places encouraging exercise and social interaction; clean air; noise protection, etc.
- Health-negative disservices, e.g., plant toxins, allergenic pollen (alder, birch, hazelnut, grasses), mosquito habitats, tick infestation, etc.

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7 Conclusions

Promising: programs aim to secure Hamburg's **Green Web**, widely seen as an asset for Hamburg's urban development.

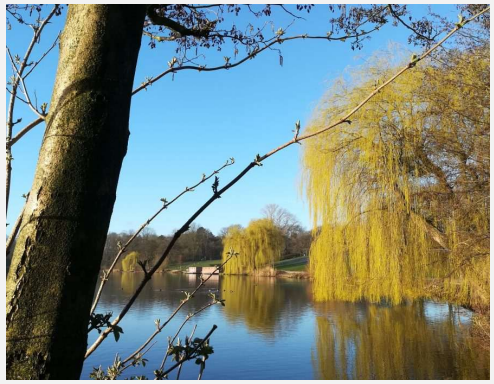
Limitation: up to now, Hamburg's urban green governance documents largely go without considering human health.

Some **reasons** for including human health in the future:
- to raise awareness of the "green-health" link,
- to further justify the (costly) efforts made in Hamburg, and
- to increase health benefits.

Other approaches, e.g., the heat plan, can encourage actors to include health into key documents, and to implement actions (design, maintenance, rules …).

In future steps, UrbGreen network is going to provide criteria to optimize urban green's health-related benefits, and approaches to manage conflicts among competing uses.







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Brief questions?



Berlin: Tempelhofer Feld