



Urban Transitions Conference, Shanghai, September 2016

The practice and exploration of Shanghai recreational trail system planning

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Abstract

With many years of urban development, Shanghai is experiencing urban transition. During this period, the city has turned from the stage of seeking rapid economic growth to a new stage of seeking ways of urban renewal to enhance urban livability. With leisure time increasing, outdoor recreation has present popular trend and become a typical lifestyle of more and more people. Requirements for diverse outdoor recreational opportunities and pleasant urban public space is getting higher and higher. Based on online public survey, offline interview with outdoor enthusiasts, field research, and comprehensive analysis of other relative plans of Shanghai, selection criteria of existing outdoor public space suitable for recreational trail system are proposed. Five types of trails, three kinds of spaces and fifteen theme lines are carried out to provide diverse choices for the public. Meantime, suggestions on the design level, includes improving pedestrian environment, and increasing the numbers of service facilities, are discussed. The recreational trail system planning of Shanghai provides a systematic way of thinking for the enhancement of public environmental quality and livability in high-density urban area.

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Peer-review under responsibility of the organizing committee of the Urban Transitions Conference

Keywords: Recreational trail system; Planning; Shanghai

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1. Research Background

1.1. Recreation is one of the key functions of city

Restricted by the level of economic and social development, people did not realize the recreational function of city until the early 20th century. Recreation is one of the four functions of the city (The Athens Charter, 1933). Accessible and favorable public spaces for daily outdoor activities are needed by more and more people for recreational purpose. The city should offer people opportunities for their recreational needs, and provide people appropriate city recreational venues and facilities to carry out those activities.

Many of the city's recreation industry in developed countries has a long history, and demand-oriented urban recreation development model has gradually formed. However, in China, urban recreation services have not been paid enough attention as part of the public service. To improve the current situation, Shanghai is seeking ways to enhance the urban recreational function by planning an urban recreational trail network, in order to drive the environmental quality enhancement of urban public space, increase richness and satisfaction of people's daily lives, and finally enhance urban livability.

1.2. Urban regeneration during post-industrial period

The best city is that which provides the best experience of living (Simonds, 1998). There is a direct relationship between people's life experience and the quality of urban open public space. With the rapid growth of urban construction land and population density, current open public space in Shanghai is unable to meet the increasing public demand for outdoor activities.

One of the three detailed objectives of Shanghai urban development is pursuing cultural attractiveness: a city of happiness and humanity (Shanghai Master Plan, 2015). Here the cultural attractiveness is not confined to history and traditional culture. It is more like a kind of identity that people feel psychological attachment to cities they live in. A city of happiness and humanity means a livable city that makes people enjoy their urban lives. Meanwhile, under the resource and environment restricts, the bottom line of development is set and mixed spatial use is promoted in master plan, which means future development of Shanghai emphasizes endogenous growth instead of extension. Therefore, public happiness becomes the primary pursuit of Shanghai urban development, and the stock of land should be revitalized with humanization as well as scientization.

1.3. Lifestyle changing of the public

Compared to earlier times, a lot of developments, such as longer life expectancies, less working time, time-saving appliances, convenience of prepared foods and eating outside, and speedier transport, has profoundly changed people's lives in modern society. Many developed countries have entered the "leisure era". Shanghai, as an international metropolis, also welcome the era's coming.

High level of urbanization contributes significantly to the increase in leisure time. Outdoor recreational activities for the purpose of leisure has rendered the popular trends and become a typical lifestyle of more and more people. Recent years, the number of people actively participating in outdoor recreational activities, such as walking, jogging and cycling, keeps increasing in Shanghai. Outdoor sports events arouse people's enthusiasm for leisure and fitness, and even enhance people's attention to the urban environment. People even spontaneously selected some open public area and urban streets as running shrine, such as the Century Park (Phoenix New Media, 2014). Such public events bring more opportunities for public space quality improvement.

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