

ORIGINAL RESEARCH ARTICLE

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Research on Urban Renewal Development and Urban Renewal Management

Xiu-Zhi Li^{1,*}, Yun Xu²

¹ Shandong Provincial Construction Planning and Design Institute Co., Ltd., Jinan, Shandong, 250000, China

² Rizhao Oriental Sun City Culture and Tourism Research Institute Co., Ltd., Rizhao, Shandong, 276800, China

***Correspondence to:** Xiu-Zhi Li, Shandong Provincial Construction Planning and Design Institute Co., Ltd., Jinan, Shandong, 250000, China, Email: 187340729@qq.com

Abstract: Urban renewal has become a core approach for spatial optimization and functional restructuring in the era of stock-oriented urban development. It encompasses multiple dimensions, including physical space transformation, improvement of public services, and adjustment of social structures. Focusing on the intrinsic logic and driving factors of urban renewal, this paper reviews the current development trends and the structural contradictions existing in spatial and functional dimensions. It further constructs a management and operational system covering planning, implementation, and maintenance stages, and proposes optimization strategies from four aspects: spatial planning improvement, enhancement of whole-process management, multi-stakeholder collaborative governance, and long-term operational mechanisms. The study aims to provide a systematic framework for promoting the high-quality advancement of urban renewal.

Keywords: Urban renewal; Stock optimization; Management system; Collaborative governance; Long-term operation

Introduction

With the urbanization process entering the stage of stock-oriented development, the focus of urban construction has gradually shifted from incremental expansion to the refinement and value enhancement of existing urban spaces. Problems accumulated during long-term urban operation, such as inefficient land use, lagging functions, and insufficient supporting facilities, have become increasingly prominent. Urban renewal has therefore emerged as a key instrument for resolving endogenous urban contradictions and revitalizing existing resources. However, the renewal process

involves intertwined stakeholder interests and complex management procedures. How to achieve refined governance through spatial restructuring and functional upgrading has become a critical issue that requires continuous attention in the pursuit of sustainable urban development.

1. Fundamental Framework and Development Logic of Urban Renewal

1.1 Internal Connotations and Main Characteristics of Urban Renewal

Urban renewal is a systematic development activity aimed at continuously optimizing urban space



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and social resources. Based on the existing built environment, it promotes quality improvement and functional restructuring, distinguishing itself from large-scale demolition and reconstruction-oriented urban development models ^[1]. This development approach focuses on unlocking the value of existing urban spaces by reorganizing inefficient spatial resources, optimizing functional and industrial layouts, and improving living environments, thereby steadily enhancing the quality of urban development. Urban renewal encompasses multiple dimensions, including physical space transformation, public service improvement, ecological environment enhancement, and social structure adjustment, reflecting its comprehensive and integrated nature.

1.2 Evolutionary Process and Development Patterns of Urban Renewal

The development of urban renewal in China has closely followed the overall trajectory of urbanization and has undergone phased transformations alongside shifts in urban development priorities. In the early stages, urban construction primarily focused on expanding new urban spaces, while renewal activities mainly involved the renovation of aging buildings and the upgrading of basic infrastructure to address deficiencies in urban facilities and services. As urbanization entered the era of stock-oriented development, urban renewal gradually evolved toward comprehensive functional upgrading, placing greater emphasis on spatial quality enhancement, industrial restructuring, and the preservation of cultural and historical characteristics. Over time, urban renewal has demonstrated a clear transition from superficial physical improvements to deeper governance-oriented interventions, and from single-dimensional spatial transformation to multi-system upgrading, aligning with broader economic and social transformation processes.

1.3 The Intrinsic Relationship Between Urban Renewal and Urban Development

Urban renewal serves as a fundamental vehicle for sustaining long-term urban development and a critical pathway for urban self-adjustment and revitalization. During the course of urban growth, structural problems such as inefficient spatial utilization, outdated industrial functions, and inadequate supporting facilities gradually emerge. Urban renewal effectively addresses

these endogenous challenges and helps overcome development bottlenecks that arise during the later stages of urbanization. High-quality renewal initiatives can activate the value of existing urban spaces, promote industrial upgrading and resource agglomeration, and enhance the comprehensive carrying capacity of cities. Conversely, the overall level of urban development also constrains the scope and standards of renewal activities. Differences in economic foundations, social demands, and resource endowments lead to diverse renewal objectives and implementation pathways across regions.

1.4 Analysis of the Driving Factors Behind Urban Renewal

The implementation and advancement of urban renewal are supported by multiple objective factors. The overall transition of urbanization constitutes the fundamental driving force, as the demand for the efficient utilization of existing urban spaces has gradually replaced the pursuit of spatial expansion and become the primary orientation of urban development. Meanwhile, residents' increasing expectations for a higher quality of life have continuously promoted improvements in public services, residential environments, and ecological spaces, providing strong social and livelihood-driven momentum for urban renewal initiatives.

2. Current Development Status and Challenges of Urban Renewal

2.1 Current Development Trends in Urban Renewal

Urban renewal in China has entered a new stage characterized by the quality enhancement of existing urban assets. The focus of urban development has shifted away from the traditional model of large-scale expansion toward the refinement and value enhancement of existing urban spaces. Local governments have gradually abandoned extensive and demolition-oriented redevelopment approaches, placing greater emphasis on the coordinated improvement of urban cultural heritage, ecological environments, and public services ^[2]. Industry-wide construction standards continue to improve, while governance concepts have been deeply integrated throughout the entire renewal process, facilitating the transition toward more refined, systematic, and sustainable urban renewal practices. Furthermore, cities have explored differentiated

development strategies based on their unique urban characteristics, enabling renewal initiatives to better align with regional development advantages and the practical needs of local residents.

2.2 Common Contradictions in the Urban Spatial Renewal Process

The implementation of urban spatial renewal often generates multiple development-related conflicts. One of the most prominent challenges is achieving a balance between revitalizing existing resources and preserving urban character. During the redevelopment of older urban districts, the demand for modern spatial construction frequently conflicts with the need to retain historical urban fabric. Excessive redevelopment may undermine the distinctive spatial characteristics accumulated over time, whereas overly conservative approaches may fail to revitalize inefficient and underutilized spaces. Furthermore, the scarcity of land resources makes it difficult to simultaneously accommodate spatial expansion and functional optimization. Limited urban land cannot fully satisfy diverse development demands, including the expansion of public spaces and the upgrading of industrial facilities. In addition, short-term construction achievements are often disconnected from long-term operation and maintenance objectives. Some renewal projects focus primarily on superficial environmental improvements while neglecting the sustainable management and operation of renewed spaces.

2.3 Major Issues in the Advancement of Urban Functional Renewal

The process of upgrading urban functional systems still faces several deficiencies that require further improvement. Insufficient coordination among functional sectors has resulted in fragmentation between residential, industrial, and public service developments, hindering the formation of an integrated and synergistic urban structure. In some areas, functional renewal exhibits a tendency toward homogenization, with standardized development models being replicated without adequate consideration of local industrial characteristics and residents' needs, thereby leading to inefficient use of spatial resources. Moreover, the upgrading of public service functions has often lagged behind rising expectations for living quality. Improvements in educational, medical,

recreational, and other supporting facilities have generally progressed more slowly than physical spatial renewal, making it difficult to meet the demands of modern urban lifestyles. Industrial transformation has also proceeded at a relatively slow pace, with insufficient efforts devoted to adapting older urban spaces to the requirements of emerging industries.

2.4 Constraints on the Adaptive Development of Urban Renewal

Various practical conditions impose constraints on the adaptive development of urban renewal. First, financing mechanisms remain inadequate, and long-term funding systems have yet to be fully established, limiting the capacity to support large-scale and continuous renewal projects. Second, a gap persists between grassroots governance capabilities and the requirements of modern urban renewal. The limited adoption of refined governance approaches negatively affects the quality of project implementation. Third, the ownership structures of existing urban spaces are often complex, making stakeholder coordination difficult and increasing obstacles to the implementation of renewal plans. Finally, industry regulations and standards are still evolving. In some specialized areas, mature construction standards and governance frameworks remain absent, thereby restricting the overall progress of high-quality and adaptive urban renewal development.

3. Urban Renewal Management System and Operational Mechanisms

3.1 Overall Framework of Urban Renewal Management

Urban renewal management is implemented through a hierarchical and multi-dimensional institutional framework to ensure the effective delivery of all tasks. The construction of this framework is centered on the overall urban development planning and coordinates the functional responsibilities and boundaries of governance actors at different levels. The governance structure is built on a combination of vertical hierarchical transmission and horizontal functional coordination, enabling the integrated deployment and tiered implementation of renewal initiatives across the entire urban area^[3]. Vertically, administrative tasks are transmitted step by step through different levels of governmental units, with clearly defined responsibilities

assigned to each level to ensure orderly implementation of regulatory and development tasks. Horizontally, multiple functional domains—including planning, construction, and operation and maintenance—are integrated to break down institutional barriers between management sectors, thereby forming a modern governance framework characterized by territorial coordination and clearly defined responsibilities.

3.2 Management Content Across the Full Lifecycle of Urban Renewal

Urban renewal governance covers the entire project lifecycle, with specific management priorities established at each stage. In the project initiation stage, existing spatial resources within the target area are systematically assessed, urban development needs are analyzed, and scientifically grounded planning schemes are formulated based on regional development conditions. This stage defines the core directions of spatial transformation, functional upgrading, and environmental improvement. During the implementation stage, construction standards are strictly regulated, with close control over construction quality and resource input to minimize inefficient development and resource waste. After project completion, comprehensive inspection and evaluation are conducted to assess renewal outcomes against urban development goals and public welfare requirements. At the same time, long-term management mechanisms are established to ensure the sustained effectiveness and stability of renewal achievements.

3.3 Operational Model of Urban Renewal Management

At the current stage, urban renewal management has formed a diversified and multi-level governance model that moves beyond the traditional single administrative control approach. Governmental actors play a central coordinating role, responsible for policy formulation, planning guidance, and industry supervision, thereby ensuring the overall strategic direction of urban renewal development. Market actors participate in project investment, construction, renovation, and spatial operation. Leveraging professional operational capabilities, they enhance the efficiency of existing urban resource utilization. Social actors contribute through demand feedback and process supervision, providing essential support to ensure that urban

renewal initiatives better align with public needs and societal expectations.

3.4 Analysis of Shortcomings in Urban Renewal Management

The existing urban renewal management system still exhibits several deficiencies in practical implementation that require further improvement. First, insufficient cross-sectoral coordination has led to gaps in the linkage between different functional domains, resulting in low efficiency in inter-departmental collaboration and overall project execution. Second, the multi-stakeholder coordination mechanism remains underdeveloped, with unclear delineation of rights and responsibilities among various participants, preventing the full realization of the potential value of both social and market actors. Third, deficiencies exist in the full-process governance system. Some stages lack sufficiently detailed regulatory provisions, and a common imbalance between construction-oriented implementation and long-term operational management is evident. Finally, the application of refined management tools remains inadequate. Traditional management approaches continue to dominate, while the adoption of digital and intelligent governance technologies is still limited, making it difficult to meet the requirements of high-quality urban renewal development.

4. High-Quality Development and Management Optimization Strategies for Urban Renewal

4.1 Optimization Pathways for Urban Spatial Planning in Urban Renewal

Optimization of urban spatial planning in urban renewal is grounded in the existing stock-based urban spatial structure and aims to reconstruct the spatial system through an integrated planning perspective. Planning formulation should move away from extensive redevelopment approaches and instead deeply explore the value and development potential of regional spatial resources. Based on long-term urban development objectives, it is necessary to coordinate the layout of industrial, residential, and public service spaces^[4]. Through the refinement of classification-based governance standards for stock spaces, differentiated planning guidance should be applied to inefficient and idle spaces, aging functional areas, and high-

quality preserved areas, thereby promoting the efficient activation of spatial resources. In addition, ecological space and construction space should be systematically integrated, embedding ecological restoration and environmental enhancement concepts throughout the planning process to improve the urban ecological structure and living environment layout. By optimizing spatial configurations in a refined manner, structural imbalances in urban space can be effectively alleviated, and urban spatial utilization can be transformed toward a more intensive, efficient, and distinctive development model.

4.2 Optimization of Full-Process Urban Renewal Management

Optimization of full-process urban renewal management focuses on the entire project lifecycle and aims to improve regulatory standards and governance rules at each stage, thereby addressing the shortcomings of traditional management systems. In the early planning stage, field investigations and demand analysis should be strengthened, approval procedures should be refined, and the alignment between planning schemes and regional development needs should be enhanced to reduce irrational redevelopment activities. During the implementation stage, a more robust system for quality control and resource management should be established, construction standards should be refined, and dynamic supervision mechanisms should be improved to steadily enhance project quality. In the project completion stage, acceptance and evaluation standards should be optimized by incorporating both public welfare requirements and urban development benchmarks, thereby preventing superficial or appearance-oriented redevelopment outcomes. In the operation and maintenance stage, a normalized management mechanism should be established, operational standards for urban spaces should be refined, and long-term maintenance responsibilities should be clearly assigned, ensuring the sustained effectiveness and stability of urban renewal achievements.

4.3 Construction of a Multi-Stakeholder Collaborative Governance Model for Urban Renewal

The construction of a multi-stakeholder collaborative governance model aims to break through the limitations of single-actor governance and establish

a modern governance system characterized by multi-actor coordination. It is necessary to clearly define the respective responsibilities and rights of different governance actors, refine the coordination functions of governmental bodies, the operational functions of market entities, and the supervisory functions of social actors, thereby clarifying their working boundaries and collaboration logic. A normalized communication and coordination mechanism should be improved to remove institutional barriers among different actors and promote information exchange and resource sharing across governance entities. Market forces should be guided to deeply participate in core activities such as spatial operation and industrial upgrading, so as to activate the economic value and development vitality of existing urban spaces. In addition, channels for social participation in governance should be expanded to incorporate reasonable demands from grassroots communities, ensuring that urban renewal governance better reflects the real needs of public livelihood development.

4.4 Pathways for Enhancing Long-Term Operational Management of Urban Renewal

Improving long-term operational management focuses on sustaining renewal outcomes and continuously releasing urban vitality, while establishing an operation and maintenance system adapted to stock-based urban development. The application of digital governance tools should be promoted, and intelligent management technologies should be utilized to improve spatial operation and maintenance monitoring systems, thereby enhancing the precision and efficiency of urban space management. A long-term funding guarantee mechanism should be improved by broadening financing channels and stabilizing funding sources for daily maintenance, infrastructure repair, and industrial upgrading within urban spaces. Furthermore, dynamic operational plans should be formulated in accordance with regional development characteristics, allowing operational models to be continuously adjusted based on urban development trends and changing public needs, thereby ensuring adaptability to evolving urban contexts.

Conclusion

Urban renewal is a systematic project that spans the entire lifecycle of planning, construction, and operation

and maintenance. Spatial restructuring and functional upgrading must be coordinated through a scientifically designed management system. From the precise identification of stock resources to the collaborative governance of multiple stakeholders, and from the refinement of full-process supervision to the continuous improvement of long-term operational mechanisms, all components are interdependent and indispensable. Continuous optimization of management models, activation of market and social participation, and the deep integration of digital governance technologies are essential to enable urban renewal to evolve from stage-based redevelopment to continuous quality improvement, thereby supporting high-quality urban development.

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