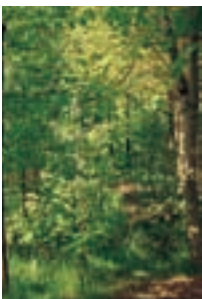**Comparisons between the theoretical five minute walk radius and the actual walkable catchment from park entrances helps identify lines of severance and poor crossings that require attention**

Larger open spaces are linked to form a network of greenways

Fronting buildings onto public spaces provides overlooking and attractive aspects

Greenways balance human and wildlife access

3.5.2 PUBLIC ACCESS TO OPEN SPACE

Parks within walking distance
It is important that space for children's play, nature conservation and sports are provided within walking distance. Local parks are ideally placed within 3-5 minutes walk (250 - 400m) of the majority of homes.

The best starting point for determining provision is to assess the actual walking distances achievable and the positioning of play facilities within parks in relation to houses (by applying the walkable neighbourhood principle - see 3.1.2). Note the positioning of entrances, lines of severance (such as railway lines or busy roads) and steep gradients that inhibit the elderly and disabled - particularly wheelchair users. This analysis can also be used as the basis for extending an existing park catchment by, for example, creating more entrance points or pedestrian crossings.

3.5.3 OPEN SPACE NETWORKS

Connect spaces
Open space networks are often more useful for visual amenity, recreational use and wildlife corridors than isolated and unrelated landscape elements. They not only serve to organise larger projects but also create linkages to existing urban areas, other sites and the wider landscape.

Networks may join up linear parks, road reserves, playing fields, parks, allotments, private gardens, buffer planting and surface drainage corridors. Greenways can be created to run through or alongside linear elements such as natural streams, wooded belts or canals and connect with parks and footpaths in nearby neighbourhoods. These can plug into neighbourhood streets that have cycle routes, reduced car levels and mature tree planting - creating a network of what the city of Vancouver calls 'Green Ways - Public Ways.'

The 400m walkable catchment radii focussed on neighbourhood focal points forms the starting principle for network design. Aim for major open spaces to adjoin at least one quadrant of the circle, but never more than two. This avoids isolation between developments and allows linear networks to be provided that are no more than 1.2 km (15 minutes walk) away from the majority of people.

3.5.4 WILDLIFE AND ECOLOGY

Balance human access and wildlife shelter
In creating a network of open spaces, there is an inherent conflict between human beings and other animals. We need to make it easier to live apart, whilst being close together. This means identifying some spaces within the network with limited access that provide rich habitats for wildlife. Railway embankments, for instance, act as good wildlife corridors as they are undisturbed by people and many animals are unaffected by train movement.

For public parkland, a balance needs to be struck between public access and biodiversity. A model open space network would form a necklace of different open space types. These could include private gardens, which are most valuable ecologically when configured in long strips that are usually well tended for the first 10m, leaving 'more messy', richer habitats at their ends.