

Original Article



Utilizing the Potential of Public Spaces for the Development of Urban Leisure and Tourism Areas (Case Study: Zargandeh Neighborhood Central District)

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Abstract:

In the contemporary world, the concept of leisure has emerged as a central topic, with the ability to engage in leisure activities recognized as a fundamental need in the daily lives of the general population. This aspect can address part of the material and spiritual needs of individuals, enhance quality of life, and contribute to the development of personality. In this context, over recent decades, the issue of how to spend leisure time has become a significant area of study across various disciplines including sociology, psychology, economics, urban planning, architecture, and more. Although there are numerous ways to engage in leisure activities, the realm of urban tourism presents a domain that can offer various options for citizens while simultaneously leaving a significant impact on the human environment, economy, livelihoods, and social and cultural relationships. In this regard, the role of diverse urban domains and land uses, particularly public spaces within cities, is crucial in promoting favorable leisure practices and providing the necessary framework for the development of urban leisure and tourism activities. This highlights the need for optimal utilization of historical/heritage, religious, cultural, ecological, and other resources in the area. The main objective of this research is to examine how to enhance the quality of urban spaces from various perspectives and to utilize the latent capacities within them for the development of recreational and urban tourism activities. This aims to achieve criteria and strategies for improving the condition of the area selected as the subject of the study. The area under investigation is part of the environment surrounding the Maksood Beik watercourse in the Zargandeh neighborhood (located in District 3 of Tehran) and is related to a zone identified as the Zargandeh regional center in the detailed plan. This area possesses significant cultural, religious, and natural potentials, and its watercourse has been recognized as an ecological axis in higher-level planning frameworks. It is anticipated that through an integrated plan, effective utilization of these features can be achieved. Therefore, after conducting initial studies in both theoretical and field sections and analyzing the capabilities and shortcomings of the zone, options and strategies for organizing the area will be presented. This will specifically focus on creating a conducive environment to strengthen recreational and tourism functions, particularly emphasizing the active participation of residents and addressing a broad spectrum of recreational needs of the users of these spaces.

Keywords: Leisure, leisure time, Urban Spaces, Urban Tourism, Zargandeh Neighborhood, Ecological Axes.

Introduction

Today,

developments related to the growth of information and communication technologies, changes in

employment structure and experience, transformations in life stages, shifts in values, and

differences arising from the prevalence of new lifestyles, as well as the dominance and popularity of consumption and consumerism as ideologies and values, urbanization, and the development of urban tourism and metropolitan living attractions can be considered as some of the contexts that have imparted a different meaning to the phenomena of leisure and tourism and created various capacities. Nowadays, leisure time should be viewed as a form of transformation in the concept of idleness in the modern era. Leisure, as a phenomenon, and sometimes even as a cultural, social, and political issue in certain societies, is a common subject across all strata of society. Due to its significance and characteristics, leisure time has attracted considerable attention from researchers. Educators and cultural policymakers, as well as psychologists and sociologists, each examine the topic of leisure from their own perspectives. The most important aspect of leisure time is the expansion of urban space, which is considered a direct consequence of leisure in modern societies. As the importance of the relationship between work and leisure has changed, and simultaneously, well-being has increased, the value of leisure time has gained more attention than ever. Leisure time has become a prominent feature of the quality of life in highly developed societies, especially regarded as a measure of individual freedom, participation in social life, and the welfare of citizens residing in those environments (Tokarski and Zarotis, 2020).

On the other hand, in the contemporary world, issues such as the normalization of the eight-hour workday and numerous social challenges have sparked both hopes and concerns among advocates of social reform. Following 1924, when the International Labor Office held its first international conference on workers' leisure, research initiatives focused on leisure time began in the United States. Among these, the most notable was the study conducted by Robert and Helen Lynd on leisure activities from 1929 to 1937. In 1934, George E. Lundberg, in a study that later became a classic, defined leisure as the opposite of activities that serve as means to achieve goals rather than being ends in themselves. Today, with the rise of social networks and increased virtual social interactions, a new definition of leisure time has emerged, distinct from historical precedents. As Bevilacqua

and Sohrabi (2020) highlight, the advent of social media has transformed leisure into a dual-purpose activity that blends work and recreation, reshaping its traditional boundaries. This shift underscores the need to rethink the concept of leisure in the modern era, as it plays a vital role in fostering the dynamism of contemporary social communities (Pempek et al., 2009).

In the context of leisure in the twentieth century, social, psychological, and critical research has been conducted extensively. For instance, the book "Towards a Leisure Society," authored by Geoffroy Domazet, published in 1966, is noteworthy. This sociologist conducted a study on previous research related to leisure and concluded that in most of these studies, leisure has been examined as a determining factor rather than a determinant. In other words, the influence of various factors on how specific classes or groups spend their leisure time has been investigated, while the increasing impact of leisure on work, social relationships, and social and cultural structures has been overlooked. A prominent sociologist and researcher like Georg Simmel can be considered one of the theoretical figures who addressed the subject of leisure. According to him, leisure is not necessarily a time that brings about creativity; however, it counters the "consumer-oriented idea of leisure time and the filling of time and consciousness in a meaningless, empty, and passive way" (Tajbakhsh, 2005: 135). Zimmel is among the thinkers who emphasize the duality of leisure, attributing this duality to the demands and characteristics of the modern era, as well as the increasing changes in all aspects of life and the responses of modern individuals to these changes. Similarly, Ghandeharion and Feyz (2014) explore the complexities of leisure and its cultural implications in their analysis of Edward Albee's *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*, highlighting how leisure activities can reflect deeper societal tensions and power dynamics. In the urban planning of the last century, the concept of leisure in the city can be traced back to the International Congresses of Modern Architects (CIAM), particularly the fourth congress in 1933, which resulted in the formulation of the Athens Charter. This congress provided research on the existing state of cities and their excessive and chaotic expansion, and it also examined the causes of prevalent problems. Furthermore, the congress

developed a program for a coherent framework for urban activities, which proposed that cities could encompass up to four vital functions, namely: "housing, work, leisure, and communications." Although the issue of separating core functions has been widely criticized, especially after the 1960s, the discussion surrounding leisure has become a significant topic in the field of urban planning. Consequently, it has sparked extensive transformations in job availability, leisure hours, land uses, and related and continuously evolving activities, as well as social and ethnic diversity and its impact on cities and urban spaces.

Recent literature on urban studies, particularly in urban design literature (Carmona et al., 2003; Pamir, 2004; Gol, 1987 and 2010; Madani-Pour, 2012; Jacobs, 1961; Chepman, 1996), underscores the importance of creating dynamic, vibrant, and attractive places for people's presence, enhancing and improving the quality of daily activities, including how leisure time is spent.

The activities associated with leisure time are deeply interconnected with the themes and content of urban tourism. Urban tourism, as a distinct form of tourism, places significant emphasis on social, cultural, and religious factors, heritage sites, historical contexts, natural elements, development infrastructure, capital, and economic dynamics. These factors not only shape the tourism experience but also influence broader economic trends, as highlighted by Roshdieh (2024), who explores the interplay between monetary policy uncertainty and market volatility, and Sadeghi et al. (2022), who demonstrate the importance of strategic financial planning, such as optimal stock portfolio selection, in navigating complex economic environments. Understanding these connections is essential for fostering sustainable urban tourism development that balances cultural preservation and economic growth.

As highlighted by Najafabadi et al. (2024) in their study on the ecological restoration of historical monuments, such as Chogha Zanbil, the integration of cultural and historical elements into urban tourism not only preserves heritage but also enhances the overall appeal and sustainability of tourism practices. This approach underscores the importance of balancing economic development with the preservation of cultural and natural

resources to create meaningful and enduring tourism experiences. Since the 1980s, the concept of urban tourism has become a significant part of research frameworks and discussions on sustainable development assessments in various countries (Ghorashi, Ezzatfar, Hatami, et al., 2024). et al., 2024). As the importance of how leisure time is spent has grown in urban living, and with the increasing number of urban tourists, research in this field has progressed, exploring innovative methods for the functioning of tourism and tourists in urban environments. In recent decades, diverse perspectives on tourism, including urban tourism, have emerged and can be categorized into economic, socio-cultural, environmental and climatic, and political dimensions (Li, 2008; Mansourihanis et al., 2024).

In recent years, the expansion of collective open spaces and the establishment of modern recreational and leisure centers, along with the development of urban tourism with suitable and sometimes maximum returns, have been significant concerns for urban organizations, city management, and investors in this sector (Rezaei and Gholami Gowhareh, 2021). However, special attention must be paid to the nature and content of these activities. It can be acknowledged that in our country, the role of urban space as a dynamic collective life of citizens, responsive to individual needs, is not particularly pronounced. This is while, if urban spaces are created to be desirable, diverse, and to provide healthy activities and entertainment, they can play a significant role in fostering more active public participation and in the effective use of public areas and functions. Consequently, this is considered an undeniable necessity, and in this regard, the utilization of both natural and human-made capacities becomes essential. Given the above considerations, this research focuses on the organization of a portion of the Zargandeh neighborhood fabric located in District 3 of Tehran, with the aim of developing urban tourism and expanding leisure facilities. Additionally, District 3 of Tehran features natural waterways, which offers a unique natural capacity, one of the most significant being the Maqsood Bek creek, recognized as one of the seven major valleys in Tehran, which flows through the Zargandeh area.

The selected area encompasses a section of the aforementioned stream and the adjacent green

space along its banks. On the other hand, it includes the center of the Zargandeh district, which features the Imamzadeh Ismail shrine and Zargandeh Park. This zone is located a short distance from Shariati Street and at the intersection of Shariati and Kalahdoz with the governmental axis characterized by predominantly commercial uses, along with significant cultural and recreational functions (such as the Farhang Cinema). Concurrently, there is a deficiency and inadequacy of recreational uses and activities within the neighborhood, alongside the existence of regionally significant facilities (such as institutions of higher education and specialized hospitals) nearby, as well as some lands and gardens that are not being utilized effectively. This necessitates the organization of activities based on community needs. This collection of areas presents an ideal space for intervention and leveraging capacities for the expansion of urban leisure and tourism activities. Enhancing the quality of the natural and built environment in the area can create more desirable spaces and pave the way for a more active presence of local residents and community members to engage in leisure and tourism functions. Therefore, the present research faces two fundamental questions: the first concerns the role and position of ecological axes and natural areas in organizing recreational and tourism activities, while the second question pertains to the significance of urban spaces in shaping leisure time and the development of urban tourism.

Theoretical Foundations of the Research

The present study is based on three subjects: leisure, urban tourism, and urban ecological space and networks. Therefore, in this section, each of the three theoretical topics will be defined separately.

1. The Concept of Leisure

Leisure, equivalent to the French term "Loisir" and the English term "Leisure," is derived from the Latin root "Licere." According to the Dehkhoda Dictionary, Leisure means comfort and rest, opposing the burdens of work and obligations, and refers to being free and forgetting (Dehkhoda, 2011: Vol. 2, entry "Faraghat"). The Larousse Dictionary defines leisure as the activities and recreational pursuits that individuals eagerly engage in during their time away from

regular work. Therefore, it can be argued that this practice is an optional and voluntary activity. Leisure is a significant part of daily life and plays a crucial role in the health, well-being, and quality of life of individuals and communities. Recreation plays an important role in people's lives through the values and benefits it brings as a key element in maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Leisure is viewed as a complex social phenomenon that affects various sectors of society (Agnar, 2020: 127).

Today's societies offer leisure in various forms, which can be practiced individually or in groups and take place in diverse environments. Leisure activities can influence individuals across different social classes and generally yield positive outcomes for both individuals and communities. As Entezarizarch, Zakerian, Madreseh et al. (2024) highlight in their analysis of age-related challenges, understanding the role of leisure in enhancing quality of life is crucial, particularly in addressing the needs of diverse populations. Society should be educated about the importance and benefits of recreational programs, as this promotes and expands the significance of leisure's role in contemporary societies. Leisure is increasingly valued as a vital force in our physical and mental well-being (Ross & Serel, 2019, p. 750). According to Iwasaki (2006), culture plays a pivotal role in shaping the conceptualization of leisure, whether in Western societies or Asian cultures. Empirical evidence demonstrates the impact of leisure on quality of life across various cultural contexts worldwide. Modes of expression in leisure—such as art, dance, music, religion, clothing, language, sports, and gastronomy—reflect and celebrate both individual and collective identities, contributing to the cultural richness of societies across the globe (Iwasaki, 2006). However, in contemporary cities, due to changes in living patterns, a lack of natural and open spaces, high costs, and difficulties in accessing recreational and leisure centers on one hand, and the pervasive prevalence of home media such as television, video, satellite, and computers on the other, a significant amount of leisure time has turned into passive and one-sided experiences, accompanied by detrimental social and psychological effects. In this regard, the expansion of open public spaces and the establishment of active leisure centers, especially

tourist spaces, have become one of the objectives of leisure planning. This approach not only targets economic and environmental goals but also plays a significant role in balancing leisure activities and ensuring physical and mental health (Saeidnia & Mahdizadeh, 2011).

Many thinkers, including Zimmel, Dumazid, and Heywood, categorize leisure activities and believe that matters such as recreation, entertainment, tourism, shopping, and casual games are considered leisure activities (Heywood, 2020: 56). Nash has also divided leisure activities into four levels: passive participation, non-emotional participation, active participation, and creative participation. Nash's model illustrates the progress of leisure, akin to the classification method of Maslow's needs. Furthermore, Torkildsen contends that leisure activities possess the potential to evoke such feelings, understanding, and consciousness that can elevate individuals to a level where they can discover peace, beauty, and joy in this world (Torkildsen, 2015: 26).

2. Tourism and Its Dimensions

The term "Tourism" is derived from the word "Tour," which means to travel around and has its roots in the Latin word "Turns," meaning to turn around, to go back and forth between origin and destination, and to rotate. This term has traveled from Greek to Spanish and finally to English. Linguistically, tourism refers to all individuals who travel to places outside their city or country for leisure, sightseeing of natural or cultural landscapes, or other activities for a period of less than one year (Choukai et al., 2018: 739). According to Kaya, the meaning of tourism can be defined as a technique of travel for pleasure; while it may be difficult to define, it is easy to recognize (Mousavi and Bagheri, 2013: 12). In its broader sense, tourism also encompasses those who travel in connection with their work and profession. In this context, educated individuals and employees in academic and industrial centers who travel for scientific and research activities also fall into this category. In a more general sense, tourism serves as a means that connects individuals with distinct religions, cultures, and ethnicities, helping them to better understand each other despite political and social tensions (Bzorge Amrei et al., 2023: 47). Therefore, tourism is rightly considered one of the fundamental activities of contemporary humans,

bringing significant changes to the host society. Many view tourism as a crucial factor in cultural exchange and familiarization with different nations across various dimensions – natural, cultural, and political (Sharpley, 2008: 67).

Krampton (2003) believes that tourism not only boosts economic prosperity and facilitates social exchange between individuals and different countries, but also enhances the growth and development of tourism motivations, including economic, sporting, and ritual motivations, among others. (Krampton, 2003: 921) Richard Butler (1991) also points out that tourism in a region is developed and maintained in such a manner and scale that it becomes enduring over an unlimited period, creating an environment (human or physical) without diminishing or altering it to a degree that would hinder the successful development and health of other activities and processes (Butler, 1991: 42). Tourism can be examined through its concepts and environments. He notes that the scientific revolution in technology and the socio-economic changes that followed World War II have created conditions that have significantly heightened the desire for national and international communications. Nowadays, tourism, framed within technological innovations and new managerial functions on one hand, and the pervasive dominance of capitalism alongside the formation of a global economy and the blurring of political borders on the other hand, has brought about numerous transformations in geographical spaces. Tourism has become an important social reality in the post-industrial era, which is generally viewed from the perspectives of cultural equilibrium and developmental balances (social justice). The tourism industry is a mix of various activities that are chain-linked to serve tourists. In fact, tourism encompasses all phenomena and relationships resulting from the interactions between tourists, suppliers, and sellers of tourism products, governments, and communities in the process of attracting and hosting tourists (Goldner & Ritchie, 2006).

3. Urban Ecological Network

In general, cities consist of two urban networks: the urban network (related to the built environment) and the ecological network (connected to the natural environment). Among these, ecological networks play a pivotal role in

enhancing environmental quality and conserving natural resources. Additionally, the function of ecological networks within cities also includes facilitating human connections and improving the quality of life for individuals. However, these networks may be subject to change due to economic interests, and they should not be addressed only in the final stages of plans and programs (Gowhareh & Taheri Tafti, 2022). In urban spaces, where life and work are constantly in motion, recreation and enjoyment of spaces and economic activities can progress in parallel. By accurately understanding urban and ecological networks, the conditions for their coexistence can be established (Wyles & Rozier, 2001).

The demographic shift from rural areas to cities has fundamentally led to numerous issues, including the degradation and destruction of the urban ecological space. Today, the increasing destruction of the natural functioning of urban ecosystems has prompted ecologists to pay greater attention to urban ecological networks. This focus is aimed at the development of urban ecological spaces and networks (Johnson & Hill, 2002). In the study of urban ecological networks, it is essential to consider the city as a cohesive and integrated system, whose ultimate goal in the ecological realm is the interconnectedness of urban ecological elements. Accordingly, unlike traditional methods in urban planning and especially municipal management, there is now a heightened emphasis on urban ecological networks to optimize the ecological functions of urban spaces, including green areas, etc. (Cook, 2002: 271).

In this regard, if no protective measures are taken for intra-urban ecological networks, the developing urban networks will encompass and ultimately destroy them. Under normal conditions, there is no natural resistance to this growing process, and no barriers will inhibit this development, resulting in the fragmentation and eventual destruction of the intra-urban ecological network. To address this issue, urban ecological networks must be examined in conjunction, rather than as two separate topics.

- Natural Ecological Network: The patches of natural vegetation cover, aquatic zones, spaces, and remnants of natural features in urban environments, along with natural corridors and

pathways such as river valleys and air corridors, as well as other natural routes for the flow of materials, energy, and plant and animal species. In general, the collection of factors, connections, and natural processes that form the foundation of the city constitutes the components of the city's natural ecological network.

- Artificial (Non-Natural) Ecological Network: The components of the ecological network in urban areas also include patches of constructed green spaces and artificial corridors, such as channels, drainage ditches, water pathways, qanats, and green pathways.

A balanced combination of urban networks with a pattern grounded in ecological principles represents the optimal manifestation of the relationship between humans and nature. On one hand, the distinct characteristics of these two patterns highlight their interconnectedness, while on the other hand, they reveal the inherent divergence between humans and nature. As noted by Ghorashi, Karimi, Hatami Dezdarani et al. (2024), forecasting a balanced integration of urban networks with ecological networks, which form the foundation of cities, has a profound impact on the structure and functioning of urban environments. This approach underscores the importance of aligning urban development with ecological sustainability to foster harmonious coexistence between human activities and natural systems.

However, greenways are not a novel phenomenon. The term "greenway" was first coined by William Dait in a study conducted in 1959 aimed at securing open spaces in the United States, and subsequently gained popularity in America and Europe (Turner, 1996: 391). Little defines urban greenways as linear green spaces that develop along both artificial and natural corridors such as riverbanks, valleys, ridges, canals, drainage channels, scenic routes, railways, and even escape routes from public buildings, among others (Little, 1990: 24). According to Foreman and Gordon (1995), greenways are protected lands located within and outside urban areas, adjacent to where people work and live, created with multiple purposes in mind (Foreman and Gordon, 1995: 4-3). Fabs (2004) describes greenways as corridors of varying widths that interconnect in a woven network and link to artificial networks, providing spaces that may overlap with sections of road and

highway networks or be connected to them (Fabs, 2004: 56). Turner (2006) emphasizes the environmental desirability aspect of greenways, stating that a greenway is a path that is environmentally sustainable. In any case, the value of greenways for public benefit is becoming increasingly apparent, and their roles and meanings are becoming richer and more extensive with each passing day.

In the past, and perhaps one could say during the first generation of greenways, there were types of green spaces that, as described by Turner, formed the pathways connecting cities and villages or established specific routes for religious festivals. At times, these were the paths surrounding the walls of an ancient city that gradually transformed into green corridors over time. Eventually, various types of green pathways emerged that connected parks and natural urban areas. Today, in addition to their significant connective role, key aspects and complementary functions have also been introduced in the design and planning of greenways, giving rise to a third generation of greenways. Ahern (1995) defines a contemporary greenway as a network of open spaces containing various linear elements and serving multiple ecological, recreational, cultural, and aesthetic purposes. He highlights five key aspects of these green corridors: connectivity, linearity, multifunctionality, sustainability considerations, and integrity (Ahern, 1995: 142). The concept of multifunctional greenways is also emphasized in the work of Fabs (2004) and is considered one of the most important aspects of the third generation of greenways (Fabs, 2004: 56).

Research Methodology

The present research is of an applied nature and follows the process of urban design. This report comprises both theoretical and practical sections. The theoretical section includes a chapter on the theoretical foundations and the examination of case studies and empirical examples, where we explore various perspectives of urban planning scholars on leisure in urban spaces and their theories regarding urban tourism. The overall method in this section is descriptive and content analysis, from which objectives, strategies, and scientific criteria will be extracted to design and formulate the theoretical framework, which will then be utilized in the practical section to provide

final solutions. In this section, the studies will be conducted in a library-based manner, utilizing available texts, sources, and documents. The practical part of the research includes two chapters: the identification of the study area and the presentation of options and the final design. In the chapter on understanding the characteristics of the area, detailed examinations will be conducted, and studies will be carried out using library resources, internet sources, and available documents (related urban plans such as comprehensive and detailed plans, statistical information, field studies, etc.). Identifying the current state of the urban fabric is conducted through observation and field research, along with the updating of maps. For this purpose, tools such as photographs, interviews, GIS software, satellite maps, and others are employed. As this segment of the research is in continuous interaction with the urban fabric of the study area, on-site presence for field data collection and statistical information is essential. Therefore, the present study's data collection and analyses are carried out according to the needs, requirements, criteria, and qualities outlined in the theoretical foundations section. The findings are categorized and evaluated in a SWOT table format.

Finding

Introduction to the Scope and Its Position

The area of interest is located in the Zargandeh neighborhood in District 2 of Region 3, Tehran. Generally, Region 3 was officially established as one of the divisions of Tehran in 1979, but the transformations that have taken place indicate a long history of development, especially concerning rural fabrics and morphological structures. The establishment and expansion of Region 3 occurred in an area that has multiple rural settlement cores with agricultural activities (agriculture and particularly horticulture), such as Darous, Zargandeh, Qolhak, and Deh Vank, which previously thrived with vibrant and prosperous life. Region 3 is one of the 22 districts of Tehran, covering an area of over 2945 hectares in the northeastern part of the city. This zone, as illustrated in Figure (1), is bordered to the north by Region 1, to the east by Region 4, to the west by Region 2, and to the south by Regions 6 and 7 (Detailed Plan of the Region, 2007: 3013).

Region 3 is situated within the historical context of the development of Tehran, intersected by two arterial roads of the city: Shariati and Vali-Asr streets. These factors have played a significant role in the vibrant transformations of Region 3. This area is located in the northeastern part of Tehran and is bounded by northern highways (Sadr, Modarres, and Chaman highways), southern highways (Resalat Highway, Haghani Highway, and Hemmat Highway), and the western boundary (Chaman Highway), as well as the eastern boundary (Pasdaran-Shariati Street). According to preliminary data from the General Population and Housing Census conducted in 2006, the population of Region 3 is 293,181 individuals. Given that the average population

growth rate in this region is lower than the corresponding average rate for the entire city of Tehran, the overall demographic trend in Region 3, despite its fluctuations, is declining compared to the city of Tehran. The area of Region 3 is 31.208 square kilometers, placing it tenth among the regions of Tehran, accounting for 3.4% of the total area of the city. This region comprises 6 districts and 12 neighborhoods, as outlined in the detailed plans for 6 districts and 11 neighborhoods, with the names of the neighborhoods listed as follows: Vanak, Ararat, Amaniye, Hasanabad Zargandeh, Ekhtiyariyeh, Darb-e-Dovom, Davoodieh, Seyyed-Khandan, Qoba, Qolhak, and Darous and Kaousieh (Detailed Plan of the Region, 2007: 3.15).

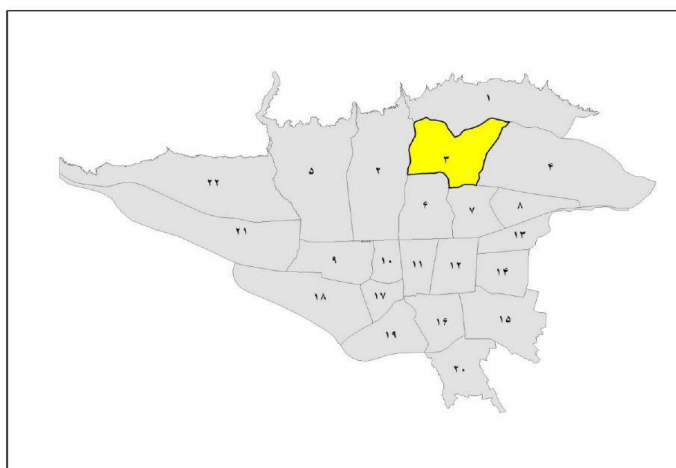


Figure 1: Location of Zone 3 in Tehran (Source: Detailed Plan of Area 3)

Physical Characteristics and Urban Spaces of the Area

In this section, the architectural morphology, including aspects such as plot density, number of floors, age of buildings, building quality, mass and space, and the interplay of solid and void, is examined. Additionally, characteristics related to urban spaces, visually significant elements, and memorable locations will be investigated. At the same time, the general characteristics of the Zargandeh neighborhood will also be analyzed.

Plot Density: The analysis of the studied fabric indicates that 15% of the plots in the entire area are less than 200 square meters, 50% of the plots range from 201 to 500 square meters, 17% are between 501 and 1000 square meters, and 17% exceed 1000 square meters in area. The finer grain fabric is predominantly concentrated in the center of Zargandeh neighborhood (Hasan Abad) within

the dilapidated areas. Medium-sized plots are observed scattered throughout the fabric. In areas with finer plots, block sizes are smaller, leading to greater permeability within the blocks and fabric, whereas in the northeastern region, due to the presence of larger plots, block sizes are larger and permeability is reduced (Figure 2). In the central part of the studied area, primarily due to the presence of non-residential functions such as the Imamzadeh, Zargandeh Park, and the University of Medical Sciences, there are plots larger than 1001 square meters, resulting in a coarser fabric. In contrast, other areas of the zone predominantly feature plots ranging from 201 to 500 square meters (see Figures 3-12). Consequently, the fabric possesses the necessary potential for utilizing plots for public domains and creating suitable spaces for leisure activities and urban tourism due to the larger plot sizes and the existence of areas exceeding 1001 square meters.

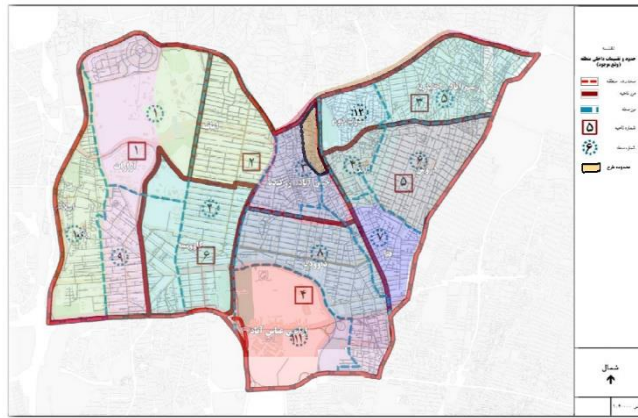


Figure 2: Boundaries and Internal Divisions of the Area (Source: Detailed Plan of Area 3)

Number of Floors and Building Heights: In the analysis of the Zargandeh neighborhood, it has been identified that most of the buildings in the area (approximately 43%) are three stories high, followed by two-story buildings at 27%, placing them in the second tier. These buildings predominantly have an age exceeding 30 years (around 66%). The average number of stories determined in the area is three; however, despite a tendency for renovation among residents, current economic conditions have limited demolition and reconstruction activities to only a few cases, primarily along the edges of the area. The texture of the neighborhood consists of buildings with varying numbers of stories situated adjacent to

one another. Figure (4) indicates that the area is predominantly dedicated to short buildings of 1-3 stories and mid-rise structures (approximately 3 to 6 stories). High-rise buildings are sporadically visible on the western side of Atari Moghadam Street. The older fabric located in the central part of the neighborhood features a low-rise vertical structure, while the middle fabric surrounding the old fabric comprises mid-rise buildings. It can be asserted that high-rise buildings serve as landmarks within the neighborhood, yet due to their lack of conformity with roadway widths, they have resulted in a disproportionate and undesirable confinement of streets.

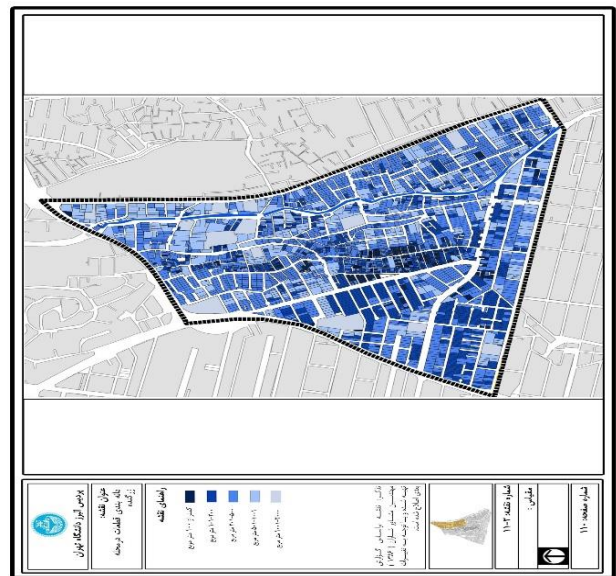
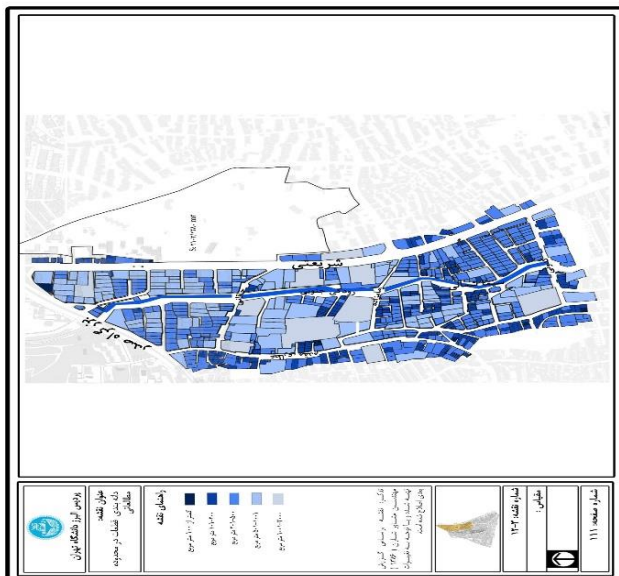


Figure 3: Granulometry of the Zargandeh Area Components (Source: Detailed Plan of Area 3)

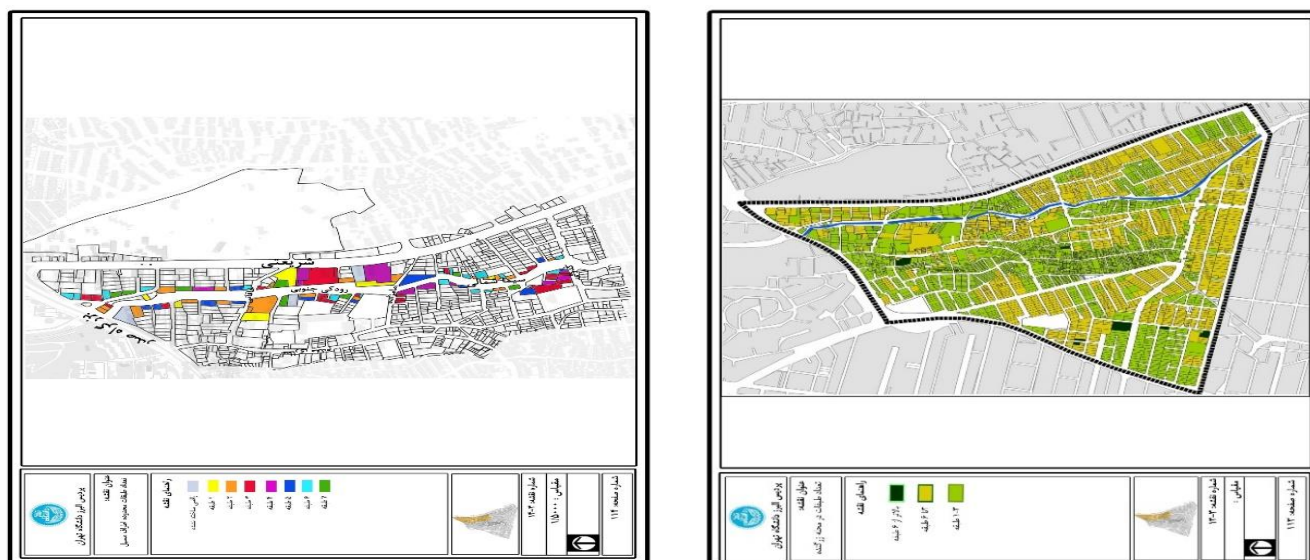


Figure 4: Number of Stories and Building Heights in the Zargandeh Area (Source: Detailed Plan of Area 3)

Elements and Components of Ecological and Artificial Spaces in Urban Areas

Artificial Elements: This section examines some of the artificial elements of urban spaces, such as paving, facades, and urban furniture.

Paving: Generally, all public spaces and the network of pathways within the area are covered with asphalt, except for the sections of sidewalks adjacent to the irrigation channels, which have a more diverse paving in terms of color, texture, and materials.

Paving in the studied area is divided into three categories:

Vehicle Paving of the Pathway Network: Covered with asphalt.

Sidewalk Paving of the Pathway Network: Comprising asphalt, mosaic, concrete blocks, etc.

Paving of Parks and Public Spaces: Primarily covered with mosaic and concrete blocks.

The paving within the study area is analyzed in Figures 5 and 6.

Urban Furniture: Urban furniture consists of semi-fixed physical elements that can significantly impact the presence and comfort of individuals on one hand, and enhance the beauty of the

environment on the other. In the Zargandeh neighborhood, much of the urban furniture is located in parks, which suffer from quality issues and are insufficient in terms of quantity and distribution. In the study area, most urban furniture includes benches, trash bins, ATM kiosks, water fountains located beside pathways, the martyr's shrine element in Zargandeh Park, drinking fountains, children's play equipment in Zargandeh and Elahieh Parks, traffic signs, telephone booths, railings around the streams, lighting elements, and advertising boards, which are predominantly situated within and around the parks. The existing urban furniture in Zargandeh and Elahieh parks is adequate in terms of quantity and placement, but lacks diversity and features uniform designs. Considering that one of the user groups of Zargandeh Park is children due to the presence of play equipment, less attention has been given to them in the design of the furniture. The density of urban furniture is higher in parks, and there is a lack of seating areas around the streams given the potential for creating such spaces. The railings surrounding the stream provide necessary safety; however, they do not possess an appealing design in terms of aesthetics, color, and the materials used. (Figures 7 and 8).



Figure 5 and 6 - Paving of the Zargandeh Area



Figures 7 and 8. Urban Furnishings of Zargandeh Park and the Railings Surrounding the Watercourse

The Zargandeh neighborhood is acknowledged as one of the traditional and historic districts of Tehran, where enduring patterns of neighborly behavior and daily social gatherings persist. However, there is a significant lack of urban furniture in key public areas, such as religious spaces, public markets, and schools. This issue is especially evident around larger sub-neighborhood facilities, as depicted in Figures 9 and 10. The absence of such amenities can impede the creation of community spaces that promote social cohesion and cultural continuity, a concern underscored by Asmaroud, Khadijeh, and Alaei (2015), who emphasize the need to balance opportunities and risks in developing educational and community-centered institutions. Furthermore, addressing these infrastructural gaps is crucial for fostering inclusivity and diversity, principles that align with the findings of Sadeghi and Niu (2024), who highlight the role of strategic interventions—such as those enabled by artificial intelligence—in enhancing equity and

representation in educational and community settings.

Natural Elements: Natural elements play a pivotal role in enhancing environmental quality and increasing the desirability of spaces due to their intrinsic value and unique characteristics. As highlighted by Zarei et al. (2024), the presence of diverse natural elements, such as vegetation and water bodies, can serve as a foundational inspiration for spatial design. These elements fulfill multifaceted roles in shaping and defining spaces, offering opportunities to create harmonious and functional environments from various perspectives.

Green Areas and Vegetative Cover: Despite its rural and summer resort history, the Zargandeh neighborhood currently lacks sufficient public green areas, with some of the most notable located in the northern and northeastern parts of the district. Green spaces in this neighborhood exist in two patterns: linear and area-based. In the area-based pattern, old gardens and neighborhood

parks (at various scales) can be identified, while the linear pattern includes the green axes and corridors of Zargandeh, comprising Rudaki Street and the surrounding greenery of the creek, along with Atarian Moqaddam Street, Daliri Street, and Shahson Street. The linear vegetation along Shariati Street is also noteworthy; the main green areas and axes are illustrated in Figure 11. It is essential to note that a significant portion of the neighborhood's vegetation consists of private green spaces belonging to homes and residential complexes, as well as neighborhood-wide facilities, which greatly influence visual quality and environmental amelioration. Additionally, the

immediate environment includes the Garden of the English Embassy, which contributes to the environmental qualities of the district. In the study area, as previously mentioned several times, the green spaces surrounding the creek and Zargandeh Park are considered the primary green areas, along with the small Alahieh Park in the northern area and scattered green spaces along Simaye Jonubi Street, as well as the green areas of Islamic Azad University and several old gardens such as Golshan Garden. The types of vegetation used in the study area include plane trees, sycamores, coniferous pines, and shrubbery such as boxwood and various flowers.



Figures 9 and 10: The Zargandeh Park River with two flowerpots and metal railings leading to the Imamzadeh

Examination of the Land Uses in the Zargandeh Neighborhood and the Study Area

The Zargandeh neighborhood is composed of diverse urban fabrics. As indicated in the strategic development document for the Hasannabad Zargandeh neighborhood, the area suffers from unbalanced development, lack of uniformity, and non-homogeneity, which, along with the presence of cultural and economic disparities between the old and new fabrics, constitute significant deficiencies within the neighborhood. As illustrated in the overall maps of the region, the central and older part of this neighborhood around Omrani Street is categorized as part of the dilapidated fabric of the area. In addition to the existing shortcomings regarding public green spaces, previously mentioned, the neighborhood also exhibits relative poverty in certain urban ratios such as service, sports, and cultural spaces. Therefore, it is essential to pay serious attention to these types of land uses in urban planning

initiatives. The land uses of Zargandeh neighborhood are depicted in Figure 12. As the service balance table for Region 3 indicates, the area is deficient in terms of green spaces and parks, tourism and related services, urban facilities and equipment, and religious services. Conversely, when it comes to cultural, sports, and educational services, there is an excess of service provision. However, it is crucial to note that the distribution of land uses across the region, zones, and neighborhoods is neither uniform nor adequate, leading to the shortcomings previously mentioned in the Zargandeh neighborhood. Based on these investigations, we have reached the following conclusions regarding the land uses in the Zargandeh neighborhood:

1-The shortage of per capita facilities, particularly in recreational, sports, and parking services, is significant.

2-As mentioned, the area surrounding Zargandeh Park, Imamzadeh Ismail, and the daily market has

Four major activities with the highest level of interaction among the residents of the studied area are: 1- Educational centers with various functions, ranging from universities to elementary schools and kindergartens; 2- Commercial centers operating weekly or monthly, such as the Zargandeh local market; 3- Cultural centers including children's houses, libraries, and cultural institutions; 4- Green spaces and parks.

Since the subject of the current research is closely related to leisure activities and urban tourism, the deficiencies in cultural, religious, sports, and recreational services are given particular attention, and these aspects will be considered in the process of examining, designing, and organizing the area. However, the primary land uses for recreational and tourism activities within the neighborhood and region include: 1. Sports facilities: Barbad Sports Hall located in Zargandeh on Attari Moghadam Street, next to the Imam Ali (AS) Mosque; 2. Salar Sports Hall located on Shariati Street, Yezdanians Alley.

- **Parks at the regional level:** Zargandeh Park located on Imamzadeh Street; neighborhood-level parks: Elahiyeh Park; sub-neighborhood level parks: Laleh Park.
- **Cultural facilities:** Farhang Cinema located on Shariati Street, above Qalehak; Ayatollah Davoodi Library in Zargandeh on Shariati Street, Kadooyi Street; Rasool Library on Shariati Street, Khaghani Street, Attari Moghadam Street; Safir Cultural Institute on Shariati Street, located between Yakhchal Street and Khaladoz, at the corner of Kadooyi Street; Bozorg Andisheh Cultural and Artistic Institute on Shariati Street, before Yakhchal, in Sadiq Alley; Shahid Beheshti Public Library on Shariati Street, situated between Yakhchal and Khaladoz Streets.
- **Mosques:** Imamzadeh Ismail Mosque located on Shariati Street, Zargandeh, in Imamzadeh Alley; Imam Ali (AS) Mosque on Attari Moghadam Street, next to Javaheri Hospital; Hojjat Mosque on Shariati Street, Qalehak, Hasanabad, Zargandeh; Jame Mosque of Qalehak on Shariati Street, Qalehak; Zargandeh Mosque on Attari Moghadam Street, opposite Qanat Alley.

Social, Cultural, and Economic Characteristics of the Zargandeh Neighborhood

- **Demographic Characteristics and Developments of the Zargandeh Neighborhood:** Zone 3 has experienced lower population growth compared to its corresponding

areas since its establishment until the present day. Based on the 2006 census, the population of this area is approximately 293,181 people, distributed across 91,933 households. The average annual population growth rate from 1980 to 2006 was around 1.3 percent. Moreover, the youth population ratio in Zone 3 is lower than the relative share of the population across the entire city of Tehran. Conversely, the proportion of elderly people (those aged 60 years and older) in this area is significantly higher than the overall population of Tehran. In general, the average household size in this neighborhood is about 3.3 members (according to census data from 2006), while the corresponding average for the city of Tehran is 4 members. Additionally, the literacy rate in Zone 3 stands at 96.5 percent, which is higher than the average for the entire city of Tehran (90.6%). The education level of literate individuals in this area also exceeds the average educational attainment in Tehran.

In the 1950s, Zargandeh was identified as a village in the northern region of Tehran. In the first nationwide census conducted in November 1956, Zargandeh was included among the villages of Shemiran and Qolhak. The book *Historical Geography of Shemiran*, quoting from the *Geography of Villages in Iran* prepared by the Army's geographical organization in 1949, states: "Zargandeh is located three kilometers from Imamzadeh Saleh in Tajrish and is connected to Qolhak, with a population of approximately three thousand residents. During the summer months, the population of Zargandeh increased by one thousand. This settlement is situated between Tajrish, Qolhak, Davoodiyeh, and Valieyeh, with Hasanabad considered one of its neighborhoods." In the 1958 census, Zargandeh was recorded alongside Qolhak, with a total population reported as 16,793, approximately 13,000 of whom were from Qolhak and the remaining 3,000 from Zargandeh. By the 1976 census, this area was integrated into the city of Tehran and counted as part of the northern neighborhoods of the city, with a total population reported as 24,150. It can be concluded that population growth in Zargandeh began in the early 1960s.

The General Census of Population and Housing in 1986 divided the Zargandeh region into specific areas for counting. The data collected from the 1991 census also indicates that between the years 1991 and 1986, the population growth in Zargandeh continued unabated. An examination of the demographic changes from 1986 to 2006

reveals a consistent increase in population throughout this 20-year period (Tables 1 and 2

and Figure 14).

Table 1: Statistical Information on the Zargandeh Neighborhood (Source: Atlas of Municipalities of Tehran)

Year	Population (People)	Household	Annual Percentage Increase
1959	3000	600	-
1976	24150	5011	6.7
1986	30410	6457	3.84
1991	36579	8333	3.69
1997	38213	9630	0.72
2006	34344	7520	-0.9

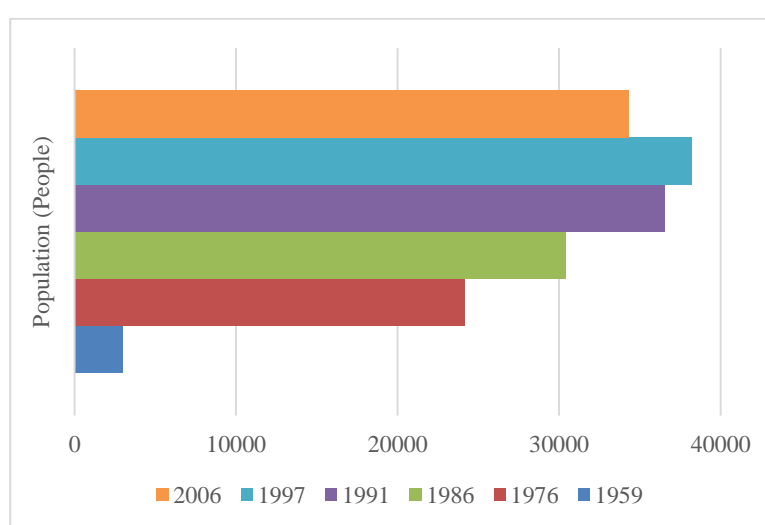


Figure 14: Demographic Developments of Zargandeh

Social and Cultural Fabric: According to the usual studies in the examined area regarding the identification of social groups, the context is determined by factors such as duration of residence, migration origin, language, culture, etc. It is possible that residents of a neighborhood, or more specifically at a smaller scale, a neighborhood unit or block, may not share a common language. However, due to their history of residence and neighborliness, they may form their own specific social group. Therefore, it is not feasible to focus on a single factor when identifying social groups. Based on the consultant's assessments, more than half of the neighborhood residents are non-Tehrani and have declared the birthplace of the head of the household to be outside Tehran. Approximately 42% of heads of households were born in Tehran

or in cities and villages within the Tehran province. Residents who have migrated from outside the Tehran province are mainly from Tabas, Sabzevar, Qom, Azerbaijan, Kurdistan, and Lorestan (Abrandasht Consulting Company, Zargandeh Urban Landscape Project, 1388: 59). The findings indicate that the majority of residents speak Persian, which can also be deduced from their migration origins and places of birth. About 70% of the population is of Persian descent. The population of Turks residing in the area constitutes 19%, Lurs 8%, and Kurds only 3% of the residents. It is noteworthy that, in terms of the spatial distribution and dispersion of the mentioned social groups, each occupies different sections of the residential fabric, making it impossible to delineate specific boundaries or social territories for each ethnicity.

Table 2: Statistical Information of Zargandeh Neighborhood

	Population	Male Population	Female Population	Working Population	Unemployed Population	Number of Households	Literacy Rate	Illiteracy Rate	Married Population	Single Population
Zargandeh Neighborhood	34344	16808	17719	8557	459	8803	31547	1290	17628	13752

Residents of the Zargandeh neighborhood have a significant history of settlement, particularly in its central area. According to the Urban Landscape Plan studies of Zargandeh (2009), out of 301 households that reported their duration of residence, 186 households, equivalent to 62%, have lived in the area for over twenty years. In contrast, only 26% of this number have lived in the area for less than ten years. The percentage of households with over thirty years of residency is also noteworthy, as 45% of households have resided in this area for more than thirty years. The population retention is directly related to the length of residence; older residents often exhibit a greater inclination to remain. This prolonged residency among the neighborhood's inhabitants indicates a high sense of place attachment to their living environment. Furthermore, considering the religious nature of the Zargandeh neighborhood and the active presence of mosques and religious centers (such as Imanzadeh Ismail, Amir al-Mu'minin Mosque, and Hojet Mosque), participation in religious ceremonies, especially during significant occasions (such as Ashura and Tasua), sees the highest engagement rates among local residents. There is also noticeable participation in congregational prayers at the neighborhood mosque, involvement in local Basij activities, and membership in microfinance institutions among the residents.

Among the social issues in Zargandeh, there is an alarming increase in young people's addiction to drugs and the presence of addicts in public areas and parks, which has created a sense of insecurity in the neighborhood. The visibility of street children, who are often engaged in unsanitary waste sorting, is also concerning. From the perspective of residents, the most pressing social issue in Zargandeh is addiction, which can be attributed to the lack of suitable recreational and

sports facilities for leisure activities, particularly for the youth. The most prominent gathering place for residents, especially during festivals and religious occasions, is the mosques. Thus, mosques function as the only collective and social spaces within the neighborhood. Consequently, the shortage of spaces for collective interactions continues to persist.

Assessment of the Leisure Needs of Neighborhood Residents and Stakeholders: The manner in which residents spend their leisure time and periods of inactivity is a subject that should be addressed in social studies. This is crucial given that unhealthy leisure practices can culminate in social issues. Some residents prefer to spend their leisure time in parks and family-friendly public spaces, while others dedicate it to traveling back to their hometowns or visiting pilgrimage sites. The most favored forms of leisure involve resting and being with family. Additionally, the inclination to gather within the neighborhood and socialize with neighbors and locals is also noted. Other leisure activities mentioned by residents include visiting religious shrines and utilizing green spaces, as well as walking along Shariati Street. To assess the leisure needs of neighborhood residents, questions were posed to various age groups, neighborhood councils, students, pilgrims, and local inhabitants regarding educational and cultural facilities, sports amenities, recreational and leisure facilities, cleanliness and hygiene of the neighborhood, access to shopping centers, public transportation, and the condition of road networks. According to the findings, residents express a relative satisfaction concerning the state of sewage systems and access to shopping centers, with over 50% rating these two aspects as good. The highest level of dissatisfaction relates to available sports and recreational facilities, which over 60% of inhabitants in the studied area deem to be inadequate. This deficiency in leisure and

sports facilities may contribute to an increase in addiction within the neighborhood, necessitating special attention during the planning phase. Dissatisfaction regarding educational and cultural facilities, cleanliness and hygiene of the neighborhood, public transportation, and the condition of streets and alleyways follows next in terms of resident discontent. Awareness of the neighborhood's sanitary conditions indicates a relative satisfaction with cleanliness and aesthetics; however, residents' dissatisfaction is primarily attributed to the presence of waste in the Zargandeh water channel and unpleasant odors.

Perspectives and Needs of Stakeholder Groups:

The stakeholder groups within the area can be categorized into several segments: residents, local businesses, students, users of recreational spaces within the locality, and neighborhood councils.

The Zargandeh neighborhood possesses certain advantages from the perspective of its residents, which include:

1. Strong social relationships and a spirit of collaboration among residents, particularly among local and longtime inhabitants.
2. A vibrant pedestrian traffic flow.
3. A favorable climate and beautiful gardens in the neighborhood.

A low unemployment rate.

From the perspective of the community councilors, addressing the challenges and issues in the Zargandeh neighborhood requires the complete implementation and management of the proposed plans for this area. These plans and programs include:

1. Comprehensive Green Space Plan
2. Program for Resolving Legal and Ownership Issues
3. Sports Facility Development Program
4. Road Widening Program, Waste Collection, and Cleanliness of the Area

However, the primary needs of the neighborhood encompass the following:

1. Increasing Cultural and Sports Facilities;
2. Expanding Recreation and Leisure Centers;
3. Provision for Intra-Neighborhood Public Transport Network;
4. Attention to Green Spaces and Gardens;

5. Strong management by the municipality and the establishment of construction control kiosks within the area are critical for ensuring compliance with building regulations. However, as highlighted by Nazarian, Movahedi, and Shahabi (2024), despite the presence of multiple kiosks, construction violations persist, largely due to issues such as bribery. This underscores the need for more effective oversight and accountability mechanisms to address these challenges and ensure the integrity of urban development processes. Furthermore, as Moghaddam et al. (2024) emphasize, the characteristics of the design team and their influence on construction project performance, mediated by project costs, play a crucial role in shaping the outcomes of urban development initiatives. Effective management and transparent processes are essential to mitigate risks and enhance project performance.
6. Addressing water pollution issues caused by sewage;
7. Mitigating the increase of pests exacerbated by surface sewage problems;
8. Regular and adequate waste collection.

Employment Status and Family Livelihoods:

The employment status indicates that approximately 48 percent of household heads are employed. The proportion of retired individuals is around 27 percent, reflecting a significant elderly population within the area. About 10 percent of the population is unemployed and actively seeking work. Investigations reveal that the majority of residents in the studied area are educated and possess a medium to high financial status, with the exception of the Hassanabad neighborhood, where a lower-income demographic resides.

SWOT Analysis

The findings are systematically categorized and evaluated using a SWOT table format. By reviewing the results derived from the theoretical foundations and summarizing the key issues, challenges, and insights into the current situation, the project's vision, along with its general and specific objectives, and strategies are formulated. This approach aligns with methodologies employed in recent studies, such as Izadian et al. (2024), who explored market reactions to capital increases in pharmaceutical companies. Finally,

design concepts are presented, and after a thorough evaluation of these options, the final choice is made, leading to a comprehensive design

and refinement of the optimal idea, as detailed in Tables 3-7.

Table 3 - Evaluation of Scope Characteristics in the SWOT Table

Subject	Strength	Weakness	Opportunity	Threat
Location and Position with a Historical Background	The presence of the Imamzadeh Ismail shrine and the regional significance of Shariati, alongside the specific environmental quality and strategic location of Zargandeh in the Tehran region, enhance accessibility to public and commercial urban functions. This situation has not only generated certain residential desirabilities in this area but also highlights the capabilities for elevating its status, particularly during peak traffic hours.	Moreover, there are fundamental differences in social environmental qualities and other factors among different zones and the fabric of the central areas and the old neighborhood of Hassanabad.	The emphasis of the detailed plan is on preventing the fragmentation of the region's gardens and allocating them to public green spaces and recreational uses, alongside the existence of stimulating projects such as the restoration of the Zargandeh watercourse and the creation of a tourism route in... The presence of the Zargandeh watercourse within the area and the establishment of functional interactions with the broader watershed.	aimed Policies at increasing revenue through the demolition of old houses and the construction of high-rise buildings alongside the watercourse.
Climate and Environment	The favorable microclimate of the region is attributed strong to the performance of green spaces and gardens, influencing the plant diversity of species within the area. The impact of green areas in creating green corridors and spatial diversity is evident, along with the utilization of	The ineffective management by urban authorities has impeded the conservation and restoration of the Zargandeh waterway, well as the as protection of plant species within the region to develop and recreational green areas. Environmental pollution in the vicinity of the waterway due to waste disposal and the	Inefficient management by urban agencies in prioritizing the preservation and revitalization of the Zargandeh watercourse and the protection of plant species in the area for the development of green and recreational zones in the detailed plan. The potential for creating neighborhood	The risk of losing the vegetation cover of the neighborhood due to their age and the increase in new construction. The presence of the Mahmudieh and Davoodieh faults surrounding the area.

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	vegetation in private spaces and their visibility from the streets.	unsuitable slopes of the certain lands in area for construction are also notable challenges.	communal spaces around the watercourse to enhance vitality and social interactions in the community. The watercourse of the Qanat runs through the area.	
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Table 4 - Evaluation of Scope Characteristics in the SWOT Table

Subject	Strength	Weakness	Opportunity	Threat
Urban Spaces and Landscape	The presence of linear green spaces has led to an increase in unauthorized constructions, which has resulted in desirable visual corridors and a strong, cohesive view corridor surrounding the watercourse. The acceptable quality of religious and educational land uses has positively impacted their effectiveness in maintaining the functional coherence of the area. There is a relative harmony in the skyline within the zone, which necessitates appropriate orientation of subdivisions and constructions according to the climatic conditions of the area.	The recent surge in unauthorized constructions has led to an increase in substandard buildings and land fragmentation, contributing to the loss of gardens. There has been insufficient attention to the renovation and enhancement of recreational and tourist areas, as well as the physical and functional quality of identity-enhancing elements in the region. There are widespread deficiencies in urban amenities both quantitatively and qualitatively, as well as in the spatial localization of development. A notable lack of coordination and homogeneity exists in urban façades regarding architectural style, color, material textures, and the configuration of openings, among others.	The policies and strategies of the government and local municipalities to provide financial and technical facilities are intended for the preservation of the Zargandeh watercourse and transforming it into a necessity for urban renewal and repair. There is a lack of serious attention to the upgrading and renewal of recreational and tourism areas. The importance of investment in the physical structure of the central part of the fabric, which can be developed as urban tourism and recreational space both quantitatively and qualitatively, as well as with regard to its location, is emphasized.	The inefficacy of offices and agencies facilitating the renewal of the urban fabric, coupled with reduced financial resources and facilities of the Zargandeh watercourse preservation, highlights the need for urban renewal and repair, which stems from economic issues and allocated budgets. There is a risk of losing existing spaces within the area during the renewal processes and the potential loss of an integrated spatial structure. Furthermore, the possibility of renewing residential units with high densities without considering the overall area and its capacities compromises the visual connectivity from outside to inside and vice

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		<p>Moreover, there are abrupt discontinuities in the paving of pathways due to steep terrain. Attention to accessibility for individuals with disabilities in pavement design is lacking. Renovations in certain areas occur without consideration for the quality of surrounding sections and the overall fabric. The construction of high-rise buildings within the fabric fails to take into account the existing average density in the area.</p>		<p>versa due to increased density.</p>
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Table 5: Evaluation of Scope Characteristics in the SWOT Table

Subject	Strength	Weakness	Opportunity	Threat
Usage and Activities	<p>The appropriate and sufficient distribution of educational facilities within the area, along with the presence of public green spaces such as Zargandeh Park and Elahiyeh, as well as green spaces surrounding the existing canal, contributes to climatic comfort in the region. The high concentration of residential uses in designated residential sections fosters continuity within the residential fabric. Cinemas, such as Farhang Cinema, serve as significant cultural facilities within the area. There is also access to vacant, derelict, and abandoned lands that can be allocated for necessary plans</p>	<p>There is a lack of equipment in recreational and leisure facilities, such as urban furniture and related amenities, which has decreased their service levels. The limited area and inadequate design of green spaces as urban spaces in the southern parts have diminished their effectiveness in promoting cohesion among green and natural patches. There is a shortage in the per capita availability of public</p>	<p>Recommendations and Strategies for the Zargandeh Landscape Plan in the Pedestrianization of the Rudaki Axis Emphasis on Enhancing Recreational and Tourism Activities in the Regional Center</p>	<p>Neglect of legal frameworks and procedures. Destruction of green spaces and a trend towards high-density construction, with insufficient counteractions against constructions in the riparian zones and drainage channels of the area, which exacerbate damages during flood events.</p>

	and services in the locality. Despite the existence of some supra-local and inter-regional facilities, such as Islamic Azad University, there is a relative compatibility among the types of uses and activities in the area.	facilities, especially various types of sports, cultural, recreational, and therapeutic uses compared to the suggested per capita rates of the detailed plan. Additionally, there is an inappropriate distribution of uses across different sections.		
Access Network and Public Transport	The slope of the roadway network is appropriate, which compensates for the lack of private and public parking spaces and allows for the existence of edge-of-road parking for both vehicular and pedestrian traffic. This has led to the development of an access pattern suitable for the topography. The road network features a hierarchy, despite the narrow widths of local and secondary roads.	The slope of the roadway network is suitable for addressing the shortage of private and public parking spaces alongside most streets, especially considering the narrow width of the access network. The presence of trip-attracting facilities, such as universities and fruit and vegetable markets, has exacerbated traffic congestion and edge-of-road parking on Atari Moqadam Street and Imamzadeh Street, especially during peak commuting hours.challenges.	The establishment of multi-level and underground parking facilities within the area. Proposal for the widening of the main access networks within the limits as delineated in the detailed plan. Presentation of plans to strengthen public transportation networks along the adjacent areas of the urban fabric within the detailed plan.	Inability of the roadway network in the area to meet the goals of the plan's horizon.

Table 6: Evaluation of Scope Characteristics in the SWOT Table

Subject	Strength	Weakness	Opportunity	Threat
Public Transportation and Access Networks	The significant social role of certain pathways compared to their traffic role (the Sharafati and Saberi axes). The active movement of pedestrians on geometrically inappropriate surfaces leads to conflicts	Lack of private parking in many parcels due to their small sizes, which exacerbates congestion and reduces accessibility. Additionally,	The focus of overarching plans on pedestrian-oriented design and the creation of recreational and pedestrian tourism axes	-

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	<p>between vehicle directions, restricted visibility, despite inadequate street quality, and adverse interactions between vehicular and pedestrian pathways in some areas. The prominent role of the pathways alongside the Zargandeh River compared to surrounding environments. The availability of suitable visual corridors can shape desirable tourism and pedestrian pathways. Intermittent traffic congestion around specific land uses.</p> <p>Accessibility to a range of public transportation services, including buses and rapid transit that pass through major networks and highways. The presence of the subway as the most important public transportation system adjacent to the area.</p>	<p>deficiencies at some intersections, resulting from designs that prioritize active pedestrian movement on geometrically inappropriate surfaces, create conflicts between vehicle directions, limit visibility for both drivers and pedestrians, and contribute to unnecessary traffic congestion, ultimately compromising travel safety. As highlighted by Entezarizarch, Paquet, and Maisel (2024), inclusive design practices, such as those explored in their study on remote focus groups with wheeled mobility device users, emphasize the importance of addressing such barriers to create more accessible and user-friendly urban environments.</p> <p>Furthermore, the lack of separation between pedestrian paths and roadways on collector and local streets, coupled with poor pavement quality—particularly in areas like Imamzadeh Khaghani and Roudaki—creates undesirable conditions for tourism and pedestrian activities. Intermittent traffic congestion around specific land uses, such as schools,</p>		
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		<p>universities, parks, and marketplaces, exacerbates these challenges, highlighting the necessity for comprehensive urban planning solutions that address the needs of all users, including pedestrians, drivers, and individuals with mobility limitations. Effective planning must also consider the educational and social functions of these spaces, as emphasized by Chávez et al. (2023), who stress the importance of understanding and integrating diverse perspectives—whether in teaching mathematics or designing urban environments—to create inclusive and functional systems. A shortage of public transportation facilities within the neighborhood, alongside a lack of linear taxi stations in the area.</p>		
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Table 7: Evaluation of Scope Characteristics in the SWOT Table

Subject	Strength	Weakness	Opportunity	Threat
Urban Infrastructure and Facilities	Residents' access to urban infrastructure and facilities	<p>Visual clutter of the electricity distribution network and decline of aesthetics in the area. Soil firmness and inability to absorb surface water. Aging infrastructure and</p>		Discharge of Surface Waters into Qanat Paths and Pollution of Groundwater

Social, Cultural, and Economic Characteristics	<p>Decrease in household size within the area.</p> <p>The presence of a strong sense of belonging among residents due to a long history of residence.</p> <p>Availability of communal social spaces centered around mosques.</p> <p>A high percentage of homeownership and independent housing.</p> <p>Cohesive relationships stemming from the long-standing residency of the inhabitants.</p> <p>A diverse and dynamic social fabric enriched by ethnic and cultural backgrounds.</p> <p>Active religious centers providing cultural and social services.</p> <p>Celebration of national and religious ceremonies.</p>	<p>facilities.</p> <p>Limitations of Leisure Activities</p> <p>The economic perspective on housing as a source of income and rental properties as a source of revenue.</p> <p>The existence of ownership issues that slow down the processes of modernization and investment.</p> <p>The diminished role of neighborhood councils in reflecting problems and deficiencies to urban organizations and accelerating construction projects and cultural and religious activities.</p>	<p>Provision of Facilities by the Government and Urban Organizations for Accelerating Modernization Processes</p> <p>Availability of platforms for community participation.</p> <p>Establishment of a local office to open dialogue with the community and exchange views regarding the plan.</p> <p>Provision of necessary infrastructure for the formation of community management institutions.</p> <p>Utilization of religious bases (mosques) for informing the public about the objectives of the plan.</p>	<p>High Average Age of Household Heads</p> <p>Distrust of the public towards officials due to neglect of neighborhood problems in past years.</p>
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Conclusion

In the present study, an attempt was made to discuss the capacity of existing public spaces within the city for the expansion and development of urban leisure and tourism areas. This was conducted through a case study focusing on the central area of the Zargandeh neighborhood, examining the changes and transformations resulting from the application of these matters. The existing conditions were analyzed based on the findings of prior studies, leading to the proposal of a plan for this area. Initially, the principles, criteria, shortcomings, and potentials of the zone were briefly reviewed, followed by an examination of some of the existing public capacities in the Zargandeh neighborhood, which

demonstrated the area's strength and capability for developing urban leisure and tourism zones. The findings indicate that the location and potential capacities of the area within the Zargandeh neighborhood are such that it has been recognized as a regional center in higher-level plans. The presence of Imamzadeh Ismail as one of the significant religious centers in northern Tehran, which can form a religious tourism route alongside Imamzadeh Saleh and Imamzadeh Qasim (located in Tajrish); proximity to commercial and cultural uses along Shariati Street (such as Cinema Farhang, the British Embassy, and various shopping centers); as well as the presence of parks and some regional and extra-regional facilities in this section (such as Azad University and specialized hospitals), has created

a unique situation. On one hand, the Zargandeh texture faces serious issues regarding land use and public facilities, particularly in terms of leisure activities and meeting the needs of inter-regional land uses. On the other hand, the social and cultural characteristics, along with the presence of various income groups, generate a diversity of needs and highlight the importance of certain activities. Organizing the area with the aim of enhancing the quality of activities and promoting urban leisure and tourism can contribute to increased social dynamism, coexistence among groups and classes, and addressing individual as well as collective needs. In general, the area under study has significant problems concerning land use and public facilities, particularly in leisure activities and fulfilling the demands of inter-regional land uses. Furthermore, the social and cultural characteristics and the presence of different income classes pose a variety of needs and the emphasis on certain activities. Therefore, it is essential to consider cultural land uses in which community participation plays a fundamental role. Alongside this issue, there is a noticeable shortage of sports, commercial, and neighborhood-scale facilities, as well as other attractive land uses in the area. Another problem affecting the area of study is the poor quality of urban furniture, inadequate lighting, monotonous pavement, and the lack of coordinated materials, indicating that there has been no specific design considered for them. Public transportation facilities are not included in the neighborhood, and traffic issues exist on Imamzadeh, Khaghani, and Attari Moghadam streets, with no defined landmark entrances for the neighborhood. From an ecological perspective, the presence of three parks and the Zargandeh stream within the area is viewed positively. However, neglecting these spaces and pollution resulting from scattered waste has led to their poor performance as an ecological resource for the area.

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