

## Implementing accessibility in municipal planning: planners' view

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### Abstract

Accessibility in public outdoor environments for those with reduced functional capacity has attracted interest on both the international and national levels. This study investigates how accessibility issues are currently treated in Swedish municipalities in order to examine how older peoples' accessibility needs are met in daily practice. A postal questionnaire was sent to all municipalities in Sweden (N=290) with questions mainly regarding three categories: (1) existence of policies and documents, cooperation with interest organizations, and measures implemented, (2) availability of governmental directives and recommendations relevant for accessibility issues, and (3) statements of how accessibility issues are treated among municipal politicians and employees. The responses were perceived by the respondent. In the data analysis, a quantitative ranking of each one of the three categories was created using questions from the questionnaire to indicate the level of accessibility implemented in municipal planning. The results show a large variation in the accessibility among the municipalities in Sweden. In municipalities that have planning documents, employees use of governmental directives and recommendations relevant for accessibility issues are more positive. This positive relationship with the treatment of accessibility was also found with factors such as if municipalities have an accessibility adviser employed, municipalities cooperate with service organizations, and municipalities use governmental directives and recommendations relevant for accessibility issues. This paper concludes that although there is still much to do to accommodate accessibility to all citizens, a majority of the Swedish municipalities are nevertheless positive about accessibility issues.

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