

Implementation of Law No. 38 of 2004 on Roads in Handling Damaged Roads in Serang District and the Responsiveness of the Department of Public Works and Spatial Planning of Serang City

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ABSTRACT

Law No. 38 of 2004 on Roads governs local government authority and responsibility in road administration, including the handling of damaged roads. In Serang District, road damage still occurs even though most city roads are in good condition, requiring a prompt response from the Department of Public Works and Spatial Planning (DPUPR) of Serang City.

This study aims to analyze the implementation of Law No. 38 of 2004 in handling damaged roads in Serang District, to identify its supporting and hindering factors, and to examine the responsiveness of DPUPR Serang City in addressing public complaints.

The study employed a qualitative approach using the case study method. Key and supporting informants were selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation, analyzed through data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing, and validated through source triangulation, method triangulation, and member checking.

Using the Van Meter and Van Horn implementation model, the results show that the implementation of Law No. 38 of 2004 has been carried out but is not yet optimal: policy standards and objectives are clear but constrained by budget limitations; technical resources are adequate, yet supporting facilities such as drainage and street lighting remain limited; the organizational structure is in place, though its execution in the field is not fully consistent; internal communication runs well, while communication with the public remains reactive; and the implementers' disposition is positive but its effectiveness is limited by resource constraints. DPUPR's responsiveness to public complaints tends to be reactive and uneven, as reports that go viral on social media are generally followed up faster than those submitted through formal channels.

It can be concluded that the implementation of the damaged-road-handling policy in Serang District has not run optimally due to budget constraints and a still-reactive response pattern, despite being supported by clear authority distribution and the commitment of the implementing officials.

Keywords: Policy Implementation, Damaged Roads, Responsiveness, Van Meter and Van Horn, Public Administration

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INTRODUCTION

Road infrastructure development is a critical part of national development, since the road network serves as a public facility that supports the smooth movement of people, goods, and services and thereby drives socio-economic activity in a region. Indonesia's road network currently reaches 527,063 km, of which regional roads (provincial and district/city roads) account for 91 percent of the total network. Road infrastructure development must be aligned with the National Long-Term Development Plan (RPJPN) 2005, although disparities between urban and rural infrastructure remain

a persistent challenge, so the government continues to pursue equitable development through regional road improvement programs, village road construction, and strengthened inter-regional connectivity.

Under Law Number 38 of 2004 concerning Roads, roads are affirmed as a fundamental transportation infrastructure that plays an important role in national life, in strengthening unity, and in advancing public welfare, while also supporting equitable development, economic growth, and social justice. The law further sets out the authority of district and city governments in road administration: district governments are responsible for district and village roads, city governments for city roads, and both are responsible for the regulation, development, construction, and supervision of the roads under their authority, while unimplemented authority may be handed over to the provincial government. Law Number 2 of 2022 similarly assigns village governments authority over the construction and supervision of village roads.

In Banten Province, of which Serang City is the capital, the provincial government manages 762.02 km of road across 77 segments spread across its districts and cities. Within Serang City itself, official data indicate that roads in good or moderate condition account for approximately 83 percent of the roughly 212 km of city roads, with the remaining 17 percent classified as damaged. Data on the condition of Serang City roads for 2019–2023 show that roads in good condition increased from 136.49 km in 2019 to a peak of 198.95 km in 2022 before declining to 196.56 km in 2023, while roads in moderate condition rose sharply from 63.19 km in 2019–2021 to 160.67 km in 2023, and damaged roads increased to 42.15 km in 2023, even as severely damaged roads were reduced to 10.07 km. This pattern indicates that although overall conditions have improved, the length of road classified as moderate and damaged continues to require close attention from the Department of Public Works and Spatial Planning (DPUPR) of Serang City, which is responsible for maintaining and improving the quality of the city's road infrastructure.

Serang District, covering an area of 25.88 km² and comprising eleven urban villages (Serang, Cipare, Sumurpecung, Cimuncang, Kota Baru, Lontar Baru, Kagungan, Lopang, Unyur, Kaligandu, and Terondol), functions as the center of government, trade, and public services in Serang City and therefore experiences a high level of mobility. Although most main roads in the district have improved and DPUPR Serang City continues to carry out road maintenance, concrete resurfacing, and drainage repair, several locations remain a recurring source of public complaint, including the road from Trondol toward Sawah Luhur, the area around Pasar Rau in Cimuncang, and connecting roads in Sumur Pecung, Cipare, and Kaligandu, where potholes, uneven asphalt surfaces, and standing water after rain are commonly found. The prolonged damage around Pasar Rau, in particular, has repeatedly disrupted loading and unloading activities and the distribution of goods, drawing public criticism that the local government has not given the issue adequate and timely attention, while the Kaligandu–Trondol tunnel corridor, heavily used by private vehicles, trucks, and school-age commuters, has likewise raised safety concerns.

Road damage of this kind is generally caused by a combination of substandard construction materials, vehicle loads exceeding capacity, unstable soil conditions, high rainfall, excavation for construction projects, and delays in repair and maintenance, and its consequences are felt directly by the community through traffic accidents, vehicle damage, disrupted economic activity, and constrained access to education, health, and government services. If the implementation of the damaged-road-handling policy in Serang District does not run optimally, the government's broader goal of improving the quality of public services will be difficult to achieve. This study therefore analyzes the implementation of Law Number 38 of 2004 in handling damaged roads in Serang District using the policy implementation model of Donald Van Meter and Carl Van Horn, which identifies six variables that jointly determine implementation success: policy standards and objectives, resources, the characteristics of the implementing organization, inter-organizational communication, the disposition of implementers, and the social, economic, and political environment. Based on this background, the study seeks to determine: (1) the implementation of Law Number 38 of 2004 in handling damaged roads in Serang District by DPUPR Serang City; (2) the supporting and hindering factors faced by DPUPR in handling damaged roads, in terms of coordination, resources, and working

systems; and (3) the responsiveness of DPUPR and its complaint-management system in handling damaged roads.

METHOD

Study participants

This study involved eleven informants selected using purposive sampling, divided into key informants, main informants, and additional informants. The key informants consisted of the Head of the Sub-Coordinator for Technical Planning and Evaluation of the Bina Marga Division and two road and bridge inspectors of DPUPR Serang City. The main informants consisted of two RT/RW heads (Kaligandu and Tegal), two road-user residents, a trader from Pasar Rau, and an online motorcycle-taxi (ojek) driver, representing the community directly affected by road conditions. The additional informants consisted of a journalist and an academic specializing in public and political policy, who provided an external perspective on the issue. Together, these informants represented the policy implementer, the affected community, and independent observers of the policy.

Study organization

The study was conducted at the Department of Public Works and Spatial Planning (DPUPR) of Serang City, located on Jl. Kolonel Tubagus Suwandi, Serang Urban Village, Serang District, and in Serang District itself as the locus of the damaged-road case, over a period of approximately three months from April to July 2026. DPUPR Serang City was selected because it holds the principal authority and responsibility for the construction and maintenance of city road infrastructure and is the agency directly implementing Law Number 38 of 2004 concerning Roads, while Serang District was selected as the center of government, trade, and public-service activity in which road damage continues to affect community mobility. This study used a qualitative method with a descriptive type and a case study approach. Data were collected through three techniques: direct observation of damaged-road conditions and DPUPR's handling process, in-depth semi-structured interviews with all informants, and documentation of activity reports, road-condition data, and related policy documents. Data sources consisted of primary data obtained directly from informants in the field and secondary data in the form of official reports, statistical data, and relevant regulations.

Statistical analysis

As this is a qualitative study, no statistical testing was applied. Data were analyzed using the interactive qualitative data analysis model of Miles and Huberman, comprising data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification, carried out continuously until the data reached saturation, with reference to the six variables of Van Meter and Van Horn's policy implementation model: policy standards and objectives, resources, the characteristics of the implementing organization, inter-organizational communication, the disposition of implementers, and the social, economic, and political environment. Data validity was strengthened through source triangulation, by comparing information from DPUPR Serang City as the policy implementer with information from affected residents, traders, and other community members; through method triangulation, by comparing the results of interviews, direct observation of damaged-road locations, and documentation such as photographs, government reports, and statistical data; and through member checking, by reconfirming interview results and findings with the informants to ensure that the data accurately reflected actual field conditions.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Policy Standards and Objectives

The findings show that DPUPR Serang City has a relatively clear policy standard through its T-1 planning system, in which the handling of damaged roads is planned one year ahead of implementation based on data on road conditions and levels of damage, with priorities determined according to the degree of damage and its impact on community social and economic activity so that lightly damaged roads receive routine maintenance while heavily damaged roads are prioritized for repair. The division of authority between national, provincial, and city roads further clarifies the

responsibility of each level of government. Directions from the Head of Department are communicated in a tiered manner through the Head of Division, the Head of Section, and finally the road inspectors in the field, so that each party generally understands its role in determining handling priorities. Nevertheless, because field conditions are dynamic, planned priorities must frequently be adjusted, and the community continues to report that repairs are often carried out only after damage has become severe, indicating that although the standards and objectives of the policy have been formulated clearly at the procedural level, the ultimate objective of consistently well-maintained and durable roads has not yet been fully achieved. This finding is consistent with Arifin and Fauzi (2023) in Langenharjo Village, Kendal Regency, who found that road infrastructure implementation was hampered by lengthy bureaucratic and administrative procedures, and with Ardani and Thamrin (2024) in Medan Marelan District, who found that recurring damage on the same roads in the same year reflected shortcomings in planning accuracy.

Resources

From the resource perspective, DPUPR Serang City has adequate technical personnel and basic equipment, supported by the Laboratory and Equipment Technical Implementation Unit (UPT), which also rents out equipment externally as a source of regional own-source revenue; when needed equipment is unavailable because it has been rented out, DPUPR resorts to renting equipment from outside parties to keep work on schedule. The most dominant constraint, however, is budget limitation: the volume of road repair needs exceeds available funding, forcing the department to apply a scale of priority and delay the handling of roads deemed less urgent. Supporting facilities such as drainage and street lighting remain inadequate in several locations, including Trondol, Kaligandu, and the Warung Jaud–Pagelaran road segment, which contributes to recurring road damage after rain and reduces safety for road users at night. The community acknowledges that completed repairs have improved daily mobility, but reports that the benefits are not yet evenly felt because several road segments remain in poor condition. This finding is in line with Hartono et al. (2025) at the Department of Public Works and Spatial Planning of Lebak Regency, who concluded that the main barriers to road development implementation lie in budget limitations, human resources, and bureaucratic flexibility, confirming that resources are the most critical variable determining the speed and quality of damaged-road handling in Serang District.

Characteristics of the Implementing Organization

DPUPR Serang City has a reasonably structured working mechanism, grouping road handling into three categories: routine maintenance for light-to-moderate damage, reconstruction for heavy damage (which accounts for roughly 70 percent of all handling activities), and new construction on segments without prior road infrastructure. Supervision runs through two parallel mechanisms, internal supervision by DPUPR for self-managed maintenance activities and supervision involving external consultants for reconstruction and construction activities, with final responsibility resting with the Commitment-Making Officer and DPUPR. A relatively open complaint-handling mechanism is also in place, in which every public report is received, recorded, and followed up with a field review. Even so, a gap remains between this well-organized administrative mechanism and the community's experience of actual repair work, since in many cases repairs are only genuinely carried out once damage has become quite severe. This pattern is consistent with the findings of Triyuanda and Nasution (2024) in Simpang Beringin, Hamparan Perak District, where the Department of Public Works and Spatial Planning of North Sumatra Province was found to be reasonably responsive in handling road repairs, yet the durability of the asphalt produced and the timeliness of the work were still considered inadequate.

Inter-organizational Communication

Internally, directions and instructions from leadership are conveyed in a tiered manner following the organizational structure, from the Head of Department through the Head of Division and Head of Section to the road inspectors who implement the work in the field, so that each party understands its duties in determining handling priorities. Externally, communication between DPUPR and the community runs through the formal tiered channel of RT, RW, urban village, and district government, alongside an increasingly dominant informal channel through social media and mass media, which the

community regards as more practical and more likely to draw a quick government response than the formal administrative route. This indicates that internal inter-organizational communication functions reasonably well structurally, while communication with the community, as the target group of the policy, remains largely reactive rather than proactive, consistent with Arifin and Fauzi (2023), who identified insufficient program socialization to the community as one cause of suboptimal infrastructure implementation.

Disposition of Implementers

DPUPR officials generally display a positive disposition toward the damaged-road-handling policy, reflected in the practice of determining repair locations not solely on the basis of the degree of damage but also by taking into account social, economic, and accessibility considerations, as well as in their commitment to recording and evaluating every public complaint even when immediate repair cannot be carried out. This positive disposition, however, has not consistently translated into rapid, tangible action that the community can feel directly, since implementation success depends not only on the attitude of implementers but also on the availability of resources and effective inter-agency coordination; without adequate resource support, a high level of commitment among officials alone remains insufficient to achieve the policy's objectives optimally.

Social, Economic, and Political Environment

As the center of government, trade, and public services in Serang City, Serang District experiences a high level of community mobility, so that road conditions are closely tied to the smooth running of social and economic activity. Damaged roads have been shown to directly affect economic activity, particularly for traders in busy areas such as Pasar Rau, who report fewer customers when access is disrupted, and for workers who depend on daily mobility, such as online motorcycle-taxi drivers, who experience vehicle damage and longer working hours because of road damage; minimal street lighting at several damaged locations also raises the risk of accidents at night. Media coverage and public posts on social media function as an effective social-control mechanism that encourages a faster government response, since DPUPR tends to conduct field reviews more quickly when a road-damage issue draws public attention through the media than when it is reported only through ordinary administrative channels, while limited regional budget capacity remains the principal structural constraint on the extent to which the high demand for road infrastructure can be met. This finding parallels that of Pramudita et al. (2022) in Sidoarjo Regency, who concluded that the responsiveness of the public works department there was fairly responsive and solution-oriented, though the handling process still required considerable time because it had to pass through survey, planning, and implementation stages dependent on available resources.

Responsiveness of DPUPR Serang City

The community has several channels for reporting damaged roads: a formal tiered channel through RT, RW, the urban village, and the district before reports reach DPUPR, and an informal channel through social media and mass-media coverage. Most informants, both officials and community members, indicate that reports are generally acknowledged and not ignored, with officers recording each report, conducting a field review, and using it as an input for subsequent handling plans, showing that DPUPR has built a reasonably open complaint mechanism that does not close off public participation in monitoring road conditions. However, community satisfaction with the speed of handling remains limited, as repairs are often carried out only once damage has become quite severe rather than immediately after the initial report, creating an impression that the government “waits” for damage to worsen before acting, whereas the community expects earlier preventive measures such as temporary patching. Reports that are widely publicized through social media or news coverage tend to receive faster attention and follow-up than those submitted only through ordinary administrative channels, indicating that media functions not merely as an information channel but also as a form of social control that pressures the government to act more quickly. This pattern is consistent with Pramudita et al. (2022) in Sidoarjo Regency and with Triyuanda and Nasution (2024) in Hamparan Perak District, both of which found a generally responsive attitude among public works agencies accompanied by slow execution, suggesting that this combination is a common characteristic of public works bureaucracy across regions rather than a shortcoming unique to DPUPR Serang City. Overall,

DPUPR Serang City's responsiveness to public complaints about damaged roads can be considered fairly good in terms of receiving and recording reports, but it remains reactive and uneven in terms of the speed of field execution, so that the benefits of the service are not yet felt optimally by the entire community.

General Discussion

Taken together, the implementation of Law Number 38 of 2004 in handling damaged roads in Serang District by DPUPR Serang City has proceeded on the basis of a relatively sound planning system, organizational structure, and internal communication, but the ultimate outcome of consistently well-maintained and durable roads remains constrained by limited resources, particularly budget, equipment, and supporting facilities such as drainage and street lighting. Supporting factors are found mainly in the areas of planning, organizational structure, and openness of communication, including the T-1 planning system, the clear division of authority among national, provincial, and city roads, the availability of technical personnel and basic equipment through the Laboratory and Equipment UPT, structured internal communication, officials' commitment to following up on public complaints, and the growing use of social media to speed the flow of information between government and the public. Hindering factors, by contrast, consistently center on budget limitations, alongside the dual function of UPT equipment that is also rented out for regional revenue, inadequate drainage and street lighting, limited proactive socialization of official reporting mechanisms, and a continuing dependence on media attention to accelerate handling. This is consistent with Van Meter and Van Horn's proposition that implementation success depends on the integrated functioning of all variables rather than on any single indicator, and it reinforces prior findings from Kendal Regency, Medan Marelan District, Lebak Regency, Sidoarjo Regency, and Hamparan Perak District showing that limited budgets and reactive, media-dependent response patterns are common characteristics of road-infrastructure policy implementation across Indonesian localities, and not a constraint unique to Serang City.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that the implementation of Law Number 38 of 2004 concerning Roads in handling damaged roads in Serang District by DPUPR Serang City has generally been carried out, but has not yet achieved optimal results. In terms of policy standards and objectives, the T-1 planning mechanism and the division of road authority have been applied clearly, but the objective of achieving consistently proper and durable roads has not been fully realized due to budget limitations. In terms of resources, technical personnel have adequate competence, but budgetary support, equipment, drainage, and street lighting remain limited. The characteristics of the implementing organization are supported by a structured working mechanism, although field implementation is not always fully aligned with established procedures. Internal inter-organizational communication runs well, while communication with the community remains largely reactive, and the disposition of implementers shows positive commitment whose effectiveness is nonetheless constrained by limited resources. In terms of supporting and hindering factors, the implementation of the policy is supported mainly by clear planning, a defined division of authority, structured internal communication, and officials' commitment to following up on complaints, while it is hindered mainly by limited regional budget, the dual function of shared equipment, inadequate drainage and lighting, and insufficient proactive public socialization. In terms of responsiveness, DPUPR Serang City performs fairly well in receiving and recording public complaints regarding damaged roads, but its responsiveness remains reactive and uneven in terms of execution speed, since repairs are generally carried out only after damage becomes severe, and reports publicized through social media or the news tend to receive faster follow-up than those submitted solely through formal administrative channels. Overall, the effectiveness of this policy's implementation would be further strengthened by increased budget allocation, improved quality and durability of repairs, a more optimized official complaint system with clear response-time standards, and broader public socialization of reporting mechanisms.

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