

The Role of Public Participation on Developing Urban Park

Maryam Goudarzi

Department of Built Environment Univiersiti Teknologi Malaysia

Abstract

Public participation is now globally approved as a mean for increasing social integration in urban areas and a fundamental indicator for sustainable development. Parks in this context play a crucial role. They provide a suitable place for community members to participate in different ranges of activities and programs. If planned they are able to noticeably enhance residents' quality of life. In this regard, present study is going to investigate the appropriateness of public participation techniques which might consequently solve existing issues of public participation in Mutiara Rini Park. .we are seeking for the most appropriate public participation technique for ensuring the best scenario for urban park development matching users needs and requirements Mutiara Rini Park situated in Skudai-Johor Bahru has been chosen as the project's study area. The research has applied both qualitative and quantitative methods including semi-structured interview, questionnaire and informal observation. The first phase of the project designed to identify the best technique of public participation respecting users' needs. Results of this phase show that respondents prefer managing and designing workshops and team working programs like exhibition, seminars and making models as the best technique of public participation. The second phase encompasses evaluating potential options for enhancing the level of public participation in so-called park. The major contribution of the thesis is to highlight the participation technique to be incorporated into urban park development process in Mutiara Rini Park as well as a tool for achieving a better quality of life for urban residents.

1. Introduction

The role of environmental factors in human and community development has attracted much interest in the recent time. However, urban park as one of the primary public space with the physical environment and open green space has also become an area of interest, among urban designer and researchers. In the bid to develop and enhance human social participation among

neighborhood, public space becomes a factor. Urban parks has a direct influence on how residents and visitors perceive urban area, how they do with their various social activities and functions.

Public space encompasses most of the human social activities (Gehl 2001). It has been argued that human being engaged in their social function in an open public space where there is room to free social interaction. A city what is endured in much greenery is considered to perform credibly well when compared with such cities with inadequate or shortage of greenery. Open green space should be allowed to take reasonable percentage of cities and urban layout as it provides Good Avenue for human activities and reduces health hazardless. It stands as a major component of open green space that can conveniently accommodates human social activities.

The physical attributes of urban park provide environment and social satisfaction to human living; social environment and social satisfactions are the basic factors in the development of human social participation. To acquire high level of human public satisfactions in to a community require having well and interesting native appareling areas within the community where visitors and community residents can be meeting to develop strong public belongingness and trust among each other.

Residential community satisfaction can easily be achieved through good and frequent interaction among the neighborhood (Adam, 1992) and develop high human public participation (Phillips, 1996).

To experience developed urban centers of strong socially cohesiveness commonly physical environment will be considered as an important hub that link and humanize people activities. The long time negligence and the usage and significance of the physical environment affect the public expectancy in human designs. Urban development is not only about planning and design of buildings and activities but it equally involve creating functioning places that can have positive impact on their surroundings. Individual can participate in a broadly define environment (physical and social environment) which include various urban spaces such as urban park.

Regular human visitation to urban park generates human interaction that facilitates strong cohesion and bond among users. However public participation stands as an off shot of human social interaction and it signifies strong motivated intentions. The development of urban and human settlement requires that good public participation should be achieved. The challenges in every urban environment demand for strong cohesive participation of individual in all public involvement in the community. Improving public participation developing the urban park and it leads to enhancing quality of life (colass & berkman, 2003) and it may future have a holistic positive impact on the urban environmental sustainability that support human well being.

The length of stay of community residents will not determine the level of the residents' belongings of there is no cause for residents of having possible meeting places that accommodate all forms of human social activities. Informal study and idea sharing can be achieved in an open natural

environment. The comfortabilities features in urban park encourage resident closeness and idea sharing that can facilitates community sense of participation as a result of trust that will be acquired in the cause of getting well used to each other.

In urban planning and in the field of architecture, effort are being greened toward the community awareness are the necessities for urban park in human settlement. Urban Park promotes greenery fitness and element in a community. It acts as good alternative of bringing much closer to the immediate nature. Meanwhile, the community ecosystem ideology equally encourage that urban physical planning should evolve greenery and embraces nature.

For effective human public participation, community should embrace. Urban Park to address human social activities of an environment is an unavoidable aspect of community and urban settlement. Once the urban park features are satisfactory to the community residents, then there is tendency that the residents will always like to be visiting such urban park.

Therefore, the day to day human activities will be extended urban park. It is of note that the aspect of human activities that took place in urban park often facilitates idea sharing in the process of providing opportunity and avenue for seating 4

and relaxing in a naturally interesting environment. Regular interaction and visitation to urban park is a major key toward achieving a strong social participation. However, public participation is a good progressive wheel for human and community development. People choose to help each other's when they develop strong public participation among themselves. Public participation in return helps to protect the physical environment and assist in working towards balance ecosystem and maintaining sustainable development.

Urban Park

Parks strengthen communities. They increase community cohesion by providing people together. Urban parks, as one of the most important public spaces in cities, have play a large role in improving social, economic, and environmental conditions of urban areas. Parallel to the growth and agglomeration of urban areas, green spaces are being considered in various communities. These green spaces are being utilized using different strategies as to their allocation and proper distribution in the developed urban environment (Ghorbani, 2006).

Aspects such as “amount of public green spaces per inhabitant”, “public parks” and “recreation areas” are often mentioned as important factors to make the city livable, pleasant and attractive for its citizens. It is strongly believed that developing more sustainable cities is not just about improving the a biotic and biotic aspects of urban life, it is also about the social aspects of city life, that is among others about people's satisfaction, experiences and perceptions of the quality of their everyday environments (Beer, 1994). In the context of this study, the relation between urban parks and city sustainability is addressed through the investigation of the value of urban nature as

provider of social services essential to the quality of human life, which in turn is a key component of sustainable development (Prescott-Allen, 1991). 5

Those willing to participate were given the questionnaire with a pre-paid envelope to return the questionnaire, and invited to fill it in during their stay at the area, so that the answers would reflect their immediate experiences. Questionnaires have been distributed on both weekdays and weekends, in different hours of the day, and in different parts of the parks. Responses formats were either closed (dichotomous, multiple choices)

Public Participation

Public participation is a major component of many conceptual model of human functioning. Public participation is an interpersonal relationship and participation in social activities such as the degree of connectedness (Jong et al, 2004). It is an action that connect individual to another which equally related to care and development (Mc Bride 2006). Public participation in the context of community development includes as a member of community developer, donating contributing and for an individual, group or association participation in social activity. Public participation can be defined as the extent to which persons are meaning fully involved in their social environment. Lindstrom (2005) posits that civic and social participation within as well as formal and informal social networks which serve to strengthen the norms and values of society and to promote generated trust and between its. It is a process of good relationship with various community members who work together as partners (Gohlieb, 2006). It is a collaborative process among group of residents having common geographical proximity and similar interest.

Importantly, it is the significance that comes with developing variety of social relationships. The aspect of public participation includes contact with partners or neighborhood and enjoyment in work and local leisure couple with the social activities (Delbono, 2007). Sourina (1991) agrees that public participation is an act 6

of taking part in group or public life. It provides sense of value, belonging and strong attachment to community.

2 Issues and Statement of the Problems

This future has made impossible for the available public space to take proper housing of various human social activities that should take place in urban social environment. Therefore these come the limitation in the degree of human interaction within groups and individual a factor that resulted to poor human degree of connectedness and social participation. Social participation has a vital impact in community and neighborhood development and well being (Lindstrom, 2005).

In line with the aforementioned there need to investigates the important and role of urban parks in human social participation as a precursor to established concrete evidence for the establishment

and development of functioning urban parks toward social participation and urban community growth.

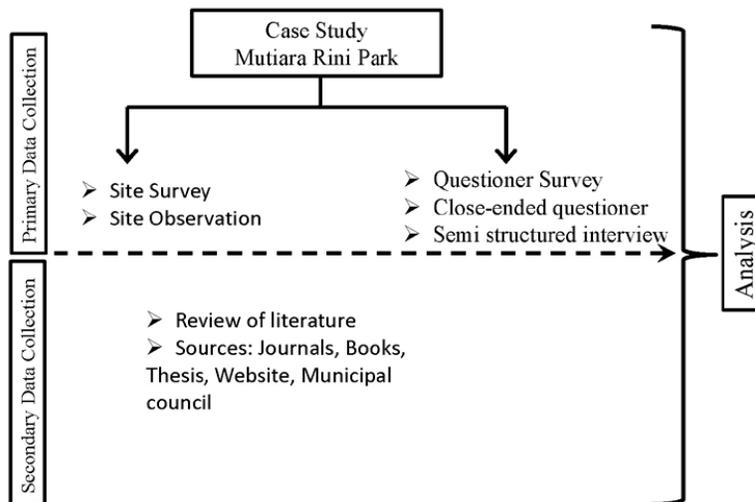


Figure 3-1 Case study and other supportive research method

3 Significance of the Study

Researching is to the impact public participation developing urban park is an important steps toward improving landscape parameters in contouring to human social development. On the complication of this research work, this result findings will emphases the important of urban park in human development and it will encourage the planning and designing of functioning physical environment in both community and urban centers while the provision of adequate greenery will be accord good consideration as a means of expanding the urban park proportioning in human environment. This research will further be useful as an eye opens and researchable environmental land escape human social cultural development and urban growth.

This study will contribute to existing research in the following areas: it will enhance awareness of public participation urban park.

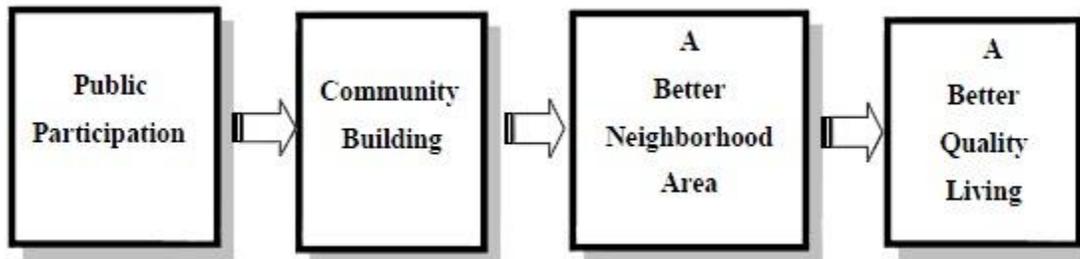


Figure 1: Significant of public participation in planning

Aim of Study

This study aims to give an opportunity to other professionals and researchers in the field to open up discussion on the selected techniques of public participation in this study as potential tools for appropriate public participation techniques into urban park development.

Methodology of study

To answer the following research questions, both quantitative and qualitative data were collected. The study will be carried out relying on this type of methods.

Research Questions

It is absolutely important to develop research questions in order to provide the focus for this research. These are set out as follows:

1. What are the issues and problems of existing public participation techniques in this park?
2. What is the most potentially technique of public participation that would be developing the urban park?
3. To what extent can the public participation technique explored in this study resolve recent issues of public participation in Mutiara Rini Park?

Result

Parks are one of the most effective ways to build a sense of community and improve quality of life. Parks are one of the most effective methods to change the character and improve the image of a community. Park improvements are often quick and tangible actions for mayors and citizens and can work in concert with other city-wide programs such as traffic management, creating

cultural activities and sustainable development. Benefits urban parks are numerous and include restorative experience, physical health benefits and improving regional air quality.

It is noted that the quality of Mutiara Rini Park is good and its very nice place for spend the time. But lack of appropriate and recognized non participation zone, participation seems to be the main problem facing public participation in this park and all urban parks.

Therefore, a new perspective on urban landscape and park development together with the changing demands, needs and satisfactions of urban dwellers and users, need to be taken into consideration to ensure that quality urban landscape and parks are developed, which will ultimately enhance the quality of urban living for residents.

The government implemented measures to improve the quality of life; promote sustainable consumption and production; protect the environment' sustainably manage the natural resource base; and enhance human, institutional and infrastructure capacity (Utusan Malaysia, 2005)

It suggests that it is relatively easy to gather a single interest group/ pressure group and for that group to remain focused and motivated to achieve its desired outcome (Littlewood and While, 1997; Rawcliffe, 1998). It is, however, more problematic to bring together a group of people who are largely satisfied with the facilities or services that are being provided. In the latter case it is not so much the issues or threats that bring people together, but more the thought that they can play a role in maintaining the quality of provision, particularly through 'insider' engagement with the local authority (Selman, 1998, 2000b).

According to this study, in this park the result is that all people, at all times and in all age groups notice and appreciate the role of public participation and the benefits of it, for their improved quality of urban parks.

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