



# agua paisaje ciudadanía

#SevillaSostenible

## “SEVILLE SUSTAINABLE CITY. FROM THE ORIGINS OF GARDENS TO THE GREEN URBAN SYSTEM” CONFERENCE

### CONCLUSIONS

### PREAMBLE

The multidisciplinary Conference “Seville sustainable city: from the origins of gardens to the green urban system” is part of the “Water, Landscape and Citizenship” Session. They were held in the in the former Santa Maria de los Reyes Convent on 22, 23 and 24 March 2017. There were 254 participants, 20 speakers and 31 papers were submitted to the Conference from which 11 were presented to the audience.

The “Water, Landscape and Citizenship” Session includes another three multidisciplinary events: two additional technical-scientific conferences to be held next October (“Water, landscape and citizenship in the construction of metropolitan areas”) and in March 2018 (“Water, landscape and citizenship. Water management in the city-region”).

Finally, an International Congress and a Council of Europe Workshop on the application of the European Landscape Convention (“Water, Landscape and Citizenship facing Global Change” is planned for March 2019.

These events have been supported by various community engagement activities: Guided visits to urban gardens and parks in Seville, bicycle tours in the new green areas and riverside parks around the city, a photography contest, plantation of trees by schoolchildren, presentation of academic papers on urban landscape and the organization of a large outdoor exhibition on the “Boulevards in Spain and America”





which was held for three weeks in the Alameda de Hercules and was visited by a large number of citizens.

Several papers have been submitted to the "Seville sustainable city: from the origins of gardens to the green urban system" Conference with the purpose of making progress in the achievement of the main goals of the W&L&C Sessions:

- contributing to a more harmonious relationship between cities and the nature they are an integral part of;
- supporting the city of Seville in becoming an exemplary international model when addressing the challenges posed by climate change.

This first conference has focused mainly on highlighting the following aspects:

- Water, landscape and increased citizen participation and empowerment can and must play a major role in the achievement of the above goals and objectives.
- The city of Seville already enjoys a good reputation thanks to its historic and cultural background and it can aspire to play its own role in addressing the challenges posed by the sustainable management of cities too. The contribution of Seville to the history of human water use, linked to a great extent to its old groves and, in the urban environment, to its parks and grades, the presence of the Guadalquivir River as structuring component and the importance of the inland port in the city's history are the basic pillars of this unique development.

Finally, the interest of the present City Council in strengthening the public participation mechanisms and structures in the face of the future urban challenges can favour, together with the elements mentioned above, a special contribution of Seville to the United Nations New Urban Agenda and the implementation of the European Landscape Convention, international instruments whose principles support the development of the "Water, Landscape and Citizenship" Session.

In view of all the above we have reached the following:

### **OPERATIONAL CONCLUSIONS**

The participants of the scientific-technical Conference: "Seville sustainable city. From the origins of gardens to the green urban system", after listening to and discussing the presentations and communications made at the conference, approved a series of provisional conclusions that were posted during the last week of March on the event's website.



We have received remarks and comments that have been reviewed by the Conference Scientific Committee and have been incorporated to these final conclusions. As established in the organization of the Conference, the conclusions will be submitted to the President of the Organizing Committee of the "Water, Landscape and Citizenship" Session for further submission to the relevant authorities and entities.

1. The Conference was held on the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the approval of the Mediterranean Landscape Charter (Seville Charter), approved in our city during the 1992 Universal Exposition. It was organized within the framework established by the United Nations in its New Urban Agenda «Habitat III» and the European Landscape Convention of the Council of Europe, which has been applied in Spain since 1 March 2008. Therefore, the public institutions organizing the conference assume the Sustainable Development Goals of the Agenda and the principles and measures established in the Convention.

2. Urbanization processes are one of the main causes of climate change and the entire set of environmental alterations, social and economic impacts, that we have labelled as "global change". At the same time, city dwellers have become a majority of the population suffering the negative impacts of such changes and alterations. It is therefore urgent to implement policies targeting consolidated cities reprogramming and reinforcing natural components and systems in them. To this end, the comprehensive semantic meaning of the notion of landscape proposed by the Council of Europe can serve as a meeting point where the demands for environmental, cultural and functional quality needed in any territory can converge.

3. The opportunities and problems city governments will always face must be addressed based on a deep knowledge of reality to which universities and the overall scientific system greatly contribute, information systems of public entities and also on "citizen science" (as the European Commission says); i.e. based on local knowledge and reinforced citizen participation. The assessment by citizens of the public space or area in which their lives and their expectations must be taken into account in the development of city management strategies, plans and programmes. In this respect, the strong growth of tourist demand in the city of Seville must be addressed as a priority, involving all stakeholders and implementing policies to make its effective regulation possible.



4. The unique historic and cultural background of Seville provides numerous evidences of fertile sequence in the relationships between nature and cities. The presence of vegetation and water in the city is clear demonstration of this sequence. Urban trees, patios, courtyards of traditional blocks, gardens and parks are part of the city landscape, as well as of the city's worldwide recognition and reputation.

Therefore, it is essential to keep reinforcing policies aimed at improving the quality of urban spaces and the consolidation of vegetation and trees, and the protection of the city's green areas, gardens and parks.

5. Moreover, the city's parks and gardens are also community resources. In addition to the contribution to the citizens' recreation and being greatly attractive for visitors, they provide essential environmental services and important public functional areas. The Conference has demonstrated the cultural, recreational and tourist values of unique sites such as the gardens of the Alcazar, the Alameda de Hercules and the Maria Luisa Park, as well as interesting artistic and educational uses of Seville's green areas. It is the task of the education system, especially of teachers and authorities, to foster and develop social awareness of these specific features and to encourage educational activities to disseminate them among not only schoolchildren but also the general population. In this manner, residents will be more aware of the characteristics and values of their vital context and take responsibility for them.

6. The right of citizens to water, as well as an optimal presence and use of the city's water resources demand a special attention and care by public entities and a greater social engagement. There are two main reason for this: First, the resource is always scarce and the complexity and comprehensiveness of its functions in the city (biological, climate, environmental, heritage, economic and landscape). In Seville, water management policies must be based on the consideration of the urban water cycle and the proper preservation of the presence of water in the city (directly or indirectly: rivers, basins, ground water, irrigation systems and infrastructure, fountains, and so on), its expansion and improvement will make a significant contribution to the achievement of the essential urban life quality objectives of the city of Seville.



7. Ideal water management in established city requires planning the future taking into consideration the adjoining, immediate and bordering areas and territories. The city of Seville cannot be presently understood without integrating its residential and productive function in the metropolitan environment. In this respect, the conclusion is that the entire river system is an exceptional territorial resource that must be grasped simultaneously as a fundamental part of the existing biodiversity (natural corridors) and as an opportunity to provide the metropolitan area as whole with free public spaces. Therefore, the present floodplain of the Guadalquivir River must not be developed and must remain undeveloped buildings, from the mouth of the Rivera de Huelva to the mouth of the Pudio River. The former pastureland and airfield of Tablada deserves a special attention, as the main part of the future metropolitan green system and main structuring axis of the conurbation, and it should achieve its greatest urban usefulness by the creation of a new periurban park.

8. The unique history of Seville rests on its inland port and it is essential that this relationship be maintained in the future. To this end, it is necessary first, to coordinate appropriately the functions of the rich and diverse Andalusian port system. Likewise, we must keep exploring and developing creative and feasible proposals to achieve full functionality of the historic waterfront in order to bring closer together and preserve the visibility between the city and its port infrastructures. These proposals will improve the compatibility of the natural protection of the Guadalquivir estuary with the functionality and positive impact of the port on the city's economy.

9. The conference has also discussed Seville's candidature for European Green Capital and the achievements and benefits of other similar interesting experiences. The participants at the conference want to state their support of this local government initiative and their desire to connect this candidature to the general objectives listed in the above conclusions. Special emphasis should be made on those aimed at achieving a reduction of average summer temperatures in the city (heat island) and the development and implementation of public action plans to encourage a greater presence of water and vegetation in the city, as well as the creation of shaded areas in all the public urban areas.



10. Finally, the Conference allowed us to understand better the important social demands regarding public green areas (Guadaira, Tamarguillo and other parks ), as well as the situation of the Palace of Castilleja de Guzman, former Colegio Mayor del Buen Aire, and its gardens, designed by J.C.N. Forestier, currently closed and with little use. We therefore urge the relevant authorities, especially the City Council of Seville, owner of this unique property, and the University of Seville, usufructuary of the property, to find new ways to keep them open, public and active.

Seville, 7 April 2017

On behalf of the Scientific Committee, the president

Florencio Zoido Naranjo