

# Innovation and Practical Exploration of the Management Model of the Urban Renewal Bureau



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**Abstract:** As China's urbanisation process enters the stock development stage, urban renewal has become an important issue in promoting urban development. This paper discusses the innovation and practice path of the management mode of Urban Renewal Bureau, including the establishment of a unified and coordinated management mechanism, the introduction of market-based operation, the optimisation of the fund management system, the promotion of the construction of smart and green cities, and the enhancement of multi-participation and public supervision. Through these innovations, the Urban Renewal Authority (URA) can effectively enhance the efficiency of project implementation, integrate resources from multiple parties, and ensure the smooth promotion and sustainable development of urban renewal projects. The innovation in management mode not only helps to resolve bottlenecks in traditional urban management, but also lays the foundation for future high-quality urban development. Looking ahead, as more cities participate in the process of urban renewal, further optimisation of the management model will provide strong support for the long-term development of cities.

**Keywords:** urban renewal bureau; management mode innovation; smart city; green city; public supervision

## Introduction

In 2024, a number of cities across China changed the name of "Housing and Urban-Rural Development Bureau" to "Housing and Urban Renewal Bureau", which marks a new stage of development of urban construction in China. Urban renewal has become one of the core tasks of urban development, shifting from incremental construction to stock optimisation. The establishment of the Urban Renewal Bureau is not only a change of function, but also a revolution in the concept of urban construction, focusing on the transformation of old districts, infrastructure upgrading, and optimisation of urban public space, in order to promote the transformation of the city from "whether it is there or not" to "whether it is good or not". In this context, it is particularly important to explore the innovation and practice of the management mode of URA. With the increasing complexity of urban functions and the aging of infrastructure, traditional management methods can no longer meet the current needs. As urban renewal involves multiple parties, how to improve work efficiency and achieve co-ordination

through innovative management mode to ensure the efficient promotion of projects and rational allocation of resources has become a key issue to be solved. Therefore, in-depth research and practice of management mode innovation can help to better promote the high-quality development of the city and improve the quality of life of the residents.

## 1. Functions and Importance of the Urban Renewal Authority

### 1.1. Functions of the urban renewal authority

The establishment of URA is not only a name change, but also a major adjustment and expansion of its functions. Compared with the original URA, the Urban Renewal Authority has assumed more responsibilities related to urban renewal, covering housing construction management, housing security, real estate market management and municipal infrastructure construction. Its core task is to co-ordinate the implementation of various urban renewal projects to meet the challenges of urban ageing, insufficient infrastructure, and improvement of the living environment, and to promote the overall upgrading of cities. 2023 China's urban renewal projects have reached 66,000, with a total investment of RMB 2.6 trillion, including the renovation of old urban districts, the addition of new car parking

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spaces, the renovation of gas pipelines, and the optimisation of the construction of urban public space. For example, 53,000 new projects have been started to renovate old districts involving 22 million residents, 36,000 lifts have been added, more than 4,100 pocket parks have been built, and 850,000 additional parking spaces have been installed. These specific tasks show that the functions of the Urban Renewal Bureau are no longer limited to traditional housing management, but are extended to a wider range of municipal infrastructure and public services, focusing on solving the “pain points” and “difficulties” of urban development. Through the restructuring of its functions, URA has played an indispensable role in improving the quality of life of residents, promoting green development of the city and optimising public space, thus contributing to the smooth transformation of the city from incremental development to stock renewal.

### **1.2. Importance of urban renewal authority**

The establishment of the Urban Renewal Bureau is of great strategic significance, marking the key transition period of China's urban development from the previous large-scale incremental construction to the stock enhancement and transformation. With the acceleration of urbanisation, problems such as ageing urban infrastructure, insufficient public services and irrational use of space have gradually emerged, and need to be addressed through systematic urban renewal. URA was established precisely to address these problems and to ensure that the city functions in a way that safeguards people's livelihood and achieves sustainable development. The functions of URA integrate the relevant responsibilities of the former Housing and Urban-Rural Development Bureau, the Housing Authority, and the Urban and Rural Development Bureau, and unify and coordinate the complex work of renovating old districts, upgrading infrastructure, and optimising the public space in the city, which makes the allocation of resources more efficient. At the same time, URA has an important role to play in promoting green and low-carbon urban development and enhancing urban resilience. By accelerating the renovation of old cities and upgrading infrastructure, Urban Renewal Bureaus promote the rational use of urban space, which helps cities to cope with environmental challenges and enhance urban governance capacity (Wang & Chen, 2024). Therefore, the establishment of urban renewal bureaus is not only a practical need for urban

development, but also a strategic initiative for future high-quality urban development.

## **2. The Necessity of Innovation in the Management Mode of the Urban Renewal Authority**

### **2.1. Adapting to the needs of the stock development stage**

As China's urbanisation process has entered the stock development stage, urban renewal has become a core task to promote the upgrading of urban functions and improve people's livelihood. Although the traditional mode of large-scale incremental development has promoted rapid urban expansion over the past decades, it has also brought about problems such as aging infrastructure, waste of resources, and irrational use of space. As land resources become increasingly tight, urban development can no longer continue to rely on new construction, but needs to be upgraded by upgrading the existing urban stock (Gao, et al., 2024). Therefore, the innovation of the management mode of URA is crucial to adapt to this stage of development. Innovative management models can improve the efficiency of stock space utilisation, optimise the urban spatial structure, and promote the transformation of old districts, the upgrading of public service facilities and the improvement of infrastructure. This not only helps to improve the livability of cities, but also reduces the environmental and social costs of blind expansion. At the same time, innovation in management mode can also better integrate resources, avoid duplication of construction and waste of resources, and promote the city's progress towards green, low-carbon and sustainable development. Through management innovation, the URA can promote the implementation of urban renewal projects more efficiently and ensure the high-quality development of the city in the stock phase.

### **2.2. Coping with the complexity of multi-party participation**

Urban renewal involves the participation of multiple parties, including the government, enterprises, residents, social capital, etc. It covers a wide range of areas, including planning, construction, transport, environmental protection and other aspects. Therefore, the management mode of URA has to be innovative to cope with this complex multi-agency participation situation. The traditional management mode is often fragmented, with unclear responsibilities and cross-powers of various

departments, leading to problems such as waste of resources, poor communication, and inefficiency (He & Xiao, 2024). Through an innovative management model, URA can clarify the division of responsibilities among all parties in the system, form an efficient cooperation mechanism, and ensure the effective participation and coordination and cooperation of different subjects in urban renewal. This innovation not only improves the efficiency of project promotion, but also promotes positive interaction between the government, enterprises and residents. For example, through reasonable policy guidance and coordination of interests, it can enhance residents' sense of identity and participation in urban renewal projects and reduce resistance in the process of project promotion. At the same time, the introduction of market-based operation can also effectively attract social capital and make up for the problem of insufficient government funding, thus promoting the smooth implementation of urban renewal projects and ensuring the continuous optimisation and enhancement of urban functions.

### **2.3. Enhancing capital management and efficiency**

Urban renewal projects usually involve huge capital investment, such as the 66,000 urban renewal projects to be implemented in China in 2023 with a total investment of 2.6 trillion yuan. Therefore, enhancing the efficiency of fund management and use is one of the keys to the innovation of the management mode of urban renewal bureaus. The traditional way of fund management often suffers from uneven distribution of funds, non-transparent use and inefficiency, leading to slow project promotion or waste of resources. For this reason, an innovative management mode can achieve a refined management of funds by establishing a standardised system for the use of funds to ensure that every fund is used where it is most needed. Through the innovation of fund management, URA can set up a special pool of funds to ensure that the funds are earmarked for specific purposes and avoid misappropriation or waste. In addition, the innovative model can also introduce a market-oriented operation mechanism to attract extensive participation of social capital and reduce the financial pressure on the government. For example, through the mode of cooperation between the government and enterprises, social resources can be fully utilised to effectively share the financial burden of renewal projects. At the same time, improving the efficiency of fund management can also accelerate the implementation

process of the project, ensure that the urban renewal project is completed on time and with quality, and further promote the sustainable development and optimisation of the city (Zheng, et al., 2024).

## **3. Innovative and Practical Paths for the Management Mode of the Urban Renewal Authority**

### **3.1. Establishment of a unified and coordinated management mechanism**

Establishing a unified and coordinated management mechanism is a key step for urban renewal bureaus to promote the efficient implementation of urban renewal projects. Urban renewal bureaus should coordinate the functions of all relevant departments, centralise and integrate the responsibilities of urban planning, housing construction and municipal infrastructure, and form a coordinated and unified management structure (Zou, 2024). This not only avoids the phenomenon of cross-functions, unclear powers and responsibilities of multiple departments in the traditional management mode, but also ensures the rational allocation and effective use of resources. Clarifying the division of responsibilities of each department is also an important part of the mechanism. Through the formulation of a clear workflow and monitoring mechanism, we can ensure that all departments will take forward their work in an orderly manner in accordance with their respective responsibilities, so as to minimise shirking of responsibilities and shirking of duties.

To achieve this mechanism, URA may set up a special co-ordination team to co-ordinate the work progress of various departments and ensure close co-operation in planning, construction and environmental protection. For example, when planning urban roads, bridges, water supply and drainage systems, various departments should unify their standards to avoid duplication of construction and waste of resources. Meanwhile, the establishment of an information-sharing platform is also an effective means to promote efficient communication and decision-making among departments. Through data sharing and information disclosure, the URA can better grasp the progress and resource requirements of each project and make timely adjustments and optimisation. In this way, the URA can effectively dispatch resources and optimise the project flow under the overall framework to ensure that urban renewal projects can be completed

on time and with high quality.

### **3.2. Introducing market-based operation mechanism**

Introducing market-based operation mechanism is one of the important initiatives of the Urban Renewal Authority's innovative management mode. Projects such as new public parking spaces and new charging piles for new energy vehicles are suitable to be promoted through government-social capital cooperation to achieve a win-win situation in terms of social and economic benefits (Zhao & Wang, 2024). Promoting the cooperation between the government and social capital through the PPP mode can effectively attract social capital to participate in urban renewal projects and alleviate the government's financial pressure. In the specific implementation process, the Urban Renewal Bureau can promote the market-based operation mechanism through the following steps.

Firstly, the Urban Renewal Bureau should actively negotiate with social capital for co-operation, and formulate clear co-operation policies and incentive mechanisms to ensure that social capital has sufficient incentive to participate. For example, the government can attract enterprises to participate in projects such as renovation of old districts and infrastructure upgrading by providing policy support, land concessions and tax breaks. At the same time, it should reasonably assess the investment return of the project to ensure that the project can bring sustainable economic benefits to enterprises and enhance the investment confidence of social capital. Secondly, the introduction of the PPP model requires the establishment of a standardised contract management system to ensure that the cooperation between the government and enterprises is fair and transparent. In the process of cooperation, the rights and responsibilities of both parties should be clearly stipulated in the contract, including capital investment, project promotion, revenue distribution, risk sharing, etc., to avoid unnecessary disputes and friction in future cooperation. Once again, the government can stimulate market vitality with the help of market-based operation mechanism to promote the rapid landing of the project. Through public tendering and other means, it can attract qualified enterprises to compete for participation and ensure the quality and progress of the project. Finally, the Urban Renewal Bureau needs to encourage enterprises to introduce innovative technologies and management methods to improve the overall

efficiency and sustainable development of the project and achieve long-term success of urban renewal.

### **3.3. Establishing an accurate fund management system**

Establishing a precise fund management system is the key to ensuring the smooth progress of urban renewal projects. Hangzhou 2024 released the Hangzhou Comprehensive Urban Renewal Action Programme (2023-2025), and such a clear fund management plan ensures the efficient implementation of all types of urban regeneration projects, and also enhances the sustainability of the projects. To achieve this, the Urban Renewal Bureau can learn from the Hangzhou experience. Firstly, set up a special pool of funds to ensure that funds are earmarked for specific purposes. For different project categories, such as the management of dangerous buildings, the transformation of old neighbourhoods, and the upgrading of public space, a clear funding budget is allocated, and the use of the funds is regularly reviewed. Through this classification management mode, it can ensure that the funds can be focused on the most urgent and important projects. Secondly, with the help of information technology management tools, a real-time monitoring system of funds is established. Through the digital management platform, URA can conduct real-time tracking and feedback on the use of funds for each project to ensure the transparency and efficient use of funds. This not only avoids misappropriation or waste of funds, but also finds and solves problems in the use of funds in a timely manner, ensuring that each urban renewal project is pushed forward according to plan (Yang, 2024). Again, the legal guarantee for the use of funds is strengthened. The Regulations on Urban Renewal in Hangzhou have been included in the legislative preparatory project, and in the future there will be a law to follow to ensure that the management of funds is standardised and transparent, providing a solid foundation for the sustainable development of the project.

### **3.4. Promoting smart city and green city construction**

Smart city and green city construction can not only enhance the modern management of cities, but also provide strong support for sustainable urban development. To achieve this goal, URA needs to start with both technology introduction and policy support. On the one hand, make full use of smart technologies to build smart city infrastructure. URA can promote the construction of a smart transport

system to optimise urban traffic flow, reduce congestion and improve accessibility through intelligent traffic signal systems and real-time monitoring. Meanwhile, intelligent monitoring equipment can also be widely used in water, electricity, gas and other infrastructures to monitor the operating status of equipment in real time, identify and solve potential problems in advance, and enhance the safety and efficiency of urban operations. On the other hand, green city construction requires the integration of low-carbon and environmental protection concepts into urban renewal projects. The Urban Renewal Bureau can promote green building standards, use environmentally friendly materials, and encourage the installation of energy-saving equipment in projects such as the renovation of old neighbourhoods and the management of dangerous buildings (Peng, 2024). At the same time, it promotes greening projects, such as the construction of pocket parks and urban greenways, to provide residents with more green leisure space and enhance the quality of the city's ecological environment.

### 3.5. Strengthening multi-principal participation and public supervision

Strengthening multi-stakeholder participation and public supervision is an important part of the Urban Renewal Authority's innovative management model to ensure that urban renewal projects are efficiently promoted in a transparent and fair environment. In Guangzhou's "Three Olds" renovation process, there were problems of "economic balancing accounts" led by enterprises, which led to irrational planning and excessive pressure on infrastructure. Therefore, URA should guide the participation of multiple parties to achieve a balance between overall planning and public demand. URA should widely invite enterprises, community residents, social organisations and other multi-party bodies to participate in the preliminary planning and implementation of projects. By setting up a multi-party consultation mechanism, it can ensure that the interests of all parties are reasonably balanced, especially in projects such as urban village renovation and renewal of old neighbourhoods, and that the views and needs of community residents are fully listened to, so as to enhance their sense of identity and support for the project. Urban renewal projects also need to introduce a public monitoring mechanism to ensure the transparency of urban renewal projects. This can be done by setting up an open platform for the project and regularly releasing

to the public information on the progress of the project, the use of funds, etc., so as to accept social supervision. At the same time, the public is encouraged to propose improvements and participate in decision-making through channels such as hotlines and feedback platforms. Through public participation and monitoring, not only can the transparency of the project be enhanced, but corruption and waste of resources can also be effectively prevented. In addition, during the planning process of a project, URA can involve more members of the public in the discussion of the project by organising hearings or community forums. Such a mechanism not only ensures that the projects are more in line with the actual needs, but also enhances the support and trust of all parties in the urban renewal work and effectively promotes the smooth implementation of the projects.

### Conclusion

The importance of the innovation of the management mode of URA for future urban development cannot be overstated. Through the optimisation of the management mechanism, the URA will not only be able to co-ordinate all kinds of resources more effectively, but also achieve higher efficiency and transparency in the implementation of projects, and promote the enhancement of urban functions and sustainable development. At present, as cities enter a phase of stock enhancement and structural optimisation, an innovative management model can ensure the smooth implementation of all kinds of regeneration projects, improve the living conditions of residents, enhance the quality of public space, and promote the construction of green and smart cities. In the future, as more cities join the process of urban renewal, the Urban Renewal Authority will also play a more important role in improving the competitiveness of cities, improving the urban environment and optimising the quality of life of residents, providing a solid guarantee for the realisation of high-quality urban development.

### Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest to this work.

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