



## People Attitudes and Perceptions to the Urban Landscape Planning in *Niro Daryae* Edged Community of Tehran

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**ABSTRACT:** Providing efficient programme to promote urban landscape is considered as one of the most significant element of development in developed cities. The significance will become more considerable in edges of megacities where a lot of environmental, social, and economic issues are evident. This article is trying to deal with the importance of landscape control in relation with a neighborhood by suggesting urban landscape planning perspective. The main goal of this research is an understanding of people needs and problems related to the urban landscape planning in the new edged community of Niro-daryae in Tehran. To achieve such a goal, a survey have been carried out in a local area to understand peoples attitude and characteristics as far as urban landscape planning are concerned. The research data are provided with interviews conducted with 42 local people based on the theme-based content analysis method. The findings of this paper show that factors such as private ownership, contact with the nature, accessibility, not wasting the land, hygiene and cleanliness and sociability of the area exerts a great influence over people`s attitude towards planning of urban landscape as far as eastern edge of Tehran is concerned.

**Keywords:** Urban Landscape Planning, Edged Community, People Attitudes, Private Land Ownership, Niro Daryae Lands.

### INTRODUCTION

With a population of around 10 million in a metropolitan region of 13 million inhabitants, Tehran is one of the largest cities of the world. The process of urban development in Tehran show irregular. Historically, the intensity of speculative development after the Second World War met the demands of the exponential growth of the city`s population. Several planning documents were launched in this period, which show a stronger role for the municipality and development policies. Presently the city continues to suffer from a range of problems, including traffic congestion, environmental pollution, unaffordable property prices and irregular edged development (Behzadfar, 2009; Madanipour, 2006).

Few forms of development have changed the Tehran landscape as dramatically as the uncontrolled growth of

the exploding metropolis. During the last two decades, in particular, fragmented and haphazard suburban development has rapidly transformed forest and farm land into an indentured landscape for the automobile, with the requisite shopping malls, slums, housing enclaves, parking lots, and expansive road networks (Pars- Boom-Sazegan, 2009).

Urban Landscape planning in Tehran like in some developing parts of the world has a short history. Tehran experience has shown that it is a concern for government and such experts that have claim to the cultural, social and economic development of different parts of the city. Unfortunately, urban landscape planning is seen as one of the recent missions in the city. Perhaps this is due to the fact that urban landscape concept started emerging about one decade ago in Iran. But unfortunately, this was completely ignored in the edges of the city. This fact have two reasons: On the one hand, government and urban management don`t have enough funds to own the lands for establishing public services, on the other hand, private

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owners intend to regenerate their lands to a profit usage (like a commercial and residential function), therefore urban management conflict, especially with a private land owners. In this case, generally recommendations of faces urban developed plan are not implemented. Meanwhile, municipalities as agent to administrate these plans must consider people rights and respect community planning and collaborative design paradigms and approaches. Niro Daryae Lands in the West edge of Tehran suffer from the lack of these attentions (Armanshahr, 2009).

The main goal of this research is an understanding people needs and problems related to the urban landscape planning in the new edged community Niro Daryae which has been shaped by municipality of Tehran. Three main approaches are important for achieving goals of paper. Essential considerations in planning and design of edged communities are in the core of these approaches. According to the substance and concerns of these new paradigms, themes and criteria for urban landscape planning in this new edged community was investigated from the viewpoints of local people. The main hypothesis of this research is that urban landscape planning in edged community of Tehran from the viewpoint of people is related to three main approaches CBP, SG & DLP.

## **PLANNING APPROACHES AT THE EDGED COMMUNITIES**

### ***Design-Led Planning Approach (DLP)***

Civilization face mostly demographic change, immigration and rapid growth during their development. This phenomenon is already an integrative tool for city and village, where the village is affected from city features and conditions. In other words urban activities penetrate in village and vice versa. Most of the city edges suffer from the lack of regular plans. These areas due to low qualitative development, lack of social integration, and lack of sense of place, are the most important concerns for urban managers and planners (Anderson et al., 1996; Sudjic, 1993; Bontje & Burdack, 2005).

Formation of such theories including: Edge City (Garreau, 1991), TND (Krieger, 1991), Urban-Village (Newman & Kenworthy, 1992; Neal, 1992), TOD (Calthorpe, 1993), New Urbanism (CNU, 1996) have been proposed due to dominance of these problems. All of these planning theories with the emphasize on "Design", follow the criteria such as mixed uses, compact form, pedestrian-oriented places, public transportation, defined edges, vital streets in the edge of mega polis cities (such as Tehran).

In the last decades, after revolutions in urban design and planning, the new paradigm "design-led planning" emerged. This approach was put forward by architects and urban designers in 21th century (madanipour, 1996). In the beginning the attention to planning process in urban design was related to the mixed use theory. In 1997 Carmona stated that the middle approaches between two fields of planning and design are essential (Carmona, 2008). According to this approach, design considerations are beyond merely aesthetical values. Also the political and management tools are useful for designing cities and communities. "Design-led planning" (DLP) has an integrative and holistic approach to the urban environment. This viewpoint is based on functional goals and principles and not rigorous and rigid guidelines. These principles in addition to the flexibility quality should connect with site conditions such as edged communities and developments (Forth, 2004). This new approach believes that design style of buildings, neighborhoods and different parts of cities have direct impacts on urban environment experience.

### ***Community-Based Planning(CBP)***

Edge communities often emerge at major traffic nodes like Interstate highway intersections, or airports. Most often they are unincorporated areas with no political representation. Common to most Edge communities is a lack of public space and the absence of an active public government. The land is usually privately owned and the owners enforce certain codes of behavior that exclude 'undesirable' population (homeless, beggars, etc.), and deviant behavior (Bontje & Burdack, 2005).

Community-based planning emphasizes on the available capacities of development in local grounds in terms of executive and theoretical aspects. A point of view should be applied so that can benefit from all the capacities and potential of the area. Using all the investment of the area will make the measures more stable. Using community-based planning is highly depended on the unity and coherence of the population. Local institutions, NGO s, CBOs, are the key elements of this perspective (Madanipour, 2006).

Community-based planning (CBP) emphasizes on the point that the citizens as a result of having lived with each other for a long time can recognize their needs and necessities and by making the required arrangements with high level managers can help to create sustainable neighborhoods. This perspective has more correlation with time and space in local scale. In general, according to the mentioned points, applying such a community-based planning approach is highly well justified and



supported owing to several reasons such as; programming, designing, executive, political, and economic reasons. It is also of scientific and theoretical validity based on many advocates and theories.

### ***Smart Growth Paradigm (SG)***

This is a powerful paradigm shift, a sweeping rethinking of the costs and consequences of metropolitan growth in the country. It offers a compelling vision of how to achieve environmental quality, urban revitalization, economic competitiveness and even racial and social justice in metropolitan cities such as Iran.

Yet the consequences of sprawl are not confined to central cities. Metropolitan growth patterns are also transforming the suburbs. Like city neighborhoods, there are a wide range of suburban experiences and realities. These constituencies are beginning to define, advocate for and implement a smart growth agenda at all levels of government. This agenda principally revolves around changing the state “rules of the development game” to slow decentralization, promote urban reinvestment and promote a new form of development that is mixed use, transit-oriented and pedestrian friendly (Katz, 2002).

The smart growth (SG) agenda generally consists of five sets of complementary policies. First, states are experimenting with new forms of metropolitan governance to handle such issues as transportation, environmental protection, waste management, cultural amenities, and economic development. Second, they have embraced land use reforms to manage growth at the metropolitan fringe. Third, they are using state resources to preserve tracts of land threatened by sprawl as well as reclaim urban land for productive use. Fourth, they have begun to steer infrastructure investment and other resources to older established areas. Finally, they are considering tax reforms to reduce fiscal disparities between jurisdictions and reduce the competition between jurisdictions for sprawl inducing commercial development (Katz, 1999).

The smart growth movement has the potential to change the landscape of metropolitan Tehran and, in the process, build stronger cities, sustainable regions and more inclusive communities. It has the power to unite formerly disparate constituencies – environmentalists, land conservationists, farm preservationists, community development advocates, and downtown business interests – into a strong, sustainable force for change. It has the ability to build new kinds of political coalitions that crossparochial borders and move beyond current racial and ethnic divisions.



## URBAN DESIGN IN THE EDGED COMMUNITY OF NIRO DARYAEE

One of those Iranian debates, one that already has a long history but is still on-going, is about the process of suburbanization. On the one hand, Iranian suburbanization is often generalized as “urban sprawl”, a deconcentration of the built environment across large distances and at very low densities. This urban sprawl process has dramatically increased people’s daily action spaces and contributed to an increasing spatial separation of urban functions. Urban sprawl is most often seen as a negative tendency for reasons such as loss of open space, increasing car dependency, and a fear for a loss of social cohesion, “sense of place” and “identity” in urbanized areas (Anderson et al., 1996; Sudjic, 1993).

Two different approaches may be taken in translating political goals into development standards:

1. Restrictive planning such as zoning regulations in municipal land use plans;
2. Prescriptive planning such as sets of guidelines agreed on by the people involved and their political representatives.

Prescriptive planning is a relatively new approach and usually combines with some elements of traditional methods of municipal planning. The first step before ‘prescribing’ guidelines is a review of municipal goals, or ‘visions’, for future development. Sets of goals about how the city should perform and exactly which qualities are expected may be called ‘vision statements’. They can be the first step of prescriptive planning and result from discussions about values within the community. The visions and individual goals are the basis for all foreseeable development in that community. They are presented in council meetings and public hearings, and subsequently supported by the council’s vote (Bruns & Schmidt, 1997).

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New political goals have entered planning and design at the city edge, such as long term sustenance of natural resources, and the preservation of cultural heritage for future generations to experience and enjoy, as well as the maintenance and enhancement of local identity. The example of the Niro Daryae lands illustrates how these

and several more specific goals may be translated into a vision statement (Armanshahr, 2009).

## RESEARCH METHOD

Understanding the resident’s perception of edged community is critical to arriving at design criteria that are based on how these settlements are really used and experienced by the people. It is an approach well grounded in the line of research of geography, environmental psychology and urban design that supports the building of cities where people desire to dwell (Lynch, 1960; Relph, 1976; Ittelson, 1978; Lang, 1994). Relph (1976), for example, has called for an approach to urban planning ‘that is wholly self conscious... that is responsive to local structures of meaning and experience... that takes its inspiration from the existential significance of place...’ As Whyte (1988) contends, people are the most potent feature of open spaces. They choose spaces that promise the most benefits to them.

Based on the summary of points from the literature review and the nature of the research questions (how and what questions), it is clear that the research methodology for the purpose of the research can be defined as mostly in the realm of explanatory inquiry. This means that the orientation of the research follows a descriptive approach to the primary findings and information concerning the conditions of the city edge Neighborhood formation in relation to the urban landscape planning.

Survey work was carried out during September–October 2011 in the eastern edge of Tehran which has been named Niro Daryae lands. “Niro daryae” lands with 20 hectare area is located along the south eastern edge of city, in district 15 of Tehran municipality, restricted by a 78meter width highway from the east side, and residential parts from west side (Fig. 1,2).



**Fig. 1. Site Location Map, Niro-Daryae Lands in Tehran**



**Fig. 2. General View to Niro-Daryae Lands in Tehran**

Most of “Niro-Daryae” lands were useless and land conversion often took place in a haphazard manner which created speculative development. Without planning permit issued by the municipality it resulted in low quality developments.

The topographical aspect of the site is very different. Existence of hills in the south of site, create a nice view, as, the mountain in north of the city is crystal clear. Accessibility of the site is favorable. However about 80 percent of lands is barren. These obsolete lands have caused many social and environmental problems.

To enhance the internal validity of research findings the mixed method qualitative/quantitative sequential

design was used. First, focus group discussion and pilot depth interviews with residents were used to develop, pre-test and refine parts of the survey instrument. The group discussion was convened with the help of the local residents’ council. The five member’s team of urban designers and planners as experts analyze findings and categorize them into main planning themes and subjects. Then, a household survey was conducted on a random stratified sample of 42 residents. 7 persons live in the site and the other (n=35) were in the adjacent site. Residents were interviewed in their homes. A structured interview format (included closed and open-ended questions) was used to guide the interview, each lasting about 30–45 min.

**Table1. Demographic Characteristics of Survey Respondents**

Characteristics	Living in site (n=7)	Living out of site (n=35)
Gender		
Male	6	22
Female	1	13
Age		
16–24	0	8
25–34	3	17
35–54	3	7
55–65	1	3
Academic Degree		
Ph.d	0	1
M.Sc	0	2
B.Sc	0	15
Dip.	7	17



## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results are presented with all residents grouped together because there was a general agreement between groups. Any differences which appear are noted.

### *Urban Landscape Planning Problems*

The complexity of the nature of the urban landscape is now recognized. There is continuous impact of man activities on the natural and man-made landscape in different parts of the city. The problems which have been mentioned by people are categorized in four aspects shown in Fig.3.

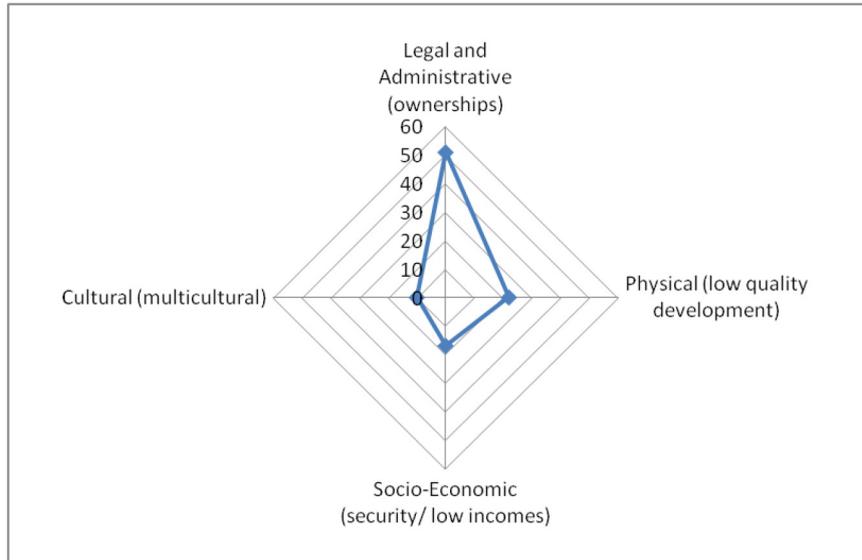


Fig. 3. Urban Landscape Planning Problems Mentioned by People

Physically, such problems include ecological, lack of infrastructure and lack of adequate open-space management dimensions. "I live in front of this site...pile up of garbage and the other trashes annoy residents..." (27 year old woman).

In terms of socio-economic and cultural dimensions they include low income, illiteracy, myth and superstition, lack of public enlightenment and lack of citizen participation in the planning process. "They always try to prevent problems when it is too late and without people viewpoints" (31 years old man).

Legal and administrative problems include general absence of specific laws on landscape planning requirements, lack of political will on the part of government, lack of appropriate manpower, lack of coordination and absence of a multi-disciplinary approach to physical planning administration. There also exist areas of conflicts and overlaps in the administrative framework of planning, especially in the role of different levels of government. "Fortunately municipality acquires 75% of lands although many private land owners take a verdict from the court and are waiting to be given

planning permit by municipality."(52 years old man).

The site encounters a legal limitation; On the one hand, subdivision of lands is happened during last decades. On the other hand, the owners of 300 parcels of lands obtain verdict from the "Court of Administrative Justice". Fortunately municipality acquires 75% of lands although many private land owners take a verdict from the court and waiting to give construction license from municipality (Armanshahr C.E. 2010).

The New Comprehensive Plan of Tehran (2009) lamented the on-going neglect of landscape consideration in physical planning in the promotion of city development in Tehran. This Report stated that we have not appreciated landscape degradation as problem along other problems such as unemployment, poverty, congestion, poor housing, transportation, and general lack infrastructural facilities.

### *People Needs and Expectations*

People needs and expectations about urban landscape planning in edged community of Niro Daryae can be



categorized into eight themes. These eight themes have been categorized according to the main theoretical paradigms such as smart growth, design-led planning and community-based planning. Besides personal benefits, several respondents also cited wider site benefits to support the provision of urban landscape planning.

These were largely related to the general urban function and aesthetics of the region: regulating land uses, cleaning up of site, leisure, socialization, beautification of the environment, greenery and nature views, land optimization and better utilization of otherwise unutilized space.

**Table 2. People Needs Related to Urban Landscape Planning Factors**

Theoretical Approaches	People needs	Living in the site (n=7) %	Living out of the site (n=35) %
DLP	To beautify the environment	19	18.3
	Saving and better utilization of space	13	10
SG	Leisure and relaxation	5.4	12
	Greenery and nature	22.3	21.1
	Accessibility and convenience	1	5.4
CBP	Cleaning up and maintenance	24.2	19
	Socialization and neighborly relations	12	7
	Regulating land uses	24.2	19

The majority of the respondents (43.2% from two groups) have a problem with regulating land uses. The lack of attention to the application of irregular land uses identified by Tehran municipality in city edge is the main problem of peoples low satisfaction. Another factor of dissatisfaction of people in these areas is a lack of public control and engagement by them. A small minority (7.6% from two groups) highlighted concern of accessibility to site. Shirazi & Niro Daryae Streets are the main accessible routes to site. For removing land ownership problems, cooperation between private owners and municipality is necessary. Also, maintenance of site for reducing pollutions is a very important factor mentioned by the people. For resolving people’s problems, Tehran municipality decided to provide local plan for “Niro daryae” lands.

**CONCLUSION**

As it mentioned in this paper, people in edged communities are sensitive to the urban landscape problems and conditions. The findings of the interviews with residents on “Niro-Daryae” community of Tehran show that eight factors such as Regulating land uses, Cleaning up and maintenance, Greenery and nature, Beautification of the environment, Saving and better utilization of space,

Socialization and neighborly relations, Accessibility and convenience and Leisure and relaxation are the main issues of people in urban landscape planning. These findings show that urban designers and managers should respond to three shifting paradigms: community-based planning (CBP), design-led planning (DLP) and smart growth (SG) in their plans and missions.

Also, the problems which have been mentioned by people are legal and administrative (51%), physical (22%), socio-economic (17%), cultural (10%) dimensions. Forecasting the people needs and expectations are the first steps of community planning process is which recommends of this paper. Paying attention to the legal and administrative considerations especially land uses statement is a very important factor in people satisfaction of edge communities. An investigation on urban landscape design and planning guidelines and briefs for edged communities can be suggested for future researches. Also, offering a planning framework with emphasized on people participation and considerations for developing edged communities such as Niro Daryae lands is another recommendation of this article.



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