

**THE USE OF WALKABLE STREET IN THE AREA AROUND MASJID  
INDIA, KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA**

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**DEDICATION**

To my beloved parents (mother and father), my brother, and sisters.

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In the name of Allah, Most Graceful, Most Merciful. With His permission I have completed this master's project report.

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## ABSTRACT

The concept of Walkable Street is a popular concept that is widely used in urban centres of developed countries like United States of America , Britain, and in Malaysia it is still a new concept. It is obvious that the concept has contributed a great deal to the urban environment, more importantly, it has ‘returned’ the urban areas to the pedestrian to use, enjoy, shop, etc apart from the fact that walking contributes to health and reduces the negative impact of vehicular traffic. It has been proven also that, shop keepers gain substantially from increase of sale in walkable streets or areas. To the tourists, walking is the main mode of communication for them to know the life style, culture, architecture of the locals apart from doing some shopping. In relation to this, a study is conducted in a selected study site around Masjid India, Kuala Lumpur. The characteristics and parameters of “Walkable Streets” as identified in the literature review formed the basis to evaluate whether the study area meets the characteristics of walkable street. The author also by employing observation survey has identified the characteristics of urban design and quality of the built environment of the study area (building use, architecture quality, visual appropriateness, ratio of built form to urban space, traffic condition and parking facilities, and the behavior pattern of the pedestrian). Another important component is to study and evaluate the perception of the pedestrian of which a face to face questionnaire interviews were conducted in several selected locations in and around the study area. Based on the findings; issues, problems and suggestions were compiled, analyzed and finally schematic and conceptual solutions were formulated.

## ABSTRAK

Konsep “*Walkable Street*” sangat popular digunapakai secara meluas di pusat-pusat bandar negara maju seperti Amerika Syarikat dan Eropah dan di Malaysia adalah suatu konsep yang baru. Jelasnyanya penggunaan konsep ini telah menyumbang banyak kebaikan kepada persekitaran bandar, dan yang lebih penting ‘mengembalikan bandar’ kepada pejalan kaki untuk mengguna dan menikmati persekitarannya; membeli-belah, bersiar-siar dan sebagainya, disamping menyihatkan tubuh badan dan mengurangkan kesan negatif dari penggunaan kenderaan bermotor. Telah juga terbukti, para perniaga turut meraih jualan perniagaan yang lebih baik di kawasan-kawasan perniagaan yang mengunapakai konsep ini. Bagi para pelancong pula, mereka sangat mengemari kawasan-kawasan ‘*walkable street*’ kerana itulah mod pergerakan utama mereka bagi mengetahui cara hidup, budaya setempat dan senibinaan tempatan disamping membelibelah. Sehubungan dengan itu, satu kajian telah dibuat di Jalan Masjid India, Kuala Lumpur. Ciri-ciri atau parameter yang membentuk “Walkable Street” yang dikenalpasti di bab teoritikal dijadikan bahan asas dalam menilai keadaan yang terdapat di tapak kajian. Pengkaji juga melalui kajian pemerhatian telah menghasilkan ciri-ciri rekabentuk bandar dan kualiti alam binaan (kegunaan bangunan, senibina bangunan, kesesuaian visual, laluan pejalan kaki, nisbah ruang binaan dan ruang bandar, lalulintas kenderaan, kemudahan tempat letak dan perilaku pejalan kaki itu sendiri. Satu lagi komponen penting berkaitan “walkable Street” adalah persepsi pengguna itu sendiri dan untuk itu satu temu-selidik bersemuka telah dibuat di beberapa lokasi terpilih di dalam dan di sekitar tapak kajian. Berdasarkan maklumat yang terkumpul di tapak kajian, satu penganalisan masalah dan potensi telah dibuat dan akhirnya satu cadangan berbentuk konsep dan skema telah dikemukakan.

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# CHAPTER 1

## 1.1. INTRODUCTION

Cities are centers of commerce and culture, celebrations of innovation, knowledge creation and education. They are expressions of political and moral authority and symbols of stability. They offer diversity and they can be wonderful places in which to live. Even when they are not, they can still be found as opportunity and magnets to population.

The fabric of the city is composed of two distinct, yet highly inter-related components: the “public” realm and the “private” realm. The “public realm” consists primarily of the publicly-owned street rights-of-way and other publicly accessible open spaces such as parks, squares, plazas, courtyards, and alleys. The “private realm,” comprises the majority of the downtown by area, is the area occupied by buildings and associated improvements and is generally more limited in its accessibility to the public.

The public realm plays a critical role in the function of the downtown, serving several inter-related and overlapping roles, including: Circulation and Access, Development Framework, Public Open Space and Visual Character as explained further below.

**Circulation and Access:** The public rights-of-way provide for circulation within and through the cities and access to individual buildings and sites. The public realm

accommodates numerous travel modes - not just automobiles, but also delivery trucks, buses, trains, street cars, bicycles, and pedestrians.

**Development Framework:** Following the fabric analogy, the public realm is the warp and weft that gives structure to the downtown and provides the framework that contains and organizes individual developments into a cohesive whole. It also serves as the entry to the private realm, a sort of public “forecourt” to individual buildings and developments.

**Public Open Space:** Within the densely developed downtown, the public realm plays an important role as public open space—allowing for light, air, and landscaping and a respite from the enclosure of buildings. The public parks, plazas and streetscapes also serve as the “living room” for community life in the downtown - the places where the public can meet, interact, and linger.

In the eyes of the general public, the public realm (urban space) plays a crucial role in formulating public perception: use of space, developing a sense of place or in simple terms attracts all levels of the community. Some cities especially those in the developing countries, to cite a few; Bangkok, Manila, Mumbai and others, paint an image of traffic congestion, polluted, risk to life as compared to some other cities (or pockets of city center) of the European counterparts, that are more approachable, friendly and safe. The crucial issue here focuses on how walkable the city is?

As universally known, walking plays a crucial role in the development of cities in terms of trade, recreation and make cities more vital. Throughout history, cities are generally catering movement on foot; city limits in the earlier days were measured by human ability on foot, but the role was in later years inundated by motorized vehicles. While growth, modernization, speed and consumerism link to the motor age, the key issue still remains; the city is for the people to live in, enjoy, and experience, and not to be inhabited or engulfed by it. Large concerns must be placed to allow both situations to co-exist; whilst motor vehicles may provide the economic backbones of the city,



pedestrian flows provide human side of the city. Thus a walkable city is still the fundamental of a livable city.

The concept of 'Walkability' provides a primary principle of good urban design that anchored people's perception, influence their perspective and behavior. People become more engaged with the surrounding environment and the community. The feeling is easily detectable in a residential community. Whilst residents of a city center may have something to say on this matter, the general public use the center regularly for reasons that are as important as to anyone else to the city, the city must permits or provides the necessary environment. Walking is the pre-requisites of that environment.

Good walking experience must involve safety, comfort and interest. It is important to have good and clean pedestrian walkways; crossings, elevation and the basic utilities (to cater for the various sections of the community) so that people can walk in that area and do not worry for their safety while they are walking along the road. Cullen (1978) explored the element of serial vision that affects human perception and behavior as well as allowing psychological stimulus while walking. Often, many contemporary towns do lack this aspect.

People walk the city for different reason; leisure, business, passing through, etcetera, nonetheless the key factor remains how 'walkable' a place is to encourage people to always use and enjoy the walk. A 'walkable' city does not only offer an efficient and cheapest transportation mode, but put the urban environments back on a scale for the sustainability of resources (both natural and economic) and lead to increased social interactions.

## 1.2. PROBLEM STATEMENTS

Like many other towns of the country, the basic city framework derives from the activities of the urban dwellers – the shop-houses of the Chinese immigrants and later superimposed by the regulatory measures of building codes and street layouts of the British precedence. Kuala Lumpur in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century developed not only as the hub of the British administration and also became a major attraction of the shop-house Chinese and some Indian communities. While the British way of town planning strongly influenced by the Garden City Era, the rule of the age strongly favors movement by foot with limited motorized vehicles. Traces of their town planning are evident as shown by the location and arrangement of activities around the Merdeka Square (Dataran Merdeka) and Sultan Abdul Samad Building. Areas around Masjid India, were dominated by the Indian Muslim community that take advantage of the River Klang/Gombak, and the development surrounding it.

However the historical situation was swallowed over time, particularly the retail developments along Tengku Abdul Rahman (TAR) and with the growth of the motor vehicles, over-shadowed most of its historical setting and ease of pedestrian movement. At one time, Jalan Masjid India was the back water of TAR road, mostly used for car parking and wholesale storage.

Many issues and problems later arise (as identified below), but the crux of the matter is closely related to the time frame and changes that tag together. To be more specific, the ‘walkability’ of this area was lost as time and development changed in intensity and functions. But by virtue of its location, adjacent to the TAR main retail outlets, the site even though on the hind side of TAR enjoys a strategic location, of being a pedestrian hub, of a very robust nature offering ‘localised’ Malaysian setting. However inherent problems, problems on site have to be elevated and improved. At the outset, the following problems have been identified on study site:

- The issue of permeability and its interconnectedness with the surrounding activities, drop-off areas (arrival/discharge points) of car parks, public transports collecting/discharge points. The existing facilities are not far but to non-local the site is not easily visible from other areas.
  
- The conflicts between pedestrian space and walkways with vehicular movements which hamper the optimization of a walkable public space. The over optimization of activities which resulted in the over-flow to the streets caused inconveniences of pedestrian movement – an over-stretched function of the street and building walkways.
  
- The retail activities are too varied as such erodes any chance for a ‘specialist function’ – ‘somewhere is no where’ thus undermine any possible move unable to portray the area in its own right, unique and imageable.
  
- The quality of the landscape treatment and urban amenities are yet to be desired; not enough spaces created for people to spend time to enjoy the sites with some easiness while sitting and enjoying a roadside cafes, walking the streets, watching people etcetera, as much of the site is covered by some form of retail activities.
  
- The quality of the architecture is far from memorable, and coupled with cluttered bill boards (of various shapes, color, sizes), the physical shells do not offer quality built environment.

### **1.3. OBJECTIVES**

1.3.1. To establish the appropriateness over of the use of the ‘walkability’ concept in an Asian city.

1.3.2. To establish the community’s perception (residents, consumers, tourists) on the concept of ‘walkability’ and the necessary pre-requisites to make an area walkable.

1.3.3. To evaluate and improve the use of the ‘walkability’ concept in the study area so as to make the site memorable and imageable.

### **1.4. SCOPE OF STUDY**

1.4.1. To appraise the concept of walkability and its usefulness for an urban center.

1.4.2. A crucial pre-requisite of any livable environment is to understand the relationship between people and the place where they live. Thus in the study area, this relationship will be surveyed and analyzed to establish whether the proposed design can make the place walkable. The key elements are the physical amenities, the building use and activities, the use of streets and shop fronts, the site permeability and interconnectedness with the surrounding developments and drop-off points.

1.4.3. Finally, the study will dwell in some depths in evaluating the possible changes and upgrading to the whole elements that make the study a walkable and imageable area.

## **1.5. RESEARCH FRAMEWORK**

The thesis comprises of 5 chapters. Chapter 1 - will comprise an introduction to the research, problem identification, research objectives and research methodology and the study area.

Chapter 2 - will cover the literature review on the subject matter of ‘walkability’ and related concepts to the subject matter under study. This chapter will provide the theoretical framework that provides the ‘content’ input of the study.

Chapter 3- will comprise research methodology of this thesis.

Chapter 4 - this chapter deals directly with the study area which include site description and history, several aspects of site investigation and data collection including physical survey of building use and conditions, perception survey (face to face interviews) with the residents, shop keepers, people coming to the site (local and foreign), observation survey on traffic conditions and flows and visual surveys. The information and data will be tabulated and analyzed.

Chapter 5 - this chapter will highlight the basic findings of chapter 4 and will proceed to propose the relevant improvements and changes as seen appropriate by the author. The basic elements of the proposals are highlighted in the form of schematic and conceptual plans and drawings rather than a detail architecture forms.

## **1.6. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:**

There are two main methods used in this study; namely a desk study involving a literature review on the concept of walkability and other relevant urban design concepts on 'urbanism', urban space, key aspects of urban design, human perception study etcetera. Special emphasis is given to key elements of types of activity, types of people frequenting the area, visual proportions of the street, street uses including uses of buildings at the street level, Informal on-street uses, building entries, Pedestrian comfort and walkability of the street and public places on street.

Empirical examples of schemes using this concept will illustrate how the concept is being applied in other cities, particularly in European cities. The literature review will then become the basis to 'test' or evaluate its appropriateness in applying to other cities (in this case area around Jalan Masjid India, Kuala Lumpur).

The thesis follows a case-study-based approach through a perception survey of using face-to-face interviews with the public comprises of the local residents, the shop keepers, the tourists and other public found in the area at the time of the study. A total of 80 samples have been collected through a random survey. The nature of information asked are very much focused on the respondent's perception of why they are on the site, how they understand the concept of walkability, and what kind of urban amenities they expect to find and finally their opinion on how to improve the study area.

Complementary survey is also conducted by the researcher in the form of observation survey of issues and problems, building use and condition, traffic flows, urban amenities. Some of the information such as building condition, building use, traffic flows and other land uses are in the form of secondary data collected from the Kuala Lumpur City Hall.

The data are tabulated using the Software Package for Social Study (SPSS) and analyzed using the using the Descriptive Analysis Method in the form of frequency and means. In addition, the author also provides an expert opinion particularly on the subjective matter of urban design.

## **1.7. STUDY AREA**

### **1.7.1. General Background of the study area**

The City Centre, formerly known as the Central Planning Area in the Kuala Lumpur Structure Plan (KLSP) 1984 is the heart of the City. The City Centre is the focus of local, national and international attention and, for many, defines the image of Kuala Lumpur. The City Centre epitomizes the aspirations of its inhabitants and the vision of Kuala Lumpur to be A World-Class City. This strategy aims to create a complete living environment in the inner city that provides the very best business and working environment together with a vibrant commercial, financial and entertainment centers. (Kuala Lumpur Structure Plan 2020).

Particular emphasis shall be placed on attracting more people to live in the City Centre. This will reduce dependence on private transport, as more people will be able to travel directly to work either on foot or by public transport. A consequence of this strategy will be to create an increased liveliness in the City Centre as more people populate its streets outside the normal business period. Commercial and entertainment enterprises also benefit from the increased residential population. (KUALA LUMPUR STRUCTURE PLAN 2020). In addition, K.L also a tourist destination both local and There are many historical and new places in Kuala Lumpur that attractive people to go there, whether they are eligible local population or visitors from abroad. Such as the area

surrounding the Masjid India, this area has many E essential elements could make it one of the most important place in Kuala Lumpur.

In Kuala Lumpur, the earlier stage of its formation and growth particularly during the British colonial times, certain effort as many buildings in K.L as The Sultan Abdul Samad Building. It was designed by A.C. Norman and built in 1894-1897 to house several important government departments during the British administration. A.C. Norman spent time in Africa and saw Muslim mosque in India which led him to use Moorish architecture in the building's design. , but commercialism soon took over particularly the retail outlets of the Chinese shop house. The grid-iron planning formed the basis of K.L town structure which therefore more focus towards vehicular access and property growth. Again the public realm is largely those reminiscent of the British earlier influence. The obvious consequences are typical: not a walkable city.

This study thus attempts to develop the possibility of changing certain pockets of means within the city retail core to promote friendlier and walkable locations.

### **1.7.2. Study site:**

The study area is the area around Masjid India, The study area includes both of the Masjid India street as main street in study area, Lorong Bunas 2 street, Lorong Bunas 1 street, Bunas street, tuanku Abdul Rahman street and Melayu street.

Masjid India was built through private donations collected from the Indian Muslim community. Located just outside Masjid India is a newly erected covered mall and flea market and many restaurants, which literally translated means "Indian Mosque." Most of the restaurants here offer halal cuisine, mainly a mix of Indian, Moghul and Malay dishes. And that make many people come to the area. Quite a few shops sell colourful saris and cotton cloth from India.