

Development Strategies for Urban Parks in Chongqing's Main District: A New Paradigm for Urban Green Spaces

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Abstract: With the advent of the new concept of an “urban park” and the new paradigm of urban development, Chongqing Municipality has actively embraced this vision, integrating it with the city’s unique geographical and demographic conditions. The city has prioritized urban park construction as a key project for public welfare, aiming to address issues such as uneven geographical distribution, limited functionality, and mismatched supply and demand. This initiative seeks to optimize urban parks as vital public resources while protecting the ecological environment. Adhering to principles of functional priority, safety and comfort, shared development, and distinctive features, Chongqing has incorporated parks and other green open spaces into its basic urban planning. This approach aims to create beautiful, comfortable and age-friendly shared urban spaces. This study, grounded in the urban park development concept and the characteristics of a mountainous, multi-center city, constructs a model to measure urban park satisfaction in Chongqing’s main urban area. The model considers supply-demand matching and resident satisfaction. It aims to systematically review relevant policies, plans, and cutting-edge theories, analyze the urban park development in Chongqing, understand residents’ needs, and address issues related to supply-demand matching, multifunctionality, and quality construction. The findings provide insights into the development and conservation of urban parks in Chongqing and beyond, aiming to continually meet the public’s growing desire for a better quality of life and support high-quality development.

Keywords: Urban park; Satisfaction; Development countermeasures

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1. Introduction

In 2018, the concept of urban park development was introduced, emphasizing the integration of parks and green open spaces into urban planning to create beautiful, comfortable, and age-friendly shared spaces. Chongqing Municipality has responded to this call by issuing several policy documents, such as the “Chongqing Municipality Creates National Ecological Garden City Work Program” and “Chongqing Municipal Urban Management Bureau on Strengthening the Planning and Design of All-Age Friendly Urban Parks.” These initiatives aim to achieve national ecological garden city standards in Chongqing’s downtown area within

three years, ensuring a minimum of 5.5 square meters of green space per capita in parks. Additionally, the “Chongqing Municipal Culture and Tourism Development 14th Five-Year Plan” emphasizes enhancing urban tourism, improving ecological green spaces, and developing leisure and recreational facilities to stimulate related industries and create urban ecological recreation areas. Chongqing’s urban parks are poised for rapid development in terms of quantity, quality, and functionality. The city’s approach combines environmental protection with optimizing urban parks as public resources, fostering beautiful, comfortable, and age-friendly shared spaces. This represents a new model of sustainable and high-quality urban development. Therefore, accurately analyzing the construction of urban parks in Chongqing’s main urban area, understanding residents’ needs, and addressing issues related to supply-demand matching, multifunctionality, and quality construction are critical for the ongoing development of urban parks and improving the quality of life in Chongqing.

2. Overview of urban parks

2.1. Definition of the concept of urban park

The famous landscape architect Michael M. Laurie, in “Nature and City Planning in the Nineteenth Century,” was the first to discuss the modern concept of urban parks from the unique perspective of the motivations behind their creation, particularly the desire for a return to nature in industrial cities ^[1]. In modern times, the concept of the park was introduced to China, with Shanghai Bund Park being the earliest modern park entity in the country. With the advent of the reform and opening-up policies, the development of urban parks entered a period of rapid growth. In *Urban Park Design*, Meng Gang, Li Lan, and others explored the multifaceted roles and functions of urban parks, concluding that urban parks are not only a key component of urban infrastructure but also serve as major venues for citizens’ leisure and recreation, as well as important sites for cultural dissemination ^[2]. Scholar Lin Lejian, in his work on gardening, defines a park as: “a space provided for public enjoyment, recuperation, and recreation, which maintains the health of urban residents, enhances physical and mental well-being, improves national education, and offers free facilities within the park. It also serves as a fire prevention, shelter, and disaster prevention green space” ^[3]. Based on these definitions, an “urban park” can be understood as public green infrastructure and green space that serves multiple functions in urban life.

2.2. Research content of urban parks

The research on urban parks focuses on themes such as sponge cities ^[4], pocket parks ^[5], park landscape design ^[6], wetland parks ^[7], and accessibility ^[8]. Current research on urban parks primarily covers both objective and subjective aspects. The objective level includes landscape planning and design, and spatial layout analysis of parks; the subjective level involves evaluating the park after use and analyzing factors that influence user needs and satisfaction.

2.3. Overview of urban park satisfaction

In the early 1960s, Cardozo first introduced the concept of “customer satisfaction” ^[9], which has been widely used in the field of service marketing and has gradually extended to the tourism industry in studying tourist satisfaction. Recently, this concept has been applied in urban planning and design, where urban park satisfaction refers to a psychological state in which residents’ expectations for urban parks are compared with their actual experiences of visiting them. Current research on urban park satisfaction mainly focuses on three areas: the factors affecting satisfaction, the selection of satisfaction indicators, and the methodologies for researching satisfaction.

3. The current situation of urban park development in the main urban area of Chongqing Municipality

3.1. Insufficient quantity and limited park green space per capita

In recent years, the main urban area of Chongqing Municipality has experienced rapid urbanization, leading to a significant increase in construction sites. Consequently, there are fewer urban parks and less park green space per capita. According to data released by China’s Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development and the China Academy of Urban Planning and Design, as of December 31, 2022, the per capita park green space in Chongqing’s main urban area was 17.47 square meters. The degree of park space per capita in Chongqing (with an area greater than 5 square meters per capita in built-up areas) was 49.19%, ranking 24th in the country, and did not reach the average level of park security per capita found in other Chinese cities and mega-cities. The details are shown in **Table 1**.

Table 1. Ranking of park security per capita in Chinese cities in 2023 (partial)

Ranking	Cities	Park security per capita in Chinese cities 2023
1	Dalian	77.05%
2	Yinchuan	69.47%
.....
23	Tianjin	49.55%
24	Chongqing	49.19%
25	Huhehaote	48.76%

Data source: China Academy of Urban Planning and Design

3.2. Uneven distribution and unbalanced matching of supply and demand

Chongqing’s urban development, influenced by geographic conditions, has developed in clusters, resulting in significant disparities in the number of parks and green spaces across the districts of the main urban area. Yubei District has the highest area of park green space, totaling 2,533 hectares, which includes clusters like Yuelai, Airport, Lijia, and Renhe. This area hosts large parks such as Garden Expo Park, Central Park, and Zhaomu Mountain Forest Park, along with numerous small and medium-sized parks. In contrast, Yuzhong District, which has a smaller administrative division and a high density of construction land, has only 150 hectares of parkland. Thus, factors like terrain, area, economy, and policy contribute to the uneven distribution of urban parks in Chongqing’s main urban areas, with significant variations in the number of parks across districts, as shown in **Table 2**. Additionally, due to differences in terrain, transportation, and population distribution, the accessibility of urban parks varies across districts, leading to an unbalanced supply and demand match.

Table 2. Percentage of parks and green space per capita in each district of Chongqing Municipality

Area	Number of parks as a percentage	Green space per capita (square meters/person)
Main district	100.00%	17.47
Yubei district	23.70%	18.00
Jiulongpo district	14.74%	16.77
Nanan district	13.87%	18.50
Yuzhong district	9.25%	7.70
Beibei district	8.09%	20.67

Table 2 (Continued)

Area	Number of parks as a percentage	Green space per capita (square meters/person)
Banan district	7.23%	23.20
Shapingba district	7.51%	9.48
Jiangbei district	8.09%	20.84
Dadukou district	7.52%	15.73

Data source: “Evaluation and Optimization of the Balanced Layout of Urban Parks in the Main District of Chongqing Municipality” by Ren Chaoqun

3.3. Single function and underutilized resources

At the initial stages of planning and design, some urban parks have focused primarily on greening and landscape effects, often neglecting the functional diversity needed to meet the needs of various age groups and interests. This has resulted in a lack of adequately diverse activity areas and facilities within the parks. Furthermore, many park facilities are aging and not maintained in a timely manner, leading to underutilization. Additionally, as a typical mountainous city with complex terrain and rich ecological resources, Chongqing has not fully leveraged the ecosystem service functions of its park system, limiting the maximization of the parks’ ecological benefits.

4. Analysis of urban park satisfaction survey

4.1. Survey object and content

The survey targeted users of urban parks in the main urban area of Chongqing, including both Chongqing residents and foreign tourists who have visited the urban parks. The survey was conducted using online and offline questionnaires distributed to city park users, analyzing their satisfaction with selected sample parks. The survey content focused on the current development status of urban parks in Chongqing’s main urban area, the development environment, and visitor satisfaction. It aimed to analyze the different needs of various demographic groups regarding urban parks and the distribution of satisfaction across different specific indicators.

4.2. Reliability test

4.2.1. Reliability test

To ensure the reliability of the questionnaire data, SPSS 27.01 software was used to analyze the collected data. The resulting Cronbach’s alpha coefficient value was 0.960, which is greater than 0.7, indicating strong data reliability, as shown in **Table 3**.

Table 3. Reliability statistics

Reliability statistics		
Cronbach alpha	Cronbach alpha based on normalized terms	Number of terms
0.960	0.961	22

4.2.2. Validity test

The collected data underwent a KMO test and Bartlett’s sphericity test using SPSS 27.01 software. The analysis, shown in **Table 4**, revealed a KMO value of 0.932, which is greater than 0.5, meeting the prerequisite

requirements for factor analysis. The significance of Bartlett’s sphericity test ($P < 0.05$) indicates the presence of common factors among all the variables, suggesting that the scale data are suitable for factor analysis.

Table 4. KMO and Bartlett’s test

KMO and Bartlett’s test		
	KMO quantity of sampling suitability	0.932
	Approximate chi-squared	2,502.574
Bartlett’s test of sphericity	Degrees of freedom	231
	Significance	0.000

4.3. Exploration of factors affecting satisfaction

The questionnaire’s tourist satisfaction scale was analyzed using factor analysis to extract independent public factors.

4.3.1. Common factor extraction

The principal component method was used to extract factors, selecting eigenvalues greater than 1 and using the maximum variance rotation method. Three factors were extracted from the factor analysis results, explaining 26.403%, 22.867%, and 19.168% of the variance, respectively, with a cumulative variance explanation of 68.439%. The details are shown in **Table 5**.

Table 5. Total variance explained

No.	Initial eigenvalues			Extracting the sum of squared loads			Rotating load sum of squares		
	Total	Variance %	Cumulative %	Total	Variance %	Cumulative %	Total	Variance %	Cumulative %
1	12.202	55.465	55.465	12.202	55.465	55.465	5.809	26.403	26.403
2	1.645	7.475	62.940	1.645	7.475	62.940	5.031	22.867	49.270
3	1.210	5.498	68.439	1.210	5.498	68.439	4.217	19.168	68.439
4	0.823	3.740	72.179						
5	0.778	3.537	75.715						
6	0.627	2.850	78.565						
7	0.579	2.630	81.196						
8	0.523	2.379	83.574						
9	0.490	2.227	85.801						
10	0.413	1.878	87.680						
11	0.355	1.613	89.293						
12	0.347	1.579	90.872						
13	0.311	1.416	92.288						
14	0.297	1.350	93.638						
15	0.247	1.122	94.760						
16	0.233	1.061	95.821						
17	0.213	0.970	96.790						
18	0.179	0.815	97.605						

Table 5 (Continued)

No.	Initial eigenvalues			Extracting the sum of squared loads			Rotating load sum of squares		
	Total	Variance %	Cumulative %	Total	Variance %	Cumulative %	Total	Variance %	Cumulative %
19	0.169	0.770	98.375						
20	0.132	0.600	98.974						
21	0.119	0.541	99.516						
22	0.107	0.484	100.000						

4.3.2. Constructing the index system

Based on the data analysis, the 22 indicator layer factors affecting visitor satisfaction in urban parks were divided into three categories of public factors, represented by F1, F2, and F3, respectively. F1 mainly includes information on convenient service, infrastructure, and the degree of intelligence, named “infrastructure and convenient service.” F2 mainly includes information on the degree of landscape ornamentation and environmental sanitation, named “overall landscape and environmental sanitation.” F3 mainly includes information on the humanization of management services, the reasonableness of management measures, and functional diversity, named “management measures and functionality.” The specific details are shown in **Table 6**.

Table 6. Component matrix after rotation

Component	1	2	3
Maintenance of facilities (Q14)	0.812		
Intelligent service facilities (Q16)	0.791		
Number of public tables and chairs (Q10)	0.773		
Store prices (Q15)	0.764		
Number of direct drinking water points (Q12)	0.701		
Effectiveness of mother and baby rooms (Q13)	0.689		
Reasonable degree of signage design (Q11)	0.657		
Number of parking spaces (Q9)	0.635		
Floor cleanliness (Q6)		0.775	
Area design rationality (Q5)		0.738	
Air quality (Q4)		0.674	
Degree of hygiene of public restrooms (Q3)		0.669	
Number of garbage cans (Q8)		0.636	
Ecological diversity (Q20)		0.630	
Artificial landscape ornamental (Q7)		0.603	
Natural landscape ornamental (Q17)		0.574	
Reasonableness of opening hours (Q22)			0.794
Security measures (Q21)			0.788
Degree of humanization of management services (Q1)			0.725
Transportation accessibility (Q18)			0.664
Atmosphere of cultural and sports activities (Q2)			0.641
Age-appropriate degree (Q19)			0.600

4.3.3. Calculation of indicator weights

The weights were obtained by normalizing the values of the variance contributions of the three factors using the following formula:

$$W_i = \frac{V_i}{\sum V} \quad (1)$$

where W_i is the weight of the common factor; V_i is the variance contribution rate of the common factor; and $\sum V$ is the cumulative common factor variance contribution rate. Using this formula, the weights of the three principal components F1, F2, and F3 were calculated. The weights of the indicator layer in the constraint layer were then obtained by normalizing the factor loading coefficient values. Finally, the weights of the indicator layer in the constraint layer were obtained by multiplying the weights of the constraint layer in the target layer. This process resulted in the evaluation index system of tourist satisfaction in Chongqing city parks and its weight distribution, as shown in **Table 7**.

Table 7. Chongqing urban park visitor satisfaction evaluation indicator system

Objective level	Constraints	Weights	Indicator layer	Weights	Final weights
Evaluation of visitor satisfaction in Chongqing urban parks	Infrastructure and services (F1)	0.34	Maintenance of facilities (Q14)	0.1472	0.05
			Intelligent service facilities (Q16)	0.1176	0.04
			Number of public tables and chairs (Q10)	0.1176	0.04
			Store prices (Q15)	0.1176	0.04
			Number of direct drinking water points (Q12)	0.1176	0.04
			Effectiveness of mother and baby rooms (Q13)	0.1176	0.04
			Reasonable degree of signage design (Q11)	0.1472	0.05
			Number of parking spaces (Q9)	0.1176	0.04
	Overall landscape and sanitation (F2)	0.33	Floor cleanliness (Q6)	0.1212	0.04
			Area design rationality (Q5)	0.1212	0.04
			Air quality (Q4)	0.1212	0.04
			Degree of hygiene of public restrooms (Q3)	0.1212	0.04
			Number of garbage cans (Q8)	0.1212	0.04
			Ecological diversity (Q20)	0.1515	0.05
			Artificial landscape ornamental (Q7)	0.0910	0.03
			Natural landscape ornamental (Q17)	0.1515	0.05
	Management measures and functionality (F3)	0.33	Reasonableness of opening hours (Q22)	0.1818	0.06
			Security measures (Q21)	0.1818	0.06
			Degree of humanization of management services (Q1)	0.1515	0.05
			Transportation accessibility (Q18)	0.1818	0.06
			Atmosphere of cultural and sports activities (Q2)	0.1515	0.05
			Age-appropriate degree (Q19)	0.1515	0.05

Based on the average score of each indicator and the weight of the indicator layer, the overall score of the Chongqing Urban Park Visitor Satisfaction Scale was calculated to be 3.3507. This indicates that respondents are generally satisfied with the current situation of the city parks in Chongqing's main urban areas, but there are

still areas needing improvement. The specific calculation process is as follows:

$$3.56 \times 0.05 + 3.28 \times 0.05 + 3.32 \times 0.04 + 3.34 \times 0.04 + 3.36 \times 0.04 + 3.28 \times 0.04 + 3.58 \times 0.03 + 3.37 \times 0.04 + 3.19 \times 0.04 + 3.15 \times 0.04 + 3.57 \times 0.05 + 3.12 \times 0.04 + 3.23 \times 0.05 + 3.34 \times 0.04 + 3.22 \times 0.04 + 3.57 \times 0.05 + 3.31 \times 0.06 + 3.21 \times 0.05 + 3.45 \times 0.05 + 3.37 \times 0.06 + 3.39 \times 0.06 = 3.3507$$

4.3.4. Linear expression of indicator weights

Using the three public factors F1, F2, and F3 as independent variables and tourist satisfaction as the dependent variable *Y*, a multiple regression analysis was performed. The results showed an R^2 value of 0.699, indicating a good model fit. The Durbin-Watson test value of 1.763, which is between 1.5 and 2.5 and close to 2, suggests no significant autocorrelation problem, indicating that the data are independent and suitable for linear regression analysis, as shown in **Table 8**.

Table 8. Model summary table

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Errors in standard estimates	Durbin-Watson
1	0.836a	0.699	0.692	0.508	1.763

Meanwhile, as shown in **Table 9**, the significance values for F1, F2, and F3 are all less than 0.001, passing the 1% significance level test. This indicates a highly significant correlation between the three public factors and residents' satisfaction. The principal component regression equation is as follows:

$$Y = 3.647 + 0.346 \times F_1 + 0.577 \times F_2 + 0.365 \times F_3$$

Table 9. Regression coefficients and *t*-test

Model	Unstandardized coefficient B	Standardized coefficient		<i>t</i>	Significance
		Standard error	β		
(constant)	3.647	0.043		84.673	0.000
F1	0.346	0.043	0.378	8.009	0.000
F2	0.577	0.043	0.630	13.352	0.000
F3	0.365	0.043	0.398	8.440	0.000

The three principal components were then used as dependent variables, and the 22 original independent variables were used as independent variables to construct a multiple linear regression model. This yielded the following regression equations:

$$(1) F1 = 0.215 \times Q14 + 0.182 \times Q16 + 0.282 \times Q10 + 0.16 \times Q15 + 0.227 \times Q12 + 0.151 \times Q13 + 0.199 \times Q11 + 0.005 \times Q9 - 3.303$$

$$(2) F2 = 0.511 \times Q6 + 0.276 \times Q5 + 0.194 \times Q4 + 0.2 \times Q3 + 0.11 \times Q8 + 0.037 \times Q20 + 0.045 \times Q7 - 0.132 \times Q17 - 4.694$$

$$(3) F3 = 0.349 \times Q22 + 0.378 \times Q21 + 0.337 \times Q1 + 0.054 \times Q18 + 0.124 \times Q2 - 0.027 \times Q19 - 4.605$$

Substituting these into the principal component regression equation, the final regression equation for tourist satisfaction and the 22 influencing indicators is:

$$Y = 0.337 \times Q1 + 0.124 \times Q2 + 0.2 \times Q3 + 0.194 \times Q4 + 0.276 \times Q5 + 0.511 \times Q6 + 0.045 \times Q7 + 0.11 \times Q8 + 0.055 \times Q9 + 0.282 \times Q10 + 0.199 \times Q11 + 0.227 \times Q12 + 0.151 \times Q13 + 0.215 \times Q14 + 0.16 \times Q15 + 0.182 \times Q16 - 0.132 \times Q17 + 0.054 \times Q18 - 0.027 \times Q19 + 0.037 \times Q20 + 0.378 \times Q21 + 0.349 \times Q22 - 12.602$$

From the regression model, it can be seen that among the 22 influencing factors, the number of parking spaces has the greatest influence on visitor satisfaction, while the reasonableness of opening hours has the least influence. Additionally, factors such as traffic accessibility, natural landscape appreciation, age-appropriateness, the intelligence of service facilities, and the humanization of management services also strongly influence visitor satisfaction.

5. Existing problems of urban parks in main Chongqing districts

Respondents are generally satisfied with the current state of urban parks in the main urban areas of Chongqing, but some issues still require continuous improvement.

- (1) Insufficient number of parks and less green space per capita: The per capita availability of park space in Chongqing has not reached the average level found in Chinese cities and megacities. Residents in the main urban areas experience relatively low enjoyment of parks and green spaces.
- (2) Geographical disparities in park distribution and unbalanced supply and demand: Due to constraints such as topography, transportation network layout, and population density distribution, the supply of urban parks in each region does not match the actual demand. This results in uneven access to and enjoyment of park facilities by residents in different areas.
- (3) Limited functionality and underutilized resources: Fieldwork and factor analysis indicate that some parks have a single functional structure and lack age-appropriate amenities. There is insufficient park infrastructure, a lack of maintenance, and a weak level of technological integration.
- (4) Air quality, environmental sanitation, and management level require improvement: The environmental quality and management level of parks are key factors affecting public satisfaction. Questionnaire surveys show that, in addition to infrastructure and convenient services, air quality, environmental hygiene, and daily management services in parks significantly impact visitors' experiences. These areas have room for improvement.

6. Improvement measures and development suggestions

6.1. Improvement measures for urban parks in main Chongqing districts

- (1) Focus on systematic planning and enhance connectivity: Enhance site selection rationality by conducting comprehensive preliminary research and data analysis to ensure alignment with city planning and public needs. Utilize advanced technologies such as Geographic Information Systems (GIS) for spatial analysis and simulation of candidate sites, assessing potential environmental and social benefits. Consider urban expansion trends and population growth to promote connectivity between parks and surrounding urban areas, forming a multifunctional urban public space.
- (2) Enhance the functional layout and improve supply and demand matching: According to the park's functional positioning and public needs, provide additional fitness equipment, play facilities, cultural amenities, and other diversified services to enrich visitor experiences. Create different functional zones for various age groups, ensuring functional layouts are distinct yet connected.
- (3) Improve service facility configuration and environmental health and strengthen management: Enhance infrastructure by increasing necessary facilities and establishing a clear labeling system. Improve environmental hygiene by increasing public toilets and garbage cans and regulating unhygienic behavior. Strengthen daily management and maintenance, conducting regular inspections and repairs. Establish a comprehensive facility maintenance system and management mechanism with assigned

responsibilities for each facility.

6.2. Development suggestions for urban parks in main Chongqing urban areas

- (1) Urban park + cultural inheritance: Urban parks, as key public facilities, can promote cultural dissemination and heritage. Organize cultural exchange activities between parks and communities, and host cultural festivals aligned with traditional Chongqing festivals and folk activities. Engage citizens and tourists with cultural performances and food tasting to enhance recognition and dissemination of Chongqing culture.
- (2) Urban park + ecological construction: Urban parks play an irreplaceable role in improving urban environmental quality and promoting sustainable development. Increase greenery by selecting suitable local plants and creating a mixed plant community of trees, shrubs, and grasses, providing a comfortable leisure environment. Enhance the park's cooling effect with water bodies and features like artificial lakes and streams, and integrate parks into the city's ecological network via ecological corridors and greenways.
- (3) Urban parks + intelligent services: Install people flow monitoring equipment at main entrances and key nodes to collect real-time data. Use big data analysis to predict visitor flow trends, aiding park management and activity planning. Provide real-time positioning, attraction introductions, and activity recommendations through an intelligent guide system for self-guided tours. Offer intelligent services like smart vending machines and smart seats, enabling self-service shopping and wireless charging. Implement an intelligent parking system for real-time monitoring and management of parking spaces, enhancing parking efficiency and resource allocation.
- (4) Urban park + tourism development: As a popular tourist city, Chongqing has opportunities for park development through tourism integration. Explore diverse cooperation models with the tourism industry, such as partnering with travel agencies to offer park tour routes, collaborating with hotels and restaurants for one-stop services, and creating souvenir programs like commemorative stamps for park visits.
- (5) Urban park + branding: Extract core values from each region to create distinctive park identities. For example, Shapingba District, known for its cultural atmosphere and youthful population, can promote a knowledge-centric image. Facilitate collaboration among Chongqing regions through joint activities and promotions, enhancing visibility and influence. Develop a city brand that reflects Chongqing's unique cultural and ecological landscape.

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