



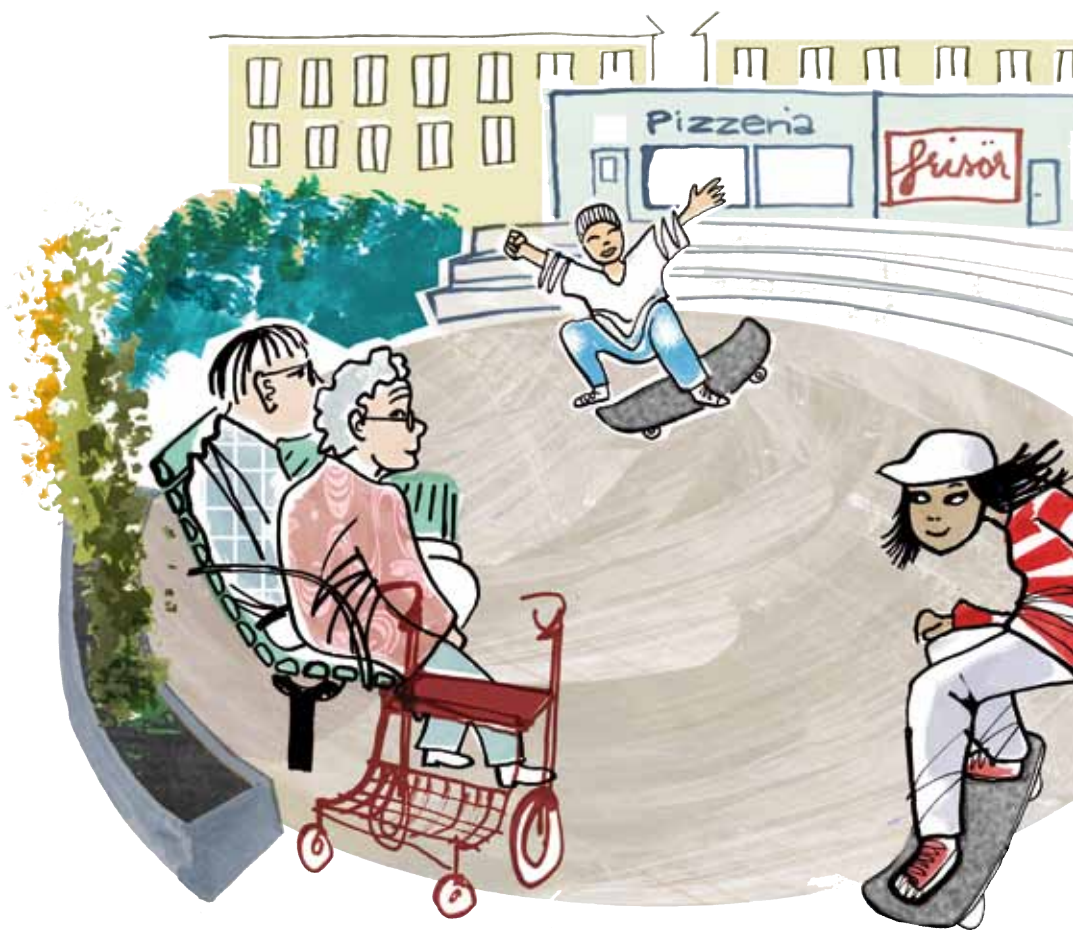


**Neighbourhood
security survey**
a guide

Contents

Put your foot down for a secure, equal and democratic society.....	5
The first national manual	6
... for a renewed approach	6
... that concludes with a section that goes deeper	7
Things to consider first.....	8
The pre-meeting.....	15
Preparations	15
Suggestions for the structure of the first meeting.....	18
The second meeting – the survey.....	21
Preparations.....	21
Suggestions for the structure of a survey.....	24
Some things to think about during the survey.....	26
Questions on the way... ..	28
Conclude the survey with a gathering and refreshments	40
Make and communicate a record.....	40
The concluding meeting	42
Preparations.....	42
Suggestions for a meeting structure	43
After the concluding meeting	45

 Neighbourhood security surveys – method and extra information.....	46
Make the most of the method.....	47
The importance of the discussion leader.....	49
Everyone’s right of access to public places.....	50
Security is about democracy.....	50
Women experience more insecurity than men.....	51
Security for whom?.....	52
Groups with different circumstances.....	53
Lighting and security.....	57
Greenery and security.....	59
 Join in creating a more secure society.....	60
Further information.....	61



Put your foot down for a secure, equal and democratic society

Many different people are responsible for the outdoor environment in a given area. They can include landlords, local authorities, public transport administrators, associations, residents, and so on. These people rarely meet together, and those who live and work in the area often find it difficult to know who to approach with their views. Nor do those responsible for a residential area sometimes know each other's areas of responsibility.

Having a neighbourhood security survey is a way to get all of these parties – everyone living and working in the area – to meet together with a knowledgeable organiser and discuss how the area can be made more secure and pleasant. The aim is for there to be a mutual exchange of ideas and viewpoints and an opportunity to disseminate information and discuss constructive ideas. The dialogue between residents and those responsible is at least as important as the physical changes that can result from the survey.

You have opened this publication because you plan to organise a neighbourhood security survey. That means that you will go together with residents and workers from the area and look around and consider which places are not secure and see how they could be improved. It also means that you will be considering places that are considered secure and enjoyable, and try to understand why that is the case.

Security is important. How secure we feel when we leave our homes dictates where and how we move around. It affects which activities we can take part in, how we feel and what opportunities we have for meeting other people. Great differences in how secure we feel when we are out and about – mainly between men and women, but also between other groups in society – mean that conditions for living our lives are radically different. To feel secure enough to want to go out at different times of the day and year and in different places is fundamental to democracy and justice.

By arranging neighbourhood security surveys, you can help create enjoyable environments with opportunities for meeting people, as well as improve security. There are several success stories around Sweden that show how neighbourhood security surveys have led to concrete actions. A neighbourhood security survey may also inspire further involvement and participation. In order for the method to be a positive force, the survey needs to be well-prepared, properly implemented and should be followed up. Step by step, this publication will show you how – before, during and after the survey.

The first national manual...

The publication that you are holding in your hand is a manual that explains how to arrange a neighbourhood security survey. Since architect Gerd Cruse Sondén at A More Secure and More Humane Gothenburg (Tryggare och Mänskligare Göteborg) developed the method in the early 2000s, several municipalities have produced their own guides. This, though, is the first national manual and it has been designed to suit varying environments in different parts of the country. So if you plan to use this manual for organising a survey, it may be advisable to check whether there are any local guidelines or check-lists for how neighbourhood security surveys are done in your municipality.

We wish to provide you with the best possible support for carrying out a successful neighbourhood security survey, and that is why it is a fairly comprehensive manual that you have in your hand – but do not let that put you off. Your first attempt may not end up exactly as you imagined, but hopefully it will still be fun and educational, and, in time, you will find a way that works best for you.

...for a renewed approach...

The method for neighbourhood security surveys has been developed in this manual by including a perspective for equal opportunities. The tools for dialogue and feedback have also been developed. Additionally, we have integrated other aspects relating to opportunities that

various population groups have for using our communal areas. The manual was developed by Mia Andersson-Ek at A More Secure and More Humane Gothenburg. The National Board of Housing, Building and Planning (Boverket), A More Secure and More Humane Gothenburg and the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention (Brå) contributed their special competence. The publication is a joint production by A More Secure and More Humane Gothenburg, the National Board of Housing, Building and Planning and the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention.

The method involves participants meeting together on three occasions two or three weeks apart. This allows participants and organisers to reflect upon and process thoughts that come up at the meetings. The extended time also allows for dialogue where participants' experiences from their local area can be expressed and considered.

...that concludes with a section that goes deeper

Both knowledge and hard work are needed for organising a good neighbourhood security survey, where an equal-opportunities perspective and other important differences in people's situations in life are taken into consideration. This manual therefore concludes by gently expanding on what you need to know and keep in mind when planning and carrying out a neighbourhood security survey. So please read the entire manual before you start planning your survey!

Things to consider first

Surveys with different purposes

Neighbourhood security surveys can have many different purposes and can be done in different ways. Sometimes, the aim is to get as broad and general an understanding as possible of the knowledge and viewpoints that residents and other people active in the area have about the place. On other occasions, the survey can aim to specifically attend to the needs of a certain target group or a particular part of the physical environment.

Neighbourhood security surveys may be done to provide a good basis for making changes in the area or for following up ongoing maintenance. There are examples of school surveys and virtual neighbourhood security surveys where, with the help of a computer, people can walk through environments that are being planned. Of course, it is also good to carry out a survey in both light and dark conditions so that different perspectives from day and night can be considered.

When planning your neighbourhood security survey, therefore, you first need to decide on the goal of your survey and use it as the basis from which to decide who to invite and how the survey is to be set out.

Readiness to act

First and foremost, you must make sure that the local authorities and other interested parties are ready and willing to act on some of the things that emerge from the survey. There also needs to be a willingness to continue working with important issues and possible conflicts that may arise during the process. This could involve conflicts to do with development plans or the use of certain places.

It is important that the process is properly established, in your own organisation as well as with other participants.

Participants

Residents and others who work in and use the area are the most important. Try as much as possible to include people of both sexes, different ages and from different ethnic backgrounds. It is also a good idea to include people from different situations in life, those who have different backgrounds and even different kinds of disability.

Sometimes it may be pertinent to have specific individual groups on a neighbourhood security survey, such as only women or only men, in order to see more clearly the differences in how these groups experience things or so as to make it easier to discuss certain issues.

Get a map that shows land owners and administrators in the area. It is essential to include as many of them as possible on the survey. Find out which ones are most relevant in the context; for example, local authorities, politicians, estate managers, tenants' associations, the police, business owners, associations and others.

Perhaps the postman, cleaning personnel, artists, newspaper deliverer or the home help services have specific knowledge – invite them! Are there homeless men and women who usually stay in the area? Make use of their knowledge, too. Sometimes, it can also be good to invite an expert on lighting and greenbelt areas.

A suitable maximum of 20 people should go along with the survey, preferably more residents than officials.



Recruiting participants

Let your imagination flow! What methods do you think suit the kind of people you are looking for? The municipal website can be used for inviting people to meetings and surveys. Ask for help with distributing invitations and encourage responses by contacting property care managers, caretakers and housing associations. Get in touch with preschools, childcare centres and schools.

Think about how your invitation is tailored to different groups. For example, it makes a significant difference depending on where it is advertised and how the invitation is written. Make sure that meeting times can fit in with work responsibilities.

Dog owners, joggers, pensioners and parents of young children are often found outside more than others. Is there any way you can seek them out and invite them?

Distribute information about the survey widely – the grapevine is an effective way to reach people. Spread the information amongst administrative personnel, neighbours or perhaps through social media. Also invite residents who have previously come forward with their observations.

Encourage those who are unable to go on the survey to give their comments by letter, telephone or web site and do not forget to forward the results of the survey to them afterwards.

State right from the beginning that there will be three meetings as well as when they will be held. Collect responses and ask for e-mail addresses and telephone numbers.

Contact each participant the day before the first meeting to remind and welcome them. Collecting responses is a good way to ensure that enough people will come and that different population groups are represented.

Statistics

There are many kinds of statistics that could be interesting to prepare for the meetings: population and housing statistics, comfort, safety and accident studies, and crime statistics. Try to break down the statistics to the population group level so as to be able to discern differences in vulnerability between different groups.

Gender distribution is often included in statistics and it may be important to draw attention to this. Try also to find categories for things such as age, social vulnerability and various groups that are particularly vulnerable to hate crimes.

Ask the local police for statistics relating to reported crime in the area. What kind of crime is committed? Are men and women affected to the same extent? Who are the perpetrators? Ask them also to explain during the survey where crimes are committed. This means that you can discuss the significance of the physical environment in situ and also reason on how it can be changed.

Remember that reported crime and feelings of security and danger do not necessarily go hand-in-hand. Also to bear in mind is that certain types of crime (e.g., car theft and burglary) are reported more often than others (e.g., graffiti and harassment) and that statistics can therefore be misleading.

It is important that crime and security are talked about in such a way that feelings of insecurity are not reinforced. If you ask a representative of the police force to talk during the survey, it may prove important to talk to him or her in advance to discuss the purpose of the survey.

Discussion leader

The meeting and conversation between participants of the neighbourhood security survey – residents, administrators and municipal officials – is the most important part of the concept. It is therefore desirable that the person leading the meetings is experienced in leading group discussions. It is the responsibility of the discussion leader to ensure that the discussion is open and involves all participants; that residents' viewpoints control the discussions so that officials do not take over.

The role of the discussion leader also includes making sure that positive and secure places and constructive ideas in the area are highlighted and discussed. It is important that the neighbourhood security survey becomes something positive and does not create or reinforce feelings of insecurity amongst the participants.

The discussion leader needs some people to help with practical things like meeting notes and photography. See "The importance of the discussion leader" on page 51.



The pre-meeting

The first meeting consists of an introduction to the subject of Security, working in small groups and a summary of the observations that have come up during the meeting, which will form the basis for planning the survey during the second meeting.

Preparations

Maps and other materials

Prepare maps of the area that the survey is planned for. Remember that not everyone is accustomed to map-reading, so it is important to have maps that are as easy to understand as possible. An aerial photograph with street names may be useful, if available.

Use maps that are limited to the particular area that you plan to survey; otherwise, they may give the impression that the survey covers a larger area, causing the participants to be disappointed when it does not do so.

For the work period involving maps, coloured pens and Post-it Notes are also needed – all in the same four colours. Check that the pens can be used for drawing on the maps. It can also be useful to have a simple note for each group describing their tasks and explaining the different colours, so as to avoid confusion during the meeting. For an explanation of this work period, see “Suggestions for the structure of the first meeting” on page 20.

Introduction to the subject – slide show and discussion

Prepare an introduction to the subject of Security and how the feeling of security, together with the actual vulnerability, varies between different groups. The meeting could, for example, be opened with a presentation in words and pictures with basic information aimed at provoking thoughts and getting the participants to see beyond their own definition of and feeling of security.

It is important to talk about how different groups of people often feel differently about and mean different things by the word “security.” These differences are particularly large and clear when it comes to gender, so it is important to talk specifically about men and women’s different experiences and vulnerability. It is also important to discuss whether things such as age, disabilities, ethnic and cultural backgrounds and gender expression give different experiences.

A basic introduction to the equality perspective of security and differences in the opportunities that various groups have for being in communal places can be found at the back of this publication, where you can find inspiration for a simple presentation.

When you make your presentation, it could be a good idea to consider using more pictures and fewer words. You can use photographs from the local area and perhaps other pictures that show examples of places that are viewed as secure or insecure. You could also talk about the history of the area and why it looks like it does today, as well as the ideas behind changes that have been made.

The goal is for the participants to start to talk about the local area and their own experiences. So pose questions to the participants about how they feel about the pictures you show of the local area. Adapt the language and length of the presentation to the background of the group at hand.

Refreshments

A break for refreshments provides a nice opportunity for everyone to stretch their legs, clear their minds and talk to all the other participants. It also allows for a moment's reflection to process impressions.

Remember to make allowance for allergies and the like. A good tip is to provide vegetarian options if sandwiches are offered, as a simple way of avoiding a situation where some people feel left out because of ethical or religious convictions.

Volunteers

Before the meeting, investigate whether there is anyone who would like to volunteer to be more active in the area. Can associations or groups “adopt” certain greenbelt areas? Ask the participants if they are interested in organising some kind of activity or operation.

These are questions that may need to mature and be reflected over. That being the case, it would be a good idea to sow a seed for thought early on and raise the question again at a later meeting.

Publication for neighbourhood surveyors

Together with this manual, a short publication is available for people going on the survey, called *Neighbourhood security survey – thoughts along the way*. It contains a brief explanation of the method and a battery of questions and things to think about during the survey. It would be appropriate to distribute that publication at the first meeting.

Suggestions for the structure of the first meeting

The meeting is opened by welcoming everyone and a presentation given by the organisers. Explain what is planned for the day and briefly have all of the participants present themselves. (About 10 minutes).

Following that, an introduction to the subject of Security is given. The introduction can be prepared with the help of the extra information section in this publication. It is important to reason on the fact that different kinds of people often feel different levels of security and mean different things by the term.

Make a presentation, perhaps with a few pictures from the local area. Use historical pictures if they are available. It would also be a good idea to show examples of secure and insecure places. Introduce the participants to past changes that have taken place in the area.

The idea is to initiate a conversation about the local area and the experiences of the participants.

Ask the audience questions on how they feel about the local pictures that are shown. (About 25 minutes)

Next, divide the participants into groups of four or five. Consider how the groups can best be divided so as to encourage good conversation. Each group is given a small map, four different-coloured pens and Post-it Notes in four colours – e.g., red, pink, green and blue.

Explain to them that the different groups are to discuss amongst themselves which places in the area they feel are pleasant or unpleasant. It can be due to security, aesthetics, a sense of belonging, where crowds usually are and so forth.

These places are then marked out on the map. The groups use Post-it Notes in the same colours to make short comments about the places, for example “Nice greenery” or “Deserted after 18:00”.

Green – pleasant in the daytime Blue – pleasant in the evening/nighttime
Red – unpleasant in the daytime Pink – unpleasant in the evening/
nighttime

When the groups have worked on the maps for 20 minutes, it is time to take a break and offer some refreshments. After the break, the groups continue with the maps for a further 20 minutes.

Altogether, the small groups work for about 40 minutes.

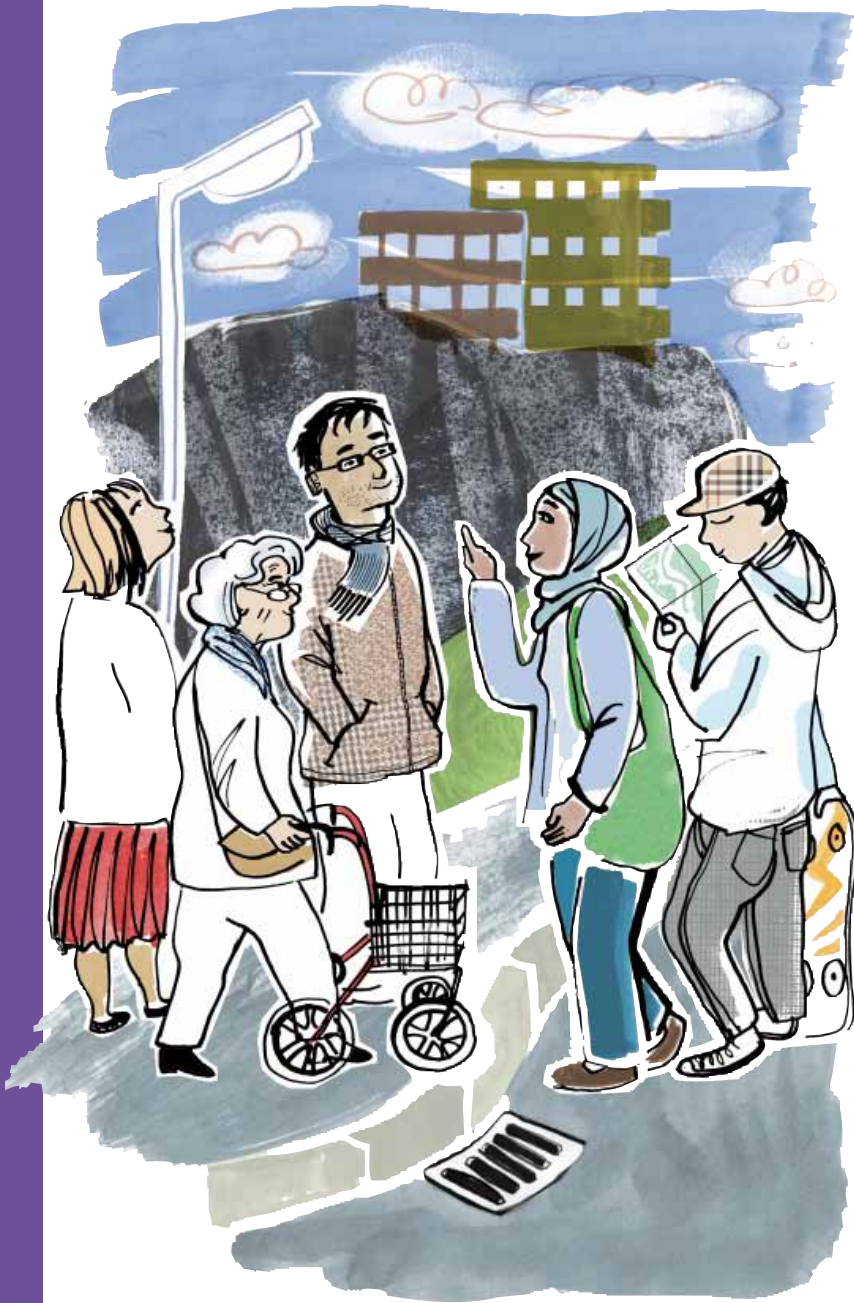
When the time is up, all of the participants go together through the notes that the groups have attached to the maps. Ask them to explain how they were thinking and whether there is anything they would like to develop further. During the discussion, mark the points that the different groups come up with on a larger map that is set so that everyone can see it.

When all of the groups' maps have been discussed, briefly review what has come to light and which places have distinguished themselves. Explain that the map will be used as the basis for planning the survey route during the next meeting. (About 20 minutes)

Conclude the meeting by thanking everyone who has taken part and tell them what will happen at the next meeting (survey with property managers and perhaps the police, time and place). Distribute the publication aimed at those going on the survey and ask them to read though it before the survey itself. (About five minutes)

In total, this plan takes one hour and forty minutes. Expect one or more parts to take longer than planned, so the estimated two hours will be used up.

Sometimes during a meeting, a discussion might be started that seems important and takes a lot of time. It may in such cases be appropriate to ask the participants if they would like to stay longer so as to finish the discussion or whether it would be better to interrupt it and perhaps bring it up again at a later meeting.



The second meeting – the survey

The second meeting involves the survey itself. First, everyone collects together and then the group or groups go their way on a predetermined walk, looking at and discussing the area. After the survey, participants join up again for refreshments and for compiling any further observations.

Preparations

Plan out the route

It is good to go to those places and walkways where the residents visit most often. Plan the route so as to include as many as possible of the places marked on the map during the first meeting.

If the group is larger than ten people, it might make sense to divide them up into smaller groups that each go separate ways. By dividing into smaller groups, a larger area can be covered along with more of the places that were identified during the first meeting.

Consider whether it may be advantageous to divide groups by gender etc. Going through the same area but in groups containing only men and only women may give an idea of any differences and similarities. So ask the participants if they are interested in being divided into groups in such a way.

Think about the results together as a single group after the survey and discuss the results and what the reasons could be.

The survey should be a few kilometres long at the most because the group will be stopping many times along the way. Count on the survey lasting around 60-90 minutes, possibly shorter if the weather is bad or if some of the participants are not able to walk very far.

Depending on the participants, it might be appropriate to divide them so that one group takes a shorter route and another goes further. Try to make sure that each participant gets to go on the routes that most interest them.

Remember that the same place can feel different in the day and night or at different times of the year. Remember, too, to prioritise walkways and put secondary importance on specific places; the most important thing is that people feel secure when moving from place to place, not that every single place in the area must feel secure. Of course, certain places are more important than others, such as places where people meet or that are important for the sake of accessibility.

Notes

Designate people in advance who will write things down and take pictures in each group. It is good if there are several people taking notes so as to record as much of the discussion as possible.

Remember that not everyone needs to be in agreement for an opinion to be recorded. Note down differences of opinion and discussions – they are at least as important and interesting as agreements. Note also differences that can be seen between different groups, like differences between men and women's experiences or opinions.

The point of the neighbourhood security survey is to collect together different people with varying experiences and viewpoints in order to cover as many aspects of security as possible. Take advantage of conflicts and disparities. The issue is how we can achieve a situation where as many people as possible feel secure and enjoy being in the area. To be able to do that, we need to listen to different voices.

Map and camera

It is a good idea to give a map to each person on the survey. If anyone has skills in Geographic information systems (GIS), it would be advantageous to use them. It can also be appropriate to mark down who is in charge of each area, so that responsibility can easily be deduced during the survey. It may also be necessary to include an explanation of symbols, if they are used on the map. Remember that also these maps should be easy to understand for those taking part in the survey.

A camera is an important tool. It should preferably be one that can take good pictures in the dark. If such a camera is not available, complementary photographs can be taken the day after the survey. The main thing is that there should be pictures taken of the places that have been discussed to enter into the record.

Suggestions for the structure of a survey

Start by collecting everyone together and having some refreshments and have a presentation of everyone involved. Briefly describe how the survey will be carried out, the process ahead, a little about the organisation of the area and municipality and a few words about the area and its history.

You can take the opportunity to tell the participants about which administrators there are in the area, how decisions are made that affect the area and in what way residents can have an influence on what is decided. It could also be a good opportunity to mention plans for the area or ongoing projects in the physical environment. Ask the participants if they know about anything else that is going on in the area.

If there are so many participants that more than one group is needed, it should be divided as necessary, so keep this in mind. Each group needs a discussion leader designated by the organiser, at least one person noting down comments and another taking photographs.

During the survey, the group stops at predetermined places according to what was identified during the first meeting or other specified meeting/conflict points. The group also pauses to discuss places that are pointed out by the participants along the way. There are some questions under the heading “Questions on the way...” that can be good to have at hand and consider during the survey.

When the survey is completed, the entire group is collected together again. The person or people who took notes go through them and the participants help to remember whether there is anything missing or if any new thoughts have come up that should be included. It could be good to give everyone turns at speaking in each group so that everyone has the opportunity to make their voice heard. Summarize what is pleasant and functional, and identify problem places.

Talk about the procedure to follow and agree on who should do what; for example, who is responsible for the various places and when they are expected to reply to comments.

The meeting is then concluded by thanking the participants and providing information about when the concluding meeting will be held and what will happen then.

Some things to think about during the survey

People are most important

The outdoor environment with its buildings, streets, parks and greenery is a framework surrounding people's lives. It is important that they all function so that people can live their lives in the best possible way, meet others, do things together, and also be able to move about on their own. To feel secure enough to go out in public is fundamental to the creation of a democratic society.

It is important to consider the meeting points that are in the area and whether they are accessible to everyone. Make use of the places where people spontaneously gather together and see whether there are aspects there that could be developed. Look at the pleasant places and those that are less so. Think about how best to learn from the enjoyable places and apply that knowledge to those places that are less pleasant to be in.

Remember that information boards and the like can encourage people to collect together and maybe start talking to each other. The information will have the best effect when situated where many different kinds of people walk past and preferably also stop. Look at where information is put up in the area and consider whether it is placed well.

Go with your feelings

It is important that all participants in a neighbourhood security survey really try to remember how it feels to be alone at the various places at different times of the day and in different seasons. Give the participants time to think and to put their feelings into words. Why and how do feelings of security and insecurity arise? Gender, age, personal observation and other factors make the experience different for everyone – take advantage of that fact!

Discuss whether there are any kinds of people who make use a place more than others and how, in that case, it affects how people view the locality. Discuss, too, whether there are people missing and what the reason can be.

Many perspectives

Men and women perceive places differently – consider how the places could be viewed through the eyes of a man or woman. Try also to understand the area from the perspective of a child, a young person, the elderly, people with disabilities or those from different cultures and social groups. Think, too, about whether there are people who are particularly vulnerable to hate crimes in the area; for example, transgender individuals or different ethnic and religious groups. Try to consider their perspectives during the survey.

See heading “Groups with different circumstances” on page 55.

Human presence

Most matters relating to security have to do with human presence. It is important that there should be a variety of other people nearby.

Alternative routes

A walkway that is beautiful and attractive in the light of day may feel dark and dangerous at night. It is good if there are alternative routes to choose from when going to school, the bus stop or the town square.

For people to be able to choose between these alternative routes, they need to **know about them** – in other words, there needs to be signs in good order and directions to follow. The alternative routes also need to be **easily accessible**, and that includes for people with disabilities, with strollers, and for those who need to sit down and rest occasionally along the way.

Take care of pleasant things

Remember that it is essential to note things that are pretty, pleasant and secure. Protect these things in the area. Look out for what works and use that knowledge when trying to change places that do not work so well.

Think about and discuss what it is that makes us enjoy being at a place that is pleasant. Do all participants perceive the same things as pleasant or are there differences within the group?

Questions on the way...

There is a lot to see and talk about during a survey. The following are a number of important questions to consider. It is only possible to concentrate on a few of them, but read all of them so that important issues are not overlooked.

Looking at the whole area

Keep your eyes open for things that show up on the way. See the uniqueness of your own area!

- What is the area like as a whole?
- Where are the prettiest and ugliest places?
- Where is better care needed?
- Has anything been vandalised? Where?
- In what condition are the trees, bushes and other greenery found in the area?
- Is clearing or thinning out needed to improve the view?
- Where is more greenery needed to make the place more pleasant? What kind of plants?
- Is it easy to find your way in the area? Are maps and signs needed? Are there any information boards?
- Is the lighting in the right place and is it working?
- Is it bright where needed? Is more needed?
- Where is it ok for there to be darkness?
- What condition are paving, stairs and railings in? Does anything need to be done about them?
- Could the area cause problems for people with various disabilities (visual, hearing, physical, allergies or orientation problems)?
- Are there enough – or too many – park benches and litter bins? What condition are they in?

- Are there any traffic routes or anything else that form barriers in the area?
- What is human life like in the area? Are there meeting places for everyone?
- Who uses the meeting places?
- What can residents and workers personally contribute to the area?
- Is there a need for more homes, shops, day nurseries, cultural environments, allotments, places of work or other important features?



The structure of the area

The physical structure is very important for how an area works. Traffic routes can separate and create barriers between adjacent areas. Beautiful parks can feel unsafe in the dark.

- What is it like in your area?
- Does anything need changing? What is missing?
- What can be improved in the short and long term?

Pedestrian and cycle paths

Pedestrian and cycle paths are the "bloodstream" of the area. They need to feel secure and enjoyable to use, otherwise people do not want to be outside, which can lead to more insecurity.

- Which pedestrian and cycle routes are the most important? Do different kinds of people use different stretches? Look for unplanned walkways, too – how do they work, and what needs to be improved?
- Are the pedestrian and cycle paths situated near residential houses, businesses and vehicle roads or in parks? What feels most secure?
- Are there any alternative routes to choose from in the daylight and darkness?
- Are there any windows from residential buildings or populated places of work nearby the pedestrian and cycle paths?
- Are there any activities open in the evening in connection with the pedestrian and cycle paths?
- Where is it possible to drive a moped without causing disturbance?
- What is it like in the winter?

Streets with road traffic

Many women, and also men, choose to walk along roads because it feels more secure after dark.

- Are there any pavements and safe and useable pedestrian crossings?
- What is the sound like – is there too much noise?
- Are there any sections between buildings that are deserted and where visibility is obscured? What can be done about it?
- Are the streetlights sufficient and evenly-spaced or do they dazzle?
- Is it easy to see oncoming people?
- Should vehicle traffic be altered or redirected in the area?
- Is the road speed alright? If not, how could it be changed?

Bus stops etc.

We want to feel secure both on the way to and at the actual stop, otherwise we may prefer to stay at home or choose another method of travel.

- Do different kinds of people use public transport to the same extent?
- Where are the stops in comparison to other features in the area?
- How are they designed and taken care of?
- How does it feel to stand there and wait? Are there any adverts that feel offensive? Is the needed information there?
- Are there any seats?
- Is there any protection from the rain, wind, sun and snow?
- Are there any windows from residential buildings or any passing vehicles that have a view of the stops?
- How do people get to the stops – are the pathways there secure, pleasant and accessible? Do different kinds of people choose different ways of getting there?
- Are there any alternative routes to the stops to choose from, and are they accessible for all?

Public squares

At the square, we want to be able to run errands, meet other people and feel secure.

- Is the square attractive and well maintained so that people in the area can feel proud about it?
- Is there any housing adjacent to the square?
- Are there secure and pleasant places in the square?
- Are there any obvious meeting places?
- Do vehicles drive through or near the square, and are there functioning parking places?
- Are there any hidden or unsafe places in or around the square?
- Are there any people who mean a lot for the square?
- Are there any unused premises in the square? How could they be used?
- What times of the day is the square used by different kinds of people?
- How can the square be made more alive? How can people become involved in issues relating to the square? Talk about it.

Parking places

Crime is sometimes committed at parking places or multi-storey car-parks, and it is not unusual for people to feel insecure at these places.

- How are the car-parks designed?
- Do men and women feel differently about the place?
- Are there any windows from residential buildings or places of work that have a view over the car parks, or are they out of sight?
- Are there walls, bushes or buildings that obscure the view?
- Are the car-parks divided into smaller sections?
- Are cars parked inappropriately?
- Who uses garages and what time of day are they used? Do different kinds of people experience it differently?
- Are car-parks and garages well-lit?
- Do multi-story car-parks have lifts? If so, how are they designed? Are they used? Could they be done differently, for example by having transparent sides etc.?
- What is the road to and from the car-park like?

Pedestrian underpasses

Pedestrian underpasses are built for the sake of road safety but are viewed by many as insecure. Some, especially women, prefer to cross a busy road rather than go through a dark tunnel.

- Is the view through the tunnel free from obstacles or does it feel long, dark and cramped?
- Are there bushes, walls or vegetation that obscure visibility near the tunnel entrance?
- Are there any alternative routes?
- Are there any safe places to cross the road at street level?
- How does the tunnel smell?
- Do men and women feel differently about the place?
- What can be done to make the tunnel more pleasant?
- Can the tunnel be taken away? What would be needed instead?



Courtyards and entrances

We share our courtyards and entrances with our neighbours. We want to be able to feel at home there.

- How can residents feel secure and enjoy being in their courtyard or entryway?
- What are the bottom levels like?
- Do windows and entrances improve security?
- Where is the laundry room? Who uses it? Is it safe to go there?
- Is there the possibility of and an interest in developing the laundry room into a meeting point?
- Do courtyards and entrances work for everyone: children, youths, the elderly and people with various kinds of disability?
- Are the entrances to residential buildings or places of work illuminated and easy to find?
- Can locks, door phones and nameplates be seen properly? Does everyone have access to them? Are they placed at a comfortable height?
- Are the entrances different from each other so that it is easy to recognise your own?
- Where are the waste disposal and recycling centres? Does that work well?
- It is possible for residents to be active and creative in their courtyard?
- It is possible for residents to put their personal touch in their courtyard and entryways? Is there an interest in this?

Schools and preschools

Schools and preschools are children's place of work. They need to feel secure at school and be able to thrive.

- Is the school a source of pride for the neighbourhood?
- Is there a possibility for children to participate in how the school and its surroundings take shape?
- Is there a difference in how boys and girls feel about and use the area around their school? Are there any differences between other groups?
- How is the school located and designed? What does it look like around the school?
- Is the school yard inviting? Does it encourage various activities?
- Are there any quiet and cosy places to go to, just to be there?
- What is it like walking to school from different directions?
- Can children feel secure when they walk to and from school?
- What is it like in and around the school in the evening?
- Are the premises used for other purposes, such as evening courses, sports, meetings, youth centres or activities for senior citizens?

Playgrounds

Play is important for all ages. At the playground, we can meet and get to know other people.

- Is the playground well designed?
- Is there a difference between how different groups of children use the playground? Does it feel accessible for all children?
- What adults are found here?
- Is there any useable and imaginative equipment?
- Is there any exercise equipment for adults with varying abilities?
- How useable is the playground in the snow?
- Is there enough seating?
- Are there places in the sun and shade?

Industry, office and hospital areas

We also want to feel secure where we work and receive care.

- How are buildings and surroundings designed?
- Are the surroundings perceived as attractive and secure?
- Is the area deserted and empty at certain times of the day or night?
- What could be improved? Think about it and use your imagination.

Conclude the survey with a gathering and refreshments

A short time is needed where everyone is gathered together to enjoy some refreshments and to discuss the survey and complete the maps and observations. Summarize what is pleasant and functional, and identify problem places as well as any differences of opinion and points of conflict. Talk about the procedure to follow and about who will be doing what.

Make and communicate a record

Immediately following the survey, the notes are transcribed. Details are sorted by who is responsible and communicated to them. When they are given the material, it is also important to remind them that they are expected to reply to each point in good time before the concluding meeting.

After the final meeting, the records should be completed with the commitments that are made and any further discussions. They are then sent to all participants and responsible people and are also made available to the public.

Making a record

1. Record the location, time and participants. Neighbourhood security survey in area XX. Date. Participants. Survey route, from – via – to.
2. Note the general conversation about the area
Refer to conversations that took place before, during and after the survey. What is the area like? How did it get like that? Why does it look like it does? What is the situation in the area right now? What problems and possibilities exist? What is it like to live there? Who lives, works and spends time there?
3. Record observations and suggestions
Make a list. Be sure to also include opinions and viewpoints that differ between the participants. Note whether it is possible to discern differences between the viewpoints of different groups. Mark out the places on a map and include pictures of each place that was discussed.
4. Give details of contact persons
Give details of contact persons at places such as the municipal district administration, property owners, shopkeepers and those responsible for public transport, traffic and park management. Write down the contact person's name, telephone number and e-mail address.
Also give details of where those who are interested can find information about previous surveys. Include the e-mail address and telephone number of a contact person who can answer any questions.

The concluding meeting

During the third meeting, those responsible for the area explain if and what they plan to do about the things that were observed during the survey. A discussion about what different parties can and want to do in the area may lead to further proceedings even after the concluding meeting.

Preparations

Visual presentation of the area and the viewpoints put forward during the first two sessions

Make a simple presentation with the map or maps from the first meeting and the survey along with pictures of the places that you stopped at and discussed during the survey.

Coordinate with those responsible

During the final meeting, those who are responsible for the area will be talking about planned actions or, if not, the reasons why the measures are not viewed as a priority or as appropriate to carry out. Be sure that they know what is expected of them at the meeting and answer their questions about how things will be arranged and anything else they may wonder about.

Suggestions for a meeting structure

The meeting is opened by the discussion leader welcoming everyone. He or she then briefly relates what has happened at previous meetings and explains the plan for the day. All of the participants present themselves. (About 10 minutes).

Refreshments can be served either at the beginning of the meeting or be available for the participants to enjoy during the meeting. It is not a good idea to pause for refreshments in the middle of the meeting because it can hinder discussions that may arise.

Those who are responsible for the places that have received feedback explain what is planned for the area or give reasons why the measures are not viewed as a priority or appropriate.

During the presentation given by the ones responsible for the area, the discussion leader allows the other participants to express their viewpoints and ask questions. Remember to keep a good tone in the conversation. Interests and opinions that differ are a necessary and important ingredient to conversations between different groups.

The role of the discussion leader is to ensure that no single person feels attacked or insulted during the conversation and to allow everyone an equal opportunity to express themselves.

The meeting is then concluded by the discussion leader thanking all of the participants. Explain what will be done with the records from the meeting and whether there will be a follow-up survey organised. It would be good to leave contact details with the administrators responsible for the area and advise them about various ways that are open for residents and other people active in the area to have an influence.

You could also conclude with a few inspiring examples of what can be done individually or together with others in the area, such as growing things, planning tournaments or concerts, starting associations and arranging series of lectures on a subject that interests many in the area.

The meeting plan should preferably allow room for some discussions to go over time. If a discussion is started that feels important but takes a lot of time, ask the participants if they would like to remain longer so as to conclude the discussion. Perhaps it is an important issue that requires an extra meeting or some other kind of forum. Think about and discuss it with the participants.

After the concluding meeting

What then?

The kind of neighbourhood security survey described in this publication can be carried out in any area, in daylight or in the dark and also at regular intervals. Including the date in the notes, maps and photographs makes it easier to follow up the work.

A simple photographic documentation of the most important places from year to year can be both useful and a source of joy. Showing pictures before and after improvements can also provide satisfaction and inspiration for change, both for those responsible and for the general public.

If anyone in the organisation has skills in Geographic information systems (GIS), the results from neighbourhood security surveys can be collected in that way, which would make the follow-up and documentation simple and clear to see.

Information and review

It is good if the results from the survey can be reported via web sites belonging to the municipality or other responsible parties and perhaps in the local newspaper.

Continuation

After a few months, it may be appropriate to arrange another survey in the same area, so as to follow up what has been done about the points that came up previously and the commitments that were made. The new survey can be done with the same participants as before, as a whole new process or exclusively with the officials, in order to see that the administrators have made the changes that they undertook to do.

Neighbourhood security surveys – method and extra information

Security is a big concept and how we experience it differs from person to person. We know that the main differences are between men and women and that other factors, such as age, cultural background and access to social safety nets are important. Our feeling of security – including what we feel when outside – is affected by many things that have nothing to do with the area we find ourselves in. It can be affected by previous experience, by the confidence we have in ourselves and our bodies, by access to social and community safety nets, our economy and housing.

We cannot use neighbourhood security surveys to change people's economic security or personal confidence, but surveys such as this can be an excellent way to work with issues concerning security and enjoyment as well as citizen participation in the physical planning.

Neighbourhood security surveys can also be a way to work with issues having to do with equality and democracy, such as who may and can be in various places, where and how dialogue is carried out between residents, officials and, perhaps, politicians. Neighbourhood security surveys can teach participants about how society works and can also be a channel for making their voices heard and being able to effect a change.

Neighbourhood security surveys can provide more secure and enjoyable surroundings that people want to be in, which means that more of them will go outside, with all of the positive effects that entails. There can also be advantages for the municipality if citizens know more about and have better trust in the work that the municipality carries out and contribute their knowledge of their local area and everyday lives.

Make the most of the method

For these positive effects to be achieved, it is important that the neighbourhood security survey be well-thought-out, empathetic, and done in a structured way. Establish the survey well amongst the interested parties who participate and try to achieve a representative mix of residents and workers amongst the participants.

It is important to have a good discussion leader who carries out ambitious preparatory work and work during the process as well as afterwards. If this is not done, there is a danger that the method will have the opposite effect, e.g., by only allowing one person in the group to talk who already has a lot of influence in the area, or because the residents feel badly treated or do not feel that their points of view are taken seriously.

There is also a risk that the conversation could become too kind and shies away from conflicts, which can give the false impression that there are no differences of opinion in the area. Different groups of people are always going to have different interests and, from a democratic point of view, it is dangerous to ignore that fact. The conversation can still be pleasant and it is possible to find mutual solutions to problems, as long as everyone understands that interests can differ within the group.

It is important to consider the difference between security and safety. Safety is about managing the actual danger we may be exposed to in a given situation. Security, on the other hand, is about how we feel in that situation and it does not necessarily have to have much to do with the actual risk. There is a danger involved in confusing the two concepts.

Activities intended to increase security through physical protection or awareness campaigns can sometimes have the opposite effect, since they can give the impression that people are really in danger and that something must therefore be done. Fences, cameras, shutters and warning signs intended to prevent crime, for example, can make the place feel insecure and exposed. This kind of perimeter protection can also lead to insecure environments forming outside the buildings, since they create areas that are hidden out of sight.

The same thing can apply if security is talked about too much. Security, like many other basic needs, is first noticed when there is a lack of it. **The best type of security is the kind that nobody even needs to think about.**

The importance of the discussion leader

The meetings and the conversations between all of the participants of the neighbourhood security survey are perhaps the most important and stimulating parts of the concept. The discussion leader's role is to keep the conversation open and make sure that everyone gets to be heard – residents, interested parties, municipal officials and others who are active in the area.

It is important that the viewpoints of the residents should guide the discussions. It is also essential that secure places and positive aspects of the area are emphasised and that feelings of insecurity amongst the participants are not reinforced.

A discussion leader who knows the local area and the local authorities may, if needed, be recruited from outside – it is not always the person responsible for promoting security or for planning issues who is the most appropriate person to lead the discussion. Having studied security in relation to different groups' access to public places is an important requirement for the discussion leader. As an example, information can be found in the Swedish Crime Survey (nationella trygghetsundersökning – NTU) by the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention.

Having a man and a woman as discussion leaders can have a positive effect, as can considering how representative the discussion leaders are based on their age and ethnic background etc. It is naturally important to involve interpreters as needed, so as to capture and convey everything that happens during the neighbourhood security surveys.

Residents are the key participants, and it is important to safeguard their opportunity to have a place in the discussions. This encourages participation, motivation and involvement. After all, it is perhaps those who live and work in the local area that know it best.

One of the aims of the survey is to strengthen the spirit of the area. Talking about the history and changes that have taken place in there could be a way of achieving that goal.

Everyone's right of access to public places

Having the opportunity to move around in public places is necessary in order to be able to take part in social activities, maintain a network of social contacts, carry out work and accomplish everyday matters. It is quite simply a prerequisite for human life and is very much an issue of equality and democracy.

Neither should a lack of financial resources exclude us from being able to move about in the city or community in which we live. We also need to feel secure and be free to roam about outside the home.

Security is about democracy

In all respects, there are differences in how different population groups are able to move about freely in society. This could be due to uneven distribution of responsibilities at work or at home, access to resources or the experience of violence and threats. These differences are, so far as we know, currently the most marked when it comes to differences between men and women, but differences can also be found between various age groups and people with different cultural backgrounds, levels of education and disabilities etc.

It is very much a democratic issue that cities and communities should be open for all citizens, which is why it is so important that there are places to go to that are pleasant to be in, open to everyone and which do not require any sort of consumption. Access to public places should not be determined by an individual's financial situation.

We need to strive to allow everyone access to our communal areas. When we come together across borders, a larger community and better security can be developed. If we do not feel secure when we are in public places, there is a chance that we will stay at home or limit how we move about.

Most people today experience uneasiness in certain situations, but certain groups are more vulnerable or feel more insecure than others. A feeling of vulnerability and a fear of crime and abuse is an obstacle for many people when they go outside. It is important to learn about different kinds of people's access to public places – it is an essential part of our democracy for everyone to have the same opportunities to go wherever they like.

Women feel more insecure than men

Feelings of security are strongly linked to gender. Crime surveys repeatedly demonstrate that women feel less secure than men when they are in public places. Research shows that most women, and, of course, some men, have strategies for dealing with that feeling of insecurity, such as paying attention to who they come across or checking to see if anyone is walking behind them. They may choose to follow one route during the day and another at night, or they may adapt their clothing or patterns of movement so as to minimise the risk of vulnerability.

At the same time, women are generally no more vulnerable to crime than are men – the vast majority of violent crime outside the home affects young men. But just considering men and women's exposure to crime in general paints a misleading picture, and there could be several explanations as to why women feel less secure than men.

One explanation for the concern that women have could be that they are significantly more likely than men to be exposed to sexual violence. This kind of crime is viewed as more frightening and intrusive than most other things a person can encounter.

Another explanation could be media images that depict women as vulnerable. Even fictional media, such as films and books, where the vulnerability of women is a commonly dramatised concept, have a role to play in creating the image that women are vulnerable.

Many women also experience a kind of low-grade degradation in their daily lives. It could be disparaging or insulting remarks, or a feeling of being constantly made into an object, where outward appearance is judged and evaluated. But it could also have to do with other reactions from the surroundings that are perceived as threatening or belittling. This kind of degradation contributes to reminding a woman that she is constantly a potential victim for more serious violations.

According to attitude research, women also tend to underestimate their own ability to defend themselves against physical attacks, whilst men, on the other hand, often overestimate their ability.

To speak of an unwarranted feeling of insecurity amongst women is therefore misleading.

It is important to understand the underlying causes in order to be able to make changes and improve things, and thereby give all people the opportunity to feel secure.

Security for whom?

When talking about everyone's right of access to public areas, it is also important to ask ourselves whom we want to create security for. Do we want everybody to have the right to security? There are groups that are often viewed as a security problem rather than people who have a right to feel secure in public places. These could be groups of youths, particularly young men. Another group is addicts, who often stay in public places.

Think about how these people are viewed and treated by us and others. Addicts in the town square are a group of people that could well work as a factor improving security as long as they do not behave aggressively or offensively. They often know what happens around them and know who is in the local area.

Groups with different circumstances

It is not easy, and neither is it perhaps always correct, to classify and put people into different categories. Sometimes, though, it can be necessary to point out general differences so as to be able to work for a more democratic and equal society.

The following are some examples of groups that could need extra attention paid to them when we consider people's right of access to public areas.

Children need to be exposed to certain risk situations in order to learn from them. At the same time, they need protective environments where they can play without being exposed to such things as road traffic.



It is important to remember that children play more or less all of the time, not only in places designed for play. The walk or cycle journey to school can be as much about looking at everything around as it is about transport from one place to another.

Try to see the area through the eyes of a child. What do children see? How is their vision obscured and what do they come across in the environment? Neighbourhood security surveys can also be carried out specifically with children; plan one, for example, with children around a common route to school or in and around the school yard. Remember that the division between the sexes is in some ways even stronger in children than it is for adults – how are girls and boys different in the physical environment? Are places for children designed for girls as much as they are for boys? Is there a tendency to reinforce gender roles in the design of places for children?

Young people are often referred to public places in which to spend time together, especially in the evenings. How can they put their mark on the place without taking over and excluding other groups? Is there a difference when it is young women or young men making their mark on the place?

We can surely all be better at listening more to our young people when it comes to the design of the area and changes that take place there. Perhaps more communal meeting places are needed for leisure activities, not only different shopping centres where we are expected to spend on goods and services. A danger with planning that takes young people's needs and experiences into consideration is that it could be only the young men who are listened to and focused on. Remember to take into account different genders, ages, and backgrounds even within the young people group.

People with disabilities can often feel restricted and insecure because of physical obstacles in the environment. Subsidence in a pavement, for example, can cause major problems for a person using a wheelchair or walking frame and for people with visual impairments who have difficulty judging differences in height. Even noisy environments and flashing lights can be a problem, as can places that have few or narrow entrances and exits.

Research also shows that women with disabilities prepare themselves for a violent situation more than other women do, by having with them something to use in self-defence. This group, then, has a greater need for alternative routes than many others do and needs environments that feel secure and clear.



Lighting and security

Being able to see the face of people we come across is important for feeling secure outside. It is especially important for a woman's feeling of security because women experience a man on his own as a potential threat to a larger extent than men do. Even though it is often impossible to judge the intentions of a person by their facial expressions and meet their gaze, it still gives people a greater feeling of being in control than if the person was completely hidden. Lighting that is a little below head level can therefore contribute to a greater feeling of security. Remember, too, that different people have different heights and that what is below head level for an adult who is walking could be dazzling for a shorter person or someone sitting in a wheelchair.

There is no guarantee that strong and closely-spaced lighting along a walkway will make people feel secure. It might feel like being on a lighted stage and the result can be an increased feeling of trepidation. Therefore, it is good if the lights also shine on some of the surroundings along the route and do not dazzle. It is preferable to light up points of focus beside the road rather than the road itself. The ground should, however, be sufficiently lit-up so that people walking can properly judge any uneven surfaces and see if it is slippery.

Remember that, at the point between light and darkness, lighting that is too bright can dazzle and ruin a person's night vision, which makes the area outside the beam of light seem considerably darker than it really is.

It can also be good to remember that not everyone minds the darkness. For some, darkness brings about a feeling of security and calmness, and it is important to also keep places where that group can enjoy the dark.



Greenery and security

Greenery, like trees, bushes and ground cover plants, are not an entirely simple subject when it comes to security and enjoyment. Research shows that greenery in cities has many positive effects, not only for people's wellbeing but also for various environmental factors in the city. Green areas lower the heart rate of individuals who are in and around them and simultaneously absorb sound and cast soft shadows. They take care of rain water so that the water and sewerage systems do not get overloaded. Green areas also create a friendlier climate in large cities.

But greenery can also be perceived as dark and foreboding. Many people feel unsafe in parks and near bushes in the nighttime and some even find greenery intimidating in the daytime. People originating from countries that lack the kind of lush vegetation that exists in Sweden can often experience even small green areas as unpleasant.

Because greenery is very important for both the environment and people's enjoyment during the day, the solution to feelings of insecurity is not to cut down all the bushes and pull up all the ground cover plants. During the survey, it could be good to discuss the significance of the green areas with the participants. You could explain several different ways of seeing greenery and how people feel about it at different times of the day and year. Talk, too, about whether different kinds of greenery have different values and uses.

The green features we have in our cities and towns are also valuable for ecological sustainability. It can, for example, be good to make sure that contiguous greenbelt areas are isolated as little as possible from other plant life. Think about whether there are possibilities for facilitating the cultivation of unused ground, courtyards and, in the long term, even on roofs and terraces.

Join in creating a more secure society

We want our public places to be inviting and attract activity, encounters and experiences. That is when we can meet in the square or at the park, walk home during the summer nights and cycle to friends' homes in other parts of town.

A welcoming community has room for everyone and allows for differences and similarities. It is when we come across differences that we are impelled to think about who we personally are and we are reminded that there are values that outweigh our personal differences and unite us. It is about a common desire to have a good life, space to move about in, rewarding relationships, being able to express ourselves and feel noticed and respected. It reminds us simply of the importance of democracy and equality.

Neighbourhood security surveys can be a way of contributing to such a society. They cannot take us all the way, but this citizen dialogue can be an important part of something larger, where we create possibilities for change that can lead to a more secure, humane and enjoyable society.

There are many uses for neighbourhood security surveys and it is possible to adapt the method for different purposes. There are also pitfalls to avoid that we have pointed out in this manual. But, mostly, there are enormous gains to be made.

We hope that you find a way of carrying out neighbourhood security surveys that works just right for you so that you can create stimulating meetings. Discuss what you have read with others, try it out and let yourself be inspired by the examples of others. We hope that you want to be a part in developing neighbourhood security surveys further and that you want to share your knowledge and experience in order to make the method even better.

Further information:

A More Secure and More Humane Gothenburg

www.tryggaremanskligare.goteborg.se/Engelska/TMG_engelska.html

Boverket-Swedish National Board of Housing, Building and Planning

www.boverket.se

The Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention (Brå)

www.bra.se

Printed by Edita Norstedts Västerås 2010

Edition: 1

Number of copies: 1 500

Illustrations: Helena Bergendahl

ISBN (printed): 978-91-86559-45-8

ISBN (pdf): 978-91-86559-46-5

This publication can be downloaded from www.bra.se,
www.goteborg.se/tryggaremanskligare and www.boverket.se

© A More Secure and More Humane Gothenburg, The National Board of Housing,
Building and Planning and the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention, 2010.

This is a publication for those planning to organise a neighbourhood security survey.

A neighbourhood security survey can be an important step towards a more humane society. By arranging a survey, you can help create the right conditions for pleasurable encounters, enjoyable surroundings and security in your area.

This publication shows you, step by step, how to organise a neighbourhood security survey – before, during and after the survey.



GÖTEBORGS CENTRALA BROTTSFÖREBYGGANDE RÅD

