



## An Analysis of Neighborhood Participation in High-Rise Construction in Thailand

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### Abstract

This paper studies the mechanisms, obstacles, and results of community involvement in high-rise construction in Bangkok, Thailand. The work is based on legal case studies, consumer protection reviews from 2020 to 2026. Also, the work uses regulatory changes, and architectural analyses. It looks into how the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process, public hearing requirements, building code enforcement, and community organizing affect the ability of nearby residents to influence high-rise developments. This impacts their living environment. The analysis shows a significant imbalance. Although the legal framework requires public participation for projects that exceed certain limits, developers often take advantage of procedural uncertainties, incomplete information. Developers also use selective interpretations of regulations regarding street width and floor area ratios to push forward construction despite clear community opposition. Notable case is the lengthy A-Ruamrudee demolition saga. The 2025 Thailand Consumers Council investigation found thirteen high-rises illegally converting emergency access zones. The law firm supported success in revoking. A Sathorn's EIA approval illustrates that effective neighborhood resistance usually demands prolonged legal efforts. It often lasting a decade or more, and typically occurs only after construction has begun. The paper also highlights positive architectural strategies that incorporate community input into design, referencing student-led social housing initiatives. A complete framework for meaningful participation, differentiating between formal compliance (public hearings, EIA submissions) and genuine engagement (iterative design collaboration, independent technical support, and transparent impact mitigation).

**Discipline:** Multidisciplinary (Construction Management, Public Policy, Construction Law & Regulation).

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# 1 Introduction

In the last thirty years, Bangkok's skyline has changed greatly. This is due to the rapid increase in high-rise buildings/condos/residential complexes. This growth is in a setting where regulatory oversight is often disjointed. Also, building codes are interpreted in various ways. Also, there is a conflict between the rights of private developers and the well-being of the communities. Actually, there are laws for Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and public involvement. The difference between what the law says and what actually happens makes long disputes. In some severe instances, buildings have been ordered to be torn down years after occupancy.

This paper examines the participation of neighborhood residents in high-rise construction decisions in Bangkok, Thailand. The research involves urban planning law, environmental governance, and community organizing. It asks: Under what conditions can proximate residents effectively influence high-rise development affecting their communities? What legal, procedural, and barriers constrain their participation? And what reforms have been proposed or implemented to strengthen community voice in an increasingly dense urban landscape?

The timing of this inquiry is consequential. In February 2025, Thailand's Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment introduced draft amendments to the EIA regulations. It specifically called for enhanced public participation. It includes mandated public hearings and stakeholder consultations. In May 2025, the Thailand Consumers Council (TCC) published an investigation identifying thirteen high-rise projects in Bangkok that had allegedly violated construction laws, including the illegal conversion of mandatory 6-meter emergency access clearance zones into ornamental ponds, cafes, and EV charging stations (Thaiger, 2025; Bangkok Post, 2025b). And in November 2025, the Supreme Administrative Court definitively rejected the owner's claim in the A-Ruamrudee case, clearing the way for demolition of two towers that had been illegally constructed on a narrow soi lacking the required 10-meter width (Bangkok Post, 2025a). These developments suggest that neighborhood participation, while consistently difficult, may be entering a more consequential phase.

# 2 Literature Review

The fast growth of cities like Bangkok has caused a big change from few floor structures to tall, dense residential and commercial buildings (Boonjubun, 2019). These high-rise buildings make better use of land. These buildings meet the needs of a growing city population. However, they often disturb the community structures, and put pressure on local infrastructure. These lead to environmental and social issues (Boonjubun, 2019; Mani & Pollitt, 2024). It is important to get local residents involved. Because the decision-making about developments may affect their neighborhoods. This would balance quick, profitable growth with the well-being of the community. This literature review brings together the current academic discussions on community participation, the limitations of urban governance and Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) in Thailand, and the conflicts between preserving neighborhoods and increasing vertical development.

## **2.1 Theoretical Frameworks of Community Participation**

To understand neighborhood participation in high-rise construction, urban planning literature relies heavily on the concepts of participatory design and democratic spatial distribution.

### **2.1.1 Participatory Design and Spatial Adaptation**

Participation is more than an administrative checklist; it acts as a human dimension and social process that facilitates information exchange, helping project proponents understand the lived realities, needs, and expectations of local residents (Pimwern, 2019). It allows communities to engage in meaningful and purposeful adaptation of their daily environments (Pimwern, 2019). Within urban landscapes, local participation empowers community members to actively voice concerns regarding spatial transformations that alter their neighborhoods.

### **2.1.2 Tokenism vs Genuine Empowerment**

However, critical urban theory warns that community participation is frequently subverted in practice. Governments and private developers often manage participation through external consulting agencies on behalf of pre-designed, top-down programs. In Thailand, empirical evaluations reveal that while public participation guidelines are legally codified, a gap remains between participation theory and reality, as crucial project decisions are frequently finalized before the public is given an opportunity to voice their perspectives (Kantamaturapoj et al., 2018). This binary between genuine empowerment and tokenistic consultation heavily influences how high-rise public hearings play out in developing Asian metropolises.

## **2.2 Institutional Barriers and Urban Governance in Thailand**

The efficacy of neighborhood participation in Thailand is deeply shaped by the structural limitations of its municipal governance and the regulatory execution of Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs).

### **2.2.1 Frameworks of the EIA/EHIA Consultation Process**

The right to public participation in decision-making is codified in Thai law, specifically requiring project proponents to conduct public participation activities at multiple stages, including scoping, assessment, and public review (Kantamaturapoj et al., 2018). For high-rise buildings, this is primarily operationalized through the EIA process, which mandates specific notification timelines and public communication channels to ensure stakeholders—including affected people, government agencies, and environmental experts—are consulted (Kantamaturapoj et al., 2018). Environmental and Health Impact Assessment (EHIA) is an advanced form of EIA that focuses on studying, analyzing, and predicting the potential impacts of large-scale development projects with high risks to natural resources, ecosystems, health, sanitation, and the quality of life of the population.

## **2.2.2 Limitations in Local Engagement and Accountability**

Despite these structured frameworks, the execution of community participation facing rapid vertical development suffers from critical institutional barriers. Research indicates that the practice of public participation within the impact assessment system has reached an impasse, with stakeholders expressing concern over the authenticity of how their worries are validated by reviewing authorities (Kantamaturapoj et al., 2018). Further, municipal governance often prioritizes market-driven development and deregulation to stimulate real estate supply over long-term community integration, leaving local neighborhoods with constrained administrative avenues to challenge or alter major high-rise projects.

## **2.3 Friction Points: High-Rise Impacts and Local Resistance**

The physical and spatial dimensions of neighborhoods dictate how strongly residents connect to their surroundings and, by extension, how aggressively they resist disruptive high-rise developments.

### **2.3.1 Class Divisions and Spatial Segregation**

The insertion of high-rise structures—particularly luxury or enclosed condominiums—radically transforms the urban landscape of Thai cities. This form of vertical urbanization often deepens class divisions and exacerbates spatial inequality, creating stark physical barriers between established low-rise residents and incoming upper-middle-class occupants (Boonjubun, 2019). The city landscape becomes increasingly fragmented as private developers construct enclosed vertical enclaves that function largely independently of the preexisting neighborhood context (Boonjubun, 2019).

### **2.3.2 Environmental and Structural Pressures**

Friction also arises regarding the compounding environmental strains that massive vertical developments place on cities like Bangkok. High-rise developments add considerable weight to the urban landscape, contributing significantly to systemic challenges such as land subsidence, localized flooding, and infrastructural stress (Mani & Pollitt, 2024). When local communities attempt to contest these developments via public forums, they are often resisting not just the visual transformation of their neighborhoods, but also tangible risks to their ecological resilience and socio-economic security.

The literature reveals that while neighborhood participation is theoretically recognized as a cornerstone of sustainable urban development in Thailand, its implementation in high-rise construction is heavily constrained. Structural limitations within the EIA/EHIA framework, tokenistic consultation windows, and the aggressive market-driven commercialization of urban spaces often sideline the voices of local communities. For vertical urbanization to proceed sustainably, Thailand's planning framework requires a transition away from developer-centric

models toward decentralized, transparent participatory mechanisms that treat neighborhood consensus not as a regulatory hurdle, but as an essential element of urban resilience.

## **3 The Legal and Procedural Framework for Participation**

### **3.1 Environmental Impact Assessment and the Public Hearing Requirement**

The Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process constitutes the primary legal mechanism through which neighborhood residents can formally register concerns about proposed high-rise construction. Under Thailand's Enhancement and Conservation of National Environmental Quality Act and associated ministerial regulations, projects exceeding specified size thresholds must prepare EIA reports for review by the Expert Review Committee. Categories requiring EIA include residential buildings, private office buildings, hospitals, hotels, and large-scale retail and wholesale structures exceeding 10,000 square meters of usable area.

Crucially, the February 2025 draft amendments to the EIA regulations have removed the previous exemptions for retail and wholesale business buildings, meaning that large commercial structures—including those integrated into mixed-use developments like Icon Siam and Whizdom 101, which previously did not prepare EIA reports for their retail components—will now face environmental review. The amendments also explicitly mandate "greater public involvement in the EIA process, including public hearings and consultations with stakeholders, ensuring transparency and accountability". (Lexology, 2025)

The public hearing is the specific procedural mechanism for neighborhood participation. As documented in Thai regulatory guidance, the public hearing is "the process of listening to the opinions of the people regarding community problems and concerns to find joint solutions before construction". This step is considered an essential part of EIA preparation. However, as the case studies below demonstrate, developers have frequently conducted hearings perfunctorily or submitted EIA reports without obtaining community acceptance, leading to disputes that halt construction mid-process.

### **3.2 Building Control Act and Ministerial Regulations**

Beyond the EIA framework, the Building Control Act and its subordinate ministerial regulations establish physical requirements that directly affect community impact. Of particular relevance is Ministerial Regulation No. 33, which mandates that high-rise buildings maintain a minimum 6-meter-wide road or clearance space to allow emergency vehicle access. The regulation also requires that access streets serving high-rise structures meet minimum width standards—typically 10 meters—a provision that has become central to neighborhood legal challenges.

The A-Ruamrudee case turned precisely on this street width requirement. Residents demonstrated that Soi Ruamrudee did not maintain the required 10-meter width along its entire length, rendering the construction of two high-rise towers illegal. The courts ultimately agreed, ordering demolition, though implementation was delayed for over a decade by successive appeals.

### 3.3 The Town Planning Act and Floor Area Ratio

A third regulatory layer involves the Town Planning Act and associated regulations governing floor-area-to-land-size ratios. The 2023 Central Administrative Court ruling revoking EIA approval for The Sathorn project turned on the "Designated Plot Rule," which provides that when a plot of land is subdivided, the combined floor area of all resulting plots must not exceed the original permitted ratio. Because The Sathorn's land had been subdivided from The Met condominium's plot, the developer was required to account for The Met's existing floor area in calculating allowable density—a requirement the EIA committee had failed to apply (Bangkok Post, 2023).

This ruling is significant because it demonstrates that neighborhood participation can succeed not only through direct opposition but through procedural challenges that hold regulatory agencies accountable for their own errors. The Met's co-owners, represented by a law firm, successfully argued that the Expert Committee had not acted prudently in accepting inaccurate measurements.

### 3.4 The Gap between Form and Substance

Despite this formal legal architecture, a persistent gap separates procedural requirements from meaningful participation. Developers have called for clear and standardized regulations, rather than alterations that vary with each rotating committee (Bangkok Post, 2023). One executive noted that EIA committees occasionally raise new issues that are situational or unique, leading to prolonged approval timelines that have stretched from four months to eleven months. This uncertainty has led some developers to shift focus to low-rise projects or to delay high-rise launches until EIA approvals are secured.

Conversely, residents complain that public hearings are conducted without genuine opportunity for influence. In the case of the Im-Ekkamai project, community representatives stated that the developer "had not listened to the community at all but submitted the EIA report while the community still did not accept it". The project, which proposed a 25-story and 43-story tower on a soi measuring less than 18 meters in width, was returned by the Expert Committee for revision.

Thus, the discussion reveals a system where both developers and communities experience procedural frustration. That is the developers face unpredictable delays, whereas the communities face exclusion from decisions that fundamentally reshape their neighborhoods.

## 4 Methods

This study employs a qualitative case study methodology, analyzing documented instances of neighborhood participation in high-rise construction across Thailand. Case selection was purposive, prioritizing cases with available legal documentation, media coverage, or architectural design records. Data sources include:

1. Legal case analyses: A-Ruamrudee (2005-2025), The Sathorn (2023 ruling), Im-Ekkamai (2020-2021)

2. Regulatory documents: February 2025 draft EIA amendments, Ministerial Regulation No. 33,
3. Consumer protection investigations: Thailand Consumers Council May 2025 report on 13 high-rises,
4. Architectural case studies: Din Daeng social housing projects (Rujiravanich, 2021)
5. Industry commentary: Developer perspectives on EIA uncertainty (2023)

The analysis distinguishes between three modes of participation: (a) formal legal challenge through administrative courts, (b) procedural engagement through EIA public hearings, and (c) affirmative design collaboration through participatory architectural processes.

## 5 Results

Table 1 shows examples of cases of neighborhood participation in Thai construction projects.

**Table 1: High profile cases of neighborhood participation in Thailand.**

Case*	Year(s)	Key Issue	Outcome
A-Asoke Condo	2023	Construction permit invalidated due to inadequate entrance width (illegal use of MRTA land)	Permit revoked; developer must reapply
Sathorn Project	2023	EIA approval found illegitimate due to incorrect measurements violating "Designated Plot Rule"	EIA approval and construction permit revoked retroactively
Im-Ekkamai	2020	43-storey tower deemed disproportionate to narrow road (soi); EIA compliance questioned	Residents threatened legal action
13OT-Bangkok Projects	2025	Violations of 6-metre clearance rule; emergency access blocked by amenities	TCC requested BMA inspection
BT-Phuket	2025	Dust, noise, safety concerns; EIA transparency questioned	Construction halt ordered unless deficiencies corrected

\*Note: Case names given here are modified names.

### 5.1 Legal Challenges

The A-Ruamrudee case represents the most extreme outcome of neighborhood participation in Thai high-rise construction: court-ordered demolition of completed buildings. The controversy began in 2005 when residents, including members of the royal household, objected to construction of two towers on Soi Ruamrudee road, arguing that the small road (soi) lacked the required 10-meter width for high-rise development. Despite objections, the Pathumwan district office issued permits, and construction proceeded, with the buildings opening in 2010.

Residents, supported by the Foundation for Consumers, filed a lawsuit with the Central Administrative Court in 2008. In 2012, the court ruled that the buildings violated the Building Control Act and ordered demolition within 60 days. The Thai Supreme Administrative Court upheld the demolition order in 2014. However, the developer successfully delayed implementation by

filing a financial claim against the district director, arguing that the permit had been unlawfully issued and that the developer had relied on it in good faith.

The decisive breakthrough came in November 2025, when the Supreme Court definitively rejected the owner's claim. The court found that the developer's tort claim had been filed four years too late—well beyond the one-year statute of limitations. With all legal obstacles removed, the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA) announced that demolition would commence (Thailandblog, 2025).

*Analysis:* This case demonstrates both the potential and the limits of neighborhood participation. Residents successfully established the illegality of the construction and secured demolition orders. However, the process consumed twenty years—from initial objection in 2005 to final resolution in 2025. Moreover, residents endured two decades of living in the shadow of towers that should never have been built. The case is thus a Pyrrhic victory: legal principle prevailed, but timely neighborhood protection did not.

## **5.2 Procedural Engagement: EIA Hearings and Community Rejection**

The Im-Ekkamai case illustrates the consequences of inadequate participation. The project proposed a 25-story Tower A (5,973 square meters) and a 43-story Tower B (29,564 square meters) connected by shared facilities, located between Soi Sukhumvit 61 and Soi Sukhumvit 63. Community representatives from Soi Sukhumvit 61 pointed out that the project qualified as an extra-large building exceeding 30,000 square meters, requiring a frontage road at least 18 meters wide. However, Soi Sukhumvit 63 measured less than 18 meters, and Soi Sukhumvit 61 measured less than 10 meters. Residents expressed concern about traffic congestion and PM10 dust during a projected three-year construction period.

Crucially, the developer had not conducted a satisfactory public hearing but had submitted the EIA report without community acceptance. The Expert Committee returned the application, requiring the developer to address community concerns within six months (Trustborworn, (2019).

Similarly, residents of Soi Ari (Phahonyothin 11) protested the Pracharat housing project of 400 units, citing that existing infrastructure could not support additional population. They noted that during construction of previous projects, sidewalks had been damaged and emergency equipment had been stored on pedestrian walkways, creating hazards. The community demanded cancellation or relocation.

*Analysis:* In both cases, residents successfully delayed projects but did not prevent construction. The participation mechanism allowed community voices to be registered and required developers to respond, but the ultimate authority rested with the Expert Committee, not with the community. Residents could block approval only if the Committee accepted their arguments—a determination that remained within regulatory discretion.

### 5.3 Consumer Protection Investigation

The May 2025 Thailand Consumers Council investigation represents a different mode of participation: systematic monitoring by civil society organizations rather than case-by-case resident opposition. The TCC received complaints from residents in eleven communities and conducted an investigation that identified thirteen high-rise projects in violation of construction laws. The violations are in Table 2.

**Table 2: Violations reported by consumers/residents**

Violations	Details
Unauthorized design changes	Developers had deviated from approved plans or EIA submissions. Spaces designated for emergency access had been converted into EV charging zones, ornamental ponds, gyms, and badminton courts
Emergency access violations	Eleven of the thirteen buildings had converted mandatory 6-meter clearance zones into cafes or gardens, leaving no space for fire trucks
Misleading advertising	Advertisements did not match actual layouts or EIA submissions

The TCC formally requested that the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA) re-inspect ten of the buildings. Legal expert from the Department of Public Works clarified. The law is clear that a 6-metre-wide road must remain unobstructed at all times. Even plant pots are considered illegal obstructions".

*Analysis:* The TCC investigation demonstrates that neighborhood participation can be amplified through institutional intermediaries. Individual residents may lack resources to document violations and navigate legal processes; consumer protection organizations can aggregate complaints, conduct systematic investigations, and engage regulatory agencies. However, the TCC's role is advisory; enforcement ultimately depends on BMA action. Whether the identified violations will be remediated remains uncertain.

### 5.4 Developer Responses and Industry Critique

Industry perspectives on participation are essential to understanding systemic barriers. Developers have expressed frustration with unclear and inconsistent EIA standards. A Developer described how his company's EIA report for a Hua Hin project was returned based on pandemic related waste segregation issues. This concern had not been raised for other projects. This inconsistency makes the developer reluctant to develop high-rise buildings because of the issues involved.

Another developer noted that the time taken to consider EIA reports had stretched from four months to eleven months, and if any adjustments are needed, this requires an additional 11 months". The developer argued that the developers are not afraid of regulations, they merely want clarity to ensure compliance and prevent time wasted on rectifications.

The Sathorn case exemplifies developer vulnerability to procedural challenges. First, the project had received EIA approval and a construction permit, both of which were revoked retroactively when the Central Administrative Court found that the Expert Committee had not

accurately calculated measurements under the Designated Plot Rule. The ruling called into question "what the project's developers, and the property's buyers will do with the commenced construction and partly sold units". (DLA Piper, 2023)

*Analysis:* Developer critiques highlight a participation paradox. Neighborhood opposition, channeled through EIA committees and courts, introduces uncertainty that developers experience as unfair and unpredictable. Yet from a community perspective, developer complaints about inconsistent standards may reflect legitimate environmental and safety concerns that deserve regulatory attention. The challenge is to develop clear, predictable standards that also meaningfully protect community interests—a balance that current governance arrangements have not achieved.

## **5.5 Affirmative Participation: Architectural Design with Community Input**

The participation literature has focused predominantly on oppositional modes—lawsuits, protests, objections. However, affirmative modes of participation also exist, in which architects and developers engage communities in the design process from the outset.

Two student-led architecture and design projects provide valuable insights. The Din Daeng social housing initiative, The SYNC by Rujiravanich (2021), utilized Grasshopper parametric modeling to study sunlight and wind patterns, which helped optimize the placement and shape of buildings to improve shared spaces on the ground floor where residents could come together. The design was influenced by the existing community's dynamics: Most of the ground floor in the older building features activities that encourage users to interact and support each other in leading a happy life and gaining knowledge about living.

Similarly, Bupphaves' (2021) Native Community Model project adapted traditional community spatial patterns into a high-rise format. This aimed to differentiate between central community areas, sub-community spaces, and private zones. The design included wind turbines in building voids, vertical green spaces for reducing heat, a water recycling system, and solar panels. This showed that design using community ideas and environmental sustainability can work hand in hand.

*Analysis:* These projects are speculative student work, not built developments. However, they demonstrate that architectural education can cultivate participatory design methodologies. The use of parametric tools (Grasshopper, Ladybug) to optimize community space placement while achieving environmental performance suggests that technical sophistication need not come at the expense of community responsiveness.

# **6 Discussion**

## **6.1 Three Modes of Participation: A Comparative Assessment**

The case evidence reveals three distinct modes of neighborhood participation, each with different mechanisms, costs, and outcomes (see Table 3).

**Table 3: Three Modes of Participation.**

Mode	Mechanism	Initiator	Timeframe	Success Factors	Limitations
Legal challenge	Administrative court	Residents + legal representation	5-20 years	Clear regulatory violation (street width, FAR)	High cost; requires legal expertise; post-construction remedies
Procedural engagement	EIA public hearing	Residents + Expert Committee	6-18 months	Ability to delay; community rejection documented	No veto power; Committee discretion; developers can revise
Consumer monitoring	TCC investigation	Residents + civil society	1-3 years	Aggregation of complaints; media pressure	Enforcement depends on BMA; advisory only

The A-case (legal challenge) achieved the most definitive outcome—demolition—but at the greatest temporal cost. The Im-Ekkamai case (procedural engagement) achieved delay and required developer revision but did not prevent construction. The TCC investigation (consumer monitoring) has achieved documentation and official requests but remains pending enforcement.

No mode consistently delivers timely, meaningful community influence. This suggests that systemic reform—not case-by-case litigation—is necessary.

## 6.2 The Asymmetry of Information and Resources

A persistent barrier to participation is the asymmetry between developers and residents. Developers have access to legal counsel, EIA consultants, architectural firms, and financial reserves to sustain multi-year approval processes. Residents typically lack these resources. As the A-case demonstrates, even when residents are legally correct and court orders are issued, developers can delay implementation for decades through successive appeals and financial claims.

The TCC investigation partially addresses this asymmetry by providing institutional support. However, the TCC cannot represent every community facing a high-rise development. Moreover, the TCC's advisory role means that even documented violations may not lead to remediation.

Information asymmetry also affects participation. Building plans, EIA reports, and technical measurements are not always accessible to residents in usable formats. The Sathorn case turned on measurement inaccuracies that residents themselves could not have identified without expert assistance.

## 6.3 Regulatory Reform: The February 2025 Amendments

The February 2025 draft amendments to the EIA regulations represent an opportunity to strengthen participation. Key provisions include:

- Removal of retail/wholesale exemptions, extending EIA requirements to large commercial buildings
- Enhanced public participation mandates, including public hearings and stakeholder consultations

- Five-year periodic review to ensure continued relevance

However, the amendments do not address several persistent issues: the lack of independent technical assistance for communities, the absence of mechanisms to enforce timely consideration of community concerns, and the continued discretion of Expert Committees to accept or reject community input without clear standards.

Developers have called for "clear and standardized regulations, rather than alterations that vary with each rotating committee". Communities would likely endorse the same principle—clarity and standardization—but for different reasons: to ensure that developers cannot exploit regulatory ambiguity to circumvent community protections.

### 6.4 Toward Meaningful Participation: An Integrated Framework

Drawing on the case evidence, a complete framework is proposed for meaningful neighborhood participation in high-rise construction, Figure 1.

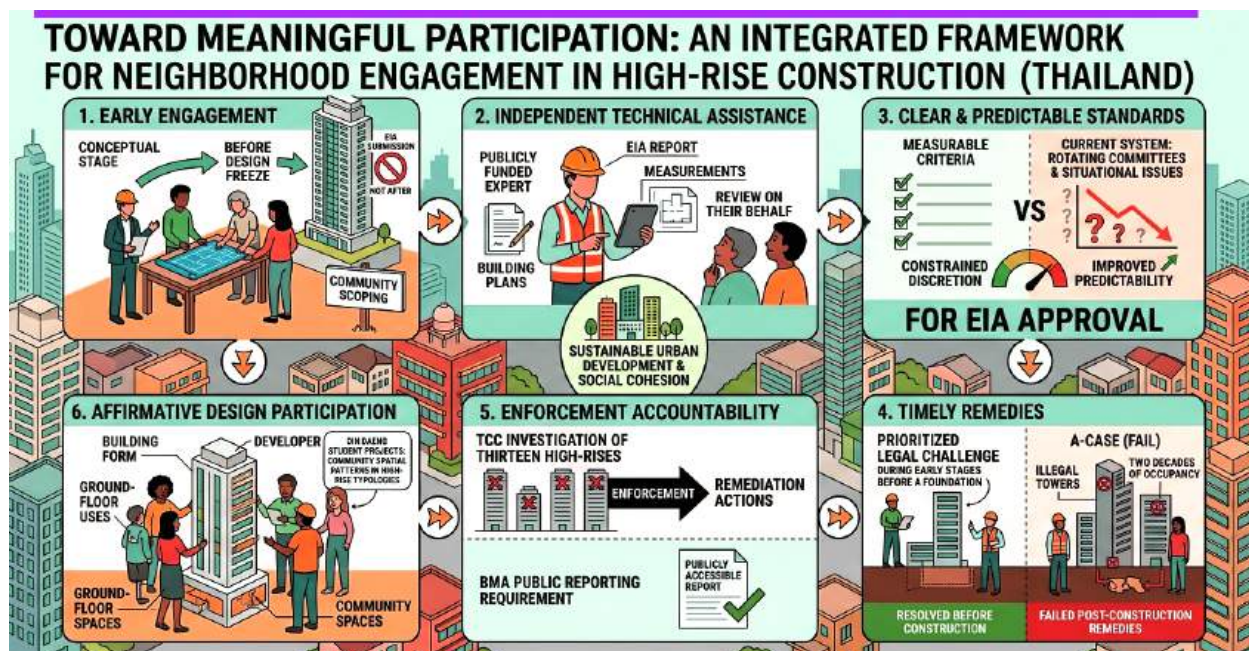


Figure 1: A framework for neighborhood engagement in high-rise construction for Thailand,

#1: Early Engagement. Participation must occur before design freeze, not after EIA submission. Developers should be required to conduct community scoping meetings at the conceptual stage.

#2: Independent Technical Assistance. Communities should have access to publicly funded technical experts who can review EIA reports, measurements, and building plans on their behalf.

#3: Clear and Predictable Standards. Regulatory discretion should be constrained by clear, measurable criteria for EIA approval. The current system, in which developers report "new issues that are situational or unique" raised by rotating committees, undermines both developer predictability and community confidence.

#4: Timely Remedies. Legal challenges should be resolved before construction, not years after occupancy. The A-case, in which residents endured two decades of illegal towers, illustrates the failure of post-construction remedies.

#5: Enforcement Accountability. When violations are documented—as in the TCC investigation of thirteen high-rises—enforcement must follow. The BMA should be required to report publicly on remediation actions.

#6: Affirmative Design Participation. Beyond oppositional modes, developers should be encouraged (or required) to engage communities in design processes that shape building form, ground-floor uses, and community spaces. The Din Daeng student projects demonstrate what is possible when community spatial patterns are projected into high-rise typologies. (Rujiravanich, 2021; Bupphaves, 2021).

## 7 Conclusion

The analysis of neighborhood participation in high-rise construction in Thailand highlights a critical juncture between market-driven vertical urbanization and the democratic rights of local communities. While Thailand's legal and administrative structures—principally the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) framework—formally mandate public consultation, their current execution often reduces community engagement to a tokenistic, late-stage formality. This structural deficiency routinely results in profound urban friction, exacerbating spatial inequality, straining local infrastructure, and leaving communities to navigate protracted, post-construction legal battles that offer little timely remedy.

To transition from mere compliance to meaningful engagement, Thailand's urban planning paradigm must adopt a proactive, integrated framework. This shift requires institutionalizing early-stage engagement before architectural plans are finalized, providing communities with independent technical assistance, and establishing predictable, measurable metrics for EIA approvals. Furthermore, reinforcing enforcement accountability through bodies like the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA) and embracing collaborative practices—such as affirmative design participation—can transform community members from passive observers into active stakeholders. Ultimately, integrating robust neighborhood participation into high-rise development is not an obstacle to progress; rather, it is an essential mechanism for cultivating equitable, resilient, and socially cohesive Thai metropolises.

This paper has examined neighborhood participation in high-rise construction across Thailand through the lens of legal challenges, procedural engagement, consumer monitoring, and affirmative design. The evidence reveals a system in which meaningful community influence is possible but rare, typically requiring sustained legal mobilization over many years, and occurring only after construction has already commenced.

## 8 Availability of Data and Materials

All information is included in this article.

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