

Walkability and Urban Centers: The Valuation of Public Open Spaces from a Sustainable Alternative

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Abstract : A car-based development is observed in our cities, what leads to social and environmental impacts, such as air pollution, excessive noises and the substitution of public open spaces for roads and parking lots. Concerning the efforts to promote a sustainable development, a key issue is the reduction of fossil fuels consumption. An alternative to the pollutant gases emission, especially from urban transportation, is the incentive for active transport. The promoting of non-motorized travels and locomotion ways that only depend on human propulsion meets the sustainable mobility notion. Walking is one of the healthiest, cleanest, most natural and economical means to move around. Also, it integrates part of public transportation travels. Since walking demands physical effort, it is sensitive to environmental conditions. In urban space, not always we come across pedestrian friendly road structures. Based on the theory of walkability, the present paper aims to discuss the walking conditions in city centers by analyzing the distribution of urban services and uses, and this also regarding sidewalks quality. The case study presented is the urban center in the medium-sized Brazilian city Campos dos Goytacazes, in Rio de Janeiro State. The study also brings contributions to the recovering of underused public open spaces, especially by encouraging their use and appropriation through valuing non-motorized travels conditions.

Keywords : active transport, historical center, sustainable mobility, walking

Conference Title : ICSUSSA 2017 : International Conference on Sustainable Urbanism, Sustainability Strategies and Applications

Conference Location : New York, United States

Conference Dates : June 04-05, 2017