

# Summer coworking as an element of a comfortable urban environment

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**Abstract.** The paper deals with the problems of improvement and the creation of a comfortable urban environment. An initiative youth project is an idea of creating a summer coworking on the territory of the Ural Federal University in Ekaterinburg. Here, the University can take responsibility for designing the urban environment and involving urban communities in the development of the city. The article presents the concept of creating a creative open space for work and leisure that will unite citizens, as well as raise the issue of using collaborative design in creating a comfortable urban environment. The author's developments in creating a unique social object – a summer coworking – are presented. Based on real urban practices and the role of the University as a driver of regional development, the authors of the project plan to create a place for open and trusting inter-social communication between representatives of government, business, public associations, and active citizens. The possibilities of points of growth and development of the formed space were also considered. The implementation of the presented project will improve and improve the territory of the city of Ekaterinburg.

## 1 Introduction

Many problems hinder the development of comfortable working and leisure conditions for citizens. As a rule, they are typical for many Russian cities. The main reasons are the lack or insufficient number of equipped urban areas for productive work and pastime of all comers [1].

For residents of Ural cities, it is common to attach special importance to warm weather. Summer in the Urals is short but hot. The climate is sharply continental. This article offers a project solution for a youth initiative with the active participation of citizens. This is the creation of a summer coworking for the capital of the Urals – the city of Ekaterinburg. It is located on the border of Europe and Asia.

On hot summer days, citizens tend to get away from a stuffy office or apartment and spend more time outside. This becomes especially attractive when you can combine work and spending time in the fresh air. Hence, an urgent issue is the creation of a comfortable and refined territory in the city's street spaces. Also, many studies of scientists have proven that fresh air and the natural environment have a positive effect on health and performance [2].

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Coworking is a relatively new, but at the same time quite popular format of public space in cities. Street coworking differs from an ordinary Park or square in the presence of engineering capabilities for full-fledged work. For example, this includes Internet access and technical support for electronic devices.

The use of coworking areas is quite diverse. These can be simple work spaces for individual use, as well as spaces for conferences, seminars, master classes, as well as various meetings, meetings and presentations [3]. Most often, street coworking spaces are used for holding any events.

In Russia, relatively recently, there are cities where street coworking projects have already been implemented or accepted for implementation. They differ in that they are available to the public around the clock. At the same time, such places provide all the necessary conditions for comfortable work and recreation.

In the era of globalization, many professions allow you to work remotely. After the introduction of restrictive measures to combat COVID19, many professions also found the opportunity to work remotely. This situation will affect the further demand for coworking places, as the home environment is not always conducive to productive work.

## **2 Problem statement and research question**

### **2.1 Review of the latest best practices and literature**

A study by the well-known retailer of outdoor advertising products LLBean revealed the problem of the need for outdoor work areas. Since 75 % of domestic workers are looking for outdoor spaces for their work. Based on research showing the benefits of fresh air to the workflow, LLBean, together with Industrious, created the first open coworking project in New York. It included individual workspaces, various media areas, and free-use spaces. This initiative was positively evaluated by citizens, which allowed us to develop areas of street coworking [4].

Today, large companies are beginning to adopt the experience of creating and using street coworking, creating such open spaces in cities. Also, in urbanized megacities, companies are looking for places to create natural spaces. For example, Facebook has set up a roof garden for employees who like to work outdoors. [5]

In large cities of Russia, they are successfully beginning to adopt the best world and Russian experience. So street coworking appeared in large picturesque parks in Moscow. For example, on Pushkinskaya embankment, in Sokolniki parks, 50th anniversary of October and Gorky Park, as well as in the Tsaritsyno Museum-reserve, there are already special jobs in the open area. Entrepreneurs and small businesses have a special demand for them [3].

And in the city of Bryansk, an initiative group of young people developed the project "space". This is a social and cultural platform. Here visitors can not only relax, but also participate in various educational programs and social projects. This complex is located in an open space in the Park. The project received a Presidential grant for implementation in the amount of more than two million rubles [6].

### **2.2 Problem statement**

The authors of this study and work at the Ural Federal University (UrFU). Currently, the University is actively promoting the program of sustainable development of the regions. This is in addition to educational and research activities. The third mission of universities will be a key factor in the positive impact of universities on the development of human capital, regions, and cities [7].

Our contribution to the impact of University can be an initial project of street coworking on the territory of UrFU.

Having studied the best experience of designing and using street coworking in practice, we plan to carry out the justification of the socio-economic development project of the summer coworking. As well as to investigate the application of the innovative method of impact investment to assess the effectiveness of the project for the formation of public space.

First of all, our coworking will be aimed at young people. But not only for those who study at the University. And for all urban communities of initiative young people with an active civic position. Those who care about managing the development of the urban environment and its improvement.

When developing the project, the authors raised the following questions:

1. Create and develop the concept of a summer coworking project;
2. Consider gentrification of the surrounding area;
3. Work out coworking mobility issues in Detail;
4. Consider adopting coworking to changing weather conditions;
5. Create a project basis (3D visualization with a description of the idea);
6. Consider options for commercializing the coworking space (if necessary);
7. Find investors to implement the project;
8. Increase the attractiveness of the territory for other urban activities.

### 2.3 Rationale of the study

To begin with, the authors checked and justified the need to create an open coworking space on the adjacent territory of the Ural Federal University. An analysis of existing coworking spaces at the University was conducted. As a result, it turned out that on the basis of UrFU, several coworking zones have been implemented inside academic buildings for individual and group work of students [8]. In addition, there is a University "boiling Point" from the Agency for strategic initiatives [9].

Our team works at the Institute of Economics and management of UrFU, so we will only show coworking spaces of this institute. They are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Coworking facilities of the UrFU Institute of Economics and management.

The name of coworking	INFORMATION ABOUT COWORKING		
	Spaciousness	Technical capability	Operating mode
Coworking of the Ural Bank for reconstruction and development (UBRiR) on 25 Gogol street	Up to 50 people	Multimedia equipment with output to 2 walls, audio system, 5 monoblocks for individual work, Wi-Fi, mobile furniture for organizing groups of various sizes, air conditioning, mini-library, recreation area, vending machine	Monday-Friday from 09.00 to 20.00
Coworking "Yes" on 19 Mira street	Up to 40 people	5 laptops, stationary and mobile furniture for both individual and group work, Wi-Fi, mini-library from YES, coffee shop (for students and employees, 50% discount via the Mobile Barista app»)	Monday-Friday from 08.00 to 21.00, Saturday from 10.00 to 21.00

Continuation of Table 1.

The name of coworking	INFORMATION ABOUT COWORKING		
	Spaciousness	Technical capability	Operating mode
Coworking of Sverdlovsk commercial Bank (SKB-Bank) on 19 Mira street	Up to 15 people	Stationary furniture for both individual and group work, Wi-Fi	Monday-Friday from 08.00 to 21.00, Saturday from 8.00 to 18.30
Library-coworking on the street Chapaeva 16	Up to 30 people	8 desktop computers for individual work, tables for individual and group work, library, paid services: printing, copying, flashing documents, lamination	Monday-Friday from 09.00 to 18.00

Existing coworking spaces are functional and in demand.

However, on warm days, students, teachers, staff, and guests of the University want to spend more time outdoors. As you know, only the territory of the square in front of the main academic building is provided for this purpose. It is equipped with benches. In the spring, summer, and autumn, it is difficult to get comfortable for work and leisure on the street due to a large number of students. Therefore, some students find a place on the concrete, iron fences next to the academic buildings on the square in front of the main academic building. Which is not convenient. The disadvantage is that there are no places for working with laptops and charging electronic devices on the territory near the University. There are no basic engineering networks. Thus, our team got the idea to create a summer coworking project at the Ural Federal University. It should become a driver of socio-economic development of the location's territory.

### 3 Research question

#### 3.1 Purpose of research

The main goal of the project was to create and design a public street space for students and employees of Urfu, as well as guests of the University. It should be at the same time an ennobled place for study, recreation, and outdoor activities near the school building.

As a result, the concept of the project should be to create a creative open space for work and leisure, which will unite citizens.

The authors are interested in developing this idea. As we strive to draw attention to the problem of the lack of urban areas suitable for productive and comfortable work in the fresh air for the benefit of the city. Citizens should have the right to participate in city events related to the improvement strategy and the creation of a comfortable urban environment.

The object of research is the influence of the University on the socio-economic development of the territory.

The subject is the creation of an initiative project of street coworking as a working platform for active citizens (primarily young people), and its application for the development of the region.

#### 3.2 Scientific novelty and scientific result

Based on real city practices and the role of the University as a driver of regional development, we create a space for open and trusting inter-social communication between representatives of government, business, public associations, and active citizens. In the atmosphere of

cooperation, using modern training and communication technologies, it will be possible to create a youth platform for discussing important urban issues. Such as urban development, landscaping, tourism, sightseeing routes, smart solutions for places where young people live. In this way, local communities will be involved in the joint design and implementation of projects, i.e. cooperative design.

The developed theoretical and applied conditions for the sustainable development of urban territories, based on the method of participatory design, include a number of certain key indicators. They are distinguished by the use of a resource approach, which allows for an innovative breakthrough in the development of regions.

The scientific result is that we have formulated a scientific and applied approach to developing a methodology for street coworking projects as a tool for attracting the target audience to ensure further sustainable development of the space.

### **3.3 Research methodology**

The paper uses a qualitative research method as a tool for the interaction of people in specific situations aimed at the development of the territory. The main driving force behind creating a comfortable urban environment and managing the development of the territory is the active role of the impact University. Such a University will be able to concentrate on the existing potential in a direction using the method of participatory design.

The target audience is young people. First of all, students are city residents who are interested in the situation with the city's territories and their development in the future, and who want to live in a comfortable and safe space. We pay special attention to the young generation of young people and students.

A social experiment was chosen as the leading method. The analysis also serves as a leading method in this study. Another method we use is a generalization.

## **4 Research body**

### **4.1 Critical analysis, questions and suggestions**

We have studied existing creative solutions for creating a comfortable urban environment in Russia and abroad. Our special attention was drawn to the article, which gives an example of 5 places in the capital (Moscow), where during city days you can find "balance and harmony with yourself" [10, 11]. Inspired by these solutions, we decided to use the main directions of the examples given in the articles in our project.

In Moscow, Gehl Architects analyzes public spaces that can be applied in different directions. This analysis covers city districts, streets, squares, and parks. The result of the analysis is identified problematic public spaces that will be transformed into well-maintained areas of the city in the future. Thus, the company proves that it is possible to gradually improve the quality of urban life. Such research allows you to create an incentive and collect data for the further development of spaces and transmit this information to the city authorities. It also raises interest in the public life of the city [12].

In October 2019, the authors of this study attended a scientific conference at one of the best universities in Denmark – SDU Odense. This University has implemented a lot of projects of co-working spaces, including outdoors. The University was originally designed as a well-organized space where coworking spaces fit harmoniously into the architecture of the campus. The University's policy is also aimed at creating comfortable conditions for students' learning.

After studying and understanding the experience, the authors developed the concept of street coworking for the Ural Federal University.

## **4.2 Main technologies and methods of project implementation**

The main technologies and methods for implementing the UrFU summer coworking project will be:

1. Use of mostly natural materials;
2. Simple and concise design;
3. Modernity and versatility (the presence of such elements as sockets, night lighting, comfort in use (comfortable benches, tables, and chairs), etc.);
4. Mobility of coworking elements (in winter, some small architectural forms can be placed in an indoor coworking for storage);
5. Combination with the existing natural landscape (it is planned not to affect the trees and shrubs growing on the territory);
6. environmental Friendliness. This also includes the garbage sorting system, which is already being actively introduced on the territory of the University;
7. landscaping of the territory. This includes planting new plants along the main path, as well as near other recreational areas. We selected unpretentious plants that do not require special care and are also able to survive the harsh Ural winters.

Also, special attention should be paid to the areas where space is located for different groups of the population. For example, students prefer to spend time in a comfortable and informal environment after classes. Therefore, it is possible to create a special area with comfortable chairs. For school children, you can create a zone with more dynamic architectural forms.

To create a 3D model of the coworking zone, we used the method of modeling the main elements of the territory under consideration in the landscape design program.

It is planned to create a multifunctional application for scheduling events that take place in the coworking zone. It will be available to everyone through the University's Personal account. The system for creating a mobile application can be combined with the existing Personal account of students and teachers.

Funding for this project is possible with the help of UrFU partners, some of them have already helped with the organization of coworking within the institutions. They were the project stakeholders. These are the Yes Language center, UBRIR (Ural Bank for reconstruction and development), SKB-Bank, and others.

## **4.3 Basic design principles**

Here you can consider the following aspects.

The principle of complicity is very important. The authors consider direct participation in the city project. The city likes creative and interactive spaces. Therefore, it is possible to create the potential for urban development and active citizenship from the territory.

The city is a simulator of life. The organization of space in the city is privacy or, conversely, creating a point of attraction (gathering companies, holding public events, and public speeches). You can maintain a balance between privacy and self-expression. It is very important to attract active citizens to participate in projects.

It is important to identify growth points and consider the offer of intensive courses for development. These can be marathons or short programs for 2-3 weeks. Taking into account the interests of all segments of the youth. But we cannot ignore the activity of the population aged fifty plus. This is a topic for future research on the role of impact University in the development of the urban environment, using the method of participatory design. These are

city initiatives. University as a " place " for thinking. It is possible to integrate the proposals of initiatives in educational programs and in educational design.

Under conditions of high uncertainty, an active community of cities creates its own future. Any "future" depends on the vision, vector, and coherence of actions. Our community of the Institute of the "living" city offers to plan, and thus shape our future. Only by taking responsibility for tomorrow will each of us reach the goal. Having outlined the directions of activity for the next period of time, we will find our place in the common cause.

## 5 Obtained result

### 5.1 Results and suggestions

The territory for the summer coworking was chosen in the square on Kirov square. The area of the square reaches 4.3 hectares. Elements of the coworking zone will be correctly distributed on this territory. Due to the existing landscape, it is possible to divide the territory into a working and recreation area.

Coworking should be inexpensive, but stylish, adhere to the principle of environmental friendliness while remaining comfortable, sincere, and positive.

So, the authors believe that summer coworking, as a necessary and enough minimum, should perform several functions simultaneously. This functionality is shown in Table 2.

**Table 2.** UrFU summer coworking Functions.

Function	View	Description
1. Vacation spot	It is planned to create a lounge area. It will include a space equipped with suspended chairs, outdoor poufs, as well as a flat area for morning sports, where you can place fitness mats or blankets	Cozy lighting at night offers visitors of co-working to joint preparation for classes, meeting with friends, watching movies, etc. Since there are no residential buildings near the coworking, the peace of citizens will not be disturbed
2. Place to work	It is planned to place a round table around which a single-stage bench will be formed. The table will have a built-in water-proof station with sockets for charging phones and laptops	It will be convenient to work here individually, conduct master classes, classes, etc. In the evening, the indoor co-working space will look like a modern urban art object due to its lighting
3. Public cultural and educational platform	A library is provided. The coworking space can easily be transformed into a dance floor or a place for small gatherings and meetings	Books on personal development, urbanism, basic economic literacy, pedagogy, etc.
4. Summer school of co-operative design and development of territories	On the other side of the territory, there will be an indoor coworking with panoramic Windows. It will be equipped with chairs with pull-out tables, a magnetic Board for events. There is also a Wi-fi point, a large number of outlets	During the school lessons, students of the relevant specialties will have a summer internship under the motto "City for youth". To learn the designing, teaching those wishing active citizens



Continuation of Table 2.

Function	View	Description
5. Urban point of social growth	A small space of comfort and order. The goal is to regularly restore order and improve abandoned territories	Such points, especially those created with the involvement of students, will show a clear example of what you need to live with dignity. This will be a significant educational factor for all generations

In the summer coworking, young and initiative leaders from students and teachers will spend their free time usefully. And most importantly, they will be able to take a fresh look at their hometown and their place in it.

The social mission of the University should be part of the impact strategy in promoting sustainable development projects in the territories. However, this is the subject of our next study.

## 5.2 Additional condition

Purity. It should be noted that containers for sorting garbage will be located on the territory of the complex, as this system is being actively implemented at the University. To support the environment, we will use mainly natural materials, namely larch flooring, small wooden architectural structures, natural stone, etc. Existing trees will not be affected during the construction process. Special signs will also be installed: "take care of nature", "Smoking is prohibited", "drinking alcoholic beverages is prohibited", "throw garbage in the appropriate trash can", "allowed to sit on the lawn", etc.

Landscaping includes planting new plants next to architectural forms. We selected unpretentious plants that do not require special care and are also able to survive the harsh Ural winters. To design the territory, we also offer to carry out work on restoring the lawn surface.

The lighting will be aimed at creating a cozy evening atmosphere in the coworking area. Low garden spotlights with light directed at decorative elements will be used, as well as single garden lights on a low leg along the paths.

To date, no University in the city of Yekaterinburg has created a summer coworking project, so the creation of such a project on the territory of UrFU will increase the attractiveness of the University for future applicants, as well as create more comfortable conditions for studying and spending time for all students and employees of the University. The project will play a significant role in many indicators: safety, environmental friendliness, comfort, etc.

## 5.3 Project financing

Initially, the project was planned as a social project, that is, the authors were looking for investors who are ready to make a gift to the city. But due to the fact that early discussions of the concept often raised the question of the need to commercialize the project, so the authors considered the following options:

Introduction of season tickets for visiting the indoor coworking area. A system of discounts for students and faculty of the University can be introduced here;

Delivery of premises for masterclasses/seminars for commercial organizations. At the same time, the authors insist that teachers and students can conduct their classes on the territory for free;

Collaboration with small businesses. With the permission of the owner of the territory, you can organize a summer coffee shop in the coworking area to make your stay in the



coworking more comfortable and profitable. Small businesses can also become a co-investor in the process of improving the territory;

Providing jobs to large companies by charging a percentage of their activities. It can be an activity in the field of coaching, meetings, or seminars for professional development in a picturesque and convenient location.

Such coworking is beneficial if you compare the profit received relative to costs. Besides, you can meet people with similar interests on such sites and make useful business contacts that can develop into profitable cooperation [5].

## 6 Conclusions

Active participation of residents, organizations, and businesses is necessary to create popular public spaces, minimize contradictions, and avoid mistakes in the improvement of public territories. The formation of a sense of responsibility among citizens makes it possible to pay attention to the spaces of their city, realize their involvement in the processes of their change, and move from the status of an outsider to the status of a responsible owner of their city.

Currently, UrFU is listed as a participant in the 5-100 project, the key result of which is the appearance in Russia by 2020 of modern universities of leaders with a good reputation, able to set trends in world higher education. Today, the University occupies the 35th position according to the QS EECA rating.

Our proposed summer coworking project will increase the attractiveness of the University to applicants, students, teachers, and, of course, citizens and guests of the Sverdlovsk region. It aims not only to provide young people with a productive workplace but also to create a community that brings together people who share their experiences and ideas, work, and relax together.

Besides, the creation of such a gentrified territory in the urban space will fulfill The May presidential decrees on the improvement of the urban environment by 2024.

A comfortable urban environment is already being created in every city in Russia. The authors believe that every resident of the city should take part in this.

Thus, forming an active civil life position, the organization of summer coworking based on the Ural Federal University will be able to involve active young people in solving issues of urban construction and development of territories together with the residents of the city. It points out one of the ways to a better and more comfortable city for people.

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