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The Concept of Developing the Square Area as a Public Space in Asahan Regency

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to examine the Concept of Developing the Square Area as a Public Space in Asahan Regency. This study uses a qualitative approach to explore how the square area in Asahan Regency is developed as an effective public space. The case study design will allow this research to focus on the square as a single case, exploring various aspects such as the role of the square in the social, economic, and cultural life of the community. This qualitative research uses several data collection techniques to obtain rich and in-depth information. Data obtained from interviews, observations, and documents will be analyzed using thematic analysis methods. The results of the research of the Square function as a center for social, cultural, and recreational interaction, which provides space for the community to engage in activities and socialize. Although Asahan Regency Square already has supporting facilities, many challenges are faced, such as poor infrastructure conditions, lack of community participation, and hygiene and security problems. The development of the square needs to be carried out through various strategies, including infrastructure improvement, diversification of activities, community involvement, security and hygiene management, and cooperation with stakeholders. To ensure that the development of the square runs as expected, it is necessary to carry out periodic evaluation and monitoring. With the application of the right development concept, it is hoped that Asahan Regency Square can become a center of dynamic, environmentally friendly, and inclusive activities, which meet the needs of all groups of people.

Keyword: Concept of Development of Square, Public Space and Asahan Regency

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1. INTRODUCTION

A square is one of the most important public spaces in a city or district. The square functions as a center for social, cultural, and economic activities of the community. In Asahan Regency, the development of the square as a public space plays a strategic role in improving the quality of life of residents and tourism attractions. However, currently the square in Asahan may not be fully utilized or managed properly, so further development is needed. This development is expected to provide a representative space for various activities, ranging from formal events, cultural festivals, to gathering places for the community. This public space can also function as a green open space, which will support the balance of the city's ecosystem and contribute to improving the quality of the environment in the area. However, the square area in Asahan Regency is currently still not optimal in terms of utilization and management. The people of Asahan Regency need a more adequate and well-integrated public space to support social and cultural activities. In the context of urbanization that continues to grow, it is necessary to plan and develop squares that not only function as public spaces, but also play a role in improving the quality of the environment and urban spatial planning.

Public space is an important element in urban life that provides a place for people to interact, do activities, and enjoy the surrounding environment. One significant form of public space in Indonesia is the square, which has historically been the center of social, political, and cultural activities of the community. The square is not only a gathering place, but also functions as a city identity, a symbol of spatial planning, and a green open area that supports the quality of the environment. In Asahan Regency, the square has great potential to be developed into a representative and functional public space. Currently, the square area has not been fully utilized to meet the needs of the community. Physical conditions that have not been maximized, limited supporting facilities, and lack of green space are some of the obstacles in its use. With the increasing population and urbanization continuing, the need for

decent and comfortable public spaces is increasingly urgent. The development of the square area as a modern, inclusive, and multifunctional public space can be a solution to improve the quality of life of the people of Asahan Regency.

Some of the problems identified in the development of the square area in Asahan Regency include: The lack of optimal utilization of the current square has not been fully functioned as a public space that can accommodate various community activities. Existing activities tend to be sporadic and poorly planned. Limited public facilities such as children's play areas, sports rooms, parking areas, public toilets, and rest rooms are still limited. This makes the square less attractive for people to do activities there. The lack of green space in the square in Asahan Regency is still minimal, which affects the comfort and visual appeal of the area. The lack of green space also reduces the expected environmental function of the square. Inadequate accessibility access to the square for pedestrians, public transportation users, and people with disabilities is still limited, reducing affordability for all groups. The lack of planned activities and the absence of regular organized programs or activities in the square, such as arts, cultural, sports, or exhibition activities, make the area less lively and only crowded at certain events.



Figure 1.1 PREPARATION OF THE D GREEN OPEN SPACE OF THE CITY SQUARE RANGE

Urban areas in Indonesia tend to experience typical problems, namely the high rate of population growth, especially due to the flow of village-to-city migration and urbanization, causing urban space management to be more difficult. The high number of urban population and increasing from time to time will have implications for the high pressure on the use of urban space. The spatial arrangement of urban areas needs special attention, especially related to the provision of residential areas, public and social facilities as well as public open spaces in urban areas. The quality of public open space has decreased significantly, so that it has resulted in a decline in the quality of the urban environment such as frequent floods in urban areas, high air and noise pollution, increased social vulnerabilities, among others: crime and brawls between residents, as well as a decrease in community productivity due to stress due to limited space available for social interaction and relaxation. In general, public open space (open space) in urban areas consists of green open space and non-green open space. Considering the importance of the role of open space (green open space and non-green open space) in urban spatial planning, provisions regarding this need to be regulated.

In Law No. 26 of 2007 concerning Spatial Planning, article 31 is also mandated the need for provisions regarding the provision and utilization of green open space and non-green open space, and has prepared Guidelines for Green Open Space (RTH) in Urban Areas (PERMEN PU no 5/PRT/M/2008) which has been discussed in the Technical Subcommittee on Spatial Planning, Technical Committee on Building Construction Materials and Civil Engineering. Therefore, the Guidelines for the Provision and Utilization of Non-Green Open Space were prepared to be used as a reference for district/city governments to plan space on a general and detailed plan scale, even on a more technical scale (RTRK and/or RTBL). In

accordance with the priority, prospects, potentials and existing problems for the handling of Green Open Space in Kisaran City, Asahan Regency this year, 1 (one) location is determined, namely the Green Open Space of Kisaran City Square. The general condition of the site is relatively flat and has some types of vegetation that will be partially maintained and there are some vegetation that cannot grow well will be replaced with new plants. This is the main potential that must be improved, in order to present results that can benefit the surrounding community through natural and beautiful natural nuances.

2. LETERATURE REVIEW

Public Space

Public space is a place or space that is used by all circles of society free of charge in its use (Susanti, 2014). According to Hantono et al. (2018), public space is a space that can be accessed by anyone without any restrictions on time and activity. As a space that can be accessed by anyone, public spaces should be able to accommodate various community activities, both individually and in groups (Hantono, 2019). Public space is a space that has a social function to meet one of the basic human needs in developing social life. The use of public space in settlements for social activities of community members is considered to be able to arouse people's desire to form a community (Tamariska et al., 2017) so that activities related to use, maintenance, and supervision can be carried out together and together.

Functions and Roles of the Square

Rancik (2016) Explaining that the square as the main public space of the city has a role as a center of social and cultural interaction. The square should ideally be a city center that can strengthen local identity and provide space for public events. Carmona et al. (2013) Squares as public open spaces have social, economic, and environmental functions. The square must be an inclusive place that can be accessed by all groups of people, and play a role in improving the quality of life of the surrounding community. The square should be able to provide a place for economic activities such as markets and street performances, which can bring the area to life. This will support local economic growth while maintaining the balance of its social functions. Emphasizing the importance of small elements in the design of public spaces, such as comfortable seating, good accessibility, and protection from the weather. These things support the convenience of visitors and invite more people to do activities in the space.

Public Space Design Criteria

Kevin Lynch (2016) Focusing on the element of legibility of space. The square should be easy for visitors to understand, with clear visual markers and a layout that allows for a good orientation. Christopher Alexander (2017) Proposed the idea of a design "pattern" that makes it easier for humans to use public spaces. The design of the square must allow for spontaneous activities, with flexible facilities and support various activities. Carr et al. (2012) Outline that a good public space requires proper management to maintain its quality and appeal over time. Community participation in the maintenance of the square can increase the sense of belonging and community involvement in maintaining the space.

3. METHOD APPROACH

This study uses a qualitative approach to explore how the square area in Asahan Regency is developed as an effective public space. The qualitative approach was chosen because it allows researchers to gain a deep understanding of the perceptions, expectations, and experiences of the community and stakeholders related to the square. According to Creswell (2014), a qualitative approach allows research to explore meanings that arise from people's daily experiences related to a social phenomenon. In this context, the phenomenon studied is the function, design, and use of the square as a public space in Asahan Regency.

This study uses a case study design. According to Yin (2018), case studies are suitable for use in research that aims to understand complex phenomena in real-life contexts, such as the development of public spaces. The case study design will allow this research to focus on the square as a single case, exploring various aspects such as the role of the square in the social, economic, and cultural life of the community. Case studies also allow the use of various data collection methods to obtain a holistic and comprehensive picture of the phenomenon being studied. The location of the research is the Asahan Regency Square Area. This square is a strategic center of public activities and is the focus of attention of the government and the community in urban planning.

This qualitative research uses several data collection techniques to obtain rich and in-depth information, including: In-depth Interviews Interviews are conducted with various stakeholders, including local government officials, city planners, architects, and community members who use the square. The interviews aimed to collect data on their perceptions and expectations regarding the

function, design, and utilization of the square as a public space. Participatory Observation is carried out directly at the location of the square to understand how the community uses this public space. Researchers observed social interactions, ongoing activities, and how the physical design of the square affected the use of space.

Data obtained from interviews, observations, and documents will be analyzed using thematic analysis methods. According to Braun and Clarke (2016), thematic analysis is a method to identify, analyze, and report patterns (themes) that appear in data. To ensure the validity and reliability of the research, the following steps are taken: Data Triangulation The use of various data collection techniques (interviews, observations, document analysis) helps validate the findings. Member Checking After the interview, the results of the transcript will be confirmed to the respondents to ensure that the researcher's interpretation is in accordance with the respondent's intentions and views. Community and stakeholder participation is an important part of this research. According to Arnstein (2016), community participation in public space planning can help create designs that are more relevant to their needs. Residents will be engaged in interviews to understand their expectations of the square, while stakeholders such as local governments will be asked for their views on planning and policy aspects.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Existing Condition of the Square in Asahan Regency

Asahan Regency Square is located in the center of the city, making it a strategic location for various community activities. Facilities include:



Figure 4.1 Existing Green Open Space of Kisaran City Square

The location of the site of the planning location is on Jalan Lintas Timur Sumatra (Jl. Jenderal Ahmad Yani), Sidomukti Village, West Kisaran District with an area of $\pm 4,500$ m². The location of the site is in front of the Asahan Regent office. The North is bordered by the Kisaran City Forest, the South is bordered by the Kisaran Grand Mosque, the East is bordered by the East Sumatra Highway and the West is bordered by rubber plantations.



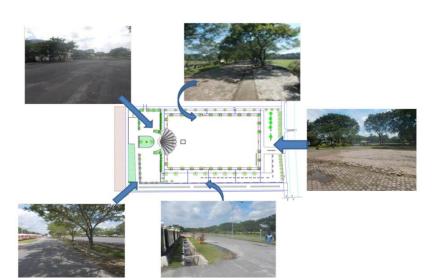


Figure 4.2 Existing Situation Around the Site

Figure 4.3 Existing Situation in the Site

For the comfort of park visitors, the main factor that must be considered is the ease of access to the site both from the flow of vehicle traffic and the ease of orientation of road users to the existence of the park location. Therefore, it is necessary to protrude the main entrance into the site that can use the concept of a gate or landscape / vegetation arrangement as a guide. Based on the analysis, the design location has the potential to be easily reached from all areas inside and outside Kisaran City, especially through motorized vehicles. Meanwhile, the accessibility of activity points and facilities on the site still has limitations so that it affects the level of accessibility for the disabled. The level of accessibility on the site through motorized vehicles is influenced by the capacity factor of the road section, with sufficient capacity so that it can accommodate vehicles for visitors.



Figure 4.4 Dimensions of the Green Open Space Planning of the Square

Asahan Regency Square is equipped with various facilities that support community activities. The existing facilities include: Green Open Space The square has a large green area, planted with various types of trees and plants, which functions as a place to relax and do physical activities. Seating A number of benches and comfortable seating areas are available, allowing visitors to relax while enjoying the atmosphere. Public Facilities There are public toilets, garbage cans, and drinking facilities, although in some cases, the maintenance of these facilities needs to be improved. The accessibility of the access road to the square is quite good, but it needs attention to the safety and comfort of pedestrians, especially at night. The use and function of the Asahan Regency square has many functions and is used for various activities, including: Social Activities The square is often used for celebration of holidays, bazaars, and cultural festivals involving the community. Recreation Place As a public space, the square also functions as a gathering place for families, children, and teenagers to exercise, play, and socialize. The Information and Education Center has educational activities carried out by government agencies or non-governmental organizations to increase public awareness of certain issues.

The involvement of the community in utilizing the square is quite significant. Many residents actively use the square for various activities, both formal and informal. However, participation in maintaining cleanliness and maintaining square facilities still needs to be increased. Awareness of the importance of maintaining public facilities must continue to be built through socialization and environmental campaigns. The existing condition of Asahan Regency Square shows that there is great potential as a public space that can strengthen social and cultural interaction of the community. However, existing challenges need to be overcome through good management, facility maintenance, and increased community participation. With the right improvement and development measures, the square can become a center of more dynamic and attractive activities for the residents of Asahan Regency.

Obstacles in the Development of the Square Area in Asahan Regency

The development of the square area in Asahan Regency aims to improve the function of public space as a center for social, cultural, and recreational activities. However, in the development process, there are various obstacles that need to be identified and overcome so that development goals can be achieved.

1. Technical Constraints

Infrastructure Condition: Many of the facilities in the square need repairs. Inadequate infrastructure can hinder the accessibility and comfort of visitors. Poor Planning: Some development projects may not be based on comprehensive feasibility studies, resulting in less efficient and effective designs. Budget Constraints: The budget available for regional development is often limited, hindering the implementation of the necessary projects.

2. Social and Cultural Constraints

Lack of Public Awareness: Many people are not fully aware of the importance of the role of the square as a public space, so participation in activities held in the square is low. Differentiation of Interests: There are various interests of the community that may conflict with each other, such as the desire to keep the square clean with the presence of street vendors operating around the area. Vandalism Culture: Some facilities have been damaged by acts of vandalism committed by a few people, thus affecting the image of the square as a safe public space.

3. Environmental Constraints

Weather Conditions: Open squares are often affected by weather conditions. Extreme rain or heat can reduce visitor attraction. Pollution and Cleanliness: Environmental pollution around the square, both from garbage and noise pollution, can reduce the comfort and safety of visitors.

4. Policy Constraints

Complicated Regulations: The licensing procedures for making developments or changes in the square area are often complicated and time-consuming. Lack of Inter-Agency Coordination: The development of the square area requires cooperation between various parties, including local governments, communities, and the private sector. Lack of coordination can hinder project implementation.

5. Recommendations to Overcome Obstacles

To overcome the obstacles faced in the development of the square area, several recommendations that can be considered include. Infrastructure Improvement: Conduct audits and repairs to existing facilities, and ensure that new infrastructure is well designed and as needed. Increased Socialization: Conducting campaigns to raise public awareness of the importance of the square and encourage participation in the activities held. Increased Security: Activate security systems, such as CCTV and regular patrols, to reduce acts of vandalism and increase a sense of security for visitors. Collaboration Between Parties: Increasing cooperation between institutions and involving the community in the planning and development of the square area.

The development of the Square area in Asahan Regency faces various obstacles that need to be addressed to achieve optimal development goals. By understanding and overcoming these obstacles, it is hoped that the square can function better as a public space that supports the social and cultural life of the community. Joint efforts between the government, the community, and other stakeholders are needed to overcome existing obstacles and realize the square as a dynamic and attractive center of activity.

What is the right strategy to develop the Square Area in Asahan Regency so that it can function optimally as a public space

The development of the Square Area in Asahan Regency needs to be well planned to maximize the function of public space. Optimal public spaces can support social, cultural, and recreational interactions of the community. In this chapter, various strategies that can be applied to develop the square to function optimally will be discussed.

1. Needs Analysis

Before formulating a strategy, it is important to conduct an analysis of the needs of the community. Through surveys, interviews, and discussions with residents, it can be known what to expect from the square area. These needs include: Expected Facilities Visitors may want more green spaces, children's playgrounds, and sports facilities. Types of Community Activities may want regular events such as markets, art festivals, or community sports activities. **Accessibility** Research shows that people want better access, both in terms of transportation and safety.

2. Development Strategy

Here are some strategies that can be applied to develop the Square Area in Asahan Regency: Improving Infrastructure \mathbf{b} makes improvements to existing facilities, such as public toilets, seats, and play areas. Using durable and eco-friendly materials to increase attractiveness and comfort. The construction of the Access Lane provides a safe and comfortable pedestrian path and an adequate parking area for visitors.

3. Diversification of Activities

Procurement of Routine Events holds weekly or monthly events, such as people's markets, music festivals, or art exhibitions to attract visitors. The Education and Training Program holds educational programs for the community, such as skills training or health seminars, which can be carried out in the square.

4. Increased Community Engagement

Citizen Participation in Planning involves the community in the process of planning and developing the square area. Public discussions can be held to get input and ideas from residents. Gotong Royong activities hold gotong royong activities to clean and maintain square facilities, thereby creating a sense of belonging among the community.

5. Safety and Hygiene Management

The addition of Security Patrols involves security guards guarding the square, especially at night, to increase a sense of security for visitors. The Sustainable Hygiene Program conducts hygiene programs that involve communities and schools, by providing sufficient trash cans and environmental awareness campaigns.

6. Collaboration with Stakeholders

Partnerships with the Private Sector collaborate with the private sector to invest in the development of the square, either through event sponsorship or support in infrastructure development. Collaboration with Non-Governmental Institutions works closely with non-

governmental institutions to hold social and cultural events that can enhance the appeal of the square.

7. Evaluation and Monitoring

Once the strategy is in place, it is important to conduct periodic evaluations to assess the effectiveness of the development. Some of the evaluation steps that can be done include: **Visitor** Satisfaction Survey collects feedback from visitors to find out what needs to be improved or improved. Visitor Data Analysis collects data on the number of visitors and the types of activities that are most in demand for future improvements.

With the implementation of the right strategy, the Square Area in Asahan Regency can function optimally as a public space that supports social, cultural, and recreational community interactions. Community involvement, facility improvement, and sustainable management are key to achieving this goal. Through cooperation between the government, the community, and stakeholders, the square can become a dynamic and attractive center of activity for all groups.

5. CONCLUSION

The development of the Square Area in Asahan Regency as a public space has great potential to improve the quality of people's lives. Through the analysis that has been carried out, several important points can be concluded:

The Importance of the Square as a Public Space The square functions as a center for social, cultural, and recreational interaction, which provides space for people to engage in activities and socialize. The existence of well-maintained and well-functioning squares will contribute to strengthening local identity. Existing Conditions and Challenges Even though Asahan Regency Square already has supporting facilities, many challenges are faced, such as poor infrastructure conditions, lack of community participation, and cleanliness and security problems. This requires special attention from the government and the community. Necessary Development Strategies The development of the square needs to be carried out through various strategies, including infrastructure improvement, diversification of activities, community involvement, security and hygiene management, and cooperation with stakeholders. A holistic and participatory approach will ensure sustainable development.

The Importance of Evaluation and Monitoring To ensure that the development of the square runs as expected, it is necessary to carry out periodic evaluation and monitoring. Through visitor satisfaction surveys and analysis of visitor data, it can be known which areas need improvement or improvement. Hope for the Future With the application of the right development concept, it is hoped that Asahan Regency Square can become a center of dynamic, environmentally friendly, and inclusive activities, which meet the needs of all groups of society. This will contribute to improving the quality of life and welfare of the community.

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