

From Zero to Hero: A Creative Lesson from Surabaya's Open Spaces

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ABSTRACT

Surabaya as one of the biggest cities in Indonesia has been through a significant change in its open spaces. The city has developed dynamically and rapidly as an interconnecting pole between the western and the eastern parts of Indonesia. Unfortunately, because of these developments, most of its open spaces have changed into some commercial built areas.

Until 2006, there were only 3% of open spaces left in Surabaya. This is an indication of an unbalanced growth, which has some broad spatial implications. Since the UU No. 26 Tahun 2007 Pasal 29 about the minimum 30% of city's open spaces was declared by the government, some programs have been done to revitalize the function of these open spaces. Now, there are already nine open spaces with various themes that can be found in Surabaya. Moreover, some open spaces that were usually misused as commercial spaces have also been revitalized as green space.

Each open space is even well-designed as a focal point or landmark for the area. The percentage of open space in Surabaya is now between 27-29%, close to the minimal percentage required by the law. The whole process of this open space revitalization is a very valuable learning experience for most cities in Indonesia, where Surabaya as a large crowded metropolitan can turn its 'spaces' to 'places'. These significant changes in the quality of its open spaces have also made a significant change in the image of the city, whereas open space is easier to be remembered in people's mind than buildings.

This paper aims to give a broader discourse about the creative ways in changing space to place in our cities's open spaces. The paper also aims to give some advice to decision makers in Indonesian cities, to encourage the optimization of the implementation of the UUPR No. 26 Tahun 2007 Pasal 29 mentioned above.

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