

The Effects of Plac Agung Rizki Adhal emaking on the Pekanbaru City Park

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Abstract

Placemaking is a process of transforming a physical space into a meaningful place by integrating community needs, social interactions, and psychological comfort. The environmental and cultural context of a location plays a crucial role in shaping how people perceive and use public spaces. This research examines the effectiveness of placemaking in Pekanbaru City Park—one of the few remaining green open spaces in the city—by identifying the factors influencing its limited visitor engagement. A mixed-method approach was employed, combining field observations, spatial quality scoring, and semi-structured interviews with park visitors and management staff. The study evaluated key aspects such as accessibility, safety, amenities, cleanliness, and social usability based on the Project for Public Spaces (PPS) framework, which emphasizes four key elements of successful public spaces: accessibility, comfort, sociability, and activity. Findings indicate that while certain physical attributes of Pekanbaru City Park fulfill user needs, issues such as poor sanitation, unpleasant odor from stagnant water, and lack of maintenance significantly reduce visitor comfort and frequency of use. Theoretically, this research contributes to urban design and placemaking literature by contextualizing the PPS framework within a tropical, mid-sized Indonesian city. Practically, it highlights the urgent need for improved maintenance strategies, community-based programming, and participatory management to enhance park livability and strengthen social cohesion in urban green spaces.

Keywords: Placemaking, Green open space, Public Space, Pekanbaru city park

INTRODUCTION

Placemaking is the process of transforming an area into a place with a distinct sense of identity, by taking into account the community's social needs and psychological factors (Silva & Sy, 2020; Carmona, 2019). The culture and environment of a location can also influence the type of space created (Lew, 2020). Public space design must be carefully planned in order to enhance the quality of metropolitan environments (Kurniati et al., 2023). The municipal park is one of the public spaces that should be examined; however, not every park is accessible to the public (Low et al., 2022; Zamanifard et al., 2021).

The development of an urban area, if not properly arranged, can result in a decline in the quality of urban ecology. One important element of urban ecology is city green open space. This refers to parts of the urban area filled with vegetation (both endemic and introduced) that provide direct or indirect benefits such as safety, comfort, well-being, and beauty in urban areas (Jabbar et al., 2021; Nguyen et al., 2021). A city park is a type of green open space composed of community vegetation, including trees and their associations, which grow within or around the city. These can take the form of paths, scattered patches, or clusters resembling or imitating a natural forest (Semeraro et al., 2021; Oropeza-Sánchez et al., 2025; Ye et al., 2025).

The existence of *city parks* is an important factor influencing the sustainability of ecological and social conditions in urban environments. City parks dominated by many tree species can reduce pollutants more effectively than those with low vegetation

diversity (Xing & Brimblecombe, 2019). Beyond their ecological function, the quality of *city parks* can significantly impact the mental health of city residents (Wang et al., 2022).

Green Open Space (RTH) is one of the essential elements of a city, providing harmony within the urban environment. It serves as a means to create safe, comfortable, fresh, beautiful, and clean surroundings (Wolch et al., 2018). Green open spaces offer ecological, socio-cultural, and aesthetic functions that enhance comfort and beautify the city environment on both micro and macro scales (Kabisch & Haase, 2019; Haaland & van den Bosch, 2015). The benefits of RTH are both direct and indirect, long-term, and often intangible (Jim & Chen, 2022). According to Article 29 of Law No. 26 of 2007, the proportion of green open space in an urban area should be at least 30% of the total city area (Rahmawati et al., 2023). Furthermore, the Regulation of the Minister of Public Works No. 05/PRT/M/2008 stipulates a requirement of 20 m² of RTH per resident (Setyowati & Putra, 2021).

One example of such green space is Pekanbaru City Park, located on Jl. Siberut, Simpang Empat, Kec. Pekanbaru City, Riau 28127. Another park, situated on Jalan Thamrin, covers an area of approximately 11,173.75 m². This park is adjacent to the Riau KNPI office, Tri Buana Sports Hall, and the Malay Customary Institution (LAM) Riau. While the land belongs to the Riau Provincial Government, management has been under the Parks and Cleanliness Service of Pekanbaru City since 2003–2004, funded through the Department of Parks and Hygiene (Ferizko, 2025). Working hours for maintenance staff run from 7 a.m. to 1 p.m. The Pekanbaru city government also uses the area for nurseries, compost production, manure processing, and planting media for other parks and road medians (Ferizko, 2025; Masnur et al., 2023).

The park on Jalan Thamrin offers public facilities such as benches, a jogging track, trash bins, and restrooms. There are also several warning signs and notices displayed by the authorities. Thanks to diverse tree species, this park has a variety of bird life, and it features a guard post. Planting activities have been conducted by the Department of Parks and Cleanliness, as well as schools involved in reforestation programs. Despite these resources, visitor numbers remain low on both weekdays and weekends, and maintenance by the government has visibly declined.

Several previous studies have highlighted the importance of *placemaking* and urban green spaces in fostering community well-being and urban livability. For example, Dash & Thilagam (2023) found that successful *placemaking* depends on integrating physical design, social interaction, and environmental comfort, noting that the vitality of urban parks is determined not only by physical amenities but also by emotional and social connections to the space. Meanwhile, Sahakian et al., (2020) reported that many public parks in Southeast Asia, including Indonesia, lack inclusivity and consistent maintenance, leading to underutilization despite their ecological and social potential.

This study adopts the Project for Public Spaces (PPS) framework, combining observation, scoring analysis, and interviews to identify physical, social, and managerial factors that contribute to low visitor engagement. Theoretically, it enriches the literature on *placemaking* and urban design in tropical urban contexts; practically, it offers

recommendations for enhancing city park management to improve accessibility, safety, and social inclusiveness in urban green spaces.

RESEARCH METHOD

The research employed a qualitative descriptive approach. This method aimed to assess the effectiveness of city parks as public open spaces in Pekanbaru City based on current field conditions. Observations were conducted to identify and evaluate various physical and social elements of the park, which were later assessed using predetermined criteria. Interviews with park visitors were then carried out to validate and enrich the results of the observation.

The study relied on primary data obtained through direct observation, field notes, photographs, and interviews with selected individuals to gather relevant insights. The research location was Pekanbaru, with the Pekanbaru City Park serving as the primary study site.



Image 1 Pekanbaru City Park satellite view
(Source: Zoom Earth, 2021)

Based on the literature review and synthesis that had been conducted, indicators and research variables were identified to achieve the study's objectives. These variables were derived from the indicators to be observed and were used as objects of analysis in the research process. Based on the literature review, criteria were also developed to assess the elements of a well-designed green open space or city park, as listed below.

Table 1. good green open space area criteria

Indicator	Variable	Score		
		Good	Moderate	Bad
Socio-cultural Function	Facilities for social interaction	Having facilities for social interaction, like gazebo, bench, etc, to still be in good condition and well-maintained.	Having facilities for social interaction like gazebo, bench, etc, to be in a bad condition	Having no facilities for social interaction like gazebo, bench, etc.
	Sports recreation	Have at least 5 sport activities that can be done on the area. (Jogging, aerobic, cycling, Running, skipping, etc.	Have at least 3 sport activities that can be done on the area. (Jogging, aerobic, cycling, Running, skipping, etc.	Have at least 1 sport activities that can be done on the area. (Jogging, aerobic, cycling, Running, skipping, etc.
	Playground	Having facilities for playground, like seesaw, slide etc, to still be in good condition and well-maintained.	Having facilities for playing activities, like seesaws, slides, etc, to still be in bad condition	Having no facilities for playing activities, like seesaw, slide etc.
Aesthetics and accessibility Function	Lighting condition on the park	Lighting on the park are all able to illuminate all area of the park	Some of the Lighting on the park are able to illuminate all area of the park.	No Lighting on the park.
	Pedestrian circulation	The pathway circulation is in good condition and Pathways are connected, in a useful manner to other recreation opportunities.	The pathway circulation is either in good condition or the Pathways are connected, when required, in a useful manner to other recreation opportunities.	The pathway circulation is neither in good condition nor the are connected, in a useful manner to other recreation opportunities.
	The sanitation of the park	is Clean and provides many trashes can nearby the facilities to use	Not Clean but provides some trash can that maybe far from certain facilities to use	Not Clean and provides little to no trash can to use
	Accessibility condition of the park	24-hour access for the public to use	12-hour access for public to use	The accesses are only available for an appointment or an event
	Parking area condition	Having big parking area compared to the number of visitors to not disturb the	Having small parking area compared to the number of visitors	Having no parking area that disturb the traffic and only provides parking on the side of the road.

Indicator	Variable	Score		
		Good	Moderate	Bad
		traffic.	that disturbs the traffic.	
	Toilet facilities	Having 4 toilets spread equally on the park in good condition	Having 2 toilet spread equally on the park with good condition	Having no toilet in good condition
	Plants on the park	Having at least 15 types of plant on the park	Having at least 7 types of plant on the park	Having no types of plant on the park
Economic function	Economic interaction in the park	Having 10 regulated economic interaction such as, street vendor on the area.	Having 5 regulated economic interaction such as, street vendor on the area.	Having 1 regulated economic interaction such as, street vendor on the area.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Physical Indicator

Socio-cultural function



Gazebo and playground



Bench condition and position



Ship monument



Playground

Figure 1. Socio-cultural function facilities

(Source: Author, 2021)

There are one gazebo and a playground available for the people to use. The one gazebo is still in good condition and the playground itself is still quite able to hold itself to be used by the kid, although maintenance is sure due in order. As for the benches, many

of the benches are positioned in an awkward way, where it is too close to the pathway or to the edge of a drop. Some are also facing Directly towards the pathway, which leaves no room for the leg to relax. There is also the ship monument which represents the Melayu's lancang kuning, unfortunately, this monument also seems to be not up to standard as there are many tears and the paints are starting to degrade.

Aesthetics and accessibility Function



Lamp on the park



The lamp park at night



The pathway going to nowhere



The pathway not looping



The water is full of trash and not maintained properly.



The pathway and plant pot is cracked and not maintained properly.



The only trash can that is near the entrance

There are trash everywhere and not properly maintained



The parking is on the road

The two toilet



The plants

The plants

Figure 2. Aesthetics and accessibility Function

(Source: Author, 2021)

Based on observations, the lamps are quite good and able to illuminate the whole park quite nicely in the night. As for a lot of the stone and pathway are also cracked and already showing signs of degradation. Then, the circulation of many of the pathways lead to nothing or to a dead end and don't loop back. Because most of the pathway leads to nothing, People rarely use it and tend to stay near the entrance of the park. The circulation of many of the pathways lead to nothing or to a dead end and don't loop back. Because most of the pathway leads to nothing, People rarely use it and tend to stay near the entrance of the park. The area smells a bit because of the trash on the water and there is also a lot of litter on the area because of the lack of trash can on the area. Then, the parking is quite small with and on parking on both sides of the road, where one side is

filled with many street vendors, and the other is filled with a lot of other people who are not going to the park. For the park there are a building with two toilets for each gender and for the plant, there are less than 7 variations on the park.

Economic Function



There is only seller inside



At every other time they sell it on the side at night of the road

Figure 3. Economic Function

(Source: Author, 2021)

There are a lot of sellers outside on the road but none inside before night, on the road there are many street vendors on the side of the road as it is also near a school and hotel. when it is night, the many sellers will start to go inside to sell their products.

The visitors' facilities opinions

- 1) Rosa (21) : The young woman had been to Pekanbaru city park 3 times, the first time is on a car-free day cause she is curious and the other two she visited it to do an assignment . She uses the place as the place is usually quiet and empty, but she will choose to go to the corner as closer to the middle has quite a smell from the water. Because of the water, there are also quite a lot of mosquitoes near the water. The place itself is quite cozy especially on the corner area, though there are no trash cans, while there are many street vendors. The parking area itself is only on the side of the road.
- 2) Septi (20) : A young man who has only visited here for the first time with his friends, he told me the reason we went there is that they don't have any money and was curious about the place. So far the place is felt abandoned and not maintained properly, the musholla is quite rundown and there are no activities that can be done other than sitting for the youth as there are no empty space to play.
- 3) Pandu (27) : A man who has been to Pekanbaru city park for 4 times. He works in an office and usually comes to a park to relax on his break or day off. This place is closer to his office and home but he usually goes to another park, which he has visited more than 10 times as he felt that Pekanbaru city park is not quite up to par with the other parts in terms of facilities, sanitation, and comfortability.
- 4) Ani (34): A mother who has been here many times with her kindergarten child. He often brings her child her before going home as it is near the kindergarten. She often

plays with her child on the playground until he was tired. As for the facilities of the park itself she uses the bench and the gazebo sometimes to rest.

- 5) Yusril (48): A man who has been selling siomay batagor , here for five years. He parked on the side of the road and mentioned that there is actually a lot of customers not from the park itself but from people passing the road and nearby buildings such as the hotel school and offices.

According to Rosita, the design of a city park relates to the following elements in order to produce a pleasant city park for each user: City parks that provide leisure opportunities. Flower gardens, children's playgrounds, shelters, lakes, bridges, and roadways are examples of recreational amenities that have become prominent. City parks may be utilized as a way of greening and city lungs, in addition to being open areas for the public and a location for social interaction. In order to work optimally, consider the capacity of infrastructure and amenities in a restricted space. City parks are easily accessible. Axisbel refers to the concept that anybody, including members of society with varying talents or physical obstacles, may access and enter an area without the assistance of others. Prayer rooms, public telephones, canteens, parking, and toilet facilities are all available in city parks.

Having facilities for social contact, such as a gazebo, a bench, and so on, that are in poor shape. Have at least three sports activities available in the region. (Exercises such as jogging, aerobics, cycling, running, skipping, and so on.) Having playground equipment, such as a seesaw and a slide, that is still in good working order and is well-maintained. The park's lighting is capable of illuminating every section of the park. The walkway circulation is in poor condition, and it is not well connected to other recreational options. Cleanliness is lacking, and there is little to no garbage can to be found. The public has access to the facility 24 hours a day, seven days a week. There is no parking lot, which causes traffic congestion, and parking is only available on the side of the road. Having two toilets that are evenly distributed across the park and are in good working order. having less than seven plants Having ten controlled commercial interactions in the region, like as street vendors. So for the final score for the park itself, it landed itself on the bad score and not up to standard when summed up.

CONCLUSION

The findings indicated that the physical aspects of Pekanbaru City Park met some users' needs, although sports facilities, sanitation, and overall maintenance remained insufficient. The lack of proper physical features limited opportunities for recreation, while unpleasant odors from stagnant water discouraged visitors from using the park's central area, leading them to prefer its outer sections. Enhancing physical facilities that support user activities was found to increase engagement and park appeal. For sustainability, the study suggested that regular cleaning, facility maintenance, and the addition of multipurpose open spaces and more diverse vegetation should be prioritized. Future research could focus on evaluating user satisfaction after these improvements and

examining how enhanced placemaking strategies affect social interaction and community well-being.

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