

Situation 56: Urban residents lack access to green spaces

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OBSERVATION

The situation was observed in dense urban residential areas through real-life

surroundings and supporting images showing daily routines of city residents.

- Urban residents were observed spending most of their leisure time indoors or in commercial spaces due to limited access to nearby green areas, with children playing in streets or parking zones and elderly people walking on sidewalks or terraces instead of parks.
- Many users showed frustration and mental fatigue caused by overcrowded or distant parks, unclear access rules, and the time required to reach them.
- Environmental and system constraints included high population density, lack of available land, urban planning that prioritizes infrastructure over greenery.
- Uneven distribution and poor maintenance of existing parks, and the negative impact of traffic, noise, and pollution on small green spaces.

STAKEHOLDER LIST

Urban Residents:

Primary users who expect safe, accessible, and well-maintained green spaces for recreation, relaxation, and physical and mental well-being.

Municipal Authorities & Urban Planners:

Administrators responsible for planning and regulating green spaces, expecting efficient land use, sustainability, and public satisfaction.

Maintenance & Service Providers:

Handle upkeep, cleanliness, and safety of green areas, expecting clear guidelines, adequate resources, and community cooperation.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. *How often do you visit a park or green space near your home?*
2. *Is there a public green space within walking distance of your residence?*
3. *How would you rate the accessibility of nearby green spaces?*
4. *What do you mainly use green spaces for?*
5. *What prevents you from using green spaces more often?*
6. *How satisfied are you with the maintenance of green spaces in your area?*
7. *Do you feel the lack of green spaces affects your well-being?*
8. *Would you use small local green spaces (pocket parks or rooftop gardens) if available?*

- 9. Which improvement would encourage you to visit green spaces more often?**
- 10. Should creating more green spaces be a priority in urban planning?**

SUMMARY

- **Green spaces exist, but are underused**
Most respondents have a park within walking distance, yet a majority visit **rarely or only occasionally**, showing a gap between availability and actual use.
- **Time and overcrowding are major barriers**
The biggest reasons for low usage are **lack of time** and **overcrowding**, making green spaces feel inconvenient or stressful rather than relaxing.

- **Maintenance quality is average, not motivating**
Most users feel **neutral** about maintenance, indicating parks are usable but not attractive enough to encourage frequent visits.
- **Green spaces strongly impact well-being**
A large majority believe that insufficient green spaces **negatively affect their mental and physical well-being**, highlighting their importance in daily urban life.
- **High demand for small, local green spaces**
Most respondents are willing to use **pocket parks or rooftop gardens**, and strongly support **more greenery and better maintenance** as key improvements.

LIST OF RESPONDERS & RESPONSES

1 +	Timestamp	What is your name?	What is your age group?	What is your occupation?
2	14/01/2026 07:01:46	Varsha	18 - 25	student
3	14/01/2026 07:29:01	Ashish Mishra	18 - 25	student
4	14/01/2026 08:32:07	Mansi	18 - 25	student
5	14/01/2026 09:01:43	Rakshitha J K	18 - 25	student
6	14/01/2026 09:02:25	KIRUDHU NISHA TWINCY A	18 - 25	student
7	14/01/2026 09:05:47	Adesh	below 18, 18 - 25	student
8	14/01/2026 09:13:13	Sindhuja	18 - 25	student
9	14/01/2026 15:11:58	Petrisha V	18 - 25	student
10	14/01/2026 15:22:41	Nivedh Sunil	18 - 25	student
11	14/01/2026 19:15:34	Chakravarthy	below 18	student
12	14/01/2026 19:49:47	Shivanjali Ghose	18 - 25	student
13	15/01/2026 21:41:29	N Raja rajeshwari	36 - 50	home maker
14	15/01/2026 22:12:03	HIMANI	18 - 25	student
15	16/01/2026 18:14:31	Rahul	below 18	student
16	16/01/2026 18:15:57	Kavita	18 - 25	self employed
17	16/01/2026 18:29:36	RITWIK	below 18	student
18	16/01/2026 18:31:20	Yash Surana	below 18	student
19	16/01/2026 18:38:32	Durgesh	below 18	student
20	16/01/2026 18:44:53	Umar	below 18	student
21	16/01/2026 19:12:25	Kalim	below 18	student
22	16/01/2026 22:00:08	Prasanna Krishna	below 18	student
23	17/01/2026 00:18:31	Vihaan	below 18	student

24	17/01/2026 10:37:38	Mahee	below 18	student
25	17/01/2026 18:56:39	Kannma	Above 50	retired
26	17/01/2026 22:13:01	R Neethi Mohan	Above 50	working professional
27	17/01/2026 22:14:31	Geetha	36 - 50	home maker
28	17/01/2026 22:15:41	Prakash raj	Above 50	working professional
29	17/01/2026 22:16:46	Malathy	36 - 50	home maker
30	17/01/2026 22:18:16	Saurav R	26 - 35	working professional
31	17/01/2026 22:19:43	Rithwik	26 - 35	working professional

Pain Point Analysis

1. Low usage despite availability

Although most users have green spaces within walking distance, they visit them infrequently, indicating that mere presence does not translate into meaningful use.

2. Time constraints and overcrowding

Busy schedules and overcrowded parks discourage users, making green spaces feel inconvenient and less relaxing.

3. Average maintenance and appeal

Neutral satisfaction levels show that poor

upkeep and limited greenery reduce the attractiveness of parks, lowering user motivation.

4. Impact on well-being

Users feel that insufficient or poorly designed green spaces negatively affect their mental and physical well-being, highlighting a gap in urban livability.

Root Causes (5-Why)

1. Why are green spaces used less?

Because users lack time and feel parks are inconvenient.

2. Why do parks feel inconvenient?

They are often crowded and require dedicated travel time.

3. Why is dedicated time required?

Green spaces are large, centralized, and not closely integrated into residential areas.

4. Why are they not integrated locally?

Urban planning prioritizes limited large parks over multiple small green spaces.

5. Root Cause Identified

Lack of small, distributed, easily accessible green spaces embedded into daily urban life.

Is this a Wicked Problem?

Yes, this is a Wicked Problem.

The issue of underutilized urban green spaces cannot be classified as simple or merely complex because it involves **human behavior, urban planning constraints, and competing stakeholder priorities**, with no single clear solution.

Why the Problem Is Difficult to Define Clearly

- Although **83.3%** of users have a green space within walking distance, **50% visit rarely** and only **20% visit daily**.

- This shows that the problem is not just “lack of parks” but a combination of **time constraints (46.7%)**, **overcrowding (50%)**, and **average maintenance quality (46.7% neutral satisfaction)**.
- These overlapping factors make the problem hard to define as one single issue.

Reflection

1. **Incorrect initial assumptions**

At the beginning, I assumed that the main problem was the lack of green spaces. Through surveys and interviews, I realized this was incorrect.

2. **User perspectives reshaped my understanding**

Interacting directly with people helped me understand real-life constraints such as lack of time, overcrowding, and average

maintenance, which I had not fully considered earlier.

3. Importance of not jumping to solutions

This study showed me that proposing solutions too early can be misleading. Simply adding more parks would not solve the issue without addressing usability, accessibility, and user behavior.

4. Value of empathy and communication

Communicating with users helped me see the problem from their point of view, making the issue more human and grounded rather than theoretical.

5. Skills developed during the lab

Through this process, I developed skills in, data analysis, identifying pain points, and applying design thinking methods.

