

## SPATIAL PLANNING POLICY STRATEGY IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF TANJUNGBALAI CITY AREA

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### Abstract

Spatial planning is one of the important elements in sustainable regional development, especially for developing cities such as Tanjungbalai City. This study aims to identify the existing conditions of spatial planning in Tanjungbalai City and to propose policy strategies that can improve the quality of spatial planning in regional development. The results of the study indicate that Tanjungbalai City faces various challenges in implementing spatial planning policies, such as lack of coordination between agencies, limited human resources, and inconsistencies between plans and realities in the field. To overcome this, a more integrated, participatory, and data-based policy is needed. The recommended strategies include strengthening coordination between agencies, increasing community participation, using technology in supervision, and developing equitable and sustainable infrastructure. The implementation of effective spatial planning policies will support the achievement of structured, sustainable regional development and provide social and economic benefits for the people of Tanjungbalai City.

**Keywords:** *Spatial Planning, Regional Development, Tanjungbalai City, Spatial Planning Policy, Supervision, Community Participation, Infrastructure, Sustainability.*

### INTRODUCTION

Tanjungbalai City as one of the growth centers in North Sumatra Province has a strategic role in supporting the dynamics of regional development. Along with the increasing population and the development of economic activities, the need for planned, organized, and sustainable space is becoming increasingly urgent. The phenomenon of rapid urbanization has given rise to various challenges, such as imbalance in land use, environmental degradation, social inequality, and reduced green open space. This condition indicates that without proper spatial planning, the growth of the Tanjungbalai City area can lead to spatial irregularities that have a negative impact on the quality of life of the community. Spatial planning as an instrument for controlling development has a crucial role in realizing a structured, productive, and sustainable city. However, in its implementation, Tanjungbalai City still faces various obstacles, such as weak coordination between sectors, limited accurate spatial data, low community participation, and less than optimal supervision of the implementation of spatial plans.

In addition, the dynamics of space needs due to the development of the trade, service, and residential sectors are also often not in line with existing planning documents. Realizing the importance of the role of spatial planning in directing regional development, a comprehensive, adaptive, and local potential-based policy strategy is needed. This strategy must be able to accommodate economic growth, maintain environmental sustainability, pay attention to socio-cultural aspects, and improve connectivity between regions. Thus, this study aims to examine and formulate a spatial planning policy strategy that can be a reference in the development of the Tanjungbalai City area, so that this city is able to grow sustainably, orderly, and competitively in the future.

The development of Tanjungbalai City in the last few decades has shown a significant increase in various sectors, such as trade, services, and housing. However, this growth is not always accompanied by optimal spatial management. Currently, various phenomena can be observed that reflect the problems of spatial planning in this city, such as the emergence of unplanned residential areas on riverbanks and flood-prone areas, the conversion of agricultural land into commercial areas without in-depth study, and the decreasing number of green open spaces that are vital for the ecological balance of the city. In addition, the inequality in the distribution of public facilities

and infrastructure between regions is also a challenge in itself. Some areas are developing rapidly and are modern, while other areas are left behind with minimal basic infrastructure conditions. The problem of traffic congestion in the city center, declining environmental quality, and land use conflicts between the housing, industry, and conservation sectors are signs that the spatial planning system has not been running effectively and sustainably. (Meka et al., 2025).

The spatial planning policy strategy in the development of the Tanjungbalai City area includes improving the function of service centers, developing facilities and infrastructure, establishing protected areas, and developing Green Open Spaces of at least 30%. This policy aims to realize integrated development between sectors, between sub-districts, and between stakeholders. Limitations in controlling the use of space, weak coordination between government agencies, and low public awareness of the importance of spatial planning worsen this condition. In addition, changes in space needs due to socio-economic dynamics cannot always be responded to quickly through existing spatial planning policies. All of these phenomena indicate the need for the preparation of a more focused, participatory, and sustainable spatial planning policy strategy to support the optimal development of the Tanjungbalai City area.

Research on spatial planning policy strategies in the development of the Tanjungbalai City area is very important considering the vital role of spatial planning in determining the direction of city growth in an orderly, productive, and sustainable manner. Without the right strategy, the potential for economic and social growth in Tanjungbalai City can be hampered by problems such as irregular land use, reduced environmental quality, increasing inequality between regions, and decreasing spatial support for various community activities. In the current context, Tanjungbalai City is facing great pressure from population growth, expansion of the economic sector, and the increasing need for public facilities. Therefore, it is necessary to formulate a spatial planning policy that not only regulates land use, but is also able to accommodate the dynamics of change, maintain environmental balance, strengthen connectivity between regions, and improve the quality of life of the community. (Sugiarto, Yamin s, et al., 2024). This strategy must also pay attention to local potential, strengthen community participation, and integrate the principles of sustainable development in every stage of planning and implementation.

This research is urgent to provide a basis for academic and practical considerations for local governments, stakeholders, and the community in making decisions related to regional development. With a more comprehensive spatial planning policy strategy, it is hoped that Tanjungbalai City can develop into a more organized, competitive, inclusive, and resilient city to face future challenges. Various previous studies have discussed the importance of spatial planning in supporting regional development. For example, research by Sutami (2020) highlights that spatial planning in urban areas needs to pay attention to the balance between economic and ecological functions to prevent environmental degradation. Meanwhile, a study by Rahmawati (2021) examines how spatial planning in developing cities is often hampered by weak coordination between sectors and limited public participation. Another study by Nugroho (2019) emphasizes the need to integrate spatial planning policies with the regional medium-term development plan (RPJMD) so that there is continuity between spatial planning and the direction of economic development.

Although these studies have made important contributions to understanding key factors in spatial planning, most studies are still general and focus on large cities. Few have specifically studied small and medium cities such as Tanjungbalai City which have characteristics of regional growth, infrastructure challenges, and socio-economic dynamics that are different from metropolitan cities. In addition, most previous studies have emphasized the planning aspect, but not many have explored in depth how adaptive policy strategies should be designed to overcome the mismatch in implementation in the field. According to experts such as Friedmann (1987) and Healey (1997), modern spatial planning must pay attention to participatory and local contextual aspects so that the resulting policies are truly in accordance with the needs of the community and the dynamics of the local area. The gap that is visible from previous studies is the less than optimal discussion of the formulation of spatial planning policy strategies based on local dynamics, implementation challenges at the regional level, and the involvement of local actors in the planning process. By seeing this gap, this study is here to fill the gap with a special focus on Tanjungbalai City. This study will examine how spatial planning policy strategies can be formulated based on real conditions in the field, paying attention to local potential, implementation obstacles, and encouraging multi-party collaboration in the regional development process. Thus, the results of the study are expected to provide new, more applicable contributions in the development of medium-scale urban areas in Indonesia.

### Identification of problems

Based on the background, phenomena, and existing research gaps, several main problems can be identified, namely:

1. There is still irregularity in land use in Tanjungbalai City which causes conflicts between spatial functions, such as between settlements, trade, and environmental conservation.
2. The decline in environmental quality due to the reduction of green open spaces and the conversion of land without proper planning.
3. Weak coordination between government sectors in implementing spatial planning policies, so that spatial planning often does not match the realization in the field.
4. Low community participation in the planning and monitoring process of space use.
5. The policy strategy that is able to integrate the dynamics of economic, social and environmental needs in regional development is not yet optimal.
6. The lack of studies based on local conditions in Tanjungbalai City to formulate adaptive and sustainable spatial planning policy strategies.

## Formulation of the problem

Based on the identification of the problem, the formulation of the problem in this study is:

1. What is the existing condition of spatial planning in Tanjungbalai City in supporting regional development?
2. What are the factors that are obstacles and challenges in implementing spatial planning policies in Tanjungbalai City?
3. What kind of policy strategy is effective in improving the quality of spatial planning in the sustainable development of Tanjungbalai City?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Spatial Planning Concept

Spatial planning is a process of planning, utilizing and controlling space carried out to create sustainable and competitive regional space.(Harahap et al., 2024). According to Santoso (2023), spatial planning functions as an instrument for regional development to create integration between social, economic, and environmental needs. Santoso emphasized the importance of integration between the function of urban space and the long-term vision of regional development. Furthermore, Wibowo and Handayani (2023) emphasized that spatial planning must consider environmental carrying capacity and disaster potential in order to create areas that are adaptive to climate change. Thus, the mitigative approach becomes an integral part of the modern spatial planning strategy.

### 2.2 Urban Area Development Strategy

The urban area development strategy, according to Pranata (2023), involves strengthening growth centers, increasing connectivity between regions, and equalizing public services. Pranata stated that the development of urban areas such as Tanjungbalai must be directed at optimizing spatial functions based on local potential and global competitiveness. In addition, according to Harahap (2023), regional development must prioritize the concept of a sustainable city through the application of smart city principles, green infrastructure, and community involvement in decision-making. This participatory approach is believed to increase acceptance of development programs.

### 2.3 Spatial Planning Policy Strategy

Spatial planning policies, according to Syahputra and Maulida (2023), must refer to the regional spatial plan (RTRW) that is adaptive to development dynamics and community needs. They emphasize the need for policy formulation based on spatial data, cross-sector integration, and consistency between planning and implementation in the field. Meanwhile, Arifin (2023) stated that an effective policy strategy must include land use zoning, development regulations, and incentives for space-based investment. Arifin also added that synchronization between city and provincial governments is the main key to the success of sustainable spatial planning.

### 2.4 Relevance to the Development of the Tanjungbalai City Area

Reflecting on the various expert opinions, the spatial planning policy strategy in the development of the Tanjungbalai City area needs to pay attention to aspects of environmental sustainability, integration of economic and social sectors, and strengthening infrastructure connectivity. Spatial planning that is responsive to local potential such as coastal areas, trade, and services in Tanjungbalai can encourage increased city competitiveness at the regional and national levels. Community-based planning and active community participation are also key to creating an inclusive and resilient city to future challenges.(Rahmadhani et al., 2023). Therefore, the integration of smart city concepts, green space management, and coastal ecosystem protection is an important focus in the future development strategy of the Tanjungbalai area.

**2.5 Framework of Thought**

Spatial planning is an integral part of regional development that aims to create a balance between social, economic, and environmental aspects. In the context of Tanjungbalai City, regional development requires spatial planning policies that are adaptive to urban dynamics such as population growth, changes in land use, infrastructure needs, and environmental preservation. According to Santoso (2023), spatial planning must be based on a vision of sustainable long-term development and be able to increase regional competitiveness. This opinion is reinforced by Pranata (2023) who emphasizes that regional development strategies must optimize local potential by paying attention to sectoral integration and inter-regional linkages.



Figure 2.1 Framework of Thought

**RESEARCH METHODS**

**3.1 Research Approaches and Types**

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach. This approach was chosen because it aims to deeply understand the spatial planning policy strategy in the context of developing the Tanjungbalai City area based on social realities and actual policies in force. (Sugiarto, Kamakaula, et al., 2024).

According to Sugiyono (2023), qualitative research is used to produce in-depth descriptions of social phenomena and policies, emphasizing meaning, understanding, and interpretation. Meanwhile, Moleong (2023) stated that qualitative research is able to capture the dynamics of policy strategies that are not always formally structured, but rather develop according to context. This type of research is a case study, focusing on spatial planning policies and implementation in Tanjungbalai City.

**3.2 Location and Time of Research**

The research location was conducted in Tanjungbalai City, especially in related agencies such as the Public Works and Spatial Planning Agency, Bappeda, and interviews with community leaders and local business actors. The research period is planned for 4 months, namely from May to August 2025.

**3.3 Research Informants**

Research informants were selected using purposive sampling, namely those who have a deep understanding of spatial planning and regional development. According to Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2023), purposive sampling allows researchers to obtain relevant and in-depth information from competent sources.

Key informants include:

1. Officials of the PUPR Department of Tanjungbalai City
2. Planner at the Bappeda of Tanjungbalai City
3. Community leaders and academics in the field of spatial planning
4. Local entrepreneurs involved in regional development

### **3.4 Data Collection Techniques**

Data collection techniques in this study include:

1. In-depth interview (in-depth interview)  
Conducted with key informants to explore their views, experiences and recommendations regarding spatial planning strategies.
2. Documentation study  
Analysis of documents such as the Tanjungbalai City RTRW, regional strategic plans, policy reports, and other regulatory documents.
3. Observation  
Direct observation of the physical conditions of urban space, land use, and regional development projects.

### **3.5 Data Analysis Techniques**

The data obtained were analyzed using thematic analysis techniques. According to Braun and Clarke (2023), thematic analysis is carried out by identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) that appear in the data.

The analysis steps include:

- Data reduction
- Data categorization
- Data presentation
- Drawing conclusions

This process also follows the method of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2023) which includes data collection, data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification.

### **3.6 Data Validity**

The validity of the data in this study was carried out through source and method triangulation techniques. Denzin (2023) stated that triangulation strengthens the validity of research findings by comparing and verifying information from various sources and different data collection techniques.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **What are the existing conditions of spatial planning in Tanjungbalai City in supporting regional development?**

The existing condition of spatial planning in Tanjungbalai City currently shows complex dynamics along with the fairly rapid development of the city. As a city that has a strategic function in the coastal area of North Sumatra, Tanjungbalai is experiencing increasing growth in the trade, service, and residential sectors. However, in its implementation, spatial planning has not been fully optimal in accordance with the plan that has been set out in the Tanjungbalai City Spatial Planning (RTRW) document. One of the real problems is the occurrence of a mismatch between the use of space in the field and its designation in the RTRW. Land conversion into residential and commercial areas often occurs without strict control, especially in the outskirts and riverbank areas (Aini et al., 2023). This raises new problems such as increased risk of flooding, decreased environmental quality, and reduced green areas that should function as the city's lungs.

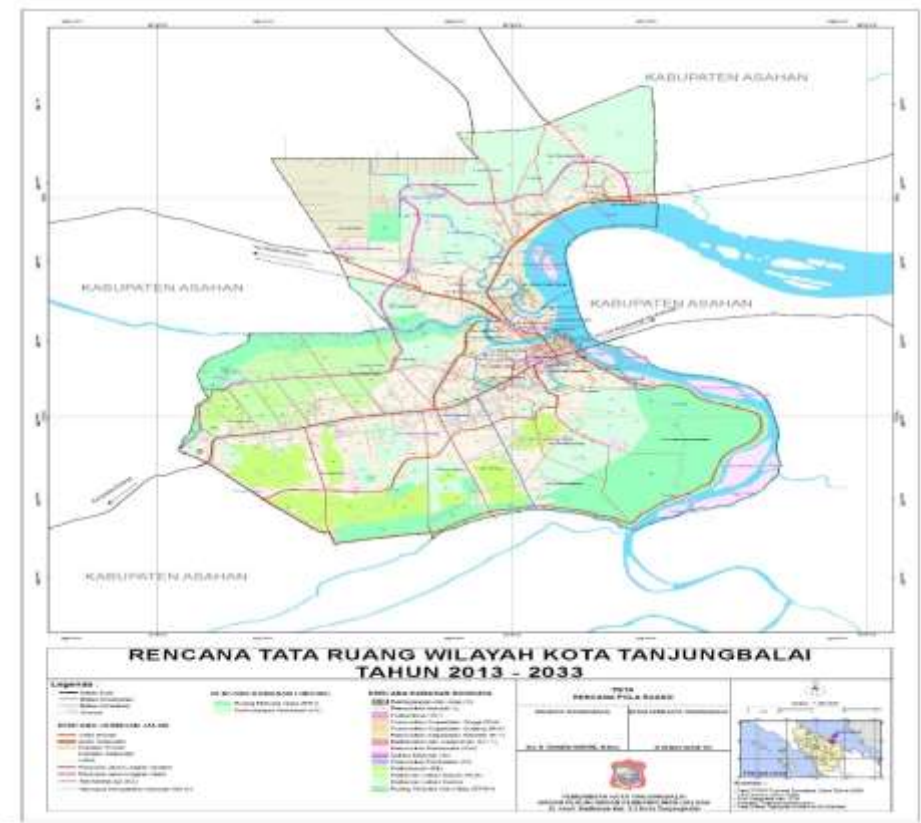


Figure 4.1 Regional Spatial Planning Plan (RTRW) of Tanjungbalai City

In the 2013-2033 Tanjungbalai City Spatial Plan (RTRW), the Tanjungbalai Waterfront City concept is identified as an area designed for the informal sector. The main objective is to provide special spaces that can be used by street vendors in trade centers. These locations are selected based on the characteristics of street vendors, so that they are in accordance with their needs. In addition, this area is also categorized as a strategic area of the city, with the potential to drive local economic growth. In addition, the development of city infrastructure, such as roads, drainage, and public facilities, has not been evenly distributed throughout the region. Several sub-districts in Tanjungbalai City show faster physical growth than other areas, creating spatial disparities that have the potential to hinder equitable development. On the other hand, the arrangement of coastal areas that have economic potential has not been managed optimally, so that opportunities for developing a marine and tourism-based economy have not been optimally developed.



Figure 4.2 Tanjungbalai City Waterfront

From an institutional aspect, coordination between related agencies in the implementation of spatial planning is still ineffective. Many sectoral policies are implemented independently without referring to an integrated spatial framework. Community participation in the process of preparing, supervising, and evaluating spatial planning is also still limited, so that a sense of ownership of the spatial policies that have been prepared is lacking. Overall, this existing condition shows that although Tanjungbalai City has a formal spatial planning document, major challenges still lie in the aspects of implementation, supervision, control, and adaptation to the dynamics of change. Therefore, a more adaptive, integrated, and participatory policy strategy is needed to optimize spatial planning as the main instrument in supporting sustainable regional development.

### **What are the factors that are obstacles and challenges in implementing spatial planning policies in Tanjungbalai City?**

The implementation of spatial planning policies in Tanjungbalai City faces various obstacles and challenges that affect its effectiveness and success in directing regional development in an orderly and sustainable manner. Some of the main factors that inhibit the implementation of this policy include:

1. **Weak Coordination Between Government Agencies** One of the biggest challenges in implementing spatial planning policies is the lack of effective coordination between government agencies involved in the spatial planning and supervision process. Often, policies taken by one sector or agency are not in line with policies from other sectors. This creates irregularities in the implementation and supervision of spatial planning policies that should be carried out in an integrated manner. For example, the housing, transportation, and environmental sectors often do not work together optimally in planning and assessing the long-term impacts of spatial use. (Ramadhani & Nuraini, 2024).
2. **Limited Human Resources (HR)** Effective spatial planning requires trained human resources with a deep understanding of the principles of spatial planning and management. However, the limited number and quality of experts at the local level often becomes an obstacle in designing, implementing, and supervising spatial planning policies. Lack of training and capacity building for government officials and the community is an important factor that hinders the smooth implementation of spatial planning policies.
3. **Infrastructure and Funding Limitations** One of the major challenges in spatial planning is the limited availability of adequate infrastructure to support good spatial planning and management. For example, there are still areas that are difficult to reach by basic infrastructure such as roads, drainage systems, and electricity networks. In addition, limited budget allocations for planning, monitoring, and infrastructure development activities are obstacles in realizing ideal spatial planning policies. Without adequate budget support, it is difficult to carry out planned spatial infrastructure improvements and development.
4. **Social and Cultural Challenges** Effective spatial planning must involve active community participation. However, one of the main challenges in Tanjungbalai City is the low level of community participation in the spatial planning process. Communities are often not maximally involved in the planning and supervision of space use, which is caused by a lack of awareness and understanding of the importance of planned spatial planning. In addition, local social and cultural values related to the use of space often clash with policies formulated by the government, so there needs to be a more sensitive approach to local needs.
5. **Mismatch between Plan and Reality in the Field** Although Tanjungbalai City has a Regional Spatial Plan (RTRW) that has been prepared by considering various aspects, implementation in the field often does not comply with the established plan. There are many land conversions, illegal developments, and developments that do not comply with the designations that have been determined in the spatial plan. This occurs due to weak supervision of the implementation of spatial planning and minimal sanctions for violations that occur.
6. **Changes in Social and Economic Dynamics** Rapid changes in social and economic dynamics are also a challenge in themselves. Space needs for the economic, trade, and residential sectors often grow faster than anticipated in spatial planning. This causes the spatial planning that has been designed to be less relevant or unable to accommodate the needs of a rapidly growing community. Therefore, spatial planning policies need to have the flexibility to adapt to these changes without sacrificing the principle of sustainability. (Nuraini & Thamrin, 2018).

Overall, these obstacles indicate that to optimize the implementation of spatial planning policies in Tanjungbalai City, improvements are needed in various aspects, starting from coordination between government agencies, increasing human resource capacity, to strengthening the monitoring system and community participation. All of these elements must be managed better so that spatial planning can support more structured, sustainable, and inclusive regional development.

**What kind of policy strategy is effective in improving the quality of spatial planning in the sustainable development of the Tanjungbalai City area?**

To improve the quality of spatial planning in Tanjungbalai City and support sustainable regional development, it is necessary to formulate a policy strategy that is able to overcome various existing obstacles. Some approaches that can be applied include:

1. **Improving Coordination Between Government Agencies** One of the first steps that must be taken is to strengthen coordination between government agencies related to spatial planning. This can be done by forming a coordination team that involves representatives from each sector involved in the planning and implementation of spatial planning policies. This team will be responsible for ensuring that every policy taken is aligned and integrated. In addition, it is important to create a more effective communication mechanism between the central government, regional governments, and the community, in order to create spatial planning policies that are more responsive to the needs of local communities.



Figure 4.3 Coordination Meeting between OPDs regarding Spatial Planning Problems in City of Tanjungbalai

2. **Community Participation in the Planning Process** An effective strategy in spatial planning is to encourage active community participation in the planning and monitoring process of spatial use. The Tanjungbalai City Government needs to provide a forum for the community to convey their aspirations and involvement in the spatial planning process through village deliberations, citizen forums, and public consultations. Local communities who better understand the real conditions in the field can provide valuable input in determining the direction of regional development that suits their needs. In addition, education and socialization regarding the importance of spatial planning must be intensified so that the community can better appreciate and support the policies taken.



Figure 4.4 Musrenbang Teluk Nibung District, Tanjungbalai City

3. **Strengthening Supervision and Law Enforcement** One of the major challenges in spatial planning is the weak supervision of the implementation of established policies. Therefore, there needs to be a strengthening of the supervision system that involves various parties, including the community, in monitoring changes that occur in the field. Strict law enforcement against violations of land use and illegal development must be a priority so that there are no deviations from the spatial plan that has been prepared. In addition, the use of technology such as Geographic Information Systems (GIS) can help monitor the development of spatial use in real time.



Figure 4.5 Regulation of Traders on Arterial Roads in Tanjungbalai City

4. **Flexible and Adaptive Planning for Change** Spatial planning policies in Tanjungbalai City must be able to adapt quickly to social, economic, and environmental changes that occur. Therefore, spatial planning needs to be designed with flexibility that allows for changes that are relevant to field conditions without sacrificing the principle of sustainability. For example, to accommodate the needs of the rapidly growing economic sector, the government needs to facilitate the development of economic areas that are integrated with social and environmental functions. This policy must also ensure that any spatial changes made still consider aspects of environmental sustainability, such as the management of green open spaces, drainage systems, and pollution control.



Figure 4.6 Arrangement of Traders' Stalls at the Bahagia Market, Tanjungbalai City

5. Policymaking Based on Data and In-depth Analysis Effective spatial planning policies must be based on accurate data and in-depth analysis of existing regional conditions and projected future needs. Therefore, data collection through field surveys, spatial mapping, and socio-economic change analysis are essential to formulate realistic and applicable policies. The Tanjungbalai City Government also needs to involve spatial planning and regional planning experts in every stage of policymaking so that the resulting policies are scientific and accountable.



Figure 4.7 Coordination Meeting of the PUTR Service with Consultants and the Ministry of ATR/BPN regarding Spatial Planning

6. Even infrastructure development to support quality spatial planning, infrastructure development must be carried out evenly throughout the Tanjungbalai City area, both in the city center and in the outskirts. Equal access to public facilities, such as roads, drainage, electricity, and clean water, is very important so that all areas can develop optimally. Moreover, environmentally friendly infrastructure development such as rainwater management systems and green open spaces must be prioritized to maintain the balance of the city's ecosystem and reduce the impact of climate change.



Figure 4.8 Routine maintenance of city roads

7. Sustainable Economic Development and Natural Resource Management Spatial planning must also be in line with sustainable economic development strategies. Tanjungbalai City has great potential in the

fisheries, trade, and tourism sectors. Therefore, the development of coastal areas and green open spaces as ecotourism areas must be part of the spatial planning policy. In addition, natural resource management must be carried out wisely by involving local communities, to avoid exploitation that damages the environment.



Figure 4.9 Maintenance of the Shell Monument as an Icon of Tanjungbalai City

Overall, an effective spatial planning policy strategy in Tanjungbalai City must be based on a comprehensive, inclusive, and sustainable approach. By involving various stakeholders, strengthening the monitoring system, and utilizing technology in planning and implementation, it is hoped that the spatial planning policy implemented can support sustainable regional development, improve the quality of life of the community, and maintain environmental sustainability.

## CLOSING

### Conclusion

Based on the analysis of spatial planning conditions in Tanjungbalai City, it can be concluded that the implementation of spatial planning policies in this city still faces various challenges, such as lack of coordination between government agencies, limited human resources, and inconsistencies between spatial plans and realities in the field. These obstacles affect the quality of existing spatial management, resulting in irregularities in land use and declining environmental quality.

To improve the quality of spatial planning in sustainable regional development, an effective policy strategy is needed. This strategy includes strengthening coordination between agencies, increasing community participation, strict supervision of policy implementation, and flexible planning to deal with dynamic changes. In addition, equitable infrastructure development based on accurate data is a key element in encouraging more structured and sustainable regional development.

### Suggestion

1. Improving Coordination Between Government Agencies: The Tanjungbalai City Government needs to form a cross-sectoral coordination team to ensure that spatial planning policies can be implemented in an integrated and effective manner.
2. Strengthening Community Participation: Communities need to be actively involved in the planning and monitoring of space use. This can be done through public consultation forums and educational programs on the importance of sustainable spatial planning.
3. Optimizing the Use of Technology: Utilizing information technology such as Geographic Information Systems (GIS) can help in monitoring changes in land use in real-time and ensuring that policies implemented are in accordance with field conditions.

4. Improving the Quality of Human Resources (HR): Regional governments need to carry out training and capacity building for government officials and the community so that they better understand the principles of sustainable spatial planning.
5. Strict Supervision and Law Enforcement: The government must strengthen the supervision system for the implementation of spatial planning and enforce strict sanctions for violations of spatial planning policies, in order to prevent changes in land use that are not in accordance with the plan.

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