

國立臺灣大學理學院地理環境資源學系

碩士論文

Department of Geography

College of Science

National Taiwan University

Master's Thesis



另闢綠道：台灣線形綠地與都市綠地角色轉向

Beyond the Park: Repositioning Public Green Space in Urban
Development through Linear Greenways in Taiwan

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中華民國 114 年 8 月

August 2025

摘要



綠地在當代都市景觀中扮演關鍵角色，具有多重社會效益。本文以臺北市的心中山線形公園與台中市的草悟道作為研究對象，探討線形綠地的空間特性與社會價值。透過對設計理念、規劃歷程與社會意涵的分析，本文試圖理解此類綠地如何促進社區連結、經濟活絡與文化參與。心中山線形公園採用極簡風格，與周邊商業區融合，吸引大量青年族群與觀光人潮，形塑出充滿活力的社會與經濟場域。然而，這樣的空間更新也導致鄰里結構的轉變，呈現出綠色縉紳化的現象。相較之下，草悟道由原本低度利用的邊緣地帶再生而成，成為串聯台中市主要文化與商業節點的重要中軸。其大尺度的綠地被劃分為多功能公共空間，展現更具策略性的空間規劃手法。透過比較這兩個案例，本文分析線形綠地在提供開放空間與社會功能上的潛能與限制，進一步回應亞洲後工業城市對都市綠地角色的重新思考。這些綠地不僅連結地理位置，也重新連結社群、身分與城市未來，顯示其在當代都市中重塑公共生活與回應空間變遷的能力。

關鍵詞：都市綠地、線形綠道、都市再生、都市規劃、可步行性

Abstract



Green space plays a vital role in contemporary urban environments, offering a range of social, ecological, and cultural benefits. This study investigates the unique characteristics and societal value of green space in linear form, focusing on two case studies in Taiwan: Xinzhongshan Linear Park in Taipei and Calligraphy Greenway in Taichung. Through an analysis of their spatial design, planning context, and social dynamics, the research explores how these parks foster community connectivity, stimulate economic activity, and support cultural expression. Xinzhongshan Linear Park, characterized by its minimalist design and integration with commercial zones, attracts young people and tourists, creating a lively urban atmosphere. Yet, this vibrancy also contributes to shifts in neighborhood composition and reflects the dynamics of green gentrification. In contrast, Calligraphy Greenway, transformed from underutilized land, functions as a cultural corridor that links major urban nodes and hosts large-scale events such as the Taichung Jazz Festival, reinforcing its identity as a civic gathering space. These two cases reveal how linear parks offer distinct spatial and social potentials, while also exposing tensions between inclusivity, design intent, and everyday use. This research contributes to broader debates on urban green infrastructure in post-industrial Asian cities, emphasizing the role of linear parks as flexible public spaces that respond to shifting urban needs and reimagine the relationship between environment, culture, and community life.

Keywords: Urban green space, urban greenway, urban regeneration, urban planning, walkability

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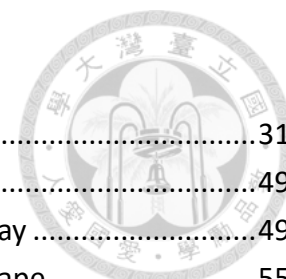
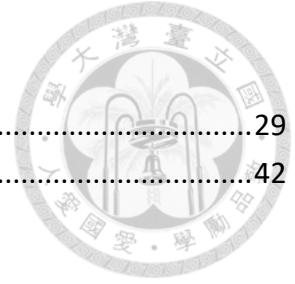


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Chapter 1. Introduction



1.1 Background

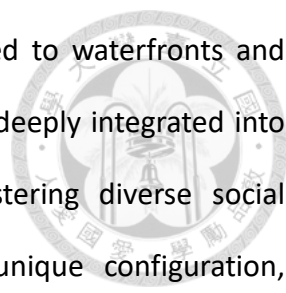
As contemporary cities undergo rapid urbanization and deepening modernization, quality of life has become a central concern for urban residents. Since urban environments grow denser and more complex, the demand for well-designed, accessible, and multifunctional green spaces has emerged as a critical issue in urban planning. Urban green spaces not only help mitigate environmental problems such as air pollution, urban heat, and congestion, but also significantly enhance social interaction, promote public health, and strengthen community cohesion. Consequently, these green areas, including parks, greenways, and recreational corridors, have become indispensable elements of the contemporary cityscape, actively shaping urban quality and livability through multifunctional and adaptive planning.

Historically, urban green spaces have undergone significant transformations in response to shifting social needs, urban forms, and cultural practices. Initially, green spaces such as the English gardens of the 18th and 19th centuries were exclusive leisure domains reserved primarily for the nobility and affluent classes. These spaces emphasized privacy and prestige rather than public accessibility. However, with the advent of the Industrial Revolution in the mid-19th century, cities faced severe environmental degradation and public health crises, prompting the emergence of publicly accessible parks. Birkenhead Park in England, established in 1847, marked a critical turning point as one of the earliest purpose-built public parks designed to address environmental problems and accommodate the social and psychological needs of working-class citizens.

Subsequently, urban parks evolved into inclusive spaces aimed at fostering social interaction, community bonding, and public well-being. Despite this progression, traditional urban parks have encountered limitations such as land scarcity, spatial isolation, and difficulty adapting to dense urban fabrics, particularly in rapidly urbanizing contexts.

Given these contemporary challenges, this research emphasizes the critical importance of exploring innovative planning strategies to effectively integrate urban green spaces within the complex fabric of modern cities. It is imperative to focus not merely on the quantity of green spaces provided, but also on their spatial quality, adaptability, and compatibility with surrounding urban contexts. Urban green spaces today must overcome inherent spatial constraints and seamlessly integrate into dense urban environments, catering to diverse and evolving community needs. Consequently, this study aims to examine how contemporary green spaces, specifically linear urban greenways, can maximize their social, cultural, and ecological potential. At the same time, they must adapt effectively to their surrounding neighbourhoods and enhance them. Through a detailed analysis of linear urban greenways, this research seeks to illuminate strategies for achieving more sustainable, inclusive, and socially vibrant urban landscapes.

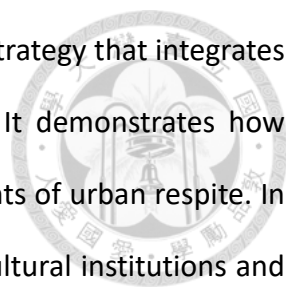
Under contemporary urban conditions, linear greenways have gained particular significance due to their distinctive spatial characteristics and community-oriented functions—an interest that emerged from my personal experiences navigating cities in Taiwan. During these urban explorations, I frequently encountered elongated green corridors seamlessly embedded within dense neighbourhoods, offering a pedestrian experience markedly more comfortable and engaging than that of typical city streets. These linear greenways not only improve walkability and pedestrian comfort but also guide residents and visitors through a variety of local settings, creating opportunities for close encounters with community life and distinctive geographic features. In contrast



to Hong Kong—where linear public pathways are largely confined to waterfronts and rarely extend into the urban core—Taiwan’s greenways are more deeply integrated into everyday city life, traversing multiple blocks and thereby fostering diverse social interactions and greater spatial connectivity. Owing to this unique configuration, Taiwanese linear greenways appear well positioned to perform specialized urban roles: facilitating pedestrian mobility, supporting community engagement, stimulating local economies, and enabling cultural exchange with adjacent neighbourhoods. Accordingly, this research focuses on the case of linear greenways in Taiwan to examine how these spaces function as critical components of contemporary urban planning. By conducting a detailed investigation, the study aims to reveal the often-overlooked social capacities of these spaces and their potential to shape and enrich surrounding communities in meaningful ways within modern urban environments.

Given the diverse array of linear greenways across Taiwan, selecting representative and impactful cases for in-depth investigation presents considerable challenges. Among these, several notable examples stand out—including Xinzhongshan Linear Park in Taipei, Calligraphy Greenway in Taichung, Haian Road in Tainan, and the Love River Greenway in Kaohsiung. Each of these greenways plays a distinctive role in shaping urban landscapes by facilitating pedestrian mobility, reinforcing local identity, and enhancing community vitality. Examining such spaces offers valuable insights for the fields of human geography and urban planning, contributing to broader discussions on spatial connectivity, placemaking, socio-economic dynamics, and environmental sustainability within high-density urban contexts.

This study specifically selects Xinzhongshan Linear Park and Calligraphy Greenway as focal cases due to their distinct roles and impacts within Taiwan’s two major metropolitan regions. Xinzhongshan Linear Park, situated in the vibrant commercial and



densely populated districts of Taipei, exemplifies a contemporary strategy that integrates commercial revitalization with pedestrian-friendly urban design. It demonstrates how greenways can stimulate economic activity while providing moments of urban respite. In contrast, Calligraphy Greenway in Taichung, which connects key cultural institutions and civic landmarks, highlights the potential of linear greenways to deepen cultural engagement and foster a strong sense of artistic identity, thereby creating a dynamic platform for community interaction and public life. Through a comparative analysis of these two cases, this research seeks to explore how linear greenways can effectively accommodate diverse urban functions within different spatial and cultural contexts, thus affirming their significance as critical cases for advancing both theoretical and practical discourse in urban geography and planning.

1.2 Research Purpose and Questions

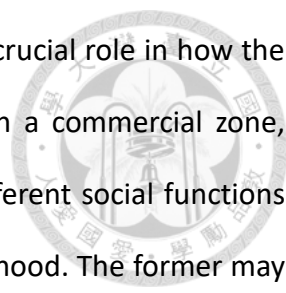
Existing literature on urban parks has predominantly focused on their environmental and recreational functions. A substantial body of research has examined how urban green spaces contribute to environmental quality, including improving air conditions, reducing urban heat islands, and enhancing urban biodiversity (Paoletti et al., 2011). In addition, many studies have explored the recreational benefits of parks by evaluating user satisfaction, physical activity levels, and leisure functions (Gómez et al., 2015; Bazrafshan et al., 2021; Bachtiar et al., 2022). While these approaches have enriched our understanding of parks as ecological assets and leisure spaces, they often underemphasize the spatial and relational dynamics that emerge between human users and the physical design of park environments.

In particular, the socio-spatial dimension of urban parks, including how people interact with space, how design influences behavior, and how parks mediate community

life, remains underexplored, especially in the context of urban greenways. These parks, characterized by their elongated and connective form, possess spatial qualities that differ significantly from traditional park typologies. Their linear configuration is not merely a geometric variation; it generates distinctive patterns of use, movement, and interaction that merit focused investigation. Although several linear greenways have emerged in major cities across Taiwan, there is still a notable gap in the literature that critically examines these spaces from a socio-spatial perspective, particularly through qualitative or interpretive approaches grounded in human geography and urban design theory.

This study seeks to address this gap by examining how linear greenways in Taiwan function not only as environmental or recreational assets but also as dynamic public spaces that shape social encounters, urban rhythms, and spatial perceptions. Instead of viewing parks as passive green infrastructures, this research approaches them as socially produced and spatially negotiated terrains, where design, movement, and lived experiences intersect. By focusing on the socio-spatial qualities of Taiwanese urban greenways, the study offers a more nuanced understanding of public space within Asian urbanism and contributes to broader discussions in urban planning and human geography.

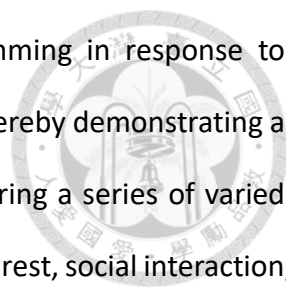
To investigate how urban greenways contribute to placemaking and community identity, this study focuses on the interplay between design and setting. Rather than treating parks as static objects of aesthetic design, this research interprets them as socially embedded spaces shaped by both their spatial configuration and their surrounding urban context. Through participatory observation and user interviews, attention is directed not only to the internal features of the parks, including circulation paths, seating, vegetation, and visual openness, but also to their geographic location, the character of adjacent neighbourhoods, and the ways in which these elements collectively shape the experience and meaning of the space.



The “setting” of a greenway is never neutral; it plays a crucial role in how the space is used, perceived, and valued. A linear park embedded in a commercial zone, adjacent to department stores and tourist flows, may activate different social functions compared to one situated in a quieter, culturally rooted neighbourhood. The former may attract transient foot traffic and function as an urban spectacle, while the latter fosters slower rhythms of everyday life and stronger community attachment. By closely examining these spatial relationships, this study seeks to understand how urban greenways operate as placemaking infrastructures, not only through their physical design but also through their embeddedness in the socio-spatial fabric of the city. This approach moves beyond interpreting parks as isolated recreational amenities and instead positions them as active agents of urban meaning-making, capable of reconfiguring local identities, facilitating new routines, and anchoring collective memory. In doing so, this research contributes to broader discussions on the role of urban green space in shaping the lived geography of contemporary cities.

In addition to examining the broader spatial setting of the parks, this study places significant emphasis on their design configuration, particularly in terms of how it facilitates a shift in the function of urban green space from static recreational land to dynamic, socially responsive environments. By analyzing the design features of the two selected cases, this research aims to uncover how specific spatial strategies enable urban greenways to fulfill diverse social functions. These functions include enhancing walkability, guiding pedestrian movement, and providing a variety of flexible spaces that accommodate both everyday use and programmed activities.

Such design interventions allow linear greenways to function as more than passive greenery; they actively engage with the urban context and respond to the specific needs of different zones along their paths. Within long and narrow urban corridors,



greenways have the potential to adapt their form and programming in response to localized demands, whether commercial, residential, or cultural, thereby demonstrating a high level of spatial adaptability and functional versatility. By offering a series of varied spaces along a continuous route, these greenways support mobility, rest, social interaction, and public events, challenging conventional assumptions about the role and definition of urban parks. To frame this analysis, the following chapter reviews existing literature on the design and function of linear greenways, with particular focus on how their spatial characteristics influence social outcomes. This literature review establishes a conceptual foundation for understanding the distinctive potential of urban greenways in contemporary urbanism and informs the empirical investigation that follows, focusing on the adaptive and integrative capacities of the two selected cases.

To engage with broader theoretical conversations in human geography and urban design, this study examines linear greenways not merely as functional infrastructure but as socially embedded spaces that are part of everyday urban life. Drawing on Lefebvre's (1991) concept of the production of space and Cresswell's (2004) work on place-making, the research seeks to contribute to a dialogue with theories that emphasize how space becomes meaningful through everyday use and interaction. Instead of treating design as a fixed blueprint, this study considers how spatial elements such as pathways, vegetation, and boundaries actively mediate social encounters and cultivate forms of belonging, attachment, and informal appropriation. In this way, the research aims to offer insights into how urban parks contribute to the production of place, not through monumental interventions but through subtle, everyday practices.

In addition, by focusing on the spatial adaptability of linear greenways, this study seeks to engage with discourses on context-sensitive design and placiality (Carmona et al., 2010; Seamon, 2012). The unique morphology of urban greenways, which extend



across varied neighbourhoods and land uses, calls for a design approach that is both responsive and locally situated. By closely observing how each segment of the selected parks interacts with its surrounding context, whether cultural, residential or commercial in nature, this research aims to offer grounded insights into how public space design can resonate with local rhythms and socio-spatial conditions. This approach contributes to a more nuanced understanding of how urban green infrastructure can be both context-aware and socially generative, particularly within the evolving urban environments of East Asian cities such as those in Taiwan.

We will also revisit and reflect on how these theoretical perspectives, especially those related to place-making, everyday space, and spatial adaptability, have been applied in previous cultural and social studies of urban green space. This reflection will inform the literature review and provide a foundation for developing the analytical framework of this research. In light of the growing recognition of urban greenways as dynamic spaces that support social interaction, flexible design, and placemaking, this study turns to two representative cases in Taiwan: Xinzhongshan Linear Park in Taipei and Calligraphy Greenway in Taichung. These parks offer clear examples of linear design strategies within dense urban contexts and demonstrate distinct spatial logics shaped by their respective city environments. By comparing these two cases, the study aims to understand how linear greenways operate as multifunctional public spaces and how their spatial forms and urban embeddedness contribute to broader narratives of urban development in Taiwan. The research questions presented below serve as a framework to guide this inquiry.

Grand Question: How do the cases of Linear Park in Taiwan demonstrate its (new) value or impacts to urban development to bestow new role or future implication to modern urban parks?



Sub 1: How does the design of Xinzhongshan Linear Park and Calligraphy Greenway shape their functionality?

Sub 2: In what ways do Xinzhongshan Linear Park and Calligraphy Greenway demonstrate their differences or uniqueness based on their own context?

Sub 3: What insight do these urban greenways for future urban park design and planning in the context of Taiwan?

1.3 Literature Review

a. The Definition and Features of Linear Park

Urban greenways represent a distinct form of urban green space characterized by their elongated, narrow configurations, typically developed along former transportation routes, riverbanks, or other urban corridors (Kullmann, 2012). Unlike traditional parks, which are often large, centrally located, and enclosed spaces, urban greenways prioritize urban connectivity, walkability, and environmental sustainability (Millington, 2015). Their design repurposes previously underutilized or transitional urban spaces, thus contributing significant social, ecological, and economic benefits. According to Kullmann (2012), urban greenways function as "ribbons of green space" extending across urban landscapes, thereby creating new ecological and social corridors. This dynamic nature of urban greenways, emphasizing continuous movement and connectivity, facilitates integration into existing urban infrastructure,

enhancing accessibility and environmental quality.

Millington (2015) categorizes urban greenways into three main types. The first, rail-to-park conversions, involves repurposing abandoned railway lines into urban green spaces, exemplified by New York's High Line. The second type includes waterfront urban greenways, which restore natural ecosystems and improve recreational accessibility along rivers or coastal areas, such as Seoul's Cheonggyecheon Stream. The third category, urban green corridors, integrates active transportation routes like pedestrian and cycling pathways within urban environments, as demonstrated by the Atlanta Belt Line. Extending this typology into an Asian context, Park and Kim (2019) analysed Seoul's Gyeongui Line Forest Park, revealing how such projects can reconnect fragmented urban districts while also highlighting potential risks, including gentrification and displacement.

Spatially, urban greenways diverge significantly from traditional urban parks. Rather than serving as self-contained destinations, urban greenways function as integral components of urban infrastructure, linking neighbourhoods, transit hubs, and amenities. Their narrow, extended forms pose unique design challenges and opportunities, such as managing continuous pedestrian flows, providing rest areas, and incorporating ecological features. The vegetative design often prioritizes rhythm, shading, and clear edge definitions over dense planting typical of larger parks, reinforcing their dynamic and flexible character.

Several prominent international examples illustrate the diverse approaches and implications of linear park developments. The High Line in New York, developed in phases between 2009 and 2019, transformed an abandoned elevated railway into a prominent public green space featuring gardens, seating, and cultural installations.

Though it significantly boosted tourism and revitalized the Chelsea district, research by Zukin (2010) and Millington (2015) revealed associated issues of rapid gentrification and displacement of lower-income residents. Contrastingly, Seoul's Gyeongui Line Forest Park, developed at ground level, effectively integrated into its surroundings, preserving a community-oriented atmosphere and emphasizing local resident involvement in its design, thus fostering inclusivity and social cohesion (Park & Kim, 2019).

Another notable case is the Coulée Verte René-Dumont in Paris, the world's first elevated linear park opened in 1993, serving as a quieter, more residential-focused green space compared to its American counterpart, the High Line. According to Rigolon (2018), Coulée Verte balanced urban greening and social inclusivity, avoiding the intense property speculation and displacement experienced in other cases. Such varied international examples underscore urban greenways' unique potential and inherent challenges, particularly their capacity to enhance urban mobility and utilize underutilized spaces effectively while also necessitating careful management of social inclusion and commercialization pressures (Rigolon, 2018).

Focusing specifically on Taiwanese urban greenways, this study examines Xinzhongshan Linear Park in Taipei and Calligraphy Greenway in Taichung. Despite extensive international research, Taiwanese urban greenways have garnered minimal academic attention. These parks offer distinctive insights into how local cultural contexts, urban policies, and economic structures influence linear park development. Xinzhongshan Linear Park exemplifies a highly commercialized approach, integrating retail spaces, weekend markets, and tourism-driven activities to rejuvenate adjacent commercial districts. Conversely, Calligraphy Greenway emphasizes cultural and artistic engagement, functioning as a multifunctional corridor connecting major

cultural landmarks and fostering community interaction.

Through analysing these Taiwanese cases, this research addresses critical gaps in urban studies literature, contributing nuanced understandings of urban greenways' social and economic impacts. It aims to evaluate how these parks navigate complex urban demands, balancing issues of gentrification, commercialization, accessibility, and public benefit, ultimately offering valuable lessons for future urban greenway developments globally.

b. Linear Greenways in East Asia

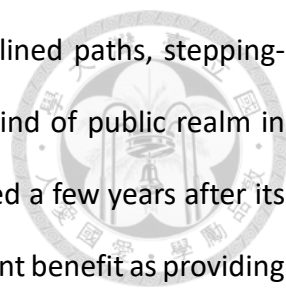
While the formal characteristics and typological distinctions of linear greenways provide a foundational understanding of their spatial logic, the ways in which these spaces are implemented, used, and interpreted are deeply shaped by cultural, political, and regional planning contexts. In East Asia, where urban density, land scarcity, and rapid development pose unique challenges to public space provision, linear greenways have emerged as adaptable tools for addressing both infrastructural and social needs. From ecological restoration to pedestrian mobility and cultural placemaking, greenways in cities such as Seoul, Guangzhou, and others reveal a range of planning strategies and priorities that differ markedly from those in Euro-American contexts. By examining selected cases from the region, this section aims to highlight how linear greenways have been mobilized not only as environmental interventions but also as instruments of cultural expression, civic identity, and everyday life. These comparisons offer valuable perspectives for understanding the distinctive trajectories of green space development in East Asian cities and for situating Taiwan's emerging

greenway projects within a broader regional discourse.

Cheonggyecheon Stream, situated in the center of downtown Seoul, is widely recognized as one of the most iconic examples of urban stream restoration and linear park redevelopment in East Asia. Completed in 2005, the project involved dismantling an elevated highway built in the 1970s to uncover and restore the stream buried beneath it. Initiated by then-mayor Lee Myung-bak, the effort was part of a top-down urban regeneration strategy aimed at revitalizing Seoul's inner city, improving environmental conditions, and reintegrating cultural heritage into the urban fabric (Cho, 2010; Kang & Cervero, 2009). The design approach focused on naturalizing the waterway, building pedestrian promenades and bridges, and incorporating symbolic architectural features such as reconstructed Joseon-era bridges to honor the site's historical importance (Lee & Anderson, 2013).

Today, Cheonggyecheon serves a variety of ecological and social functions. Environmentally, the stream has been reestablished as a riparian habitat, with one study documenting a 639% increase in biodiversity within a few years of completion (Kang & Cervero, 2009). The corridor also contributes to climate adaptation efforts, with improved air circulation and local temperature reduction, and was engineered to manage a 200-year flood event (Han & Nishimura, 2006). In terms of urban mobility, the 5.8-kilometer linear park prioritizes pedestrian access through continuous walkways and green promenades. Though not designed for high-speed bicycle commuting, the corridor significantly enhanced walkability and was complemented by concurrent improvements to public transportation, which contributed to a modal shift among commuters (Park, 2008).

Beyond its ecological and infrastructural dimensions, Cheonggyecheon

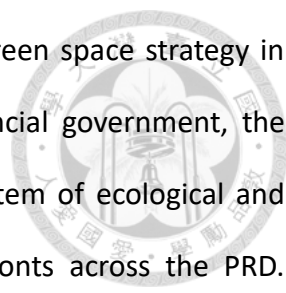


functions as a major recreational and cultural venue. Its tree-lined paths, stepping-stone crossings, and open seating areas have created a new kind of public realm in Seoul's densely built downtown. According to surveys conducted a few years after its opening, a majority of residents cited the stream's most significant benefit as providing "a place to relax" (Lee & Anderson, 2013). Between 2005 and 2007 alone, the site hosted over 250 public events, including festivals, concerts, and lantern exhibitions, further reinforcing its role as a dynamic cultural space (Cho, 2010).

Importantly, Cheonggyecheon also carries deep symbolic and cultural meaning. Historically, the stream functioned as a neighbourhood common where residents engaged in everyday practices such as laundry, bathing, and gathering. Its restoration thus invoked nostalgia and a sense of urban ecological reconciliation, emphasizing the co-existence of nature and city (Han & Nishimura, 2006). The project's deliberate inclusion of traditional iconography and restored historical sites infused the greenway with civic identity and historical continuity (Lee & Anderson, 2013). Cheonggyecheon has since become a cultural landmark, frequently used as a backdrop for Seoul's annual lantern festival and other citywide events that celebrate local heritage.

Nevertheless, the project has also been criticized for triggering processes of gentrification. As land values in the surrounding downtown rose, informal street vendors and lower-income communities that once occupied the area were displaced, raising concerns about the social equity of such large-scale urban beautification efforts (Kang & Cervero, 2009; Cho, 2010). This underscores the complex and often contradictory outcomes that can result from transforming urban infrastructure into linear public green space.

In contrast to single-corridor projects, the Pearl River Delta (PRD) Greenway



Network represents a regionally scaled and state-led linear green space strategy in southern China. Launched in 2010 by the Guangdong provincial government, the greenway initiative sought to establish an interconnected system of ecological and recreational corridors linking cities, rural areas, and waterfronts across the PRD. Developed through a rapid, “campaign-style” implementation, the initiative relied on the mobilization of local governments to construct greenways along canals, roadways, and former rail lines, with emphasis placed on the speed and visibility of progress (Wang & Chen, 2015; Liu, Wang, & Zheng, 2017). By 2015, the network had exceeded 12,500 kilometers in total length, spanning nine cities and becoming one of the most extensive greenway systems in the world. The stated goals of the program included promoting ecological sustainability, enhancing regional connectivity, and advancing China’s image as a leader in “eco-civilization” development (Wang & Chen, 2015; Qian, 2014).

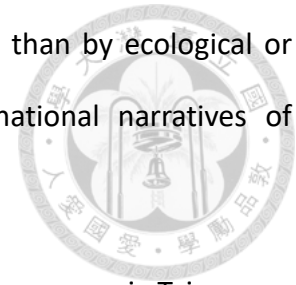
Although multifunctional in theory, PRD greenways have primarily emphasized mobility and connectivity. Many corridors serve dual purposes as cycling and walking routes, linking residential districts to parks, rivers, and other urban attractions. Notably, the “Greenway No. 3” route spans 370 kilometers east–west across the delta, connecting the outskirts of Guangzhou with Shenzhen. However, many greenways were effectively designed as landscaped extensions of transportation infrastructure, often overlapping with existing arterial roads, rather than functioning as standalone ecological corridors (Liu et al., 2017). While some segments, particularly those in suburban or riverside contexts, incorporated ecological restoration elements such as native vegetation and wetland patches, these tended to be uneven and secondary in scope. In cities like Shenzhen and Foshan, greenway corridors have nevertheless become popular sites for jogging, cycling, and informal leisure activities, akin to more

traditional urban urban greenways (Zhao, Zhang, & Wen, 2020).

Although cultural placemaking was not a central priority of the PRD initiative, certain flagship projects illustrate potential in this regard. Guangzhou's Donghaochong Greenway, for instance, rehabilitated a formerly polluted urban canal into a landscaped recreational corridor integrating flood control, heritage signage, and public art installations. This hybrid approach to infrastructure and culture illustrates the symbolic aspirations of the program, even as most corridors remained utilitarian in form. Overall, the strength of the PRD greenway system lies not in its site-specific design quality but in its sheer connectivity—functioning as a green framework that physically stitches the region together (Liu et al., 2017; Zhang, 2019).

The PRD greenways also reveal important insights into China's planning ethos. Their rapid construction, standardized forms, and large-scale deployment reflect a centralized, performance-driven urban governance model often seen in Chinese environmental campaigns (Qian, 2014). While many segments lack the historical depth or symbolic resonance found in projects like Seoul's Cheonggyecheon, they have nevertheless become meaningful through everyday use. Across the region, residents have adapted greenway spaces for morning exercise, community dancing, informal vending, and night markets, activities that reflect the vibrant and participatory street culture of southern China (Zhao et al., 2020). Some greenways even incorporate regionally specific landscaping such as Lingnan-style gardens or decorative public art that connects the infrastructure to local aesthetic traditions. However, scholars have noted that the network's top-down planning process, focused on mileage quotas and uniform branding, has often resulted in homogenous design and limited responsiveness to community needs (Liu et al., 2017; Zhang & Wu, 2006). In sum, the PRD greenways illustrate a network-centric approach to linear green infrastructure,

guided more by goals of mobility and regional image-making than by ecological or cultural place-making. Their evolution embodies broader national narratives of modernization through greening.



To ensure the long-term vitality and relevance of linear greenways in Taiwanese cities, it is important to consider how local communities can take part in shaping and sustaining these public spaces. When residents, nearby businesses, and civic groups are actively involved in the design and management of greenways, a stronger sense of ownership and responsibility can emerge. Practices such as community gardening, locally created public art, or the formation of volunteer stewardship groups have proven effective in cultivating this kind of grassroots engagement. In cities like Seoul, such approaches have helped urban greenways remain active, cared-for, and responsive to the evolving needs of the neighbourhoods they serve.

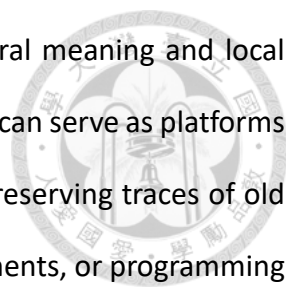
Equally important is the need to accompany greenway development with mechanisms for assessing and mitigating its broader social impacts. While these projects often bring positive transformations—beautifying urban environments, attracting visitors, and stimulating local economies—they can also trigger unintended consequences such as rising property values, the loss of informal economies, or the displacement of vulnerable groups. The experience of Cheonggyecheon, where rapid commercial revitalization marginalized former street vendors and low-income residents, serves as a critical reminder of these risks. In the context of Taiwan, it will be essential for future greenway planning to include tools for monitoring socioeconomic outcomes and to implement strategies that support inclusive use. This may include the preservation of low-cost vending spaces, programming that reflects local cultural practices, or ensuring that greenway access points connect equitably with surrounding districts, particularly those with underserved populations. By taking

these steps, linear green spaces can function not only as ecological and aesthetic corridors, but also as equitable and inclusive assets that serve the broader social fabric of the city.



In light of the diverse strategies and outcomes seen across East Asian linear greenway projects, several important lessons emerge that may inform the ongoing development of linear green spaces in Taiwan. While cities such as Taipei and Kaohsiung have already begun incorporating urban greenways—such as the Xinzhongshan Linear Park and the Love River Greenway—there remains considerable potential for these spaces to more effectively integrate mobility, ecology, and culture.

First, it is essential for Taiwan's greenways to find a thoughtful balance between mobility and placemaking. These spaces should not function only as routes for transit, but also as meaningful destinations. By connecting key urban amenities such as schools, markets, and parks, and integrating features like seating areas, playgrounds, or landscaped corners along the way, greenways can encourage both movement and pause. This dual function helps avoid the risk of turning the corridor into a sterile, single-use path, a concern observed in parts of the Pearl River Delta greenway system. Equally important is the integration of ecological and environmental functions within the design. Even in densely built urban areas, linear greenways can accommodate green infrastructure, including bioswales for stormwater management, native plantings that support biodiversity, or even the daylighting of covered urban streams. While Cheonggyecheon's large-scale ecological restoration may not be feasible in every case, it nevertheless underscores the value of rehabilitating urban nature through linear interventions, a principle increasingly relevant for Taiwanese cities confronting the challenges of heat islands and urban runoff.



Another key consideration is the need to embed cultural meaning and local identity into the spatial language of greenways. These corridors can serve as platforms for expressing community stories and histories—whether by preserving traces of old infrastructure, incorporating indigenous or regional design elements, or programming events such as night markets and seasonal festivals that resonate with Taiwanese traditions. As demonstrated by the Gyeongui Line Forest Park, a culturally embedded greenway is more likely to foster community attachment and usage over time. Moreover, the sustainability of these public spaces depends largely on community ownership and participation. The planning, maintenance, and programming of greenways should involve not only municipal agencies, but also residents, local businesses, and grassroots organizations. Initiatives such as community gardening plots, locally produced public art, and volunteer stewardship groups can help build a sense of shared responsibility and belonging. This approach is exemplified by Seoul’s neighbourhood-led green space projects.

Finally, cities must be attentive to the potential social consequences of greenway development, especially in terms of gentrification and displacement. The case of Cheonggyecheon, where economic revitalization coincided with the exclusion of informal vendors and low-income populations, offers a cautionary example. To ensure that greenways in Taiwan function as inclusive public assets rather than exclusive urban amenities, proactive measures should be taken—such as maintaining affordable vending zones, ensuring equitable access for adjacent communities, and integrating social impact monitoring into post-development evaluations. By internalizing these principles, Taiwan’s linear greenways can move beyond aesthetic or ecological considerations and become deeply embedded infrastructures of everyday life. These are spaces that connect not only physical locations but also foster

connections among communities, identities, and visions for the future.



In conclusion, East Asia's examples show that linear greenways are highly adaptable instruments of urban planning, from Seoul's dramatic downtown stream rebirth to Guangdong's intercity green web to the intimate community park in Yeonnam. Each offers valuable lessons for Taiwan, suggesting that successful greenway development lies in finding the right mix of function and meaning connecting people and places, restoring environment and community, and tailoring each project to its unique cultural context. By learning from these cases, Taiwan's planners can craft linear green spaces that not only enhance mobility and ecology but also tell the story of Taiwan's cities and people.

c. Functionality and Social Functions of Urban Park

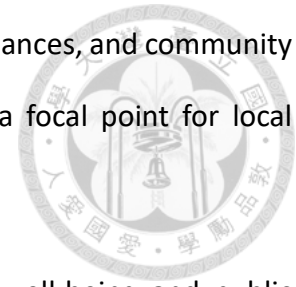
Urban parks play a crucial role in shaping social interactions, community cohesion, and public well-being. With cities becoming increasingly dense and fast-paced, the presence of urban green spaces has been recognized not only for their environmental and aesthetic values but also for their significant social and psychological benefits (Chiesura, 2004). Parks offer spaces for recreation, cultural events, and social encounters, contributing substantially to the overall quality of urban life (Low & Smith, 2006). Particularly within contexts of urban renewal and community revitalization, parks have become strategic tools to foster social inclusion, reduce inequalities, and reinforce local identities (Gehl, 2010). Unlike traditional parks, which primarily function as static spaces for leisure, contemporary urban parks, especially urban greenways, provide diverse social functions, including facilitating pedestrian

mobility, cultural engagement, and economic activities, thus positioning themselves as essential components in modern urban planning (Wolch et al., 2014).

One essential function of urban parks is their ability to foster community interaction and social cohesion. Unlike commercial spaces that restrict access based on economic capability, urban parks serve as inclusive environments where people from various socioeconomic backgrounds can freely engage in social exchanges (Low & Smith, 2006). For instance, Copenhagen's Superkilen Park, designed explicitly to reflect the city's multicultural identity, integrates architectural and artistic elements representative of over fifty nationalities. Research by Low and Smith (2006) confirms that Superkilen Park effectively enhances social cohesion by providing neutral and shared spaces for culturally diverse groups, demonstrating the critical role of urban parks in facilitating social integration. Similarly, Peters, Elands, and Buijs (2010), studying neighbourhood-scale green spaces in the Netherlands, found that parks increase face-to-face interactions among residents, which in turn strengthens local social networks and mutual trust.

Beyond social interaction, urban parks are vital venues for cultural expression and public events, significantly shaping local cultural landscapes and identities (Davies & Thompson, 2016). Parks offer accessible platforms for diverse cultural activities, including art installations, music festivals, and community-driven events, promoting a broader, community-oriented cultural engagement. A prime example is Berlin's Tempelhofer Feld, a vast park converted from a former airport runway, now a hub for collective cultural experiences hosting music festivals, open-air cinemas, and grassroots activities. Davies and Thompson's (2016) study underscores how such spaces not only support cultural diversity but also foster civic participation and a sense of communal belonging. Similarly, Calligraphy Greenway in Taichung exemplifies this

cultural functionality by integrating artistic exhibitions, performances, and community initiatives directly into its spatial design, thereby becoming a focal point for local cultural production and dissemination.



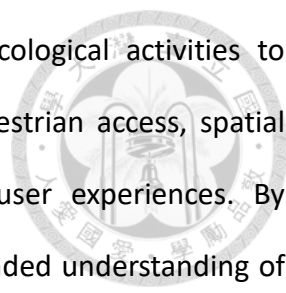
Urban parks also significantly enhance psychological well-being and public health. Extensive research in environmental psychology and public health illustrates that urban green spaces reduce stress, promote relaxation, and contribute positively to overall mental health, particularly in high-density urban environments (Wolch et al., 2014). Ulrich et al. (1991) notably demonstrated that hospital patients with views of greenery experienced faster recoveries, highlighting the therapeutic value of natural settings. Similarly, Wolch et al. (2014) conducted cross-city studies revealing that residents living near parks consistently reported lower anxiety and depression levels compared to those in highly urbanized areas lacking sufficient green spaces. This aspect is particularly relevant for Xinzhongshan Linear Park, situated within a densely populated commercial district in Taipei. Here, the presence of accessible green spaces provides essential psychological relief, offering a green corridor amidst urban intensity.

Despite the well-documented benefits of traditional parks, urban greenways introduce new dimensions to urban public space through their unique spatial and functional characteristics. While existing literature extensively addresses large-scale urban greenways, such as New York's High Line and Seoul's Gyeongui Line Forest Park, highlighting their roles in urban branding, pedestrian connectivity, and sustainability (Millington, 2015; Park & Kim, 2019), less scholarly attention has been paid to smaller-scale urban greenways within high-density urban contexts, particularly in Taiwan. Issues such as commercialization, gentrification, and accessibility have been partially explored, yet a comprehensive understanding of how urban greenways impact local social dynamics, especially in contexts with limited urban space, remains lacking.



In the Taiwanese context, existing research on urban greenways is notably uneven. Studies related to Xinzhongshan Linear Park, in particular, are limited and tend to concentrate primarily on creative streetscapes and cultural revitalization rather than analyzing the park's comprehensive role and impact (徐瑩峰, 2012; 徐瑩峰, 2014; 何友齡, 2010). 謝宜安's (2022) work provides one of the few focused examinations, assessing user experiences via questionnaires, highlighting high satisfaction levels in aspects such as comfort, walkability, and facility quality, albeit noting limitations related to market spaces during weekends. By contrast, Calligraphy Greenway has received significantly more scholarly attention due to its earlier establishment. Studies addressing Calligraphy Greenway have explored its marketing strategies (施孟林, 張庭彰, & 廖月霞, 2018; 李淑芳, 林源明, & 李世昌, 2022; 曾奕菁, 2015), tourism impacts (黃意文, 蔡永川, 賴婉綸, & 陳弘順, 2015), and user satisfaction (吳文昇, 2020). Despite these contributions, the existing literature often lacks critical engagement with broader socio-spatial impacts, including commercialization, gentrification, and the nuanced interactions between the parks and surrounding urban contexts.

To bridge this research gap, the present study specifically compares Xinzhongshan Linear Park and Calligraphy Greenway, aiming to contextualize their urban roles within their distinctive city settings, Taipei and Taichung. By comparatively analysing these two urban greenways, the study seeks to illuminate how differing approaches, commercially driven revitalization versus culturally integrated design, influence social inclusion, local community dynamics, and overall urban development outcomes. Functionality and walkability are adopted as central analytical frameworks, drawing on established urban design theories and literatures (Carmona, 2021; Ahern, 2011; Gehl, 2010; Southworth, 2005). Functionality here encapsulates parks' abilities



to accommodate diverse uses—ranging from leisure and ecological activities to informal social gatherings—while walkability emphasizes pedestrian access, spatial continuity, and movement qualities that shape everyday user experiences. By examining these dimensions, this research contributes a grounded understanding of how spatial characteristics mediate human interactions and behaviours, informing future strategies in urban planning aimed at effectively balancing community needs, cultural identities, and sustainable urban development.

d. The Impacts of Urban Parks on Community Identity

Urban parks are not only spaces for recreation and ecological conservation but also play a crucial role in shaping community identity and local cultural narratives. As cities evolve, urban parks have increasingly been used as tools for place-making, cultural revitalization, and branding strategies (Lynch, 1960; Zukin, 2010). Parks contribute to how people perceive and interact with their neighbourhoods, influencing their sense of belonging, community pride, and place attachment (Walker, 2004). The ways in which parks shape community identity vary depending on their design, purpose, and integration into urban environments. Some parks serve as symbols of cultural heritage, while others function as catalysts for economic transformation or centres for social activism (Zukin, 2010). This chapter examines the relationship between urban parks and community identity, focusing on how parks reshape neighbourhoods socially, culturally, and economically. It also evaluates whether urban greenways, given their distinct spatial characteristics, contribute differently to these transformations compared to traditional urban parks.

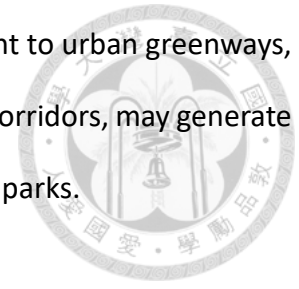
Defining Community Identity and the Role of Parks

Community identity refers to the collective sense of belonging and shared experiences among residents within a geographic area (Lynch, 1960). This identity is shaped by physical landscapes, social interactions, historical significance, and cultural expressions within the community. Urban parks contribute to this identity in several ways. They provide shared public spaces where residents can engage in everyday interactions, reinforcing community cohesion and trust (Peters et al., 2010). Parks also act as repositories of history and cultural heritage, incorporating architectural elements, monuments, and design features that reflect local identity (Walker, 2004). Furthermore, urban parks support creative and cultural activities, becoming venues for public art, performances, and local festivals, which help reinforce the collective character of a place (Zukin, 2010). Given these factors, urban parks become essential components in shaping and reinforcing the collective identity of urban communities. The extent to which a park influences community identity depends on its design, governance, and integration with the surrounding urban landscape (Walker, 2004).

How Urban Parks Reshape Communities

Urban parks significantly contribute to the transformation of communities, influencing social structures, cultural identity, and economic conditions. While parks are often regarded as inclusive public spaces, their impact varies depending on their design, governance, and interaction with urban development policies (Low & Smith, 2006). In many cases, parks enhance community engagement, support local cultures, and generate economic opportunities. However, they can also exacerbate inequalities, displace marginalized groups, and reinforce patterns of gentrification (Zukin, 2010;

Wolch et al., 2014). These varied effects are particularly relevant to urban greenways, which, due to their elongated form and integration into urban corridors, may generate distinct social and economic dynamics compared to traditional parks.



Social Transformation: Strengthening or Disrupting Community Bonds

Urban parks have the potential to foster social cohesion by providing neutral gathering spaces where people from different backgrounds can interact. By facilitating casual encounters, communal activities, and local events, parks play an essential role in strengthening community ties and civic engagement (Peters et al., 2010). Research on Berlin's Tempelhofer Feld, a former airport repurposed into a massive open park, has demonstrated that public spaces designed for inclusive participation can become focal points for grassroots initiatives and civic action (Davies & Thompson, 2016).

In Taiwan, Calligraphy Greenway in Taichung exemplifies how a well-designed park can promote inclusivity and cultural participation. The park's integration with public art installations, creative markets, and cultural festivals fosters a sense of belonging among residents and visitors. Unlike traditional parks, which are often isolated from commercial and residential areas, Calligraphy Greenway merges with the surrounding urban landscape, reinforcing Taichung's identity as a cultural city. Despite these benefits, some urban parks risk prioritizing economic gains over social accessibility, leading to social exclusion (Low & Smith, 2006). Xinzhongshan Linear Park in Taipei, for example, has seen an increase in property values and commercial rents, potentially discouraging long-term residents from utilizing the space. This raises concerns about whether urban parks should prioritize community use or economic development, a key question in urban planning.



Cultural Reinvention: Enhancing or Erasing Local Identity

Urban parks serve as cultural landmarks, reinforcing local heritage, artistic expression, and urban branding (Zukin, 2010). Parks that integrate historical narratives and public cultural events contribute to place identity. Seoul's Gyeongui Line Forest Park is an example of how a linear park can preserve and celebrate local heritage by maintaining remnants of its historical railway while offering modern green spaces (Park & Kim, 2019). Similarly, Calligraphy Greenway supports public art and performance spaces, strengthening Taichung's reputation as a creative hub. Its open-air exhibitions, community-driven art projects, and interactive installations make cultural engagement accessible to a broad audience, differentiating it from more enclosed gallery spaces or formal performance venues. However, parks can also erase cultural authenticity if their design favours commercial interests over heritage preservation. New York's High Line has been criticized for transforming a formerly industrial district into a luxury enclave, shifting its original cultural landscape (Millington, 2015). Xinzhongshan Linear Park, similarly, has seen its role shift toward commercial branding and retail expansion, raising concerns about whether it remains a cultural space or has become an extension of Taipei's commercial districts.

Economic Impact: Stimulating Growth or Driving Gentrification

Urban parks often contribute to economic growth by attracting tourism, increasing foot traffic, and revitalizing underutilized spaces (Rigolon, 2018). Atlanta's Belt Line, a large-scale linear park, successfully transformed a neglected railway corridor into a thriving mixed-use development, bringing investment into previously

declining areas.

However, economic revitalization is often accompanied by gentrification, where rising property values and rental prices displace long-term residents (Wolch et al., 2014). The High Line in New York exemplifies this issue, as real estate speculation following the park's development led to the exclusion of lower-income communities (Millington, 2015). Similarly, Xinzhongshan Linear Park has witnessed rising commercial rents, making it increasingly difficult for traditional businesses to survive, raising questions about whether its economic benefits are equitably distributed.

This study examines how Xinzhongshan Linear Park and Calligraphy Greenway contribute to community identity in Taipei, particularly in terms of social inclusivity, cultural representation, and economic transformation. By analyzing the effects of urban greenways through these lenses, this research aims to provide insights into how modern urban parks can be designed to serve both residents and urban planners more effectively. Urban parks are more than just green spaces—they are cultural artifacts that reflect the identity of a city and its people. Whether as community hubs, cultural landmarks, or economic drivers, parks shape how neighbourhoods evolve and how residents perceive their urban environment. By analyzing Xinzhongshan Linear Park and Calligraphy Greenway, this research will contribute to a deeper understanding of how contemporary parks influence urban identity, social cohesion, and spatial justice.

1.3 Case Introduction

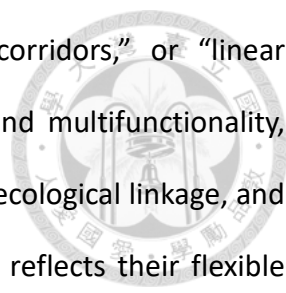
Before presenting the background of the case studies, it is important to provide a clear foundation by establishing how the two selected sites, Xinzhongshan Linear Park

and Calligraphy Greenway, are defined within Taiwan's official planning framework. According to the *Urban Planning Act* and the *Green Space Classification System*, "urban green spaces" are designated areas that serve ecological, recreational, or aesthetic purposes and are integrated into broader urban land use planning. These spaces include various forms such as parks, greenbelts, and plazas. To clearly illustrate the differences between the two cases, their comparative attributes are summarized in the table below.

Table 1. Comparative Attributes of the Two Cases

Attribute	Xinzhongshan Linear Park	Calligraphy Greenway
Location	Taipei City (Datong & Zhongshan Districts)	Taichung City (West District)
Official Classification	Linear Park	Green Corridor
Managing Authority	Taipei Rapid Transit Corporation, Taipei City Gov.	Taichung City Urban Development Bureau
Length	Approx. 600 meters	Approx. 3.6 kilometers
Area	~1.96 hectares	~6.5 hectares (varies along segments)
Original Land Use	Former Taiwan Railway (Tamsui Line) corridor	Former agricultural/creek zone, then parkway
Redevelopment Period	2018–2019	2010–2013 (renamed from Jingguo Parkway)
Key Functions	Pedestrian circulation, events, leisure, commerce	Cultural space, recreation, walkability
Planning Vision	Revitalize MRT-adjacent zone with public vibrancy	Blend culture, art, and open space for community
Public Use Character	Highly commercial, vibrant, central circulation hub	Recreational, artistic, neighbourhood-integrated

Rather than being categorized strictly as conventional "urban parks," both Xinzhongshan Linear Park and Calligraphy Greenway are more accurately defined under



broader classifications such as “urban green space,” “green corridors,” or “linear greenways.” These terms emphasize their spatial configuration and multifunctionality, which encompass not only recreation but also urban connectivity, ecological linkage, and integration with adjacent land uses. This foundational distinction reflects their flexible roles in post-industrial urban transformation. In order to establish consistent terminology for the case studies, this thesis adopts the term “urban greenway” to describe both Xinzhongshan Linear Park and Calligraphy Greenway. While Taiwan’s urban planning regulations classify parks and green spaces as public facilities intended to provide recreational areas for citizens, there is no specific designation for linear green spaces in official documents. The term “urban greenway” effectively captures the linear and connective characteristics of these spaces, as well as their multifaceted roles in urban environments, including recreation, cultural activity, and community engagement. This terminology provides a coherent framework for analyzing their functions and contributions to urban life.



Figure 1. Research scope of Xinzhongshan Linear Park (Base map retrieved from Public Works Department)

This paper selects Xinzhongshan Linear Park and Calligraphy Greenway as the two primary subjects of investigation. This section briefly introduces the background of both parks, beginning with Xinzhongshan Linear Park. The park is located between Zhongshan MRT Station and Shuanglian MRT Station, with the main area of focus in this study indicated by the blue rectangle shown in Figure 1. Geographically, the park functions as a green corridor situated at the boundary between Datong District to the west and Zhongshan District to the east. Covering approximately 1.96 hectares (20,000 square meters), this linear park connects the northern and southern parts of the city and serves as a spatial and symbolic link between the two districts. Although the green corridor extends further northward past several MRT stations, only the section outlined in blue is officially named Xinzhongshan Linear Park; the remaining segments are referred

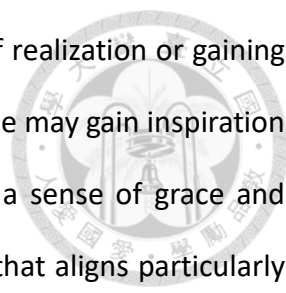
to as the MRT Linear Park. The research scope in this study is limited to the section between Shuanglian MRT Station and Zhongshan MRT Station, as marked in Figure 1. This particular segment was chosen because it is more frequently used by the public and has been fully completed, unlike the southern extension toward Taipei Main Station, which is still under construction. Additionally, the area within the blue rectangle is notable for hosting local markets and festive events. By focusing on this prominent segment, the study aims to yield more concrete and representative research outcomes.

One of the defining characteristics of Xinzhongshan Linear Park is its form, specifically, its configuration as a linear park. The emergence of linear parks or urban greenways is often associated with the redevelopment of waterfronts and former railway tracks. This typology has become a practical urban planning strategy for utilizing edge spaces within the city that may not be suitable for other forms of land use. Linear parks typically incorporate both green and grey elements. Green components such as vegetation and greenways help to establish the park's image as a green corridor, while grey infrastructure serves functional purposes by enhancing connectivity for both cyclists and pedestrians within the urban fabric. The balance between these green and grey elements often depends on the thematic emphasis and intended purpose of the park. Given the unique form of linear parks, the spatial organization within them presents particular challenges for planners and designers. Deciding whether to allocate more space to greenery or hardscape features requires careful consideration, as all elements must be accommodated within a long yet narrow layout. This spatial constraint contributes to the distinct design and functionality of linear parks, setting them apart from more conventional urban parks that are rectangular or square in shape. These differences in both aesthetic expression and functional value will be further explored in the subsequent sections of this study.



Xinzhongshan Linear Park is not the first linear park developed in Taiwan. The earliest example is Calligraphy Greenway in Taichung. Capitalizing on the elongated shape of a linear park, Calligraphy Greenway connects a series of educational and cultural landmarks, such as the National Museum of Natural Science and Taichung Civic Square, spanning a total length of 3.6 kilometres. Completed in 2011, it was previously a green belt known as Jingguo Parkway. This history illustrates a fundamental difference in the origins and spatial conditions between Calligraphy Greenway and Xinzhongshan Linear Park. The land used for Xinzhongshan Linear Park was formerly part of the Tamsui railway line, which was relocated underground in the 1990s, from Minquan West Road Station to Xiangshan Station. The resulting green belt in Zhongshan, redeveloped from the old railway corridor, is significantly narrower than Calligraphy Greenway, with a width of approximately 25 meters. In 2018, the Taipei Rapid Transit Corporation initiated a revitalization project for the MRT linear green belt between Zhongshan Station and Shuanglian Station. The segment delineated in Figure 1 was subsequently renamed as Xinzhongshan Linear Park, which is the focus of this study. According to Ecoscope, the design firm responsible for the park's planning, the principal vision behind the project was to serve as “a major catalyst in the regeneration process and reinvent the district's identity.” The revitalization aimed to introduce novelty and vibrancy to the area, using the urban park as a medium to cultivate a renewed and desirable social image for the surrounding community.

The other linear park examined in this paper is Calligraphy Greenway, located in Taichung City, Taiwan. Spanning approximately 3.6 kilometres, the park's name is worth exploring at the outset. According to the description provided by the Taichung Urban Development Bureau, the name was inspired by the phrase “Walking along Calligraphy Greenway” (行草悟道; *xing cao wu dao*). In this expression, *xing* means “walking,” *cao*



refers to “cursive calligraphy,” and *wu dao* suggests the process of realization or gaining insight. The naming reflects a poetic vision for the park: that people may gain inspiration and refresh their minds as they walk along the greenway, with a sense of grace and fluidity akin to the strokes of calligraphy. This is a romantic ideal that aligns particularly well with the linear park typology. Because a linear park allows for uninterrupted, forward movement, unlike traditional circular park paths, it facilitates a continuous spatial journey. As the scenery and atmosphere shift gradually along the route, *wu dao* may be interpreted as a metaphor for openness, relaxation, and mental clarity. Whether this poetic vision is realized in practice can be evaluated in later sections of this paper.

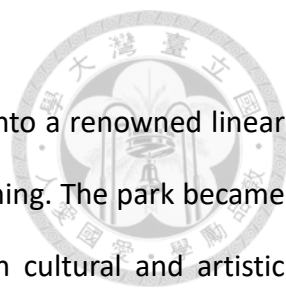
Calligraphy Greenway's origins trace back to the Japanese colonial period, when the area was primarily agricultural land interspersed with natural waterways such as the Tuku Creek. According to Village Official C and Resident D, an elderly local, the area also included a graveyard. During the mid-20th century, as urbanization accelerated in Taichung, the space was transformed into a green corridor known as Jingguo Parkway, which served as the precursor to the current revitalized greenway. Initially, this urban plan aimed to beautify and green the city, particularly at a time when Taichung's manufacturing industry was becoming increasingly prominent. The development of Jingguo Parkway helped organize what had previously been a fragmented and disordered urban landscape. The once meandering Tuku Creek gradually dried up, becoming an underutilized and vacant channel through the city. As Resident D described, the dried streambed was eventually filled in and integrated into the land that now forms part of Jingguo Parkway. As shown in the 1940s map below, the white line (added by the author) indicates the approximate location of what is now Calligraphy Greenway. Taichung's early urban plan was already characterized by a web-like structure, and the emergence of Jingguo Parkway, later Calligraphy Greenway, can be seen as forming the backbone of

that web. From an urban planning perspective, the greenway's role has gone beyond simply adding greenery to the city. It has functioned as a key component of ecological infrastructure while contributing to the reimagining of a city that risked being overly industrialized. This marked the first major transformation of land use at the site, helping to unify and straighten the urban fabric in a more coherent and structured manner.



Map: 1945 urban planning of Taichung (retrieved from Taichung Development Bureau)

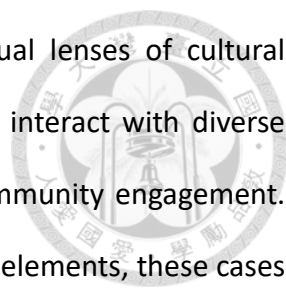
With the advent of urban renewal strategies in the early 2000s, Taichung authorities began revamping existing public spaces to enhance the city's cultural landscape. The transformation of Jingguo Parkway into Calligraphy Greenway was part of a broader initiative to integrate art, culture, and nature into urban design. This redevelopment aimed to create a vibrant environment that fostered social interaction, celebrated local culture, and incorporated public art installations. The result was a multifunctional space that enriched community experiences and attracted both residents and visitors.



By the 2010s, Calligraphy Greenway had fully evolved into a renowned linear park that exemplified Taichung's shift toward modern urban planning. The park became a symbol of the city's dedication to blending green spaces with cultural and artistic elements, supporting the local economy, and fostering a communal spirit. Its strategic location connected key cultural and commercial hubs, demonstrating Taichung's commitment to sustainable and people-centered urban development. Calligraphy Greenway was intentionally designed to link the National Museum of Natural Science and the Civic Square, reinforcing its thematic emphasis on inspiration and reflection. This linkage suggests that the name "Calligraphy Greenway" embodies the park's aspiration to connect people with spaces that can subtly stimulate insight and imagination.

To provide a brief overview before delving into the main findings, Calligraphy Greenway in Taichung and Xinzhongshan Linear Park illustrate how public green spaces are being reimagined within the highly urbanized landscapes of contemporary Taiwan. Both cases are located in dense urban centers and are closely connected to transit infrastructure, including MRT systems, underground parking facilities, and former traffic corridors. However, these areas have undergone a notable transformation from utilitarian infrastructure or leftover spaces into thoughtfully designed urban greenways that function as cultural, recreational, and social hubs. This transformation reflects broader shifts in state-led modernization strategies, where infrastructure is increasingly employed not only to enhance efficiency but also as part of a more holistic vision for urban public life.

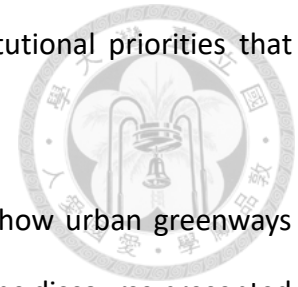
By focusing on these two urban greenways, this study seeks to understand how public green spaces are evolving in both form and function, and how they contribute



to expanding the social roles of urban nature. Through the dual lenses of cultural geography, the research examines how design and functionality interact with diverse users, while also enabling new forms of spatial practice and community engagement. Rather than viewing green spaces as passive or merely decorative elements, these cases highlight their potential as active public platforms that foster social interaction, civic participation, and even local economic vibrancy. In doing so, they demonstrate how urban greenways in Taiwan are adopting new identities and suggest broader possibilities for the role of green space in shaping the future of the urban public realm.

The siting of both Calligraphy Greenway and Xinzhongshan Linear Park was not incidental, but rather the result of specific urban planning decisions and infrastructural transformations. Their respective locations have significantly shaped the social roles each park has come to embody. Calligraphy Greenway in Taichung was developed along the city's pre-existing Green Corridor system, connecting cultural institutions such as the National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts with the municipal government district. The park's placement between civic and cultural hubs reflects a deliberate strategy to establish a destination-oriented public space that promotes gathering, leisure, and symbolic visibility within the urban landscape. In contrast, Xinzhongshan Linear Park emerged following the underground relocation of MRT lines along Zhongshan North Road in Taipei. Occupying the former site of a traffic median, the park is situated near transit nodes, commercial areas, and fragmented urban parcels, which required a design more focused on circulation and transition. As a result, the park serves as connective space between transportation infrastructure and public life, supporting movement, brief periods of rest, and informal social encounters rather than extended use. These differences in site selection reveal the embedded spatial logic that informs each park's design and social function. Although both parks serve as public green spaces, their respective roles diverge

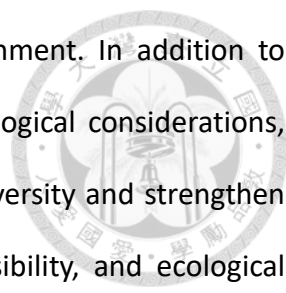
in accordance with the surrounding urban fabric and the institutional priorities that shaped their development.



In relation to the third research question concerning how urban greenways contribute to urban development, it is also important to consider the discourse presented by the official design companies responsible for these projects. Their stated visions and expectations provide valuable insights into how these greenways are positioned within broader development strategies. The following section offers a brief summary of how the firms behind the two case studies articulate their intended contributions to the urban landscape.

Under the design vision of Ecoscope, the Xinzhongshan Linear Park was conceptualized as a “mountain in the city,” envisioned as a continuous green corridor connecting the northern and southern sections of Taipei along the MRT Tamsui Line. The project emphasizes a restrained and minimalist aesthetic, incorporating soft curves, exposed concrete, and muted colors to create a calm and permeable environment. Instead of imposing a fixed program, the design allows for flexible public use, accommodating everyday commuting, casual strolls, cultural events, and temporary installations. This approach reflects a broader ambition to develop an urban landscape that is inclusive, adaptable, and attuned to local rhythms, providing residents with a linear space that is both practically useful and symbolically meaningful.

Importantly, the park was also positioned as a key element in Taipei’s urban renewal strategy. As part of the city’s “Urban Turntable” initiative, the project aligns with broader efforts to reintegrate fragmented spaces around major transit lines, particularly in older districts such as Zhongshan. Ecoscope’s design leverages the MRT’s underground structure to reimagine the surface as a walkable and green passageway, enhancing both



pedestrian mobility and the visual quality of the urban environment. In addition to prioritizing human-centered goals, the project incorporates ecological considerations, including the planting of layered tree canopies to promote biodiversity and strengthen environmental resilience. With its focus on connectivity, accessibility, and ecological integration, the park serves not merely as a recreational facility but as a strategic intervention addressing Taipei's shifting priorities in public space planning.

Taichung's Calligraphy Greenway, developed under AECOM's landscape vision, exemplifies a fluid and performative approach to linear green space in which cultural aesthetics and spatial rhythm are emphasized. Drawing inspiration from the expressive motions of Chinese cursive script, the park was designed to mirror the varied cadence of calligraphic brushwork, incorporating sequences that are slow and fast, tight and open. These qualities are reflected in the shifting scale and tempo of the urban corridors it traverses. In contrast to the minimalist and infrastructural orientation of Xinzhongshan Linear Park, the Calligraphy Greenway emphasizes visual storytelling, sensory engagement, and thematic design. Extending over 3.6 kilometres and covering approximately 6.5 hectares, the greenway links major cultural landmarks, including the National Museum of Natural Science and the Taichung National Art Museum. It weaves through both historic neighbourhoods and newly planned districts, functioning as a transitional space and a civic common. The architectural language of the greenway is deliberately responsive to the diverse paces and purposes of urban life, reinforcing its role as a socially vibrant and symbolically rich urban corridor.

More than merely a physical intervention, the Calligraphy Greenway is embedded within Taichung's broader ambition to position itself as a cultural capital in East Asia. Following the city's designation as the "World's Most Livable Cultural City" in 2007, the municipal government initiated this linear park as a flagship project for urban

revitalization and tourism development. AECOM's design responds to this vision by integrating green infrastructure with cultural programming, soft mobility, and a distinctive aesthetic sensibility. The project brings together environmental sustainability, artistic expression, and local economic activation, embedding public space into the rhythms of daily urban life.

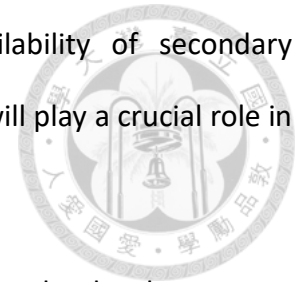
In comparison, Xinzhongshan Linear Park emphasizes functional connectivity and ecological layering within Taipei's infrastructural framework. Calligraphy Greenway, by contrast, positions itself more explicitly as a platform for civic expression and lifestyle identity. Taken together, the two parks illustrate how linear green spaces can perform distinct but complementary roles in reshaping post-industrial urbanism in Taiwan.

From this discussion of the intended visions and planning rationales behind these urban greenways, several key design principles and strategic objectives can be identified. The following section introduces the research methodology adopted in this study.

1.4 Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative research approach aimed at acquiring in-depth information about the selected urban greenways through multiple methods. First, semi-structured interviews will be conducted. Since many of the research questions are inherently subjective, personal experiences and opinions are essential for offering grounded insights into both Xinzhongshan Linear Park and Calligraphy Greenway. This is particularly important for Xinzhongshan Linear Park, which only opened to the public in 2019. As a newly developed urban park, it remains relatively underexplored in both public

discourse and academic literature. Due to the limited availability of secondary information online, first-hand data gathered through interviews will play a crucial role in shaping the study.



Interviewees will be selected based on their relevance to the development or everyday use of the parks. Ideally, they should include not only planners and designers involved in the projects but also regular visitors, nearby residents, shop owners, and market participants. This diverse pool of respondents is intended to enable a more comprehensive analysis in later chapters. In this way, the study engages with a wide range of stakeholders who influence or are influenced by the parks and their surrounding districts.

Second, field observation will be carried out. Regular visits to Xinzhongshan Linear Park, no less than 3 times a month, will be conducted at different times of the day to capture varying patterns of use. While geographic limitations restrict frequent visits to Calligraphy Greenway, at least one site visit will be made. Observations are expected to provide valid insights into user behaviours, spatial dynamics, and noteworthy features. Brief, informal conversations with users may also be conducted to capture spontaneous reflections and experiential narratives on-site.

In this study, the selection of interviewees followed a purposeful sampling approach (Patton, 2015), aiming to gather rich and relevant qualitative data from individuals with meaningful experiences or perspectives related to the linear park. To identify potential participants, I used a combination of three strategies. First, I posted online calls for volunteers, which allowed individuals who were already interested in or emotionally connected to the park to come forward. This form of self-selection sampling (Rubin & Rubin, 2012) is particularly useful in studies of everyday spaces such as parks,

where people with strong opinions or unique experiences are more likely to respond voluntarily. Second, I reached out directly to key stakeholders, such as neighbourhood leaders and local business owners located near the park. These interviewees were selected based on their direct involvement in or influence on the area and were expected to offer valuable insights from a planning, community, or economic perspective (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Third, during fieldwork, I occasionally conducted short interviews with park users who were willing to talk. This opportunistic or on-site sampling (Miles, Huberman & Saldaña, 2014) enabled me to capture spontaneous feedback and everyday user experiences in context.

Since urban greenways are highly integrated into daily life, random or casual interviews might result in general or superficial answers. By focusing on people with specific experiences, strong attachments, or relevant positions, I aimed to collect more reflective and insightful data, aligning with what Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) describe as “knowledgeable participants.” The interview guide was designed to explore key themes based on my research questions, including patterns of use, perceptions of the park, and the meaning or role of the park within the broader urban context. The structure followed a semi-structured format, which ensured consistency across interviews while also providing flexibility to pursue emerging topics (Patton, 2015). Below is the table showing the interview included in the research by now.

Table 2. List of interviewees

Name	Case referred	Identity	Date (yyyy/mm)
Village Official A	Xinzhongshan Linear Park	Elected Officials of Jiantai Village	2024/03
Village Official B	Xinzhongshan Linear Park	Elected Officials of Guangneng Village	2024/05
Visitor A	Xinzhongshan	Visitor	2024/03

	Linear Park		
Resident A	Xinzhongshan Linear Park	Resident near	2024/03
Cafe Owner A	Xinzhongshan Linear Park	Cafe Owner near Xinzhongshan Linear Park	2024/04
Resident B	Xinzhongshan Linear Park	Resident near	2024/05
Visitor B	Xinzhongshan Linear Park	Visitor	2024/05
Activist A	Xinzhongshan Linear Park	Activist on Xinzhongshan Linear Park design and planning	2024/05
Cafe Owner B	Xinzhongshan Linear Park	Cafe owner near Xinzhongshan Linear Park	2024/07
Male store manager	Xinzhongshan Linear Park	Store manager of a boutique near Xinzhongshan Linear Park	2024/07
Resident C	Calligraphy Greenway	Park User	2024/07
Village Official C	Calligraphy Greenway	Elected official of Shengping Village	2024/09
Resident D	Calligraphy Greenway	Resident near	2024/09
Resident E & F	Calligraphy Greenway	Residents near	2024/10
Resident G	Calligraphy Greenway	Resident near	2024/10
Visitor C	Calligraphy Greenway	Visitor	2024/10
Visitor D	Calligraphy Greenway	Visitor	2024/11
Resident H	Calligraphy Greenway	Resident near	2024/11

Chapter 2. The Nature of Linear Park



2.1 Walkability in Urban Greenways

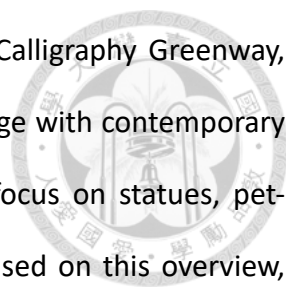
For every field visit to Calligraphy Greenway, we walked along its entire length. A noticeable disparity was observed in the relationship between space and crowd distribution. The experience of walking through the linear park offered us a distinct perspective for examining the unique qualities of such spaces, which can be effectively introduced by bringing the concept of walkability into the discussion.

Calligraphy Greenway is located in the West District of Taichung City, Taiwan. It stretches from Taichung Civic Square near the National Museum of Natural Science in the north to the National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts in the south. This area lies at the heart of Taichung, making it easily accessible and well-connected to other parts of the city. The Greenway intersects several major streets and avenues, establishing itself as a prominent cultural and recreational corridor within the urban landscape. To facilitate the discussion, different sections of the linear park are divided and named based on their geographical location. As shown in the map on the left-hand side, the section between the National Museum of Natural Science and Civic Square is designated as Area N (North). Following the same logic, Area C (Central) refers to the section between Civic Square and the National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts, while Area S (South) refers to the section located south of the Museum of Fine Arts.



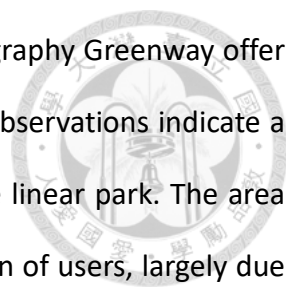
Given the extensive coverage of the Calligraphy Greenway, a brief introduction to each section based on field observations is provided. Starting with Area N, from south to north, this is one of the most crowded sections as it extends from Civic Square and is adjacent to Eslite Park Lane. This area hosts a series of cultural markets and street performers near the entrance of Eslite, attracting a notable crowd, especially on Friday evenings and weekends, with approximately 50 to 70 viewers gathering to enjoy the performances. Moving further north within Area N, the pedestrian flow decreases significantly toward the National Museum of Natural Science. This section lacks specific facilities, except for a small area designed for roller skating with mini routes. In general, the rest of the section serves as a green corridor with occasional benches. A similar condition can be observed in Area S, which also lacks designated functions and primarily consists of extensive plantings and pedestrian pathways.

In contrast to Areas S and N, Area C stands out in terms of design and planning, featuring four major thematic sections. Beginning in the northern part of Area C, this section is well-equipped with standard urban park facilities. It offers ample space for both elderly visitors and children's playgrounds, making it a popular gathering place for older adults and young children, particularly during morning and evening hours. This part of the park functions similarly to a traditional urban park. Furthermore, two temples are located in this section. According to Village Official C, the elected representative of



Shengping Village, these temples predate the establishment of Calligraphy Greenway, contributing to a distinctive landscape that blends spiritual heritage with contemporary park design. The remaining three thematic sections in Area C focus on statues, pet-friendly amenities, and sports-oriented facilities, respectively. Based on this overview, Calligraphy Greenway demonstrates a diversity of functions commonly associated with traditional parks. This appears to contrast with Xinzhongshan Linear Park, where certain recreational features typically found in neighbourhood parks are partially absent. At this stage, it seems reasonable to expect that Calligraphy Greenway has retained the character of a traditional urban park. Building on this observation, the following section explores the actual walking experience along the greenway.

The walking experience within Calligraphy Greenway is strongly shaped by its scale and spatial configuration. As previously noted, the park spans approximately 3.6 kilometers from north to south, making it significantly longer than Xinzhongshan Linear Park. In addition to its length, the park is considerably wider. Across most sections, Calligraphy Greenway offers at least five parallel pedestrian routes: three within the park itself, and two additional sidewalks running along its eastern and western edges, which are connected to adjacent areas via traffic lights. In comparison with the spatial scale of Xinzhongshan Linear Park, Calligraphy Greenway provides a noticeably higher degree of walking comfort. Pedestrians here do not encounter any sense of spatial insufficiency. However, the generous width and extensive layout of this linear park also draw attention to an underlying contrast between space and user density. Despite the availability of ample walking routes, the number of park users may not always correspond to the scale provided, thereby highlighting an interesting disparity between spatial provision and actual crowd presence.



The number and distribution of pedestrians along Calligraphy Greenway offer important insights for analyzing the park's usage patterns. Field observations indicate a marked disparity in user density across different segments of the linear park. The area around Civic Square consistently attracts the highest concentration of users, largely due to the presence of a wide, open lawn that supports a variety of leisure activities. Moving northward into Area N, which links to the National Museum of Natural Science and is flanked by middle-class residential buildings and commercial high-rises, pedestrian activity is still evident but noticeably lower than that of Civic Square. As one continues southward from Civic Square, particularly beyond the National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts toward the southern terminus of the greenway, the number of users drops sharply. In these southern segments, fewer than five individuals were observed at any given time. This uneven distribution raises important questions about the relationship between walkability and actual usage. Although the park offers continuous and accessible walking routes throughout, walkability alone does not appear to guarantee high user engagement across all areas. As noted by Resident C during a field visit, most regular users are nearby residents, particularly elderly individuals. Younger demographics appear to be less engaged, either in terms of facility use or willingness to traverse the length of the greenway. This points to a need to further examine how different user groups perceive and interact with the space, and how location-specific factors may influence usage intensity.

"If you wish to see how the park works, you can walk around early morning here (Area C). But most people gather at the Civic Square, especially young people. Just because there are creative markets and some performances take place. This side (Area C and Area S) is much smaller in number of users, a proportion of them are dog owners,

for your information.”

(Resident C)



Resident C, an elderly man who frequently visited the park with his grandchild, offered reflections that shed light on how user patterns differ between urban greenways. In the case of Calligraphy Greenway, most users observed were of a similar demographic, primarily older adults. This reveals a noticeable contrast between user activity in Areas S and N and the high concentration of visitors near Civic Square, both in terms of age distribution and overall numbers. While it is evident that Civic Square attracts the majority of parkgoers, a question arises: why do other sections of the Calligraphy Greenway experience such limited pedestrian activity?

To address this, our fieldwork experience in Taichung has been incorporated into the analysis of walkability. Upon arriving in the city, the disparity in user distribution became more understandable when considered alongside the broader urban context. Unlike Taipei, where the MRT system offers extensive and integrated coverage, Taichung's public transportation network is relatively limited. It consists of only one MRT line, a railway system, and a network of buses. Among these, buses primarily serve as supplementary connections to areas not covered by rail transit. Given that Taichung's geographic area is nearly ten times larger than that of Taipei, the commuting habits between the two cities differ substantially. While walking along Calligraphy Greenway and its adjacent side streets, we observed significant differences in transportation patterns. As shown in Photos 1 and 2, both sides of the park were lined with parked cars and motorbikes, an everyday sight that was absent along Xinzhongshan Linear Park in Taipei. This observation reflects a broader trend: a high level of private vehicle ownership among

Taichung residents, which in turn influences how public space is used. For many citizens, commuting by car or scooter is part of their daily routine, reducing the likelihood that they would engage with the greenway through walking.

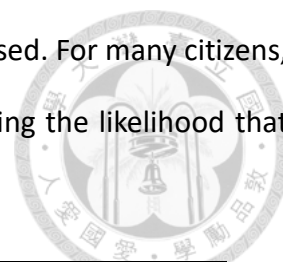
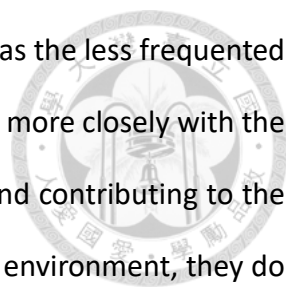


Photo 1. Sideway of Calligraphy Greenway	Photo 2. Alley extends just from lateral side of Calligraphy Greenway

This result reveals an interesting contradiction within the linear park: although it offers high walkability, only a small number of citizens actually use it for walking. The walkability is evident in the park's flat pathways, unlike the slopes and level changes found in Xinzhongshan Linear Park, as well as its generous plantings and natural shade. Ironically, the area where people most frequently gather is the Civic Square, which lacks shading. This contrast invites us to reconsider how a linear park is ideally meant to function. Rather than serving purely as a green corridor that guides movement from one end to the other, the park appears to function unevenly across different sections.

Area N, with its concentration of businesses and the presence of Civic Square, has developed into a vibrant node that caters to tourists and encourages consumption.



In contrast, Areas C and S tend to be more peripheral, functioning as the less frequented ends of the Calligraphy Greenway. These two areas appear to align more closely with the traditional role of an urban park, offering passive leisure spaces and contributing to the city's green infrastructure. While they bring nature into the urban environment, they do not effectively guide pedestrian flows. Despite the differences in usage patterns, Areas C and S still provide a high degree of walkability. However, the effectiveness of this function depends on a crucial condition: there must be a visible rate of actual use. Without sufficient users, even the most well-designed walkable space cannot fully realize its intended social and spatial roles.

During the field visit to Calligraphy Greenway, the investigation of walkability extended beyond the boundaries of the linear park itself to include the surrounding streets and alleys. Assessing the walking experience in the nearby urban environment helps contextualize the park's accessibility and evaluate its overall contribution to the city's walkability. By navigating through adjacent roads, crossing intersections, and observing the connectivity between different sections of the city, we documented the following field notes to capture the walking experience around Calligraphy Greenway.

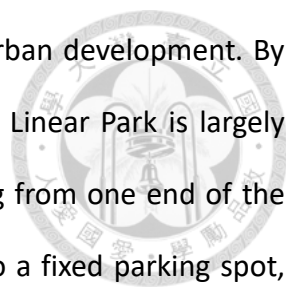
"I turned my body to dodge cars. Went up and down along the arcade and zigzagged around motorcycles parked on the way. Taking a quick photo of the streetscape, I sent it to my Taiwanese friend just to ask if Taichung got an actual path for pedestrians." (field notes)

To explore this issue further, I visited the elected representative of the nearby neighbourhood, referred to here as Village Official C. When asked about the walkability

of Taichung City, he showed a subtle expression of displeasure. This reaction may reflect a broader sensitivity to critiques often directed at certain Taiwanese cities, which are occasionally described colloquially as “pedestrian hells” due to their challenging and unsafe walking environments. In response, Village Official C offered the following defense of the city’s traffic conditions and pedestrian infrastructure:

“I won’t consider here as a ‘hell of pedestrian’. Taichung is still a city with sufficient and accessible transportation. Even if you claim the walking experience is not satisfactory, that is merely because of the market nearby. It occupies part of space on the street, which is unavoidable and is happening anywhere else in Taiwan.”

Even in areas near markets, the overall pedestrian experience in Taichung falls short of what would be considered safe and comfortable. Compared to Taipei, streets in Taichung often lack a designated buffer zone between road traffic and pedestrian areas such as arcades or storefronts. In Taipei, this buffer is typically marked in green paint or separated by a curb, serving as a clear boundary that discourages vehicles from encroaching into pedestrian space. This design feature contributes significantly to a safer and more pleasant walking experience. In contrast, such elements are inconsistently applied in Taichung, leading to a clear discrepancy between the walkability of the Calligraphy Greenway and that of the surrounding urban fabric. The standard level of walkability across Taichung is generally lower for residents who might otherwise enjoy strolling, exploring new shops, or engaging in spontaneous urban experiences. Coupled with a prevailing reliance on private vehicles, the streets often lack visible pedestrian activity. This helps explain why Areas S and N of the Calligraphy Greenway remain underutilized despite offering high walkability within the park itself. Moreover, the scale of the park is relatively large, and walking its full length can be time-consuming.



This situation reflects broader patterns in Taichung's urban development. By comparison, the high pedestrian flow observed in Xinzhongshan Linear Park is largely enabled by the presence of the MRT system. The ease of moving from one end of the park to the other via public transit reduces the need to return to a fixed parking spot, making walking a more viable and appealing option. In contrast, in Taichung, reliance on motorcycles or cars creates a structural disincentive for walking long distances. As a result, pedestrian movement within the Calligraphy Greenway tends to concentrate around Civic Square, while Areas C and S remain marginalized and less integrated into the city's everyday pedestrian flows.

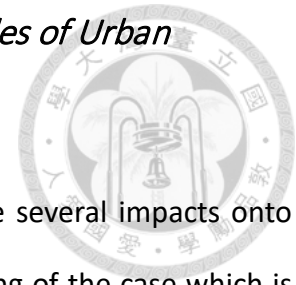
The discussion on walkability in Calligraphy Greenway highlights a key paradox: while the park offers a wide, safe, and well-structured green corridor for pedestrians, this potential is not fully realized in practice. Designed with distinct thematic zones to accommodate diverse user groups, the park's elongated form and generous scale reflect thoughtful urban planning. However, field observations reveal that some sections, particularly the central and southern parts, remain underutilized despite their high walkability. This discrepancy raises critical questions about how greenways function in relation to their surrounding urban context. It suggests that the effectiveness of a park cannot be assessed by design alone; instead, it is shaped by broader patterns of urban movement, accessibility, and everyday behavior. Calligraphy Greenway presents an intriguing case in this regard. Although the park is clearly designed for pedestrian comfort, with wide walkways and a coherent spatial flow, actual foot traffic varies considerably across its segments. The northern section (Area N), especially near Civic Square, attracts the highest number of users, likely due to its proximity to commercial hubs and event spaces such as markets and busker performances. In contrast, the central (Area C) and southern (Area S) sections attract noticeably fewer users, despite offering similar

walkable environments.

This uneven distribution reveals an important insight: walkability depends not only on spatial design but also on the urban context in which it operates. As Gehl (2010) notes, successful pedestrian spaces must be understood in relation to infrastructure, behavior, and mobility patterns. In a city like Taichung, where car ownership is widespread and public transportation networks are relatively limited, the incentive to walk long distances is reduced. As a result, even well-designed green corridors may struggle to fulfill their intended function if they are not integrated into residents' daily routines. Walkability, therefore, should not be viewed as a fixed attribute of space, but rather as a relational quality that emerges through the interaction between design, accessibility, and urban rhythms.

Calligraphy Greenway demonstrates that walkability is not solely determined by good design; it also relies on how well the park fits into the everyday routines of local residents. As Calthorpe (1993) argues, effective urban design should promote walking. However, in Taichung, where car usage is widespread and public transportation is not well integrated, the park's potential as a pedestrian corridor remains limited. This illustrates that walkability in urban greenways depends not only on physical design but also on the broader transportation culture of the city. Although Calligraphy Greenway was designed with walkability in mind, its actual use is shaped by a car-centered environment that restricts its effectiveness as a pedestrian space. This highlights the importance of considering both spatial design and urban context when evaluating how well a greenway can fulfill its intended role.

2.2 Functional Design and Social Needs: The Multifaceted Roles of Urban Greenway



The nature of an urban greenways that would impose several impacts onto Xinzhongshan Linear Park. The shape and size establish the setting of the case which is unlikely to be altered, forms the ground for building and designing the park itself. The shape of the linear, to a large extent, determined the character of the urban park in this case. Urban greenway distinct itself with its unique long and narrow space feature that would generally be emphasized for its ability to build connection among communities, foster visitor flowrate and more. In the case of Xinzhongshan Linear Park, we highlight the capability of assembling crowds and diverting flux of visitors with such a green corridor along a commercial, cultural environment.

The narrow and elongated form of Xinzhongshan Linear Park plays a crucial role in shaping the visitor experience. On one hand, it extends a green corridor that connects the northern and southern parts of the city. On the other, its shape naturally directs pedestrian movement along the pathway, offering continuous visibility of the surrounding streets, as shown in Photo 3. Unlike traditional rectangular parks, where movement is less guided and views of the surroundings are limited, linear parks like this allow visitors to remain visually connected to adjacent neighbourhoods, including nearby shops, cafes, and urban landscapes. In this way, the park enables pedestrians to perceive and engage with the community as they walk, turning movement into a process of spatial discovery. Xinzhongshan Linear Park not only weaves through the urban fabric but also opens a path for visitors to get to know the area. For instance, one end of the park connects to a cluster of large shopping malls near Zhongshan MRT Station (Photo 4), while the sides are lined with boutique shops and artsy cafés. The green corridor thus serves as both a physical and experiential link, encouraging visitors to explore and wander

across these distinct urban zones.



Photo 3. Visibility from Xinzhongshan Linear Park towards streetscape

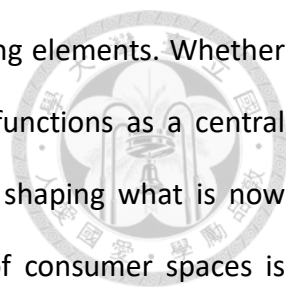


Photo 4. Mall right next to Xinzhongshan Linear Park

The Elected Officials of the Jiantai Village, adjacent to Xinzhongshan Linear Park, Village Official A elaborates on the relationship between the linear park and the business clusters there,

“As you know, a spot that is crowded, like near a temple, requires a certain extent of space that allows visitors to come and go. Even if the spot is tempting, without the space itself to accommodate the influx of people, barely it could be a successful spot. Since we have business clusters here, with the aid of the linear park providing the space, by then people would be willing to come.”

What Village Official A expresses reflects the core idea of designing space to serve people. While urban parks are by nature public spaces, the establishment of



Xinzhongshan Linear Park has uniquely harmonized its surrounding elements. Whether this integration was planned or emerged organically, the park functions as a central connector that ties together nearby urban features, effectively shaping what is now known as the "Zhongshan business district." If this clustering of consumer spaces is coincidental, it may be attributed to the site-specific constraints of the park itself. Constructed on a narrow, elongated plot of land that could not be significantly reshaped, the park's linear form resembles the spatial characteristics of temple streets or night markets, as noted by Village Official A. This configuration is particularly well-suited to accommodating pedestrian flows and informal commercial activity.

More significantly, the linear layout facilitates not just forward movement but also lateral access into adjacent alleys and lanes, allowing pedestrian traffic to spread across the district like a stream flowing through a porous surface. Had the site been a more expansive, regular-shaped space, it might not have evolved into a park that encourages such fluid and decentralized movement. Larger parks often feature crisscrossed paths that can confuse or diffuse pedestrian flows, making them less effective at concentrating activity. This spatial logic aligns with the concept of lateral porosity, which refers to how easily pedestrians can move across a linear space into its surroundings. When combined with the longitudinal walkability offered by the park, enabling movement from one end (Shuanglian/Zhongshan) to the other, a distinctive urban pattern emerges (Kullmann, 2012). As Visitor B noted, "the most apparent function of the park is to guide people to walk, so that they can enter alleys nearby." Field observations in this study support this view: most pedestrians were seen walking in a consistent direction, typically from Zhongshan toward Shuanglian, revealing a strong sense of directional flow embedded in the park's design.

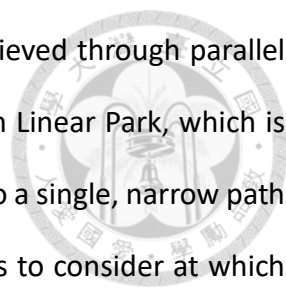
At the same time, as one moves closer to the Shuanglian end of the park, the

number of visitors noticeably decreases. While it is understandable that Zhongshan is more crowded due to the presence of shopping malls, this observation raises a question: where do people go as they walk through the park? Field observations reveal that lateral porosity is more effective for visitors who begin their journey from the Zhongshan side. Lateral exits, such as the one shown in Photo 5, are more visible and accessible from that direction. This spatial arrangement creates a sense of orientation and comfort, making it feel natural and inviting for pedestrians to exit into the side alleys from that end of the park. The visual cues and bodily experience of walking reinforce this sense of welcome and direction. This subtle guidance helps to distribute the pedestrian flow into nearby lanes and alleyways, contributing to the vibrancy of the surrounding neighbourhood. It also explains how businesses in the vicinity benefit from a noticeable influx of customers entering from the park.



Photo 5. Lateral exit facing the side of Zhongshan

Meanwhile, the concept of linear transit highlights how people move through a linear park from one end to the other, often forming a loop by returning along a



different path. In wider parks, such looped circulation can be achieved through parallel walkways or internal loops. However, in the case of Xinzhongshan Linear Park, which is only about 25 meters wide, pedestrian movement is constrained to a single, narrow path used for both going and returning. This limitation requires visitors to consider at which point they should turn back. At the midpoint of the park lies Jazz Square, an underground performing arts venue. Above it, the linear park continues via an elevated, bridge-like structure that extends toward the Shuanglian end (Photo 6). Notably, the regular weekend market in Xinzhongshan Linear Park only stretches from the Zhongshan side up to the area above Jazz Square. This spatial boundary often becomes the turnaround point for visitors, who tend to retrace their steps back toward Zhongshan. As a result, pedestrian movement beyond Jazz Square and toward Shuanglian is significantly reduced. Whether intentional or not, this planning outcome appears to discourage large crowds from flowing into the Shuanglian area. In doing so, it preserves the relatively quiet and residential character of that neighbourhood, while still offering lateral access to adjacent streets. This uneven distribution of pedestrian activity reveals a spatial asymmetry in the park's design, suggesting a deliberate attempt by planners to manage the contrasting characteristics of the two districts. In other words, by placing greater emphasis on the Zhongshan end and limiting flow to Shuanglian, the park's design may paradoxically help maintain a balance between commercial vibrancy and residential tranquility.



Photo 6. Bridge separating the two ends, Jazz Square at the bottom

The role of directing crowd flow in Xinzhongshan Linear Park closely parallels the case of Calligraphy Greenway, where an elongated linear form tends to create a polarized effect between the two ends. One end may attract a high volume of visitors, while the other remains relatively calm. This phenomenon suggests that when a linear park is planned with attention to its segments, it can be tailored to meet diverse social needs. Such flexibility reflects the versatility of linear parks, which can serve multiple functions depending on their urban context. Whether the goal is to preserve traditional park elements such as green space and recreational areas, or to accommodate crowds and manage pedestrian flows in commercial districts, linear parks can be adapted to fit both. While these features illustrate the potential of linear parks to redefine the concept of urban green space, they also reveal certain limitations. Specifically, the narrow and elongated scale of a linear park often requires sacrificing some characteristics of traditional parks in order to realize these new possibilities. As the following discussion of Xinzhongshan Linear Park will show, such novel urban spaces may no longer fully resemble what is conventionally understood as a “park.”

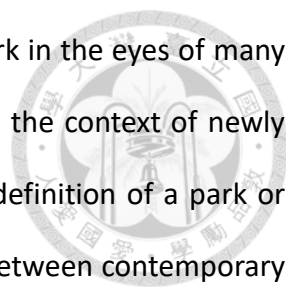


From another perspective, the elongated shape of Xinzhongshan Linear Park inevitably constrains both the range of user activities and the space available for vegetation. In its current condition, the park's relatively larger green coverage is located north of Shuanglian MRT Station, near Wenchang Temple. However, this area lies outside the scope of this research. The portion of the park south of Shuanglian Station, which is the focus of this study, is significantly more crowded and features a much higher proportion of paved, or grey, surfaces. This contrast highlights how the park's form limits its ecological and recreational functions. Although Xinzhongshan Linear Park successfully serves as a pedestrian green corridor, its utility largely stops there. The narrow width, approximately 25 meters, is sufficient to support a comfortable walkway but insufficient to accommodate larger facilities such as playgrounds or expansive grass fields. As noted by Visitor A, the space felt unexpectedly out of place for something labeled as a "park," suggesting a disconnect between the park's name and the user experience it actually offers.

"I didn't notice this is a park until I was told. To me, it does seem like a plaza instead of a park, since it never looks like what a park should be. The proportion of grey cover to green is like 9 : 1. And it just does not feel like a park that would allow children to run around and to rest comfortably as it is just overcrowded."

(Visitor A)

Based on the responses from the interviewee, it becomes evident that Xinzhongshan Linear Park primarily functions as a pedestrian corridor designed to accommodate foot traffic. However, its spatial limitations result in a lack of features commonly associated with public parks, such as comfortable resting areas and recreational facilities. In contrast to the more spacious green zone in front of Wenchang Temple, the southern section of the park appears to have sacrificed greenery in favor of



grey infrastructure, making it less recognizable as a traditional park in the eyes of many users. This observation raises a central question for the study: in the context of newly developed urban spaces like Xinzhongshan Linear Park, has the definition of a park or recreational space evolved? Or does this reflect a misalignment between contemporary design principles and public expectations? The following section will explore this issue from another angle, focusing on how the park is perceived and experienced by its users.

In light of the observed discrepancy between the general public's perception of urban parks and the actual visual and bodily experiences reported by respondents, particularly regarding green coverage in Xinzhongshan Linear Park, this section examines the process and outcome of greening management within the park. This inquiry plays a critical role in the research because it helps determine whether the park is intentionally deprioritizing traditional greening functions typically associated with urban parks. It also raises a broader question about whether such an approach is suitable as a model for future urban park design.

In the process of conducting interviews, most of the respondents reflected that the proportion of plantation in Xinzhongshan Linear Park is not up to standard or more could be done. Even for the Elected Officials from the nearby villages, they admit the room for plantation is sacrificed for the sake of commercialization, which includes weekend markets and festive events. As some of the respondents, like Activist A and resident B have said, both echos on the fact *"the green coverage rate may not show a significant drop, yet the body experience of greenings in the park does observe a great change."* From the perspective of Resident B, he pointed out that before the redesign of the linear park, the general design of the park was with smaller walkways instead of cement paths. The implementation of using cement in the entire park has greatly

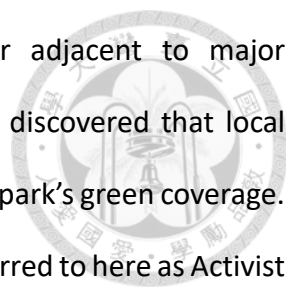
disrupted the ability of the space to moderate micro-climate. This inspires the research to investigate through the forms of plantation in Xinzhongshan Linear Park.

Respondents noted that the earlier version of the linear park offered a stronger cooling effect as a green open space. This reflects a bodily experience that is not fully captured by the seemingly unchanged level of green coverage in the current park. Activist A, a key figure in the campaign to preserve the vegetation around Shuanglian, played an important role in negotiating the conservation of plantings during the redesign of the park. She pointed out that most of the vegetation in the current park consists of transplanted trees, and that many long-standing, mature trees were lost during the redevelopment process. The newly planted trees are visibly younger, shorter, thinner, and less leafy than those that once stood in the park. As shown in Photo 7, the tree trunks are narrow, and the canopy has not yet developed to provide extensive shade. Larger trees, such as those shown in Photo 8, are present elsewhere in the park, but they are not located alongside the main pedestrian path. In other words, the primary walkway in Xinzhongshan Linear Park is shaded only by smaller trees like those in Photo 7. The number of trees in the park is also limited. Given that Xinzhongshan Linear Park is a relatively narrow space, largely composed of edges and lateral exits, planting tall trees along its boundaries would obstruct visibility for both pedestrians and drivers, thereby raising safety concerns. These constraints further restrict the park's ability to function as a fully shaded green corridor.

	
Photo 7. Young trees in the park	Photo 8. Older trees in the park

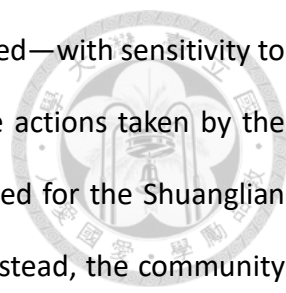
This observation becomes more understandable when we consider the limited canopy coverage along the linear park, which results in a noticeably weak cooling effect. The microclimate within Xinzhongshan Linear Park does not differ significantly from that of the surrounding streets, suggesting that the park does not function as effectively as traditional parks in moderating temperature or providing shade. In other words, the vegetation in this park fails to create a nature-like environment in terms of thermal comfort and shelter. Although the overall green coverage rate may not appear to have decreased significantly, this could be due to the widespread use of shrubs. While shrubs are technically vegetation, they do not offer the same cooling effect as trees. This helps explain why the amount of greenery might seem sufficient in objective terms, yet the perceived temperature still resembles that of walking along an ordinary urban street.

Although this study does not primarily focus on ecological or microclimatic concerns, the landscape design of Xinzhongshan Linear Park reveals spatial strategies that significantly influence how the park is experienced and used in social terms. The use of low shrubs and open lawns emphasizes visibility, permeability, and spatial fluidity, which



corresponds to the park's function as a transitional corridor adjacent to major transportation routes. During the course of this research, it was discovered that local residents had organized a series of actions aimed at preserving the park's green coverage. One of the leading figures in these efforts was our interviewee, referred to here as Activist A. The discussion that follows draws on her experiences and perspectives. The site of the action was the lawn area located in front of Wenchang Temple, adjacent to Shuanglian Station. Activist A, who has lived in the neighbourhood since childhood, was prompted to take action after encountering a notice posted on the construction fence at the site. The notice detailed plans for the redevelopment of the lawn, which included a substantial reduction in its size compared to the previous layout. In response, she began mobilizing others in the community who shared her concern in order to advocate for the preservation of the original lawn.

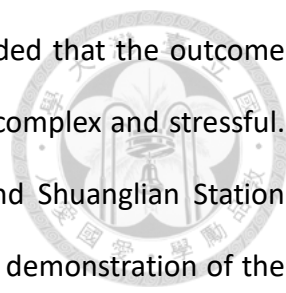
Activist A developed a deep emotional connection with the park, having grown up in the neighbourhood and spent much of her time there. For many residents, places like this park hold personal memories and contribute to a sense of identity, forming the foundation of their attachment to the space. This emotional connection was crucial in allowing Activist A to mobilize support from various local institutions, including nearby schools and hospitals. Many individuals signed petitions not only out of concern for the lawn itself, but also for personal reasons tied to their experiences in the park. During the interview, Activist A was asked about the specific actions taken during the campaign. In addition to formal channels such as meetings with government officials and press conferences, what stood out was the series of community gatherings held directly in the park. Residents came together to share their personal stories and experiences connected to the space. These gatherings reflected a form of negotiation rooted in sentiment, demonstrating that their concern extended beyond the physical lawn. It was also an



expression of how the community hoped the park would be planned—with sensitivity to local values and lived experiences. From today’s perspective, the actions taken by the community can be seen as well-justified. There is no pressing need for the Shuanglian side of the park to become overly commercialized or crowded. Instead, the community values peace, livability, and open green space. Unlike Zhongshan, where demand for market space and event venues is high, Shuanglian reflects a different set of priorities. Preserving a larger, open lawn in this context should be seen as both reasonable and meaningful.

In the interviews with elected officials from nearby villages, it was revealed that they hold a certain degree of influence in negotiations with the planners of the linear park. For instance, they participate in regular meetings with the planning team to stay informed about updates to the park’s revitalization plans. They are often asked to provide recommendations or express preferences, particularly regarding the sections of the park closest to their communities. This dynamic was also reflected upon by Activist A, who noted that elected officials are often the key figures whom planners aim to satisfy. They are generally regarded as representatives of local residents, and thus play a central role in legitimizing the design process. However, as Activist A pointed out, the reality is often more complicated. In any urban project, each stakeholder may pursue distinct goals or interests. This complexity, she argued, is a common feature of representative democratic systems. From her perspective, such structural conditions can only be addressed by ensuring that individual voices are heard. This does not necessarily mean that elected officials are unhelpful, but rather that communication barriers often exist between different actors. Bridging these gaps is essential for more inclusive and responsive urban planning.

Toward the end of the interview with Activist A, she was asked whether she



was satisfied with the current condition of the park. She responded that the outcome was acceptable, even though the process had been emotionally complex and stressful. Ultimately, the lawn was largely preserved, and the area around Shuanglian Station retained its sense of calm. She regarded the collective action as a demonstration of the public's ability to assert their rights in shaping public open space. At the same time, the experience also revealed how existing socio-political structures can hinder efforts to achieve environmental justice. Reflecting on her personal use of the park, Activist A noted that she seldom walks toward the Zhongshan end because it is often too crowded. However, she did not view the presence of crowds negatively. Even though that part of the park does not directly serve her needs, she acknowledged that the revitalization and increased foot traffic may bring new and positive transformations to the broader community. In her view, the most meaningful form of justice in urban development lies not in uniform outcomes. Rather, it is found in allowing parks, whether located in residential or commercial areas, to evolve in ways that reflect local needs and respect the rights of the people who inhabit them.

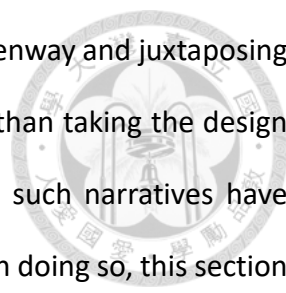
The functionality of Xinzhongshan Linear Park is closely shaped by its physical design, particularly its elongated and narrow form. This distinctive layout functions not only as a green corridor connecting key areas of the city, but also as a mechanism for directing pedestrian flow. The park's linear form creates a strong sense of directionality, which Kullmann (2012) identifies as a defining characteristic of urban greenways. In the case of Xinzhongshan, the design guides visitors along a continuous route, facilitating movement between commercial zones and cultural landmarks. This directional flow enhances pedestrian accessibility and encourages interaction with the surrounding environment, including nearby shops and cafes. In doing so, the park becomes more than a transit space; it serves as a dynamic part of the community. This observation aligns with

Millington (2015), who argues that urban greenways function as integrative elements, linking neighbourhoods and fostering social engagement through spatial connectivity.

Moreover, the design of the park contributes to shaping the identity of the surrounding community. As Gehl (2010) suggests, urban public spaces such as parks play a vital role in strengthening the social fabric by fostering interaction and a sense of cohesion. In the case of Xinzhongshan, the linear park has supported the development of a vibrant business district by attracting both local residents and visitors. Its function as a pedestrian corridor, directing foot traffic toward nearby commercial areas, illustrates the dynamic relationship between public space and urban growth. However, this functionality also reveals certain constraints. The park's narrow width and elongated form limit its capacity to provide the kinds of expansive recreational areas typically associated with traditional parks. This concern was also raised by Visitor A during the interviews, who noted the lack of open green areas for rest and leisure. Such limitations invite reflection on how the definition of urban parks is evolving in contemporary planning contexts. Increasingly, parks are expected to serve multiple roles, balancing environmental, social, and economic functions. Xinzhongshan Linear Park exemplifies how the design of urban greenways can fulfil diverse demands by simultaneously supporting community engagement and contributing to the broader objectives of urban development.

2.3 Reconfiguring Design: Interrogating the Urban Governance of Urban Greenways

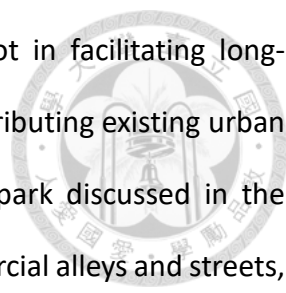
This section concludes the preceding case studies by revisiting the official



design narratives of Xinzhongshan Linear Park and Calligraphy Greenway and juxtaposing them with the empirical findings from field observations. Rather than taking the design discourse at face value, the aim here is to critically assess how such narratives have materialized, or contradicted, through everyday spatial practices. In doing so, this section moves beyond aesthetics or functionality, and seeks to unpack the broader implications of urban greenways as tools of spatial governance, identity formation, and socio-economic restructuring.

Both case studies reveal distinct priorities embedded in their design. In the case of Calligraphy Greenway, AECOM's vision of a "flowing" and "calligraphic" urban corridor emphasizes rhythm, openness, and cultural expressiveness across its 3.6-kilometer stretch. Yet, fieldwork reveals an intriguing contradiction: while the design promotes high walkability, the actual pedestrian experience is fragmented. Because Taichung remains a car-oriented city where private vehicles dominate daily mobility, usage of the greenway is highly uneven. Certain nodes, such as those near the National Museum of Natural Science or the Civic Square, are densely visited, while other sections appear underutilized, even deserted. This spatial inconsistency is exacerbated by the greenway's sheer length and scale. Instead of fostering continuous pedestrian engagement, the linear form becomes a selective space, activating some zones while leaving others disconnected or marginal. In these less frequented segments, the greenway's function shifts from an interactive urban corridor to a more passive landscape element—serving primarily an ecological or beautification role rather than actively shaping urban life.

In contrast, Xinzhongshan Linear Park presents a different design logic and spatial dynamic. While its walkability is somewhat more limited due to narrower paths



and occasional obstructions, the project's primary focus lies not in facilitating long-distance pedestrian flow, but rather in accommodating and redistributing existing urban foot traffic. From a micro-scale perspective, the layout of the park discussed in the previous section subtly directs people toward the adjacent commercial alleys and streets, rather than channelling them northward toward the quieter Shuanglian area. This suggests an intentional design language geared toward supporting the vibrancy of surrounding commercial zones while preserving the relatively tranquil character of nearby residential neighbourhoods. Notably, the park features minimal vegetation compared to conventional green spaces, highlighting a deliberate trade-off in the design concept. By reducing emphasis on ecological greening, the space prioritizes spatial fluidity and permeability over natural immersion. This choice may be seen as a partial abandonment of what is conventionally expected from an urban green space. However, it also reveals a distinctive form of urban adaptability, demonstrating how urban greenways can serve more flexible roles in city-making strategies beyond environmental considerations.

Building on these observations, it is important to consider how each space reflects, or fails to reflect, the core visions laid out by its design consultants. These spatial dynamics reflect, to varying degrees, the visions articulated by each project's design consultants—yet also reveal where these visions encounter friction in real-world application. For Calligraphy Greenway, AECOM envisioned an urban corridor inspired by the expressive flow of calligraphy emphasizing spatial rhythm, cultural vibrancy, and continuity. This vision is partially realized in the variation across different segments: high-traffic zones near museums and commercial blocks host performances and markets, fulfilling the intended sense of cultural liveliness and rhythm. However, other stretches of the greenway, particularly those farther from key landmarks, experience significantly

lower foot traffic. In these areas, the spatial language becomes more subdued, and the greenway shifts toward a passive landscape element, fulfilling primarily aesthetic and ecological functions rather than the active, expressive role originally envisioned.

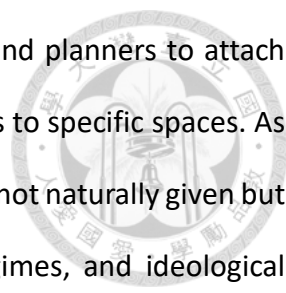
In the case of Xinzhongshan Linear Park, Ecoscope promoted a minimalist and integrative approach, emphasizing clear movement patterns and everyday usability. This intention is notably reflected in the park's ability to direct pedestrian flow toward surrounding commercial alleys, subtly supporting local economic activity while maintaining the calm atmosphere of adjacent residential areas. Yet the park's minimal use of vegetation suggests a conscious de-prioritization of ecological and restorative functions. In doing so, it partially diverges from broader expectations of what urban green spaces should provide, and reveals a design strategy that privileges spatial permeability over environmental enrichment. Both cases thus demonstrate a partial alignment with their design visions—manifesting some core ideas, while adapting or compromising others in response to contextual constraints.

These partial alignments between design vision and real-world implementation reveal both the adaptive potential and the intrinsic limitations of urban greenways within contemporary city-making. Where the intended functions were realized, such as Xinzhongshan's subtle redirection of foot traffic toward commercial alleys, or the activation of key nodes along Calligraphy Greenway, greenways emerge not simply as leisure-oriented open space, but as infrastructural agents capable of shaping pedestrian movement, supporting local economies, and mediating between distinct urban rhythms. In these moments, the greenway operates as a flexible spatial strategy that blends environmental design with economic revitalization and social circulation, suggesting that linear green spaces can play an active and multifunctional role in post-industrial urban development.



However, the same case studies also underscore significant blind spots embedded in the original design narratives. The underutilized stretches of Calligraphy Greenway reveal a key vulnerability in the project's large-scale design logic. Specifically, the assumption that a continuous, aesthetically unified green corridor can sustain equal levels of cultural vibrancy across its full extent proves to be problematic. As the greenway extends beyond the city's more animated core into quieter or less commercially active districts, its spatial role begins to shift. In these peripheral zones, the greenway often fails to generate the kinds of urban vitality and cultural convergence envisioned in its design narrative. Instead, its function reverts to that of a passive green buffer. While it continues to provide visual relief and ecological value, it lacks the social density or performative energy needed to serve as an active platform for urban life or innovation. This outcome reflects a design approach that overemphasizes formal coherence and symbolic continuity, while underestimating the importance of context-specific engagement with Taichung's spatial hierarchy and movement ecology.

Similarly, Xinzhongshan's deliberate reduction of vegetation, although intended to preserve urban permeability, raises questions about the trade-offs involved in deprioritizing ecological or restorative functions. While its design successfully integrates pedestrian flow with surrounding commercial areas, it also partially diverges from broader expectations associated with urban green spaces. In this regard, the park illustrates a deeper tension in greenway planning, namely the need to choose between enhancing environmental qualities and maximizing spatial adaptability for economic or logistical purposes. The concern and underlying concept of the "green" part of Xinzhongshan Linear Park can be further explored and interpreted. In contemporary urban design and renewal projects, "greenery" often serves less as a tool for ecological enhancement and more as a symbolic language embedded in strategies of spatial



governance. The presence of green elements enables the state and planners to attach positive connotations such as livability, sustainability, and progress to specific spaces. As Smith (1996) and Swyngedouw et al. (2003) argue, urban nature is not naturally given but socially produced through the interplay of capital, planning regimes, and ideological constructs. What emerges is a form of “manufactured nature” that functions more as a signifier than as a biophysical intervention. The case of Xinzhongshan Linear Park illustrates this point: its green elements are limited in scale and fragmented in form, yet they carry disproportionate symbolic weight in the park’s public representation and policy framing.

While the majority of the park is paved in grey concrete, and vegetation is confined to perimeter strips and occasional tree rows, the project is still widely promoted as a green infrastructure achievement and categorized as a “park” in official discourse. This minimum threshold of green that is insufficient for meaningful mitigation of urban heat or microclimatic regulation. It nonetheless achieves visual harmony and lends the space an aesthetic of comfort. Such superficial greening blurs the line between urban park and upgraded sidewalk. And yet, through the discursive act of naming the space a “park,” the project gains legitimacy within urban redevelopment agendas and is inscribed with symbolic capital associated with public welfare, openness, and inclusiveness. Naming plays a crucial role here. The label “park” carries with it a normative imagery of openness, relaxation, and accessible greenery, especially in global contexts where parks serve as markers of a progressive and people-centered city. In the case of Xinzhongshan, the designation of “park” produces a performative spatial identity that appeals to both residents and tourists, even when the site’s material and ecological conditions diverge significantly from conventional parks. This symbolic inflation raises the question: does minimal greening justify the elevation of a space to the status of “park,” and what does

this imply about the politics of naming in spatial governance?



This study deliberately avoids the term “linear park” and instead adopts “linear greenway” as its analytical language. This choice is meant to foreground the ambiguities and contestations embedded in official naming practices. While “greenway” neutrally denotes a linear open space for circulation, rest, and connection, the term “park” invokes stronger associations with ecology, welfare, and leisure. By using the former, this study resists taking the state’s framing at face value and instead interrogates the discursive labor that enables minimal green elements to perform maximal symbolic functions. During fieldwork interviews, several users explicitly questioned whether Xinzhongshan truly functions as a park, remarking that it “feels more like a sidewalk” or “lacks places to linger.” These observations reflect a dissonance between symbolic designation and experiential reality. In this sense, “green” and “park” should be read as instruments of governance rather than neutral descriptors. They enable state actors to legitimate spatial interventions, align projects with global urban aspirations, and mask functional limitations with visual and rhetorical coherence. In the context of linear greenways, this process reveals how governance operates not only through spatial design but also through symbolic economies. Naming, imagery, and minimal aesthetic cues are mobilized to manufacture the appearance of publicness.

These insights suggest that while urban greenways possess considerable adaptive capacity, their successful integration into urban planning requires a more nuanced and localized approach. Rather than applying uniform design principles across an entire corridor, planners and designers must consider how different segments of a greenway interact with the surrounding urban fabric. The case of Calligraphy Greenway offers a compelling example. While certain underused stretches highlight the risks of overextension, others demonstrate a promising form of spatial optimization. For instance,

in Area C—situated farther from the city’s central commercial district—the greenway accommodates its reduced pedestrian flow by incorporating active recreational spaces, such as sports courts, which are well-used by nearby residents. This adjustment shows how linear greenways can flexibly respond to shifting urban densities and user needs.

Looking further south, Area S of Calligraphy Greenway presents a spatial juncture that is even more peripheral. At this point, its future programming becomes an open question: should it be enhanced as a recreational site for adjacent communities, or should it instead be developed with an emphasis on ecological restoration and environmental education? These are the kinds of strategic considerations that both government bodies and design consultants must actively engage with. Rather than treating greenways as purely connective infrastructures, they should be viewed as site-responsive systems that can embody diverse and even hybrid functions. In this light, the greenway’s linearity becomes not a constraint, but a framework for modular interventions that can evolve in response to local demographic, economic, and ecological conditions. What this case ultimately reveals is not only the potential for greenways to enrich urban life, but also the importance of proactive planning, grounded fieldwork, and neighbourhood-sensitive design in unlocking their full functional capacity.

These spatial and functional discrepancies do not merely reflect technical or logistical shortcomings in design, but also expose deeper governance dynamics in how urban greenways are conceptualized, implemented, and maintained in Taiwanese cities. In both cases, the visions proposed by design consultants—whether emphasizing cultural rhythm and aesthetic continuity in Taichung or minimalist permeability in Taipei—were filtered through top-down planning mechanisms that afforded limited engagement with local communities or neighbourhood-specific needs (Healey, 2006; Hou, 2020). While the spatial form of the greenway suggests openness and adaptability, its governance often

remains centralized, privileging symbolic coherence and macro-scale narratives over participatory negotiation or long-term spatial responsiveness (Jessop, 1997).

This tension becomes especially apparent in how different segments of the greenways were programmed. Spaces that aligned with municipal priorities or tourism-oriented image-making received more curated interventions, while peripheral areas were left to function passively as green buffers. Such selective spatial activation reflects what Hou (2020) terms “design-led governance,” where urban form becomes a medium for enacting governmental visions, often at the expense of informal uses and everyday flexibility. As such, these cases illustrate not only the flexibility but also the constraints of greenways as planning instruments embedded in institutional governance regimes. Rather than being inherently democratic or inclusive, the publicness of such spaces is contingent upon the broader regulatory frameworks and political agendas that shape their development. This underscores the importance of embedding more adaptive, context-sensitive, and socially responsive approaches into the governance of urban greenways, especially if they are to serve as resilient infrastructures for both ecological and social urban futures.

In summary, this section has examined how the design visions and urban intentions embedded in both case studies are selectively realized, reshaped, or even challenged through actual spatial usage. While these greenways reflect a growing ambition to integrate ecological, cultural, and economic functions into urban landscapes, their effectiveness ultimately depends on how well such visions adapt to local patterns of mobility, governance frameworks, and community needs. As the next chapter turns toward the ways urban greenways are enlisted in place-branding and identity reconstruction, it becomes crucial to ask not only how space is planned and experienced, but also how it is symbolically mobilized to project new images of the urban community.

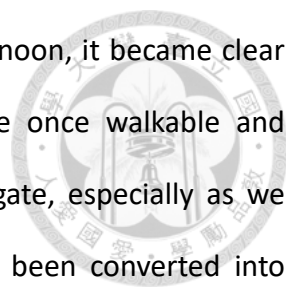
Chapter 3. Reconstructing Community Image with Urban Greenway



Community Image here could be described as a local scale of icon of how a neighbourhood or a district present to the residents and visitors. The revitalization of the two urban greenways in this paper undergoes their unique process to establish new image to the proximate district with respect to the new characteristics of the park. This chapter will lead to the discussion on how linear park can particularly bring new trend to the community and neighbourhood.

3.1 The Fluidity of Urban Greenway embodied by Music

Every October, the Calligraphy Greenway hosts the Taichung Jazz Festival, a major cultural event that draws large crowds into Civic Square. The festival reflects the city's effort to integrate art and music into urban life and has become a key feature of Taichung's cultural identity. International jazz musicians are invited to perform on stages set primarily in Civic Square, with events spanning approximately ten days. Established in 2003, the festival has grown into one of Taiwan's most anticipated annual celebrations. It has become something of a pilgrimage for music lovers and tourists alike, drawing visitors to Taichung each year. By connecting the city to global music culture, the festival has played a significant role in reshaping Taichung's public image. In its most recent edition, the Taichung Jazz Festival attracted more than one million participants over the course of ten days. The following section presents an analysis of this event based on direct field observation.



Upon arriving at Calligraphy Greenway in the late afternoon, it became clear that the space had undergone a dramatic transformation. The once walkable and peaceful green corridor was now crowded and difficult to navigate, especially as we approached Civic Square. A significant portion of the park had been converted into temporary motorcycle parking areas. This was a stark contrast to the impression from previous visits, where the pathways felt calm, spacious, and pedestrian-friendly. Motorcycles moved through the park to reach designated slots, often competing for space with pedestrians. The image of encountering fewer than ten people in a section of the park no longer applied. Instead, the magnitude of the Taichung Jazz Festival was immediately apparent. Roads surrounding Civic Square were either restricted or entirely repurposed to accommodate the crowd. These spaces were filled with vendor stalls, mobile toilets, sponsored booths, and recycling stations. Civic Square itself was covered with picnic mats as people began reserving spaces. A large stage stood at one end of the square, and although the performances had not yet begun, rehearsals were underway. As the evening approached, the energy of the space gradually built up, anticipating the night's main event.

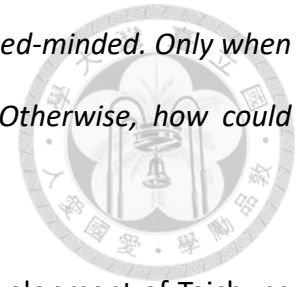
The Jazz Festival has given another perspective for us to review Calligraphy Greenway. Former research had mostly referred the event of Jazz Festival to the studies of branding and marketing of the Taichung City (Ho, 2017; 洪薇淳, 2016). Their points are in concert with the concept of urban entrepreneurialism. The city itself is being branded and marketed to the world. The Jazz Festival was implemented due to the objectives set by the former Taichung City Mayor Jason Hu, who aimed to bring influx of investments through building up international image of the city. In other words, Jazz Festival makes use of the recreational space to bring in (or even copy) Western culture into Taichung. In which there were controversy of the worries on wiping out local culture, and music be reduced

to the co-star with the blooming of demands of local snacks and cuisine, these have been overcome that Jazz Festival is eventually localized after 20 years of taking place. It is interesting for a foreign event being brought into a community and slowly be customized and localized to be a tradition of the community, as we can see, even the government is ruled switching from one party to another, Jazz Festival is still a crucial annual event here. It could be the signature of the city.

To extend the discussions of Ho (2017) and 洪薇淳 (2016) on place-making and the social implications of cultural events, this section turns to the role of the Taichung Jazz Festival and its relationship with Calligraphy Greenway. The festival evokes an atmosphere reminiscent of Halloween, as it takes place at night in October and gradually fades as time passes. In this sense, the “limited edition” of Calligraphy Greenway appears only once a year, temporarily transforming the park into a highly animated cultural space. By the following morning, however, the park had returned to its usual calm and peaceful state. Just as this study questions the lasting impacts of spatial interventions in Xinzhongshan Linear Park, the effects of the Jazz Festival on the surrounding community invite a different set of considerations. The contrast lies in both temporal rhythm and intensity. The festival creates a brief yet powerful surge of activity, whereas the commercial and touristic functions observed in Xinzhongshan unfold more continuously, though with a lower overall intensity. On the morning after the festival, a casual conversation was held with two residents, referred to here as Resident E and Resident F, a retired couple who have lived near Calligraphy Greenway for many years. When asked about their impressions of the Jazz Festival, they responded as follows.

“The crowd is just insane, but this is not necessarily a bad thing. Because this place (Calligraphy Greenway) has always been peacefully or even boring. It doesn't

matter if young people come to play. We seniors are not so closed-minded. Only when people come, there will be business and opportunity here. Otherwise, how could Taichung survive with just one or two night markets?”



Residents E and F offered their perspectives on the development of Taichung and its tourism landscape, placing particular emphasis on the presence of young people. From their point of view as senior citizens, young people represent vitality and energy. This brings attention to a notable tension in the everyday use of Calligraphy Greenway, where younger users are relatively scarce. In many sections of the park, elderly residents and children are the primary users. The Jazz Festival, despite being occasional and time-limited, serves as a rare moment when young people and newcomers gather in large numbers, injecting new energy into the space. The couple expressed their hope that such events might contribute to a broader revitalization of the park and even the city. Their comments also introduced an interesting comparison between Calligraphy Greenway and Taiwanese night markets. This was not the first time such a comparison had been made during fieldwork. In a previous interview with an elected official in the Xinzhongshan case, the linear park there was also juxtaposed with night markets. As one of the most iconic tourist attractions in Taiwan, the night market sets a cultural benchmark for spaces capable of drawing visitors. When linear parks are compared to night markets, it signals their emerging role as spaces of attraction and consumption. With the surge of attention brought by the Jazz Festival, Civic Square within Calligraphy Greenway holds the potential to become a major tourist destination. In this sense, the festival functions as a key catalyst that elevates the park's touristic profile. While some may argue that any park could host similar events, it is important to revisit the specific characteristics of linear parks in order to understand why such events are particularly effective or meaningful in these settings.

One of the most distinctive features observed during the field visit to the Jazz

Festival was the exceptional fluidity of visitor movement. The design of Civic Square is minimalistic, characterized by a large open lawn with few fixed structures. This simplicity allows for a wide range of activities. On regular days, people use the space for picnics, dog walking, and leisure, as shown in Photo 9. Civic Square is surrounded by trendy shops and cafés, along with the Eslite bookstore operated by the Park Lane group. Similar to its role in the Xinzhongshan Linear Park case, the presence of Eslite tends to attract youthful retailers and a steady stream of young visitors. This area, with Eslite at its core, is commonly referred to as the Park Lane shopping district. The positioning of Civic Square directly in front of Eslite contributes to a consistent pedestrian flow into the lawn area. The Jazz Festival, layered on top of this everyday vitality, further illustrates the potential of large open lawns to serve as flexible and dynamic spaces. In this context, Civic Square exemplifies how a linear park can support both daily use and large-scale cultural events, reinforcing its multifunctional value within the urban fabric.



Photo 9: the overview of Civic Square



During the Jazz Festival, Civic Square transforms into a lively and communal space. Attendees often sit on the grass with picnic mats, creating a relaxed atmosphere amid the surrounding department stores and trendy shops. The presence of food trucks adds to the vibrancy, as many visitors purchase food from nearby vendors and return to the lawn to enjoy their meals while listening to the live music. Yet, this seated experience represents only one mode of participation. Other attendees prefer to wander throughout the area, casually exploring the surroundings and occasionally pausing to enjoy the performances. This fluid movement underscores the advantage of holding the festival in an open and flexible setting. The spatial openness of Civic Square accommodates diverse forms of engagement and fosters an inclusive festival experience. Compared to traditional parks, hosting the Jazz Festival in a centrally located open lawn offers notable benefits. Musical enjoyment does not require fixed seating, and the layout of the space allows for both deliberate participation and spontaneous involvement by passersby. This integration with the surrounding urban environment supports a dynamic interaction between the event and the city. The ability to move freely, engage with nearby shops, and remain connected to the festival exemplifies the potential of linear parks to support multifunctional use while enhancing the overall urban experience.

To briefly summarize this section, Civic Square clearly benefits from its proximity to Eslite and a surrounding cluster of trendy shops, which together bring a steady stream of visitors into the park. The organization of the Jazz Festival further demonstrates the potential of a linear park to function as a space of fluidity and social convergence. In the context of Taichung's urban development strategy, Civic Square is increasingly positioned as a central venue for annual cultural events and promoted as a focal point for tourism. This stands in stark contrast to the situations observed in Area C

and Area S, where the roles and spatial dynamics of linear parks are shaped by different forms of use, planning intentions, and community expectations.

The Taichung Jazz Festival at Calligraphy Greenway plays a significant role in shaping public perception and use of the park. As noted by Ho (2017) and 洪薇淳 (2016), the festival exemplifies urban entrepreneurialism, where cities deploy cultural events as tools for global marketing, aiming to attract tourism and investment. The success of the festival lies in its ability to blend international culture, particularly jazz music, with the local character of Taichung. Over time, it has evolved from a foreign import into a localized tradition that contributes to the city's cultural identity. This development resonates with Zukin's (1995) concept of place-making, which emphasizes how cultural practices can redefine urban spaces and support their revitalization. The Jazz Festival illustrates this process by transforming Calligraphy Greenway into a dynamic venue that draws not only music enthusiasts but also international visitors. In doing so, it enhances Taichung's reputation as a centre for culture and the arts and reinforces the park's role as both a local gathering space and a symbol of the city's cultural ambitions.

However, the festival's impact on the park extends beyond its role in city branding. Field observations show that during the event, the normally tranquil environment of Calligraphy Greenway transforms into a lively and crowded space. Pedestrian paths are overtaken by parked motorcycles, and Civic Square becomes densely filled with food vendors, booths, and festival infrastructure. This transformation reflects the dynamics noted by Caldwell et al. (2016), who argue that temporary events can significantly alter the function of urban parks, enhance their vibrancy while potentially disrupt their everyday use. Unlike more permanent installations or ongoing activities, the Jazz Festival generates a brief but intense period of heightened activity, attracting a distinct type of visitor flow fuelled by excitement and anticipation. The way people move

through the space—between picnic areas, food trucks, and performance stages—demonstrates the spatial flexibility of urban greenways like Calligraphy Greenway. This capacity to host diverse activities while remaining integrated with the surrounding urban fabric highlights the unique potential of linear parks to support both cultural programming and routine public use. It also emphasizes the importance of adaptable design in creating spaces that can shift between everyday calm and event-driven energy.

3.2 Cultural and Art in Reforming Social Image

a. Designing into Commercialization

The location of Xinzhongshan Linear Park is particularly distinctive due to its placement directly above the Zhongshan Metro Mall. The integration of the linear park with the underground commercial street creates a layered urban environment that contributes to a memorable and dynamic experience for both visitors and consumers. The Metro Mall beneath the park has been in operation since the 1990s. Originally developed to improve access to the Taiwan Railway at Zhongshan Station, the underground passage was also envisioned as a commercial corridor to attract shoppers. In its later stages, the mall was rebranded as an underground cluster of bookstores, giving it a unique cultural character. In 2017, Eslite Bookstore, one of Taiwan's most well-known retail chains, took over this section and redeveloped it under the name "R79 Eslite Underground." The name refers to the mall's spatial location between metro exits R7 to R9, which correspond to the area covered by the bookstore.

The development of the Eslite Underground marked the beginning of shaping

a distinct community identity characterized by a cultural and artistic atmosphere. The connection between the linear park above and the Metro Mall below is reinforced through the design language and aesthetic values associated with Eslite Bookstore. This cultural continuity plays an important role in linking the vertical layers of the urban space. An initial observation of the spatial and material design of Eslite Underground reveals several key features that contribute to its role in community image-building. As seen in Photos 10 and 11, the use of cement flooring and wooden panel walls creates a minimalist yet refined environment. The layout of the underground space is relatively open, allowing for the placement of mobile market stands that sell accessories, books, and lifestyle goods. The atmosphere evokes the signature “Eslite style,” often associated with warmth, quiet sophistication, and simplicity. The colour scheme consists of muted and dim tones, which do not aim to create a sense of vibrancy but rather cultivate a calm and inviting environment. This carefully curated aesthetic plays a subtle but important role in reinforcing the cultural branding of the space and contributes to the overall identity of the neighbourhood.



Photo 10. Entrance of R79 Eslite Underground from Zhongshan MRT Station



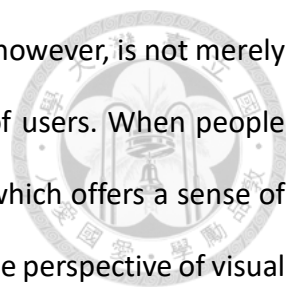
Photo 11. Eslite Book Store

Adopting a similar approach to that used in examining the underground bookstore, the design of Xinzhongshan Linear Park above ground reflects a consistent aesthetic language rooted in minimalism. The park's layout emphasizes streamlining and simplicity, echoing the visual and material style found in the Eslite Underground. A central principle of this minimalist approach is the intentional preservation of open space, allowing emptiness itself to serve as a spatial element. The stylistic continuity between the ground-level linear park and the subterranean Book Street contributes to a unified community identity. Together, the minimalist landscape and the curated cultural environment below ground project an image of the Zhongshan neighbourhood as youthful, creative, and aligned with contemporary design values. As shown in Photo 12, the park utilizes a palette dominated by muted grey tones, with compacted pebble surfaces forming the main pathway material. The only contrasting colour is found in the greenery of the plantings, reinforcing the minimalist character of the space.



Photo 12. Pathway of Xinzhongshan Linear Park

The appearance of Xinzhongshan Linear Park integrates seamlessly with the surrounding architecture. However, as several interviewees pointed out, this design has



resulted in a noticeable reduction of green space even. Greenery, however, is not merely decorative. It plays a vital role in shaping the visual experience of users. When people think of parks, they often associate them with the colour green, which offers a sense of calm and relief from the surrounding grey tones of the city. From the perspective of visual perception, some respondents remarked that Xinzhongshan Linear Park feels overly assimilated into the adjacent streetscape, to the point that it no longer presents itself as a distinct green space. This impression is closely tied to the park's narrow width, which places it in close proximity to busy roads on both sides. The presence of constant traffic reduces the sense of spatial separation and makes the experience of walking through the park feel more like traversing an open street. In contrast, Calligraphy Greenway is significantly wider, allowing for greater spatial distance from roadways and creating a more sheltered, immersive experience. Xinzhongshan, by comparison, lacks this buffer, which limits its capacity to provide the embodied sense of escape often expected in urban parks. While its proximity to commercial streets may encourage consumption, it does not fully align with the broader goal of reintroducing nature into urban life. Interviewees had shown attitude as below

“The revitalization of the park has removed a large scale of green canopy, leaving a large proportion of grey colour.”

(Resident A)

“The green cover here is greatly reduced, especially the section approaching Shuanglian.”

(Resident B)

Another notable design feature in Xinzhongshan Linear Park is the Zhongshan

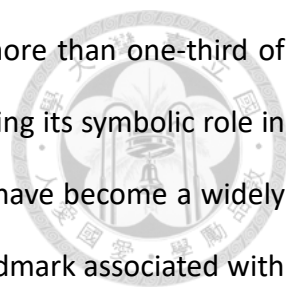
MRT Station entrance. As shown in Photo 13, this structure is more than a functional transit point; it is integrated into the overall aesthetic of the park. Designed with a grey, streamlined surface and an arch-like form, the entrance also functions as a small spectating deck, creating a ceremonial and visually striking threshold for the park. According to an interview with the elected official of Guangneng Village, the design was proposed by her. She envisioned the entrance as a symbolic urban element, inspired by metro stations in Japan where architecture invites photography and becomes part of the city's visual culture. Her intention was for the structure to attract visitors who would take photos and share their experiences on social media, thereby enhancing the visibility of the neighbourhood. As shown in Photo 14, the spectating deck offers a limited but curated view of the surrounding malls and busy roads. Other interviewees noted that creating photogenic urban features in a dense city like Taipei remains a challenge, with common feedback being that "there's nothing special to see." Despite these limitations, the design of the station entrance has had a meaningful impact. It strengthens the visual identity of Zhongshan and demonstrates how everyday infrastructure can contribute to the character and atmosphere of an urban public space.



Photo 13. Zhongshan MRT station entrance and its spectating deck



Photo 14. View from the side of spectating deck



A Google Image search for “Zhongshan” reveals that more than one-third of the images prominently feature the MRT station entrance, indicating its symbolic role in shaping the area's public image. Although the entrance may not have become a widely recognized photo spot, it has nonetheless emerged as a visual landmark associated with Zhongshan. Serving as the main access point to the linear park, the structure reinforces the park's identity and contributes to its visibility both on-site and in online representations. Notably, a similar architectural treatment is absent at the opposite end of the linear park, near Shuanglian Station. This contrast may subtly reflect a strategic emphasis on directing visitor attention and activity toward the Zhongshan side. The disparity suggests a prioritization of urban branding and foot traffic generation on one end of the park, highlighting unequal spatial investment in the design of its gateways.

Building on the questions raised in the previous section, this part explores another recurring phenomenon observed in Xinzhongshan Linear Park. Every weekend, the park hosts a market that primarily sells cultural and creative goods, accessories, and products from independent vendors. Over time, this market has become a defining feature of the park, turning it into a site of regular activity and informal gathering. This transformation can be seen as an extension of the surrounding commercial environment, shaped in part by the influence of nearby malls and the cultural identity associated with Eslite. Much like the vendor stalls in the Eslite Underground, similar commercial practices have been introduced to the park's surface level, effectively embedding retail activity into a public recreational space. The integration of commerce into the linear park has undoubtedly contributed to its popularity, drawing large numbers of visitors on weekends. As shown in the figure below, the park occasionally collaborates with commercial brands and organizations to host events or promotional activities. The boundary between recreation and retail in this setting has become increasingly blurred. This close

relationship between the park and surrounding cultural-commercial clusters plays a significant role in shaping visitor behaviour. As Visitor A remarked, *“Whenever I come near Zhongshan, I walk along the park and around the district. It’s a spot that is popular among young people.”* The park thus functions not only as a linear green space but also as part of a broader lifestyle and consumption landscape that appeals particularly to younger demographics.



Photo 15. Weekend market in the park



Photo 16. Brand promotion event

The commercialization of Xinzhongshan Linear Park is likely to be encouraged by the authorities as it surely brings economic benefits and boost tourism. Before the actual field work went into interviewing visitors, it was imagined as a favourable spot for most users, until we have gotten in touch with several respondents as they reflect below.

“The shading of trees has been significantly reduced, as compared to that of before revitalization, as if the current design is merely working for the market here.”



(Resident A)

"It feels like I'm strolling down the street instead of walking along in the park... (but do you feel comfortable with the overall environment there?)

Absolutely not, simply because it's just exceedingly crowded."

(Visitor A)

The experience of Xinzhongshan Linear Park extends beyond its visual alignment with the surrounding urban landscape. The bodily experience of walking through the park increasingly resembles that of navigating a crowded commercial street. With limited greenery and high pedestrian flow, the environment diverges from what one typically expects in an urban park. To support this observation with visual evidence, two photographs of the park are discussed below. As shown in Photo 17, the park contains a moderate amount of greenery, including both trees and shrubs. However, the dominant visual elements remain grey surfaces and hardscape materials. Although one could argue that a minimal level of greening is present along the pathways, it is insufficient in fulfilling the ecological or aesthetic functions typically associated with urban parks. The vegetation provides little shade and fails to form a coherent green canopy, resulting in a space that visually lacks softness and natural texture. This observation is further reinforced in Photo 18, which captures a weekend scene featuring dense crowds and the activity of a street market, all taking place under sparse tree cover. In this setting, the park appears more as a platform for commercial activity than a space for rest or retreat. The prominence of "urban" elements, such as paved surfaces, stalls, and high foot traffic, overshadows the "park" aspects of the space. As a result, the spatial experience creates a sense of dissonance. While the crowd may signal economic vitality, it undermines the core expectation of a park as a space of calm, shade, and environmental relief. In this case,

Xinzhongshan Linear Park seems to prioritize commercial activation over environmental comfort, prompting a reconsideration of how parks are defined, experienced, and valued in dense urban contexts.



	
Photo 17. Green canopy in Xinzhongshan Linear Park	Photo 18. Market and crowds

With the effects of commercialization within Xinzhongshan Linear Park now identified, this section shifts focus to the broader chain reactions observed in the surrounding community. Field observations during site visits also extended to the adjacent urban fabric, particularly to the east of the park, where Chifeng Street has become one of the most iconic destinations for visitors. Chifeng Street is highlighted on the "Undiscovered Taipei" website curated by the Department of Information and Tourism, which describes the area as “dotted with hipster cafes, art museums, and specialty restaurants, adding artistic ambience to the old street and ancient houses and attracting many visitors.” Historically referred to as the “blacksmith street,” Chifeng was once lined with hardware and automotive parts stalls (Department of Information and

Tourism, Taipei City Government, n.d.). This is why the current image of the street is often portrayed as a fusion of the modern and the traditional. Photos 19 and 20 illustrate this coexistence clearly. While the buildings along the street still preserve their long-standing, traditional appearance, a new wave of modern establishments has emerged. Art-themed cafes and boutique shops now occupy many storefronts, adding a visually striking contrast to the older architecture. These new businesses are visually distinct, with polished aesthetics that contrast with and, in some ways, accentuate the older built environment. The arrival of such establishments has altered the atmosphere of Chifeng Street considerably. Whether due to the hip design of the newcomers or the aesthetic tension between old and new, the street has succeeded in attracting a younger demographic. It has become a popular site for exploration, signalling a shift in how the area is perceived and used within the broader narrative of urban revitalization.



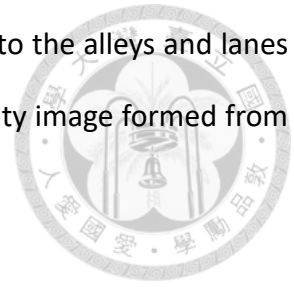
Photo 19. A blacksmith store, the “Ancient” part, in Chifeng Street



Photo 20. A cafe, the “Modern” part, in Chifeng Street

This leads to an early conclusion that the design of the linear park allows it to blend well with the streetscape. Together with the strategy of combining weekend market and brands promotion, Xinzhongshan Linear Park successfully turns its role facing tourism

industry and fit into the business district. Afterwards, as we sip into the alleys and lanes near the linear park, we seek to uncover more from the community image formed from the above commercialization.



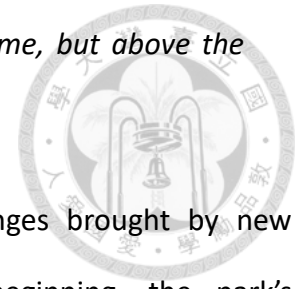
b. Green Gentrification and Community Authenticity

The marching of modern stores into the street is never coincidental, as Village Official A, the Elected Officials of Jiantai Village, has put forward, *“crowds bring business opportunities as the linear park opened to public few years ago, the businessmen smelled it”*.

As we have a brief knowledge on how the current state of the neighbourhood around Xinzhongshan Linear Park is, what kind of issues have been observed and proposed to address the chain social impacts imposed by the park? Village Official A does provide us with a comprehensive review.

“First of all, you need to know is that the land rent around has been increased. This has led to impacts on the original industry, right? Stores in Chifeng Street had always been selling automotives parts, but they are disappearing... and the new business are coming into the Street. Secondly, let me just tell you all the things, it is affecting the environment, transport, order. (Oh, how is it related to the order?) That is like when more people come, more matters are happening. But the issue of order is still fine, the problems with the environment. Many of the new businesses are in the catering industry, and obviously they produce pollution, noise and cooker smoke... Given if you were going home today, you would have to pass through all these queues and people in front of the restaurants, what would you

feel? Yes, the business on the ground floor grants great income, but above the restaurant we (residents) opt for living quality.”



Village Official A offers an overview of the challenges brought by new businesses around Xinzhongshan Linear Park. From the beginning, the park's development was heavily shaped by commercial goals, aiming to align with the surrounding consumer-oriented environment. This strategy has succeeded in generating business opportunities and boosting the local economy. However, it has also sparked a chain reaction within the nearby residential community. According to Village Official A, the surge in foot traffic has significantly impacted both the community and its residents. Photos 21 and 22, taken from the same location on a weekday and a weekend, show a clear difference in the number of people passing through the alleyways. On weekends, the crowd flows from Zhongshan MRT Station, through the linear park, and eventually spills into these small residential lanes. Photos 23 and 24 highlight the growing popularity of new businesses in the area, many of which sit directly beneath residential buildings. This brings a great deal of disruption to daily life. Residents now face constant foot traffic, which means strangers frequently pass through their neighbourhood. In addition to noise and pollution from commercial activity, there is also a rising sense of unease about safety and privacy.



Photo 21. Flowrate on weekday



Photo 22. Flowrate on Weekends



Photo 23. Crowds outside ground-floor business



Photo 24. Queue outside ramen restaurant

In conclusion, the commercialization of Xinzhongshan Linear Park has brought clear benefits for local businesses and young consumers. It has created a trendy destination where commercial brands can showcase themselves in new and creative ways. However, even casual visitors can sense that the park does not meet the expectations typically associated with an urban park. As a contemporary public space, it falls short in fulfilling basic leisure needs, such as offering greenery, shade, and a comfortable environment—both within the park and in its surrounding community. The park's strong

commercial focus has tipped the balance, compromising its role as a place of relaxation and public enjoyment. This imbalance raises a broader question about the role of contemporary parks: how should design, planning, and even management take into account the social functions of green spaces in increasingly commercial urban settings?

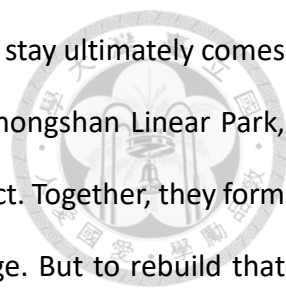
The impacts of Xinzhongshan Linear Park, as summarized in the preceding discussion, include a significant influx of visitors into the surrounding neighbourhood. This increase in foot traffic, largely driven by young people, brings vibrancy and stimulates consumption. However, it also raises concerns related to gentrification, as noted by Park and Kim (2019) and Millington (2015). These scholars argue that urban parks, especially those introduced into older or distressed areas, can become catalysts for change, attracting new opportunities and reshaping the social and economic fabric of a neighbourhood. Compared to traditional parks, linear parks have an even stronger potential to drive community revitalization by guiding visitors along their length and into nearby streets and alleys, as seen in previous sections. The regular markets held in Xinzhongshan Linear Park further amplify its commercial function, transforming it from a space primarily meant for leisure into a platform for economic activity. This shift invites us to consider a broader question: does this model of urban park align with the goals of sustainability? Before addressing that, we begin by examining how gentrification unfolds in this context and how it intersects with local culture, everyday life, and economic dynamics.

From the perspective of visitors, outsiders to the neighbourhood, Xinzhongshan Linear Park is largely viewed in a positive light. Promoted by the Taipei City Government's Department of Information and Tourism, the park has become a well-known destination in the city. While it may not carry the global fame of New York's High Line Park, field observations frequently revealed the presence of foreign tourists,



speaking Cantonese, English, or Mandarin with mainland Chinese accents. On social media platforms, Xinzhongshan is often featured as a vibrant area filled with food, shopping, and trendy spots, further reinforcing its image as a tourist attraction. Visitor interviews generally confirmed this impression. Many spoke favourably about the park, appreciating its innovative design and the pleasure it brought them. However, when asked about their thoughts on the older blacksmith shops along Chifeng Street or the local community more broadly, most expressed a kind of sympathetic detachment. Comments such as, “I’d love them (the blacksmith shops) to stay, as they represent local livelihood, but it might be hard for them,” reflect an awareness of the tension. From their viewpoint, the traditional businesses are unlikely to survive the commercial momentum generated by the park. This contrast highlights a deeper issue: while the park enhances the visitor experience, it also accelerates changes that threaten the survival of long-standing local cultures and economies.

Blacksmith stores in this context are now caught in an awkward position. During the field observations, it was clear that many visitors were drawn to these shops not to make purchases, but to take photos. Their vintage and retro appearance has made them popular backgrounds for social media posts. As these images circulate online, they attract even more people to the area. However, this attention does not translate into actual economic support for the blacksmith stores. While they become part of the neighbourhood's aesthetic appeal, their business remains marginalized. Meanwhile, as the area becomes more popular and property values begin to rise, these long-standing businesses may no longer be able to afford to stay. This explains why some interviewees expressed empathy toward them, acknowledging their cultural value but also recognizing the challenges they face in a rapidly changing environment.



The question of whether blacksmith stores are willing to stay ultimately comes down to authenticity. From an outsider's view, features like Xinzhongshan Linear Park, creative markets, and retro cafés are all new additions to the district. Together, they form a chain reaction that draws crowds and reshapes the area's image. But to rebuild that image, something often needs to be cleared away. In this case, the blacksmith stores are likely the ones being pushed out. Cafe Owner A reflected on this shift during our interview. When asked about the rise of boutique shops and the decline of traditional industries, he expressed concern about growing homogeneity. Businesses now imitate each other, adopting similar retro styles and targeting the same young demographic. Over time, the district risks becoming repetitive. While the market may weed out shops that fail to attract customers, what disappears in the process is more than just variety. What's truly at stake is the district's authenticity.

From the perspective of insiders, the view on gentrification can be quite different. While outsiders often express concern over the loss of traditional industries and the disappearance of original community features, those who live and work in the area may see the changes in another light. In an interview with Village Official B from Guangneng Village, she responded to questions about gentrification with a contrasting view. She stated that most blacksmith store owners are not particularly distressed by the transformation of the area. These businesses are often run by older individuals who have inherited the stores from previous generations. However, the business of car repair is no longer as significant as it once was. In modern Taipei, car repair services are widely available and often offered by more professional and better-equipped shops. According to Village Official B, the decline of blacksmith stores began long before the establishment of Xinzhongshan Linear Park. She also noted that younger generations within these families are usually not interested in continuing the family trade. Most of them seek other

career paths that offer better salaries and more opportunities. This shift reflects a broader trend of urban modernization. From this viewpoint, the disappearance of traditional stores is not simply caused by the park. It is more accurately understood as part of a larger process shaped by social and economic change.

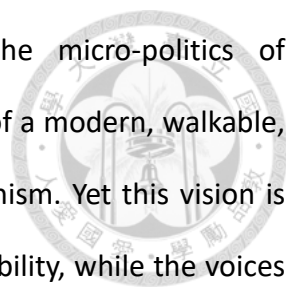
Unlike studies conducted in cities like New York or Seoul, the case of Xinzhongshan Linear Park offers a clearer view of the interplay between community revitalization and the fate of traditional industries. While some stakeholders express concern that the removal of car repair and blacksmith shops erases the district's original identity, the question of who holds the authority to define authenticity remains open to interpretation. Drawing on the perspective of Zukin (2009), in a modernized urban context, authenticity may no longer lie solely in preserving original features. Instead, it may depend on ensuring that all residents have the right to make decisions about their own livelihoods. The development of the Linear Park, with its commercial character and emerging landmarks, injects new vitality into the area. New businesses and incoming tourists interact in ways that gradually construct a renewed social image for the district. This does not necessarily signal the disappearance of local culture, especially since representatives of the traditional industries have not expressed strong opposition to these changes. According to Village Official B, the Linear Park should be seen as the physical foundation for fostering cultural change. In her view, it is the new shops and creative markets that serve as the actual driving forces for revitalization. These businesses, which she calls the "software" of the district, must be maintained with care. She emphasizes that quality and meaningful interaction with the local community is essential to ensure long-term sustainability. This is also why she does not oppose the influx of newcomers. In conclusion, both the park and the neighbourhood are still undergoing transformation. The ultimate outcome of this evolution remains uncertain and invites

further reflection from those who observe it.

Yet the question of publicness in Xinzhongshan Linear Park remains unresolved. Beyond debates on authenticity, a more fundamental issue concerns who this space is truly designed for. The official planning discourse frequently refers to “revitalizing the community,” but this community is never clearly defined. Does it refer to long-term residents whose livelihoods were tied to car repair and metal workshops? Does it include the young newcomers running cafés and pop-up markets? Or is the imagined user of this space largely the transient flows of tourists and weekend shoppers that the new commercial corridor now attracts? The design language of Xinzhongshan offers few facilities for children or older residents, nor does it provide spaces for slow-paced, everyday encounters. Instead, its streamlined paving, pop-up market infrastructure, and photo-friendly scenery seem to cater more directly to consumption, circulation, and visibility.

This ambiguity suggests that the “community” in planning rhetoric may function more as a legitimizing label than a reflection of actual residents’ needs. As Low and Smith (2006) argue, public space is often justified in the name of collective benefit, while in practice access and usability are selectively granted to certain social groups. In the case of Xinzhongshan, the local population has little influence over how space is programmed or represented. While some residents cautiously welcome the new vitality brought by commerce, others note that the linear park mainly benefits visitors and shop owners, rather than fulfilling their own daily requirements for shade, seating, or informal gathering spots. As one long-term resident observed in interview, “It’s called a park, but it feels like a passage for outsiders, not a place for us.”

Seen from a broader perspective, the publicness of Xinzhongshan is thus tied

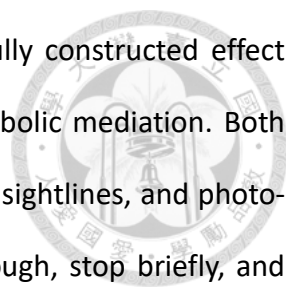


more to macro-level urban development goals than to the micro-politics of neighbourhood life. The linear park serves as a spatial showcase of a modern, walkable, green city, aligning Taipei with global narratives of liveable urbanism. Yet this vision is achieved by reformatting space for flows of consumption and mobility, while the voices of established residents remain marginal in defining what public space should be. The result is a contested form of publicness: one that is symbolically inclusive but functionally oriented toward selective groups, raising questions about whose everyday life is truly being served by this new so-called community-oriented greenway.

3.3 Culture Meets Commerce: Spatial Coexistence in Urban Greenways

This chapter will examine how urban greenways serve not only as physical infrastructures but also as dynamic platforms for reimagining community identity through cultural and commercial engagement. Sections 3.1 and 3.2 demonstrate that these greenways, while spatially linear, are socially expansive, they foster new forms of public gathering, consumption, and symbolic meaning. Building on this perspective, it is important to first examine **how the attractiveness of these linear greenways is actively produced**, rather than assumed as a natural outcome of providing public space. The appeal of Xinzhongshan and Calligraphy Greenway emerges through design choices, curated activities, and everyday practices that transform them into destinations of interest. Understanding this constructed attractiveness sets the stage for analysing how cultural narratives and commercial initiatives subsequently reinforce their success.

Xinzhongshan Linear Greenway and Calligraphy Greenway are often described as “successful linear public spaces,” largely due to their ability to attract steady flows of visitors. Yet field observations and interviews indicate that this attractiveness is not an



inherent property of the spaces themselves, but rather a carefully constructed effect produced through urban governance, design strategies, and symbolic mediation. Both cases emphasize visibility and movement: the clean paving, open sightlines, and photo-friendly corners of Xinzhongshan encourage visitors to pass through, stop briefly, and share images online, while Calligraphy Greenway's lawns, tree cover, and art installations invite casual encounters, playful interactions, and performative uses of space. These design features not only improve comfort but deliberately create scenes worth seeing, photographing, and circulating.

Attractiveness is also sustained by ordinary, non-economic actions that acquire promotional value. In Xinzhongshan, visitors frequently stop in front of the few remaining blacksmith and car repair shops to take photographs, capturing the juxtaposition of “old industry meets new lifestyle.” Though these workshops are remnants of a fading local economy, they now function as visual markers of authenticity that circulate widely on social media, attracting more visitors eager to “document” this hybrid atmosphere. In Calligraphy Greenway, the vast lawns and pet-friendly environment encourage people to bring dogs, rabbits, or cats to play. These interactions, while not directly generating revenue, produce highly shareable images of leisure, family life, and friendliness that enhance the greenway's reputation as a must-visit destination. Everyday actions thus become informal marketing devices, transforming ordinary space into a symbolic asset in the city's image economy.

This construction of attractiveness lays the groundwork for subsequent commercial success. As these spaces gain visibility through design aesthetics and user-generated media, commercial actors and city agencies can capitalize on the heightened foot traffic. Pop-up craft markets, boutique cafés, and temporary installations in Xinzhongshan align themselves with the “lifestyle corridor” image, while large-scale

cultural events in Calligraphy Greenway, such as the annual jazz festival, amplify its identity as a cultural landmark. In both cases, attractiveness is not simply a by-product of providing public space; it is actively produced through a feedback loop of design, daily practice, and symbolic circulation, making linear greenways powerful platforms for merging commercial activity with cultural narratives of urban life.

In Taichung's Calligraphy Greenway, the spatial continuity of the corridor played a key role in the success of large-scale events such as the Taichung Jazz Festival. The linear form enabled sound and atmosphere to flow beyond fixed boundaries, attracting visitors not only to the designated event areas but also throughout the park and its surrounding streets. This diffuse and immersive experience enhanced the festival's visibility and accessibility, contributing to its recognition as an iconic cultural event and positioning the greenway as a key site for urban tourism and city branding. In contrast, Xinzhongshan Linear Park in Taipei functioned less as a stage for monumental events and more as a connective tissue between diverse commercial and cultural activities. As explored in Section 3.2, the park's integration with weekend markets, department stores, and independent boutiques helped reconfigure the surrounding area into a culturally vibrant and commercially active zone. The park's presence helped consolidate the fragmented South-North shopping districts into a more cohesive identity, turning Xinzhongshan into a symbolic and functional core of the Nanjing–Chongqing area. While this transformation enabled a surge of foot traffic and creative small business development, it also coincided with the gradual disappearance of traditional industries, such as metalworking on Chifeng Street, signalling the onset of green gentrification.

The cases of Calligraphy Greenway and Xinzhongshan Linear Park illustrate how urban greenways can enable a form of spatial coexistence in which culture and commerce are not only compatible but also co-productive. Rather than isolating cultural expression

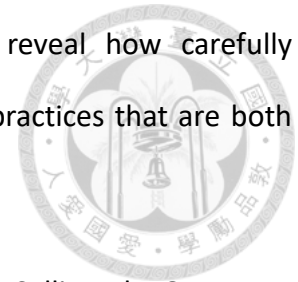


from economic activity, both parks demonstrate how cultural programming, and spatial design can be mobilized to enhance local economies while maintaining a distinctive place identity. In Calligraphy Greenway, the recurring presence of arts festivals, open-air performances, and thematic markets serves to animate the space and extend visitor engagement across multiple segments of the corridor. These events are not merely cultural spectacles; they function as catalysts for surrounding commercial activity by increasing foot traffic and enhancing the area's symbolic capital. As Evans (2003) notes in his work on cultural planning, the integration of arts-led initiatives within public space often serves broader urban agendas, including economic revitalization and image construction. The spatial rhythm of Calligraphy Greenway, with its intentional variation of open plazas and semi-enclosed nodes, supports such activation by allowing cultural events to flow seamlessly into surrounding shops, cafes, and restaurants.

Similarly, Xinzhongshan Linear Park illustrates how small-scale cultural interventions—such as weekend craft markets, music performances, and seasonal decorations—can be embedded within an everyday commercial fabric. The park's linear form stitches together a wide array of businesses, from department stores to independent boutiques, without creating a rigid boundary between consumption and cultural participation. This mirrors what Zukin (1995) describes as the “aestheticization of everyday life,” where culture becomes a medium through which urban economies are both symbolically and materially restructured. The cultural appeal of Xinzhongshan, amplified by its spatial openness and pedestrian accessibility, becomes an asset that supports emerging entrepreneurial scenes, particularly among youth-oriented or design-driven enterprises.

Both examples highlight the potential of urban greenways to serve as hybrid zones that dissolve the traditional binary between culture and commerce. Rather than

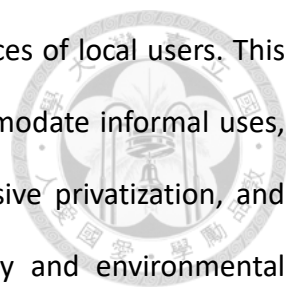
positioning one as the antidote to the other, these parks reveal how carefully choreographed spatial design can accommodate diverse urban practices that are both economically viable and culturally meaningful.



While the cultural-commercial synergy observed in both Calligraphy Greenway and Xinzhongshan Linear Park has contributed significantly to urban vitality, it also brings about a set of tensions that must not be overlooked. As these greenways become prime venues for high-profile events and everyday consumption, issues such as crowd congestion, noise disturbance, and the encroachment of commercial installations on public space become increasingly visible. Moreover, the cultural cachet of these spaces has, in both cases, contributed to a form of green gentrification—where aesthetic and ecological enhancements, paired with lifestyle-oriented commercial programming, lead to rising rents and the displacement of longstanding communities or traditional industries (Gould & Lewis, 2017; Anguelovski, 2015).

In this context, urban greenways must not only be celebrated as multifunctional infrastructures but also governed as contested public arenas. Municipal planning must address the competing demands of inclusivity, sustainability, and economic development. As Hou (2010) argues, participatory design and grassroots engagement are essential in ensuring that public spaces remain genuinely accessible and responsive to local needs. In the case of Xinzhongshan, recent controversies surrounding zoning enforcement and commercial legality have highlighted the limits of top-down urban management. Without transparent and inclusive governance structures, the symbolic openness of urban greenways may belie their actual exclusivity or fragility.

A more adaptive and community-sensitive model of “cultural governance” is thus necessary—one that recognizes not only the value of curated events and aesthetic



interventions, but also the everyday practices and lived experiences of local users. This entails building more flexible regulatory frameworks that accommodate informal uses, regulating event frequency and spatial footprint to avoid excessive privatization, and embedding long-term monitoring mechanisms for social equity and environmental impact. Only by addressing these tensions can urban greenways fulfill their promise as inclusive infrastructures for both cultural expression and everyday life.

While the revitalization of Calligraphy Greenway and Xinzhongshan Linear Park has successfully reshaped community image and stimulated cultural and commercial engagement, it has also given rise to several unintended consequences. First, the influx of visitors—especially during festivals, markets, and weekends—has intensified the issue of overcrowding. For nearby residents, this translates into noise pollution, congestion, and a disruption of the neighbourhood’s everyday rhythms. Second, the increased use of greenways for commercial purposes, such as temporary stalls, performances, or brand activations, often encroaches upon the original intent of public open space, blurring the line between civic accessibility and private commodification. In some cases, portions of the greenway become temporarily inaccessible or functionally altered, undermining their value as inclusive and spontaneous social environments.

Third, and more structurally, the popularity and symbolic rebranding of these greenways have contributed to green gentrification. As these spaces become associated with cultural capital, design-led aesthetics, and lifestyle appeal, the surrounding neighbourhoods face rising rents, shifting demographics, and pressure on long-established communities and small businesses. In the case of Xinzhongshan, for instance, the emergence of boutique salons, vintage clothing stores, and curated cafés has coincided with the gradual displacement of older trades and lower-rent establishments, particularly around the once-industrial Chifeng Street. These developments reveal that

while urban greenways can serve as catalysts for cultural regeneration, they can also amplify social inequalities and spatial exclusion if not governed with care.

While the cultural and economic revitalization brought by Xinzhongshan Linear Park and Calligraphy Greenway has been widely praised, several socio-spatial side effects have also emerged, such as increased pedestrian congestion, the privatization of open space, and signs of green gentrification. Nevertheless, local perspectives collected through field interviews suggest a more nuanced understanding of these changes. In terms of how rising crowd activity has transformed neighbourhood life, one community activist highlighted that the presence of more visitors—despite some tensions over spatial use—has revitalized the area with a renewed sense of liveliness. As they remarked:

“Although the controversy over open space has not led to the full restoration of green areas in Xinzhongshan, the current liveliness has nonetheless brought more energy to our community.”

(Activist A)

This view illustrates how public space, even when reconfigured by commercial and event-oriented activity, can foster a positive affective atmosphere and reinforce urban sociability. As for the commercial evolution of adjacent alleyways—especially those surrounding Chifeng Street—concerns about homogenization coexist with observations of differentiation and creativity. A local café owner, for instance, noted that the intensifying commercial scene has not necessarily eroded the neighbourhood’s character. According to their account:

“There are definitely more shops on Chifeng Street now, but it hasn’t turned into a generic zone. People are still trying to differentiate themselves for commercial success.”

(Cafe Owner B)

This suggests that economic transformation is not always accompanied by cultural flattening. On the contrary, market pressures may stimulate stylistic pluralism and inventive forms of urban branding. Meanwhile, the gradual disappearance of legacy industries, such as ironworking, often fuels assumptions of displacement or cultural loss. Yet, a local village official offered a more internal explanation:

“Some of the old ironworks shops have disappeared, but this has more to do with family businesses being discontinued than with forced eviction.” (Village Official B)

Rather than interpreting every transformation as externally imposed, this viewpoint underlines the role of generational shifts and the declining viability of traditional trades. It calls attention to the subtler, organic dimensions of neighbourhood change that accompany, but are not necessarily driven by, state-led redevelopment.

These local perspectives reveal a more grounded and resilient understanding of community transformation. A successful neighbourhood is not merely defined by economic vitality but also by the cultivation of a cultural identity that residents can recognize and take pride in. Rather than viewing economic change and industrial shifts solely as disruptions, they may be understood as intrinsic to the long-term evolution of urban life. Gentrification, in this context, is not necessarily a direct consequence of greenway development, but may instead represent a broader process in which strategic repositioning and cultural reinvention allow a city to reorient its growth trajectory.

In this light, the adaptive co-existence of culture and commerce observed in the cases of Xinzhongshan and Calligraphy Greenway suggests that urban greenways are not just corridors of leisure or aesthetics—they are flexible planning tools that can mediate urban transition. By accommodating diverse uses, supporting emerging economies, and enabling new forms of spatial identity, these urban greenways

demonstrate how green infrastructure can play a pivotal role in guiding the social and symbolic restructuring of post-industrial urban futures.



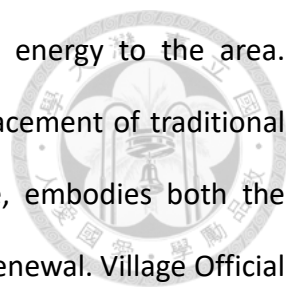
Chapter 4. Discussion and Conclusion



This thesis set out to explore how contemporary linear greenways like Taipei's Xinzhongshan Linear Park and Taichung's Calligraphy Greenway are changing the role and meaning of urban public spaces in Taiwan. Through detailed analysis of these two cases, we have seen that urban greenways today are not simply parks in the traditional sense. Rather, they have evolved into complex, multifunctional spaces where culture, commerce, public life, and urban image intertwine in fascinating—and sometimes problematic—ways.

Xinzhongshan Linear Park highlights a new reality in urban planning. Originally envisioned by designers as a green infrastructure to enhance sustainability, biodiversity, and social inclusivity, the park has instead become strongly defined by commercial activities and youthful aesthetics. While the initial vision emphasized tree canopies, ecological benefits, and spaces for the elderly and marginalized, interviews revealed quite a different reality. Young consumers dominate the park, drawn to its trendy cafes, weekend markets, and social-media-friendly scenery. Elderly residents and children, who traditionally frequent urban parks, find limited space and facilities catering to their needs. As one visitor notably pointed out, “there are too many stairs and ups-and-downs for children to play safely.” This gap between the original ideals of an inclusive community park and the lived experiences of local users highlights a crucial tension: for whom are these spaces truly designed?

At the same time, the commercialized nature of Xinzhongshan Park has undeniably contributed to the revitalization of its neighborhood, creating a lively social scene and reshaping the community's image. New businesses, pop-up markets, and



trendy boutiques have brought economic vitality and youthful energy to the area. However, this vibrancy has also meant rising rents and the displacement of traditional industries and businesses. The park's transformation, therefore, embodies both the opportunities and the risks associated with contemporary urban renewal. Village Official A, who closely followed the park's development, has expressed concern about excessive commercialization, urging planners to refocus on people-oriented design in future extensions. His reflections suggest the importance of balancing commercial interests with genuine community needs, raising fundamental questions about what truly makes a park "public."

In Taichung, Calligraphy Greenway offers another perspective on the evolving role of linear greenways. Unlike the densely commercialized Xinzhongshan, Calligraphy Greenway is celebrated as a cultural landmark, hosting major city events such as the Taichung Jazz Festival. Its open, linear layout allows events to permeate through the space, creating a distinctive urban experience. Yet, despite its success as a cultural venue, daily pedestrian activity along the Greenway remains unevenly distributed. Areas near key attractions like the National Museum of Natural Science remain busy, while more distant segments often feel deserted. Residents describe the Greenway as fragmented, noting that "no one really walks the entire stretch." This mismatch between the Greenway's intended function and actual daily use illustrates another critical challenge for linear parks: how to align ambitious design visions with the realities of urban life and mobility habits.

By comparing these two distinct greenways, this chapter aims to rethink the role that linear green spaces play in modern cities. We will examine how their designs influence social behaviors, how commercial and cultural strategies shape their identities, and how the realities of community life challenge the initial planning intentions.

Ultimately, this analysis can help us reflect more critically on the future of urban greenways, their social inclusivity, and their capacity to serve diverse urban communities.

Throughout this research, one major issue stood out clearly: there is often a significant gap between what linear greenways are intended to be, and what they actually become in everyday life. Both Xinzhongshan Linear Park and Calligraphy Greenway started with ambitious visions. Designers and planners promised sustainability, inclusivity, cultural richness, and economic revitalization. Yet, in reality, how well these promises have been fulfilled depends heavily on local context, user behavior, and planning choices.

For instance, Xinzhongshan's transformation from a traditional streetscape into a lively commercial corridor indeed brought fresh energy and new opportunities to the area. Its sleek, minimalist design successfully attracts young people and visitors who come to enjoy coffee shops, weekend markets, and picturesque spots perfect for social media. Yet, in doing so, the park has overlooked the practical needs of elderly residents, children, and other vulnerable groups. Interviewees repeatedly noted the park's lack of suitable facilities and pointed out that spaces filled with stairs and hard surfaces are not friendly for everyone. This suggests a key lesson: while commercial appeal is important, it should never fully replace inclusive public design.

Calligraphy Greenway offers a different lesson. Its planners aimed to create a continuous cultural corridor that enhances pedestrian connections and supports major city-wide events. Indeed, the annual Jazz Festival has elevated the Greenway into a major cultural icon, boosting the city's brand and attracting tourism. However, beyond these successful events, daily usage remains uneven. Observations show that people use the Greenway mainly in small, segmented sections rather than experiencing it as a cohesive whole. This indicates another essential point for planners: ambitious linear designs need

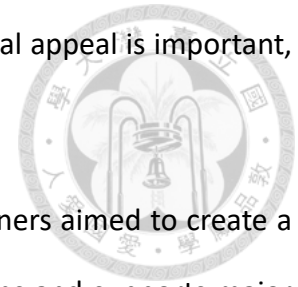
careful consideration of local habits and urban mobility patterns. A successful greenway should respond flexibly to daily rhythms, not just periodic events.

Both cases highlight a crucial dilemma facing planners today. On one hand, linear greenways can effectively reshape community identity, enhance urban vitality, and drive economic renewal. On the other hand, prioritizing commercial and cultural goals at the expense of everyday usability risks alienating the communities these spaces are meant to serve. The question becomes less about choosing between commerce, culture, or community—and more about balancing all three through sensitive and adaptive designs. Ultimately, urban greenways need to be planned not just as symbols of modern urban life, but as practical, welcoming spaces that genuinely meet the diverse needs of their users.

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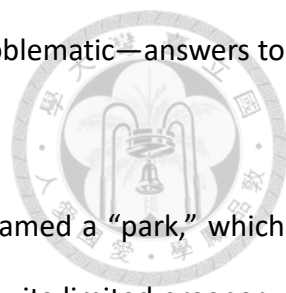


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Throughout this research, we have repeatedly encountered a critical tension: what does it truly mean for a park or greenway to be “public”? Is publicness simply defined by accessibility and openness, or does it also involve who gets to use these spaces, how they're designed, and whose interests they ultimately serve? Xinzhongshan Linear

Park and Calligraphy Greenway both highlight important—and problematic—answers to these questions.



In Taipei, the Xinzhongshan Linear Park was officially named a “park,” which suggests openness, inclusivity, and ecological value. Yet, in reality, its limited greenery, extensive commercial facilities, and selective targeting of young, economically active visitors raise serious doubts about whether it truly functions as a park in the traditional, inclusive sense. Why, then, call it a park? The use of the term “park” appears strategic, a form of governance that lends legitimacy and positive associations to a commercialized, heavily managed space. By labeling the space as a “park,” city planners could justify redevelopment projects, attract funding, and align the area with globally appealing images of sustainable and livable urban spaces. But does this kind of naming, while convenient for governance and branding, actually serve local residents or fulfill genuine community needs?

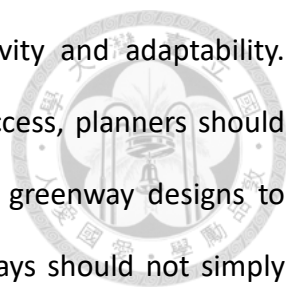
Calligraphy Greenway offers another angle on the issue of publicness. It certainly is more aligned with traditional expectations of green spaces, providing ample lawns and a cultural venue that supports citywide events. Yet, its uneven daily usage points to an underlying problem: when large-scale cultural events end, who uses the Greenway? Interviews and field observations show clearly that daily visitors—mostly nearby residents—struggle to find continuous value or comfortable access outside festival periods. Again, we must ask: is publicness genuinely realized through sporadic, event-driven usage patterns, or should it be rooted in consistent, everyday inclusivity and convenience?

These questions force us to reconsider how urban greenways are governed and who benefits from their development. Both parks illustrate that governance of urban

spaces often privileges certain groups over others, whether intentionally or inadvertently. At Xinzhongshan, commercial interests and youthful consumers overshadow elderly residents, families, and marginalized groups. At Calligraphy Greenway, cultural tourism and city branding can unintentionally marginalize everyday community needs. This raises a fundamental dilemma: do urban parks exist primarily to showcase a city's modernity and cultural vibrancy, or should their priority be genuinely meeting everyday community needs and ensuring equitable access?

Ultimately, reflecting on the governance and publicness of these linear greenways invites us to ask: what do we truly expect from our parks today? Should they serve as accessible community spaces that cater to diverse, daily needs, or as tools of urban development and image-building for specific groups and occasions? Perhaps the real challenge for urban planners and policymakers lies not only in balancing these competing interests, but also in openly confronting the political nature of space itself. Public spaces are never neutral; their design, naming, and management inherently reflect the values and priorities of those who plan them. Recognizing and questioning these values openly is an essential step toward creating truly inclusive and genuinely public urban green spaces in the future.

This thesis ultimately challenges us to reconsider what a linear greenway could—and perhaps should—become in Taiwan's future cities. Xinzhongshan Linear Park and Calligraphy Greenway have shown us both the possibilities and pitfalls that arise when urban greenways become focal points for commercial activity and cultural branding. While these strategies can bring economic vitality and citywide visibility, they also risk marginalizing everyday users and diluting ecological and social functions that once defined traditional parks.



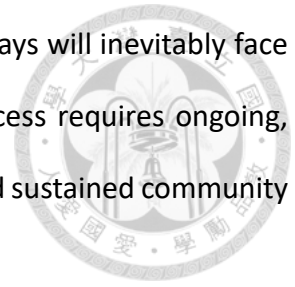
Thus, future planning must prioritize genuine inclusivity and adaptability. Rather than imposing fixed visions of commercial or cultural success, planners should more actively listen to community voices, continually adjusting greenway designs to reflect local needs, daily behaviors, and social diversity. Greenways should not simply exist as showcases of urban progress or consumer-friendly spaces. Instead, they must serve as platforms that genuinely support urban life, welcoming a wide range of users—not just occasional visitors, but elderly residents, children, families, and marginalized groups—who depend on these spaces for daily rest, interaction, and community building.

Furthermore, planners and policymakers should actively resist the trends of excessive commercialization and green gentrification. Greenways should avoid becoming mere tools of economic exploitation that displace existing residents or transform local identities without genuine community consent. Adaptive management strategies—ones rooted in transparency, continuous public engagement, and flexibility—could help urban greenways evolve sustainably. The goal should be not merely to create visually appealing spaces, but truly meaningful ones that reflect and respond to the dynamic realities of urban life.

At the heart of this research lies an important realization: urban greenways have moved far beyond traditional definitions of parks. Their true value today lies precisely in their flexibility—their capacity to adapt, evolve, and mediate among diverse urban demands. Xinzhongshan Linear Park and Calligraphy Greenway vividly demonstrate this evolution, showing how these spaces can simultaneously serve as cultural landmarks, economic engines, community hubs, and symbols of modern urban living.

Yet, precisely because linear greenways occupy such multifaceted roles, we must remain cautious. Their flexibility should never come at the expense of inclusivity or

environmental integrity. As cities continue to grow, urban greenways will inevitably face new pressures, expectations, and challenges. Ensuring their success requires ongoing, reflective planning processes that prioritize genuine publicness and sustained community engagement.



In the end, whether we call them parks, greenways, or urban corridors matters less than what they truly offer to their communities. The ultimate test of any public space is not how well it meets official visions or global branding ideals, but how effectively it serves everyday human lives. If planners, policymakers, and citizens alike can embrace this perspective, urban greenways will continue to be powerful, transformative tools—helping cities become not just more attractive and economically vibrant, but more inclusive, resilient, and genuinely livable.

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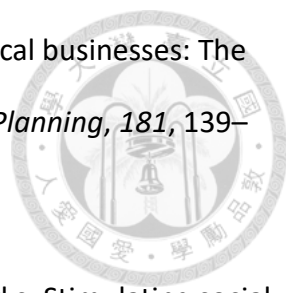
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