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Strategy to Revive Bandung Skywalk; Refunctional Concept of Failed City Area

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to provide insights and recommendations for the government, the public, and future researchers in an effort to revitalize the Bandung Skywalk as a functional and effective public space. Built in 2017 as an urban tourism icon, the Bandung Skywalk experienced a decline in functionality following the Covid-19 pandemic, which restricted public activities in public spaces. This study used a qualitative descriptive method with a phenomenological approach supported by urban spatial atmosphere theory to understand users' perceptions and experiences of the space. The results indicate that the Skywalk has strategic potential for revitalization through the concept of refunctionalizing public spaces, such as developing it into a thematic tourism area or a multifunctional facility that supports residents' social and economic activities. These findings emphasize the importance of design innovation and public space management policies post-pandemic. Implicatively, this study can serve as a reference for the Bandung City Government in planning more adaptive and sustainable urban development. The research's originality lies in the integrative idea between spatial atmosphere theory and the practice of urban space revitalization, which has not been widely applied in the context of urban studies in Indonesia.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Skywalk Bandung or Teras Bandung, is one of the new icons in the city of Bandung which was successfully built in 2017. With the initial purpose as a city facility, which utilizes this building as a new tourist spot. Located above the famous Jalan Cihampelas, Teras Cihampelas provides a new perspective in enjoying the shopping and tourism area in Bandung (2024).

A skywalk is a type of walkway that connects two or more buildings in an urban area, or connects high points in a mountain recreation zone. Urban skywalks often take the form of covered or roofed pedestrian bridges that protect pedestrians from the weather. Modern skywalks with open roofs in the mountains now often have glass bases. Sometimes closed urban skywalks are made almost entirely of glass, including the ceiling, walls, and floor. In addition, some urban skyways function strictly as linear parks designed for walking. In addition to pedestrian safety and comfort, the main reasons given by city planners for the development of skywalks are reduced traffic congestion, reduced vehicle air pollution, and the separation of people from vehicle noise. A number of cities (e.g., Spokane, Washington) have performed sophisticated analyses of skywalk systems using computer models to optimize skywalk layouts.



Figure 1. Cihampelas before the skywalk (Source: Revitalization Skywalk Bandung 2021 Reviving The Urban Area “Urban Space” in Bandung)

Initially, the reason for building the Skywalk was to relocate 200 street vendors who were chaotic along Cihampelas. So the cost reached IDR 48 billion, such as providing street vendors with subsidies or an investment of IDR 250 million per person. So what are the rewards and contributions given by the ecosystem of this area to the regional income ratio after the relocation after the Skywalk was built? Because if so, the street vendors in Cicadas who are chaotic also want to have a Skywalk made, including a place to sell for free. Even all street vendors throughout the city of Bandung must want it too (Prasetyo, 2023). In addition, the Bandung city government continues the construction of the skywalk or Teras Cihampelas and by the end of this year, Teras Cihampelas will be 250 meters longer towards the Pasupati flyover (2018). The emergence of the Skywalk in the city of Bandung is also claimed as an effort to eliminate congestion on Jalan Cihampelas (2014). However, congestion still occurs. Congestion on Jalan Cihampelas has actually decreased since the traffic engineering changed the direction of Jalan Cipaganti, not because of the Skywalk. In addition, regarding this congestion, there has never been an official data base from the Bandung city government, for example regarding road capacity and structure, density levels, mobility and certain momentum that make the construction of this Skywalk urgent and a priority. This Skywalk refers to the Bandung Vision 2030 Research as an elevated walkway system that will be connected to future transportation systems such as LRT/Cable Car. However, the research

lacked consultation, testing, and publication to the public as a practice of openness of information mandated by the KIP Law. However, the construction continued. Based on the research, it is also said that there will be a Skywalk under the LRT rail structure and along the railroad tracks at West and East Bandung Stations so that residents can continue their journey on foot to Kiaracondong Station or to Andir Station. Something that might be done in the future but is not realistic for now, because the LRT display has disappeared (Prasetyo, 2023).



Figure 2. the condition of the Cihampelas terrace is not well maintained, 2025.
(Source: Personal)

Over time, Teras Cihampelas has faced various challenges, including a decrease in the number of visitors and the need for better maintenance. In addition, various problems that have arisen at the Skywalk Teras Cihampelas have become a concern for many people, especially the problem of the deserted skywalk tourist location and the lack of maintenance efforts for the facility. If there are no improvements, it is feared that the skywalk will lose its function as an icon for pedestrians, commercial activities, and tourism. Since the Covid-19 pandemic hit, the atmosphere of the Cihampelas terrace or Skywalk Cihampelas in Bandung City, which is usually busy, has become deserted. This has had an impact on many street vendors who have gone out of business (2021).

Around 50 percent of traders in the area were forced to close down due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. So, he said, many kiosks were abandoned (Rizaldi, 2021). Revitalization of the Bandung Skywalk "Teras Cihampelas" is one of the city's pressing problems. In the early 21st century, these "iconic" places were generally not prepared for development, which became a distraction from the overall view of the city. In addition, the construction of the Bandung Skywalk, by becoming a new tourist destination and icon of the city of Bandung, was initially expected to increase dynamics and social activities for the community (2025).

2. RESEARCH METHODS

This study applies the use of descriptive qualitative methods with a phenomenological approach and the theory of urban spatial atmosphere. the relationship between humans and their physical environment, where this architectural approach requires a clear architectural

system design, to direct architects to their right targets. The system approach to architecture has levels that have clear roles and are interrelated to form a clear system.

This system thinking framework tries to compile criteria ranging from human to technical criteria, so that the position and role of the building towards human goals are clear and the role and position of the planner are also clear. The system approach to architecture has 4 (four) subsystems, namely: (1). Planning subsystem, (2). Development subsystem, (3). Management subsystem and (4). Bionomic process subsystem.

Inequality in spatial dynamics is associated with social polarization and economic imbalance. Therefore, sustainable urban and regional development requires innovative solutions to overcome urban shrinkage and urban congestion. One important question in this context is whether small-medium-large cities can benefit from the problems of growing and dense cities, thereby contributing to more balanced spatial development. The discourse of the Bandung City Government (Pemkot Bandung) to reactivate Teras Cihampelas during Ramadan 2021 seems unlikely to be realized (Oktapiana, 2021).

3. RESEARCH RESULT

The construction of the Bandung Skywalk infrastructure will be continued in 2023 with public funds from the city budget, IDR 23 billion. The construction of the Skywalk was first initiated by Mayor Ridwan Kamil in 2016. The first 450-meter Skywalk stretches above Jalan Cihampelas, stacked horizontally as wide as the road corridor below it, supported by 44 foundation pillars at a cost of IDR 48 billion (Prasetyo, 2023). However, the construction of this Skywalk is not included in the Bandung City Spatial Plan (RT/RW) 2011-2031. Likewise, in the revised RT/RW for 2022-2042, it is not clearly stated. The construction of the Skywalk infrastructure is also not found in the Bandung RDTR 2015-2035. Or in more detail in the Zoning Regulations and Strategic Plan of Coblong District, it is also not found. So the problem is, this development is suspected of repeating the administrative and bureaucratic defects of spatial planning as a development fallacy (2025). The city of Bandung should have a Planning Gallery, a place where all city development projects are presented, displayed and then tested by the public before being executed. However, in the construction of the Skywalk this never happened. In developed countries, the Planning Gallery is a real manifestation of the democratization of smart cities in city planning, as a forum for communication, dialogue and political negotiation between citizens and the government with a legal basis for spatial planning through the public interest inherent in its implementation practices - including punishment if there are violations. However, this does not happen in Bandung where the Planning Gallery is only a symbol of the claim that good governance exists, even though in fact its authority as a planning force and control of city development is very weak, especially if it involves the public.

Bandung spatial planning is indeed available and only as a paper tiger of the city administration with fierce fangs as a legitimacy of the regulation of the use of public budgets and transactional political space in coloring an area for a certain purpose, but toothless in its implementation towards the interests of city residents in an effort to create a livable city, a smart city with a sustainable future. Bandung spatial planning has deliberately weakened itself systemically-accumulatively without the substance of concrete changes in the form of political will, openness, and democracy. In fact, spatial planning is not a cheap, easy and haphazard policy product.

Solutions provided:

Converting Skywalk into Capsule Hotel

Bandung is a metropolitan city that is the center of government of West Java, Bandung is a center of trade, industry and culture, but it must be realized that behind the glitter of Bandung it holds an extraordinary history, from the struggle to the beauty that is famous to the world. Bandung with one of its nicknames Paris van Java (Social 2023). describes how the beauty and life of the people of Bandung are like the people of Paris in the sense that Bandung is a reflection of Indonesian fashion. Bandung is one of the main tourist destinations in Indonesia for both foreign and local tourists. Bandung is famous not only for its beautiful natural scenery, but also for its many historical relics, unique culinary delights, fashion shopping centers and others that are the attractions of urban tourism. The Cihampelas area is one of the main tourist locations in Bandung which has been famous since the 90s as a shopping street center for selling jeans and textiles and is a Shopping Tourism and Cultural Heritage Area according to Bandung City Regional Regulation No. 1 of 2013 concerning RIPPDA 2012-2025 (Namira, Wipranata, and Tjung 2022).

Therefore, the development and regulation of the city of Bandung continues to be carried out, for example in 2017 the Bandung city government, which at that time was mayor Ridwan Kamil, once built a skywalk or Cihampelas terrace to regulate street vendors (PKL), but unfortunately if we look at it today, the development has become unused, many have been abandoned by traders and in the end have become neglected and many have been damaged (2024).

Ridwan Kamil's goal is actually very good, to regulate street vendors and try to create new tourism, but in reality it is not well received by the community, especially street vendors, because it results in weak sales, and in the end the street vendors leave (2025)

Actually, seen from the government's goal of building the Cihampelas terrace, it is also for the good of the people of Bandung, especially street vendors, as expressed by Zulfikar Rakita Dewa, namely First, the use of public space by street vendors is not for its function so that it can endanger other people or the street vendors themselves; Second, the existence of street vendors makes the city's spatial planning chaotic; Third, the existence of street vendors is not in accordance with the city's vision, namely emphasizing the aspects of cleanliness, beauty and tidiness of the city; Fourth, environmental pollution is often done by street vendors; Fifth, street vendors cause social vulnerability (Dewa, 2019).

The goal of Ridwan Kamil is actually very good, to regulate street vendors and try to create new tourism, but the reality is not well received by the community, especially street vendors, because it results in weak sales, and in the end it is abandoned by street vendors, then the community feels reluctant to go up the Cihampelas terrace because it is too complicated, and in the end the place is abandoned by traders or buyers (results of interviews with traders around the Cihampelas terrace).

According to a report from online media liputan 6 today revealed that instead of being built as a solution to traffic congestion in the area which is one of the shopping tourism icons in the city of Bandung, West Java, now the condition of Teras Cihampelas is abandoned and even unkempt. This is very unfortunate if it is not handled quickly by the government.

The author provides one solution so that the development is not in vain so that the government changes the skywalk into a capsule hotel, this idea is an interesting idea especially in big cities with high population density and growing accommodation needs. Skywalks which usually function as pedestrian bridges or connectors between buildings or shopping centers can be converted into efficient lodging spaces. Here are some ideas and explanations about how skywalks can be converted into capsule hotels:

1. Utilization of Vertical and Modular Space

Skywalks usually have a long and narrow shape, but with a modular design, these spaces can be converted into efficient capsule units. Capsules can be placed along the skywalk with a vertical or horizontal stacking system that does not interfere with pedestrian mobility.

2. Easy and Strategic Access

Skywalks are located in strategic locations, usually connecting business districts, shopping centers, or public transportation such as train stations or bus terminals. Thus, capsule hotels located in skywalks provide easy access for tourists or travelers who need a place to stay close to the center of activity.

3. Compact and Multifunctional Design

Capsule hotels are designed with a very efficient concept, optimizing space with beds that can be folded or integrated with technology for the comfort of their users. The limited spaces in the skywalk can be utilized with compact and multifunctional designs, for example providing sleeping areas, storage, and technological facilities such as charging stations and Wi-Fi.

4. Shared Facilities

To save space, capsule hotel facilities can be made shared, such as public bathrooms, dining rooms, or lounge areas. With this shared concept, each capsule still has good privacy, but its management becomes more efficient and more cost-effective.

5. Energy and Environmental Efficiency

Capsule hotels located on the skywalk can be designed with environmentally friendly principles, such as the use of renewable energy (solar panels), efficient water management systems, and designs that prioritize natural ventilation. This concept can be attractive to tourists who are more concerned about sustainability and being environmentally friendly.

6. Security and Comfort

To improve visitor comfort, a good security system must be implemented. For example, with a smart lock system, CCTV surveillance, and adequate lighting. The interior design of the capsule also needs to pay attention to comfort, even though space is limited, such as adding ventilation, good lighting, and ergonomic beds.

7. Unique Attraction for Tourists

The concept of a capsule hotel on the skywalk can be a special attraction for tourists who want to experience a unique and different accommodation experience. This place can be an option for backpackers or travelers who want a cheap, practical, but still comfortable and modern accommodation experience.

8. Reducing Congestion and Increasing Mobility

By converting the skywalk into a capsule hotel, this building not only functions as a connecting bridge, but also as a public space that can reduce congestion. This capsule hotel, which is in a strategic location, allows people to rest without having to go far to a conventional hotel that may be located further away.

9. Business and Economic Potential

From an economic perspective, this conversion can open up new business opportunities, both in terms of property investment, tourism, and the service sector. By utilizing unused or suboptimal space, managers can profit from the increasing need for accommodation, especially in urban areas with high property rental prices (Nurcahya, Syah, Hambaliana, et al., 2025).

Converting Skywalk into Green Open Space

In addition to being a capsule hotel, the architectural design of Teras Cihampelas has also been updated by adding artistic and aesthetic elements to attract visitors. Green areas and small gardens have been added to create a more comfortable and environmentally friendly atmosphere (2024).

Bandung is one of the big cities in Indonesia which has now become the largest metropolitan city in West Java. Currently, the Bandung City Government is very active in developing the face of the city, one of which is by building Green Open Spaces in various corners of Bandung City (Ratanfury et al., 2018). The environmental carrying capacity of a city can be increased again or maintained by maintaining the existence of an aspect that plays a major role in environmental quality, one of which is the existence of the RTH (Green Open Space) area (Naldi & Indrianawati, 2016). Currently, the city of Bandung only has around 1,700 hectares of green open space. Meanwhile, the ideal green open space for a city with an area of 16,729.65 hectares is around 6,000 hectares.



Figure 3. Poorly maintained park conditions, 2025.
(Source: Personal)

Because the existence of Green Open Space (RTH) in urban areas in the future, is expected to not only function to support ecological benefits, but also have social, cultural, and aesthetic benefits, such as city (Astutik & Qomarun, 2024). That is why, to support local governments in increasing the area and arranging RTH in urban areas, several efforts have been made by the central government, starting from the issuance of laws, ministerial regulations, and several guidelines related to RTH (2024).



Figure 4. one of the horizontal gardens at Skywalk Cihampelas, 2025.
(Source: Personal)

The Indonesian government through the Ministry of Public Works, Directorate General of Spatial Planning has launched a program known as P2KH (Green City Development Program) as an implementation step of the Spatial Planning Law (2007). Green open spaces as referred to in Law No. 26 of 2007 consist of public green open spaces and private green open spaces (DPKP3 Kota Bandung, n.d.). The idea of a green city was chosen as a solution that is expected to be a reference for cities to create comfortable and healthy cities for their citizens (Fatimah, 2012). The sustainability of city parks is not only the responsibility of the government, but also requires the active role of the community. Starting from maintaining cleanliness, avoiding vandalism, to reporting if there are damaged facilities (Diskominfo Kota Bandung, 2025). With public spaces that can be used for various activities. Such as competitions if anyone has a particular hobby, mini exhibitions, to open study or work spaces (Aurellia, 2023).

4. CONCLUSION

This study provides new ideas regarding the reuse of the Bandung Skywalk as an efficient and sustainable city facility. Based on the analysis, the main findings indicate that the Bandung Skywalk has strategic potential to be revived through functional innovations that are more adaptive to the needs of urban communities. Two development alternatives that emerged from this study are, first, converting the Bandung Skywalk into a Capsule Hotel. This concept is considered realistic because the Skywalk's location in the center of Bandung City greatly supports tourist accessibility, while the change in function does not require major modifications to the existing construction structure. Second, the Bandung Skywalk can be converted into a City Green Park, which functions as a public open space to improve environmental quality and the psychological well-being of city residents. Scientifically, this study contributes to enriching the discourse on the revitalization of urban public facilities with an adaptive and sustainable approach. The resulting ideas can serve as a reference for the Bandung City Government in formulating urban space development policies, as well as strengthening the implementation of the Regional Spatial Plan (RTRW) to be more responsive to the social, economic, and ecological needs of the community. Furthermore, this study demonstrates that the concept of multifunctional public space can provide creative solutions in urban planning without increasing the burden of construction or new land. However, this study has several limitations, particularly in the technical analysis and economic feasibility study, which have not been thoroughly examined. Further research is recommended to examine aspects of reconstruction costs, energy sustainability, and public and tourism perceptions of the Bandung Skywalk's new functional concept. With further research, it is hoped that the resulting recommendations can provide a stronger basis for decision-making regarding the future development and revitalization of public facilities in Bandung City.

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