

Welcome to The City of Overstream



The city of Overstream is a developing mid-sized city in Central Finland. You are a resident invited to help plan its future!

The scenario:

The city is facing growing challenges, including flooding caused by increasing rainfall, a lack of urban green spaces, and strong population growth that may threaten nearby natural areas.

The city of Overstream has been granted 30 000 € in development funding from the European Union to support future planning and solutions.

You are part of a stakeholder group working on how Overstream should develop. The city is planning to implement Nature-Based Solutions (NBS) to address issues such as climate change, urban heat, water management, and biodiversity. Environmental experts from a consultancy company have proposed several possible solutions for the city and its surrounding areas.

Your task:

Represent your group's interests and decide together how to spend the 30 000 € budget.

Each participant represents one of the following stakeholder groups in Overstream. While everyone shares the goal of improving the city, each group has different priorities and influences based on their background.

Stakeholder Groups:

1. The City Council: Focused on the city's long-term growth, budget management and public opinion.
2. Environmental NGO: Prioritises sustainability, biodiversity, and ecological benefits.
3. Young Parents of Overstream: Concerned with safe, green spaces for children, family well-being, and community health.
4. The City Gardener: Focuses on practical greening solutions, urban gardening, and plant-based improvements.

Each participant has a role described in a separate document, and it must stay confidential. Your job is to advocate for your group's priorities while negotiating with others.

Work together to discuss, compromise, and decide how to spend the budget—your choices shape the city's future.

Suggestion 1



Restoring a nearby peatland

Cost: 30 000 €

Location: 40 km north of the city

Description: The plan is to restore 100 hectares of peatland by actively blocking the ditches. In addition, a nature path will be built to the area, allowing citizens to observe bird species that are expected to return after the restoration is completed.

Benefits:

- Restoration will offer some short-term jobs for excavator operators who are blocking the ditches, as well as for ecologists who will monitor the project's progress and its success.
- Biodiversity benefits include creating an environment for bird species that inhabit wetlands and supporting the return of bird species that no longer inhabit the area.
- The nature path offers various health benefits and recreational possibilities for residents.

Suggestion 2



Building a city park to a new neighborhood

Cost: 30 000 €

Location: A new residential area "Northreach" northeast of the city

Description: Building a new mid-sized park to the city's new residential area. The plan is to build the park on land that is currently a wasteland. Strategies to enhance biodiversity in the area will be incorporated into the parks' design, and residents will be involved in both the planning and building processes.

Benefits:

- The park, along with the social nature of the project, will enhance health benefits in the local communities.
- The parks' trees help cool the area in the summer.
- The vegetation in the park will help manage excess rainwater locally.
- Based on the design of the park, it can provide multiple biodiversity benefits in the area.

Suggestion 3



Rainwater runoff management improvements

Cost: 30 000 €

Location: The project will be distributed evenly across the city

Description: Rainwater runoff management in areas identified by the consultancy company. Solutions include retention ponds, alluvial meadows, and rain gardens.

Benefits:

- Prevent flooding by managing water flow in ditches.
- Purify rainwater and meltwater.
- Enhance biodiversity in the area.

Suggestion 4



Rewilding experiments in kindergarten yards

Cost: 20 000 €

Location: Two of the city's kindergarten yards

Description: Remove asphalt and other manmade surfaces, designing the playgrounds around nature. Incorporate vegetation and other green, blue and brown elements into the playgrounds.

Benefits:

- Bringing nature closer to children fosters a positive relationship with nature.
- Exposure to different microbes in nature can help develop a healthy immune system.
- Promotes physical activity and creativity in children.
- Creates additional biodiversity benefits in the area.

Suggestion 5



Creating a new city meadow

Cost: 10 000 – 20 000 €

Location: Adjacent to an existing park located southeast of the city

Description: The meadow will be designed in collaboration with residents and experts from a local polytechnic. The cost is determined based on the area selected and the methods used to create the meadow (e.g. land cultivation, etc.)

Benefits:

- Vegetation will help cool the area and reduce the urban heat island effect in the summer.
- Based on the design, the meadow can help manage excess rainwater and improve soil health.
- The meadow and its aesthetic value provide health benefits for residents. Based on the design of the meadow, it can provide multiple biodiversity benefits in the area.



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Education and NBS -
bending the curve for biodiversity

The city	City of Overstream
Size	150 km, located in Central Finland
Area specifics	Urban city with growth potential, surrounded by rich regional nature
Population	65 000 inhabitants
Demographic	Around 30% of the population is under 30 years old
Education	Primary school, secondary schools, high schools, vocational schools and polytechnics. Discussions are ongoing with the University of Middle Finland about setting up a new campus in the city.
Economy	The energy sector, manufacturing, and education are the main employers in the area. The city is keen to develop tourism.
Environment	The region around the city is bordered by forests of borealia pines, lakes and peatland (most of which have been ditched)
Governance	The City Council
Cooperation	The city is a part of NFGC (Nature Friendly Growing Cities)
Places of Interest	A nature conservation area located 50 km north of the city, the old town of Overstream
Culture	Theater, winter and summer festivals for families, traditional cuisine markets



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Top story

Heavy Rains Paralyze Parts of City

Several neighborhoods in Overstream experienced severe flooding yesterday after intense rainfall overwhelmed the city's drainage systems. Roads were temporarily closed and basements flooded. The heaviest impacts were reported in older residential area west of the city center, where residents described water rising rapidly along streets. "We've lived here for 20 years and never seen anything like this," said one resident. Local community groups have raised concerns about unequal resilience across the city.

According to the city's technical department, the rainfall exceeded what the current infrastructure was designed to handle. And that similar events are expected to become more frequent due to climate change. Environmental experts and researchers have pointed out that traditional drainage systems alone may no longer be sufficient.

These recent floods have intensified debate within the city council about how to invest in future infrastructure. Some council members have emphasized the need for immediate flood protection measures and onvestments that benefit multiple parts of the city. While, others have warned that budgets are already strained due to other planned development projects. For many residents, the issue goes beyond infrastructure. "This is about feeling safe in your own home," one resident stated.



Municipal Matters

Funding granted for the development of Nature-Based Solutions in the city

The city of Overstream has been granted funding by the European Union to develop Nature-Based Solutions within the city. The funding is a part of the NFGC (Nature Friendly Growing Cities) initiative and is meant for nature-based solution development. For a city to qualify for NFGC funding, it is required to actively involve its residents in the planning and development processes.

Nature-Based Solutions are actions that are inspired and empowered by nature, that aim to solve societal issues while also producing benefits to biodiversity.

Sounds simple, right? Not quite. Some previous developments have faced criticism for not truly enhancing biodiversity in the city. Instead, the actions have been seen more as greenwashing, leaving residents confused or skeptical about the changes. Another problematic issue identified with NBS is that some projects may have increased inequality in the city, as they often benefit newly built areas or city centers primarily populated by wealthier residents, leaving other socioeconomic groups behind.



Community Updates

The city's new residential area has finally been named

The new residential area northeast of the city has finally been named, one year after the first residents moved in. Locals were invited to submit name suggestion, and more than 70 suggestions came in. The city council thanked all residents for excellent suggestions noting that the decision was a tough one. After careful consideration, the name “Northreach” was chosen for the area. “We believe Northreach perfectly describes the area, as it conveys the image of a spacious, forward-moving district, one that is already reaching new heights of development”, the council expressed with pride.

Currently, Northreach is the most expensive area in the city in terms of square meter price, although it is still undergoing renovations. The wasteland nearby has yet to be filled, and according to the residents it diminishes the appeal of the area. Discussions are ongoing regarding whether the land should be reserved for new housing units, though most residents would prefer the city to develop a park in the area, replacing the current bleak view.

Upcoming Events & Programs Calendar

Here is a detailed look at our upcoming activities. We invite all families and residents to join us!

JUN
25

Summer Festival

AUG
10

Local Cuisine Market



The city theater is rolling out new shows this summer and fall—catch the full lineup in the next issue of The Overstream Post.

