

Towards All-Age-Friendly Cities: Objectives, Theoretical Foundations, and Planning Pathways

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Abstract

Building all-age-friendly cities is a crucial strategy for achieving the national goal of supporting Chinese modernization through high-quality population development. The concept connects life stages, age groups and intergenerational succession with the high-quality development of cities, and aims to provide appropriate environments and resources for the development of all members of society. Based on a systematic reflection on related research and practice in China and abroad, this paper argues that all-age-friendly city building should move beyond an approach focused mainly on vulnerable groups and become a universal agenda for shared development across all age groups. It proposes a goal system that enhances health and well-being across the whole life course, promotes equitable development for all groups and advances intergenerational continuity. Focusing on the intersection of physical space and social space, the paper develops theoretical and methodological support from the combined perspectives of the capacity approach and the opportunity approach. It then proposes planning pathways for all-age-friendly cities, including environmental adaptation, resource coordination and intergenerational practice.

Keywords

All-age-friendly city; capacity; opportunity; environment; resources; intergenerational practice

Introduction

Every individual experiences a life course from birth to decline. At different life stages, people have corresponding physiological, psychological and social development characteristics [1]. In everyday life, these characteristics are translated into different environmental needs, and those with limited capacities may face difficulties that they cannot overcome alone. Diverse subject needs, differentiated environmental conditions and the still-evolving process of urbanization together create real challenges for the coordinated development of population and space. As cities enter a stage of high-quality development, these challenges have become central issues of public well-being.

Urban planning is an important means of shaping environments and allocating resources. Ignoring objective age differences may create new forms of imbalance and inadequacy in development. Conversely, measures designed in isolation for a single group may generate contradictions and inefficiencies in practice, and may even lead to the unintended exclusion of people outside the target group [2]. Public-policy decision-making and urban renewal therefore need a systematic age perspective and a flexible, applicable set of operational tools to respond to complex realities. In view of the urgent need to build all-age-friendly cities, theoretical clarification and goal construction are essential for overcoming decision-making dilemmas and promoting broader practice.

1 Origin and Development of the All-Age-Friendly Concept

1.1 Age Characteristics as a Core Issue of People's Well-Being

According to the *Civil Code*, the *Law on the Protection of Minors* and the *Law on the Protection of the Rights and Interests of Older Persons*, the human life cycle can be divided by age into three stages: minors aged 0-17, adults aged 18-59 and older persons aged 60 and above. The population at each stage has distinctive development needs. Childcare, education, income from work, medical care, old-age support, housing and assistance for vulnerable groups are all age-related dimensions of public well-being [3].

Since the twenty-first century, urban planning has paid increasing attention to spatially disadvantaged groups, including older people, children and women [4-5]. Its basic premise is to provide supportive environments and services for vulnerable people, in line with the values of equity and justice in modern urban planning [6]. Unlike classifications based on income, education or occupation, age provides a complete and continuous analytical dimension. Vertically, every individual goes through an irreversible life cycle, and needs for the built environment change continuously with life stage. Horizontally, age covers the whole population living at the same time, while actual conditions differ widely and the factors shaping public-resource allocation are complex. Moreover, different age groups may compete for resources or experience environmental exclusion because of differences in lifestyles and values. These dynamics affect both individual quality of life and social well-being.

In public policy, age characteristics were once simplified into the basis for "statistical persons" and quota systems. This understanding still shapes planning intervention today. It is not difficult to reach conceptual agreement that all-age friendliness should benefit every person, every family and every community. Yet in planning decisions and practice, many bottlenecks still need to be overcome.

1.2 From "Older People and Children" to "All-Age Friendliness"

International research and practice in this field originated from concern for the key groups often described in China as "older people and children". In response to their specific vulnerabilities, sociology, demography, public health and other fields have produced extensive research. The global challenges of population aging and low fertility that emerged at the end of the twentieth century generated serious economic and social concerns. The World Health Organization and UNICEF successively proposed the initiatives of age-friendly cities and child-friendly cities, encouraging urban action to address demographic change.

In 2010, the World Health Organization's *Global Age-Friendly Cities: A Guide* identified eight main dimensions of an age-friendly city: housing, transportation, outdoor spaces and buildings, community support and health services, communication and information, civic participation and employment, respect and social inclusion, and social participation [7]. The Child Friendly Cities Initiative, jointly launched by UNICEF and UN-Habitat in 1996, has worked to implement the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* in cities around the world. In 2018, UNICEF published *Shaping Urbanization for Children: A Handbook on Child-Responsive Urban Planning*, which proposed that child-friendly cities should advance investment in public elements, including housing and land, public service facilities, public space, transport systems, water and sanitation, food systems, waste cycles, energy networks, and data and information and communication technology networks [8]. These two internationally influential guides both take "friendly for all ages" and "fit for all" as important principles and show clear commonalities in their construction content.



Fig. 1 Comparison of Global Guidelines for Age-Friendly Cities and Child-Friendly Cities

Source: Prepared by the authors based on WHO, *Global Age-Friendly Cities: A Guide* (2007), and UNICEF, *Shaping Urbanization for Children: A Handbook on Child-Responsive Urban Planning* (2018).

At present, more than 40 countries and thousands of cities have incorporated the concepts of age-friendly cities and child-friendly cities into urban development goals, advancing a series of actions from the city scale to the community scale. However, despite the accumulation of cases, policy frameworks for older people and children in China and abroad are still mostly discussed separately, and planning practices rarely intersect. As practice deepens, it has become clear that single-age-oriented planning strategies cannot adequately address structural contradictions in urban and social development. These contradictions appear not only as dilemmas of public well-being, such as resource competition, but also as problems that affect rights protection and quality of life at different life stages. Urban development needs to invest in every life stage and promote the accumulation and transmission of such investment across the whole life course.

1.3 Promoting High-Quality Coordination of Population and Space through All-Age-Friendly City Building

China entered the stage of population aging in 2000. By the end of 2024, the population aged 60 and above had reached 310 million, accounting for 22.0% of the national population and exceeding the total population of most countries in the world. The combination of advanced aging, empty-nest households and low fertility will remain a basic national condition for China over a long period [9].

In 2023, the Central Financial and Economic Affairs Commission proposed "supporting Chinese modernization through high-quality population development", emphasizing the comprehensive development of people as a core strategy, improving population health quality and promoting positive interaction between population, resources and the environment. From the *Outline of the Fourteenth Five-Year Plan* in 2020, which focused on "older people and children", to the proposal for the Fifteenth Five-Year Plan in 2025, which called for a population service system covering all people and the whole life cycle, national policies and measures have been shifting from a principle of specificity toward a principle of universality. This shift intersects with the transformation of urban development modes and the goal of promoting high-quality urban development [10]. The strategic role of all-age-friendly cities in Chinese modernization is therefore becoming increasingly clear.

In recent years, important national policies such as the *Guiding Opinions on Promoting the Construction of Age-Friendly Living Environments* (2015), the *Guiding Opinions on Promoting Child-Friendly City Building* (2021) and the *Opinions on Piloting Youth Development-Oriented Cities* (2022) have required urban development to respond to diversified needs arising from age differences. Local governments have responded through special plans, improved public service facility systems and age-appropriate renewal projects. Yet "all-age-friendly city" still lacks a clear definition and is often confused with concepts such as age-friendly or child-friendly city. A deeper understanding of continuous life stages and systemic spatial environments, as well as an integrated response, remains insufficient. In the face of cognitive ambiguity and practical missteps in age-sensitive planning governance, it is urgent to clarify the conceptual meaning of all-age-friendly cities, define their goal system and theoretical framework, and use planning intervention to promote high-quality coordination between population and space.

2 Conceptual Meaning of All-Age-Friendly Cities

The starting point of all-age-friendly city building is to recognize capacity differences across life stages and to promote the common well-being of all members of society through public policy and spatial intervention. Its conceptual meaning is to connect life stages, age groups and intergenerational succession with the high-quality development of cities, providing appropriate environments and resources for the development of all members of society.

2.1 Capacity Differences Across the Life Course

Capacity refers to the combination of all physical and mental abilities that an individual can mobilize [11], including knowledge and abilities accumulated through daily activities, social activities and intergenerational communication [12]. Understanding changes in capacity across the life course is crucial for interpreting differences in needs at different life stages. The life-course capacity curve (Fig. 2) shows that individual capacity is a continuous process associated with age, moving from growth and development to maturity and then to decline. The early and later stages of life, located at the two ends of the curve, are characterized by relatively insufficient personal capacity and higher dependence on the external environment. Investment in critical and sensitive periods, such as childhood and pregnancy, has high long-term returns for the health and well-being of individuals and families.

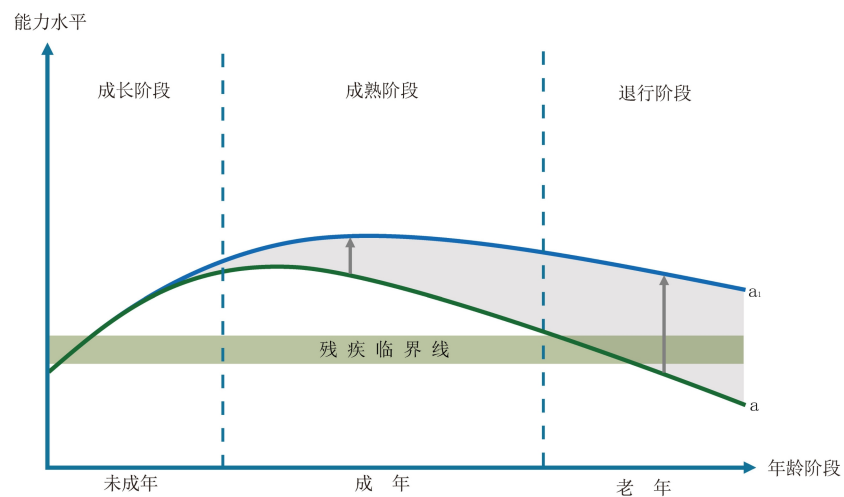


Fig. 2 Capacity Curve of the Life Course

Source: Prepared by the authors based on WHO, *Global Age-Friendly Cities: A Guide* (2007), and *International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health* (2001).

Another important insight of the life-course capacity curve is that although the basic pattern of capacity development is shared, individual capacity trajectories differ. Significant gaps may also exist among people at the same age. In Fig. 2, the curves describe a continuum of individual capacity levels. Curve a represents the general level of capacity that can be achieved in a standard environment. Curve a1 represents the optimal capacity that individuals can achieve when the environment provides greater support. By contrast, when people cannot obtain effective environmental support or are exposed for long periods to risky environments, their activities or capacities may fall below the general level a, leading to earlier disability and even affecting life expectancy. Observing the interval between a and a1 also shows that the role of the environment differs across life stages and tends to expand with age. In sum, compensatory and protective environments, together with elements that promote healthy behavior, are important for moving the capacity of all groups toward the upper curve, with particularly significant effects in old age.

2.2 Human-Environment Interaction

The environment is a key factor in optimizing the range within which individual and group capacities can be expressed. Lawton's person-environment fit theory argues that the degree of fit between environment and capacity determines how well everyday needs are met, and therefore advocates adaptive measures that support vulnerable groups [13]. Environmental gerontology developed on this basis and moved aging research beyond earlier paradigms dominated by medicine and nursing, promoting broad practice in age-friendly living environments [14-15]. In fact, human beings interact with their surroundings throughout life. Many chronic diseases in old age can be traced back to environmental exposures in adulthood, childhood or even prenatal and neonatal stages [16-17]. Likewise, a lack of resources for growth, education and related needs in childhood may increase physical, mental and social adaptation difficulties in adulthood and old age [18].

The environment is the sum of hardware and software factors outside the individual. It includes natural and built environments, as well as social environments such as policies, institutions, services, products, technologies and social values. The direct objects of urban planning are mainly the built environment, including housing, green space, roads, public service facilities and infrastructure. These physical spatial elements influence quality of life for all age groups and the overall average life expectancy of the population [19]. A growing body of epidemiological, sociological and physical-activity research shows that the built environment has significant effects in delaying capacity decline and promoting proactive health. People living for long periods in communities with high greenery and strong service accessibility tend, overall, to have higher health levels [20-21].

Beyond built-environment conditions, the process through which people meet their needs in specific contexts also depends on social support gained through cognition, action and social interaction. Such support may be decisive for the expression of individual capacity when material conditions are limited. Lawton further discussed environmental proactivity, namely people's active shaping of favorable environments and organization of external resources to improve their own development conditions [22]. This view enriches the understanding of human-environment interaction by extending the focus to social connections between individuals and communities, and between self and others. It emphasizes the importance of collective action and institutional support. Over the life course, people build

relationships with communities, experience staged development in needs, responsibilities and routines, and generate corresponding social practices and meanings of place. These connections flow across spatial and temporal scales, are strengthened through daily activities and evolve with residents' aging and life-course development. Yet how to intentionally create positive intergenerational relations and social networks across diverse urban and community settings remains an area requiring further exploration.

2.3 Systemic Influence of Urban Planning

One difficulty in planning intervention within the complex background of built environments and social space is that measures designed to improve conditions for a specific group are not always consistent with the interests of the broader public. In practice, this may appear as varying degrees of intergenerational resource competition and spatial exclusion. A second difficulty is that actions to improve health and well-being through environmental change involve all members of society and occur across generations. They require sufficient cross-age and cross-group evidence-based practice in order to identify effective locally appropriate solutions.

Urban planning has profound influence and considerable potential for expanding lifelong well-being for all members of society. On the one hand, many measures intended to improve the quality of life of vulnerable groups also improve the livability of the community as a whole and help create inclusive and shared development environments [23]. On the other hand, integrating all-age friendliness into planning, construction and urban renewal can help coordinate the use of public resources, promote intergenerational cooperation and social participation, and create sufficient and balanced conditions for development. Existing work in China, such as age-friendly cities, child-friendly spaces and youth development-oriented cities, has strongly supported people-centered goals in practice [24-25]. The urgent next step is to elevate work that mainly supports vulnerable groups into a universal agenda for flourishing across the whole life course and among all people, and to define the goal system for all-age-friendly city building.

3 Goal System for All-Age-Friendly City Building

The overall goal of all-age-friendly city building is to provide necessary support for every individual at every life stage, thereby improving health, well-being and quality of life. This goal is supported by three interconnected value systems: enhancing health and well-being across the whole life course, promoting equitable development for all groups, and advancing intergenerational continuity throughout the process.

3.1 Enhancing Health and Well-Being Across the Whole Life Course

According to the World Health Organization, health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity [26]. The primary goal of all-age-friendly city building is to enhance health capacities across life stages, expand the range within which capacities can be expressed and provide as many choices as possible for individuals to achieve optimal well-being. Measures such as community open space, housing affordability, environmental walkability and accessibility of service facilities have been shown to have positive effects on residents of all ages. These effects extend across the whole life course and cover physical, mental and social health [27-28].

In addition to identifying effective lists of interventions, planning must also respond to population and social development goals. All-age-friendly city building needs to take into account the combined effects

of population, geography, space and society, represent and serve the needs of different groups, and realize the best interests of all members of society. Moreover, because planning intervention cannot precisely respond to changing needs at either the policy or operational level, it must provide inclusive environments that allow subjects to exercise agency and make choices consistent with their capacities and interests in specific contexts.

3.2 Promoting Equitable Development for All Groups

Advantages and disadvantages between individuals and groups expand through accumulation. Individuals who remain in disadvantaged environments for long periods tend to experience increasing inequalities in health, social status and quality of life. Those with abundant resources show overall advantages in old age, whereas groups exposed to long-term adverse environmental conditions show cumulative disadvantages. Age is a robust variable in population and spatial analysis. It is highly correlated with socioeconomic factors but is not confined to a specific social niche. Interventions targeting age groups therefore often have stronger universal and equity value.

It should be noted that when a specific group lacks resources to meet basic needs, this reflects imbalance and inadequacy in development. When the use of facilities or places falls short of expectations, however, public intervention may be seen as redundant or inefficient. Several questions may therefore become controversial in action toward all-age friendliness: What level should compensatory measures for people with weaker capacities reach? How should potential resource competition and activity exclusion in shared living settings be addressed? How should equity and efficiency in resource allocation be understood?

The different positions of age groups in social life determine their opportunities to obtain external support. According to age stratification theory, age differences are embedded into everyday practice through social structures. They are present not only in everyday settings such as lifestyles and social participation, but are also deeply shaped by institutions, policies and culture [29]. This perspective helps explain the deeper causes of social-spatial differentiation beneath the surface of capacity differences. For example, the reduced interaction with the outside world and declining social participation of older people are not only due to functional decline, but also the result of society lowering expectations and resource provision for older people. The goal of equitable development is to reduce avoidable and correctable gaps between groups. Public policy should promote equitable development for all people on the basis of understanding capacity differences, and should avoid structural imbalance.

3.3 Advancing Intergenerational Continuity Throughout the Process

Individuals living in urban contexts rely on public resources, social relations and institutional rules to meet their needs. The built environment is not only the carrier of public-resource allocation, but also a field in which social relations are reproduced. Intergenerational coexistence contains rich social capital and can provide internal solutions to problems that external rules cannot easily address. It is an important supplement to government resources and market services. Promoting interaction among age groups, especially between young people and older adults, helps reduce intergenerational distance and generates continuous informal resources through mutual assistance and reciprocity. For example, the "time bank" in mutual old-age support exchanges stored hours of voluntary service for equivalent hours of future care services [30]. The same logic can also be applied to after-school care, community childcare and environmental maintenance. It offers localized alternatives for meeting diverse service needs and valuable opportunities for accumulating social capital and enhancing social cohesion.

In research on all-age-friendly cities, changes in public needs caused by intergenerational succession are equally important. According to data from the Chinese Social Survey, the health level and quality of life of different generations in China continued to rise from 2013 to 2021, but the rate of increase differed, reflecting differences in needs across life stages and changing expectations of intergenerational development. For example, people born in the 1950s and 1960s, who experienced periods of material scarcity, place greater emphasis on material security and basic public-service guarantees, whereas millennials who grew up in more affluent conditions have higher expectations for diversity and quality. Encouraging residents at different life stages to participate actively in social affairs helps protect the interests of the groups they represent, improves understanding of the needs of other groups and advances intergenerational continuity throughout urban governance through cooperation.

4 The Capacity-Opportunity Synergy Framework for All-Age-Friendly City Building

The discussion of the conceptual meaning and goal system of all-age-friendly cities is fundamentally rooted in the underlying logic formed by the capacity approach and the opportunity approach. This provides the theoretical basis for embedding age diversity into multidimensional and multilevel planning measures and helps explore operational pathways for high-quality coordination between population and space.

4.1 The Capacity-Opportunity Synergy Framework

The capacity-opportunity synergy framework for all-age-friendly city building is based on the spatial mapping of needs. It reveals the systemic mechanisms through which environment, resources and intergenerational factors interact, helping people at any time to fully mobilize their capacities and use various opportunities, while enhancing the well-being of other groups as they pursue their own interests (Fig. 3). The capacity approach focuses on the range within which subject capacities can be expressed. It protects the basic rights of every age group in urban life and maintains individual dignity at different life stages. The opportunity approach focuses on changes in individual capacity, the complexity of group needs and the value of intergenerational social capital. It seeks cumulative gains by integrating physical and social spatial elements, thereby creating fair and sustainable development opportunities.

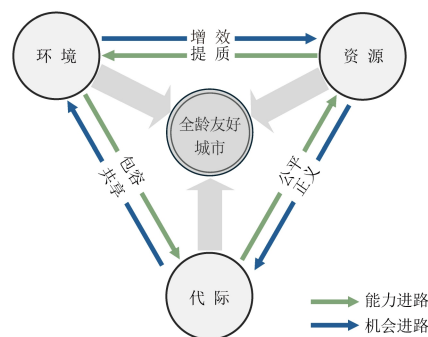


Fig. 3 Capacity-Opportunity Synergy Model for All-Age-Friendly Cities

The capacity-opportunity synergy framework emphasizes that capacity and opportunity are continuous and mutually embedded dimensions, rather than separate value systems. The framework helps decision-makers understand both differences and commonalities in needs, reduce the obstructive effects of age stratification through mechanisms, policies and environmental measures, and formulate

more equitable and reasonable social policies. At the same time, examining the combined state of capacities and opportunities helps practitioners grasp the overall level and the principal contradictions, and optimize planning intervention under conditions of scarce public resources.

4.2 Capacity Approach

The goal of the capacity approach is to improve external conditions on the basis of age differences, optimize population health trajectories and enhance health capacities at all life stages. Its operational process is to improve the fit between capacity and environment. When the fit is high, the environment actively supports the expression of individual capacity and produces stronger comprehensive benefits. When the fit is low, whether the environment is too challenging or insufficiently stimulating, the range of individual functioning is limited and the overall benefits of the environment decline [31].

Planning intervention needs to recognize the partial incommensurability among environmental elements and reduce avoidable capacity gaps among groups. On this basis, it should consider principles of environmental inclusion, weigh the benefits of resource input and output, and form intervention ideas based on the capacity approach: respect differences in subject capacities; identify both differences and commonalities in spatial needs; improve the tolerance and flexibility of the built environment for users with different capacities; provide alternatives when environmental constraints cannot be overcome; and avoid unintended exclusion of people outside the target group, rather than sacrificing the interests of some groups for others.

Because life-course capacities, population age structures and intergenerational needs are continuously changing, the built environment cannot provide a static solution that always suits all people and all stages of capacity. Intervention should therefore be understood as a deliberate process of promoting positive human-environment interaction [32-33], using continuous improvement of the foundational environment to support universal and sustained spatial well-being.

4.3 Opportunity Approach

The goal of the opportunity approach is to create and enhance health and well-being for all people. Its operational process is to provide choices and opportunities for choice in response to diverse needs. Planning intervention is a series of choices based on value judgments [34]. In specific contexts, it can follow three feasible lines of thinking. The first is constraint-based choice: defining action goals, scope and priority areas according to existing conditions, giving priority support to the age groups currently in the most disadvantaged position, and ensuring equity and justice in social and spatial development. The second is needs-based choice: responding to specific contradictions, requirements and aspirations, integrating demographic structure and development trends, and proposing corresponding planning thinking and work mechanisms to optimize the comprehensive benefits of public intervention. The third is choice-based choice: incubating multiple options to achieve expected goals and mobilizing available and combinable elements to realize the best interests of each age group.

The opportunity approach also reduces path dependence on engineering-oriented thinking through social innovation and identifies opportunities in everyday practice. For example, adults are generally recognized as having more complete capacities and therefore more public-service choices. From another perspective, however, children and older people often have less structured daily lives and thus more discretionary time and freedom to use public service facilities and community public spaces. Solutions based on the opportunity approach can avoid the passivity and isolation of urban renewal actions and move toward integrated solutions that are context-sensitive and consistent with group

interests. In other words, planning practice needs to examine the interaction between capacity and opportunity, pay attention to localized solutions in action, and broaden the time-space sharing perspective of resource allocation [35], rather than merely lowering environmental thresholds or blindly expanding special facilities.

5 Planning Pathways for All-Age-Friendly Cities

Based on the integrated framework of building capacities and expanding opportunities, the planning pathways for all-age-friendly cities can be summarized in three main dimensions: environmental adaptation, resource coordination and intergenerational practice (Fig. 4). These dimensions run through physical space and social space and include a series of goal-oriented strategies and actions.

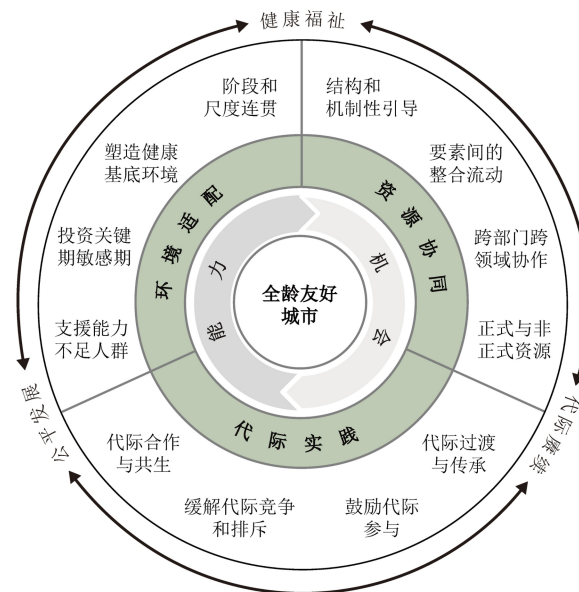


Fig. 4 Planning Pathways for All-Age-Friendly Cities

5.1 Environmental Adaptation

Environmental adaptation emphasizes continuity across the whole life course and intergenerational succession, and promotes strategy integration across the full process and multiple scales. On the one hand, planning and social governance should integrate the all-age-friendly concept into urban renewal, and establish and improve related policies and implementation mechanisms in order to optimize the level and spatial layout of public service facilities. On the other hand, specific implementation projects should improve age inclusiveness and create all-age-friendly "complete communities" and "community life circles".

"Whether an intervention effectively improves the health and well-being of all people" should be taken as a key principle for evaluating the renewal of old urban residential communities. In response to longer life expectancy and changing work and life patterns, urban renewal should explore innovative ways to repair "capacities" and "opportunities" and shape a foundational environment consistent with residents' health and well-being across the whole life course. On this basis, strategic investments should be made in critical and sensitive periods and in vulnerable groups, such as safeguarding maternal and infant environmental safety, improving childcare and old-age care services, and providing barrier-free facilities

for people with insufficient capacities, including older people, children and persons with disabilities. Contents concerning basic rights and equitable development should be protected through statutory planning.

5.2 Resource Coordination

Resources refer to all favorable conditions that can improve health and well-being, including public resources, market resources, social resources and intergenerational resources. Planning intervention needs to move beyond the logic of quota allocation and spatial relief, and instead provide structural and institutional guidance. First, with the aim of improving health-capacity trajectories, health resources should be shared efficiently among different age groups according to specific times, places and scenarios, emphasizing both equity and efficiency in resource allocation. Second, differences in group interests and barriers between departmental actions should be broken down. Public resources such as elder care, childcare and education should be integrated, functional hybridity and spatial complementarity should be promoted, and policy innovation should help age groups with priority support needs establish symbiotic relations with other groups. Third, welfare integration in the public sphere should be promoted. Fiscal tools such as old-age subsidies, long-term care and childbirth subsidies should be connected with spatial pathways such as housing policy, special facility planning and residential-environment improvement, in order to respond to diverse needs through cross-departmental and cross-sectoral cooperation.

For example, South Korea's One Roof program encourages older people to sublet their homes to nearby young students at below-market prices [36]. Through intergenerational reciprocity and spatial sharing, this measure helps older people gain companionship and maintain social functioning, while indirectly releasing idle housing resources and reducing young people's economic pressure. It contributes to the integration and circulation of system resources and elements.

The systemic and complex nature of resource coordination far exceeds what individuals can control, yet it is closely related to individual choice. Informal resources not yet fully incorporated into policies and regulations, such as cultural traditions, social capital and intergenerational relations, play a significant role in helping residents build broad connections with cities and communities, softening the boundary between people and environments, and maintaining the self-organizing capacity of social systems. For instance, some Southeast Asian cities advocate the community "Kampung spirit", using trust mechanisms in acquaintance-based society to promote the sharing of public facilities and compensate for shortages in formal public service resources.

5.3 Intergenerational Practice

The practical foundation of intergenerational interaction is a shared living environment. Although conflicts arising from differences in living habits and needs can be observed in everyday life, intergenerational relations as a whole tend more toward cooperation than competition [37]. On the one hand, everyone benefits from improvements in environmental safety, belonging and accessibility. On the other hand, intergenerational connections and cross-generational trust networks can effectively reduce the cost of social governance, ease intergenerational friction and support public affairs.

Intergenerational practice is a form of social practice that takes all-age integration as a core principle. It includes actions and work mechanisms that promote cooperation, coexistence and intergenerational participation. First, macro strategies concerning land-use structure, transport organization and public-service systems should address structural challenges that hinder population health development, and

should pay attention to how the transformation of urban functional structures may affect the intergenerational transmission of resources. Second, based on existing conditions and in response to residents' needs, urban renewal should resolve current contradictions, optimize the range of capacity expression and help people move smoothly from one life stage to the next. Third, public spaces should be used to create more opportunities for intergenerational contact, providing spatial ties embedded in the built environment for the continuous accumulation of social capital. At the same time, groups of different ages should be encouraged to participate in public decision-making and urban renewal, promoting mutual understanding among all members and allowing them to express their own value. Because the effects of intergenerational practice are less visible than those of place renovation and usually do not bring significant change in the short term, sustained incentives from public policy are especially necessary [2]. Chinese traditional culture has long valued intergenerational care and neighborhood mutual assistance. It may therefore support an all-age-friendly urban development path with Chinese characteristics in the process of urban renewal.

6 Conclusion

The subjects served by urban development and construction have always been all people. Interventions based on intergenerational separation and competition cannot promote win-win cooperation in urban and social development. The progressive significance of all-age-friendly city building lies in recognizing the needs of different life stages, constructing a continuous perspective for optimizing capacity across the whole life course, and deepening understanding of the relationship among age groups, which is both competitive and mutually dependent. This understanding can positively influence decision-making and action.

The capacity-opportunity synergy framework provides an underlying logic for public decision-making. It advocates systematic intervention through environmental adaptation, resource coordination and intergenerational practice, injecting sustained momentum into high-quality urban development.

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