Public Perception on Attributes of Walking Avenue in Urban Areas of Sri Lanka

Dissertation Submitted to the University of Sri Jayewardenepura as a Partial Fulfillment for the Requirements of the Final Examination of the M.sc in Real Estate Management and Valuation Degree

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Student Declaration

The work described in this dissertation was carried out under the supervision of Ms. Nisani Wickramaarachchi and any report on this have not been submitted in whole or in part to any university or any other institute for another degree/examination or any other purpose.

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Acknowledgement

First of all, I would like to thank Ms. N.C. Wickramarchchi, Senior Lecturer, Department of Estate Management and Valuation, University of Sri Jayewardenepura for being my supervisor and having faith in me for carrying the responsibility of doing research under her profound guidance. Her prominence in giving me this opportunity and her constant attention and support throughout my research conferred me with a sense of responsibility. She was always there to help me at all times. Apart from a wonderful teacher she is great human being and I respect her from the depth of my heart.

I wish to my sincere thanks to Professor R.G Ariyawansa, Coordinator, Head of the Department of Estate Management and Valuation, University of Sri Jayewardenepura for giving valuable instruction regarding my research.

I wish to my sincere thanks to Ms. Janaki Edirisingha, Senior Lecturer, former Head of the Department of Estate Management and Valuation, University of Sri Jayewardenepura for giving valuable instruction regarding my research.

And also I would like to thank Urban Development Authority and Provincial Road Development Authority and Sri Lanka Land Reclamation Development Corporation for giving information regarding my research.

And my sincere thanks go to my batch mates and friends for providing support to of this task.
Abstract

To find large areas close to urban areas to build recreational facilities is impossible when compare with the current demand for urban land resource. After identifying of narrow strips of stream bank reservations as a prime space available for this purpose created and designed the new concept of walking paths. The purpose of this study is to examine the public perceptual preferences on relevant attributes of walking avenues in selected case studies. The study also aims to analyze public preference willingness to maintain attributes. A total of 10 environmental attributes were identified from earlier Qualitative and Quantitative studies. Participants were asked questions basically focused on their preference and their social characteristics. Robust test of equality of Means and Homogenous Subsets techniques were used to analyze preference of respondents and descriptive analysis method was used to analyze willingness to maintain of attributes. The results were grouped in to five and then ranked. The most prioritized character is Safety (Safety of male, Safety of Female) while Facility of Toilet, Availability of Shading, Availability of landscape, Availability of Natural View were the next preferred attributes. The findings can assists those involved in designing and managing outdoor environment to identify salient environmental attributes and prioritize them in providing. The approach aids to understanding what are the attributes to be provided at what cost to the walking path users. This is a more research - exposed category of urban recreational settings due to walking paths is a newly introduced urban planning element to Sri Lanka. Therefore, association between walking paths and land value, formulating standards to walking paths, Controverts of river bank reservations with walking path construction etc areas to be further researched.
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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

1.1 Background of the study

Public open spaces such as city squares, parks, beaches and sidewalks tend to keep the city and integrate the function of the city with other urban components. These places become locations for people to meet, relax and exchange ideas as well as centers for various activities that improve the physical and social environment of the city. Public open spaces includes things such as Parks, playgrounds, Beaches, Natural Views, observation places etc. Most of the countries give priority for the urban parks and open space in the city design. Public open spaces play multiple roles in making our cities more sustainable. These are regarded as an essential element for people’s recreation and healthy living and also include nature’s services, ecological benefits e.g: preserving bio diversity, social benefits e.g: socialization and healthy living, and economic benefits e.g: tourism etc.

Designation of public open space is an integral component of urban development planning. It shows that open space benefits provide considerable potential cost savings to local authorities. e.g: preventing health problems, increasing worker’s productivity, lessening infrastructure damage, attenuating flooding, etc. Strong evidence shows that when people have access to open spaces, they exercise more. Researches show that contact with the natural world improves physical and psychological health. According to the view of Sherer, 2003, open space visionaries, parks were not amenities; they were necessities, providing recreation, inspiration and essential respite from the city’s blare and bustle. And the visionaries were particularly concerned that open spaces be available to all of a city’s residents.

Urban parks and open spaces are major part in the urban design in the world. Most of the countries give major priority for the urban parks and open space in the city design. Sherer, 2003, found that, many of the nation’s great city parks were built in the second half of the 19th century. Urban planners believed the parks and open spaces would improve public health, relieve the stresses of urban life, and create a democratizing public space where rich and poor would mix on equal terms. By mid-20th century, city parks fell into decline as inner cities fled for the suburbs.