

Establishment and Practice of a "Dual Track" Urban Renewal Planning System: A Case Study of Yangzhou City

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Abstract

With the decline of growth supremacism, urban renewal has become a primary driver of urban planning, development, and governance. A well-functioning renewal planning system is the foundation for effective implementation. This paper analyzes the positioning of urban renewal plans and the challenges in coordinating them with territorial spatial planning from legal and operational perspectives. It provides a theoretical explanation of the urban renewal planning system using 'institutional change theory'. Based on the degree of system independence and the legal effectiveness of unit plans, renewal systems are categorized into three types: integration, parallel, and substitution. Taking Yangzhou City as a case study, the paper constructs a 'specialized plan—unit plan' renewal system. By dividing renewal units into management units and implementation units—corresponding to district and block-level detailed plans respectively—a framework is formed to vertically transmit renewal needs and horizontally integrate with regulatory plans, offering a path for prefecture-level cities.

1. Real-world Dilemmas and Theoretical Basis

1.1 Legal Perspective

Urban renewal has shifted from a partial component of master planning to a specialized plan. However, the top-level design for a systematic governance framework remains incomplete. While the 'five-level, three-category' territorial spatial planning system is established, the 'Territorial Spatial Planning Law' is still pending, leading to a fragmented, bottom-up regulatory implementation.

1.2 Operational Perspective

Despite national guidelines for urban renewal, implementation remains difficult. The 'unit' has become the core spatial level for 衔接 (coordination), but the relationship between renewal units and detailed planning units lacks clarity. Furthermore, integrating urban renewal logic—which differs from standard infrastructure-led planning—into existing territorial spatial plans is challenging.

1.3 Institutional Change Perspective

Institutional change theory suggests that changes occur when expected benefits exceed costs. Current urban planning systems, designed for an expansion-driven 'growth era', struggle with the complexities of 'stock-era' urban renewal (e.g., complex property rights, high transaction costs). A new institutional arrangement is needed.

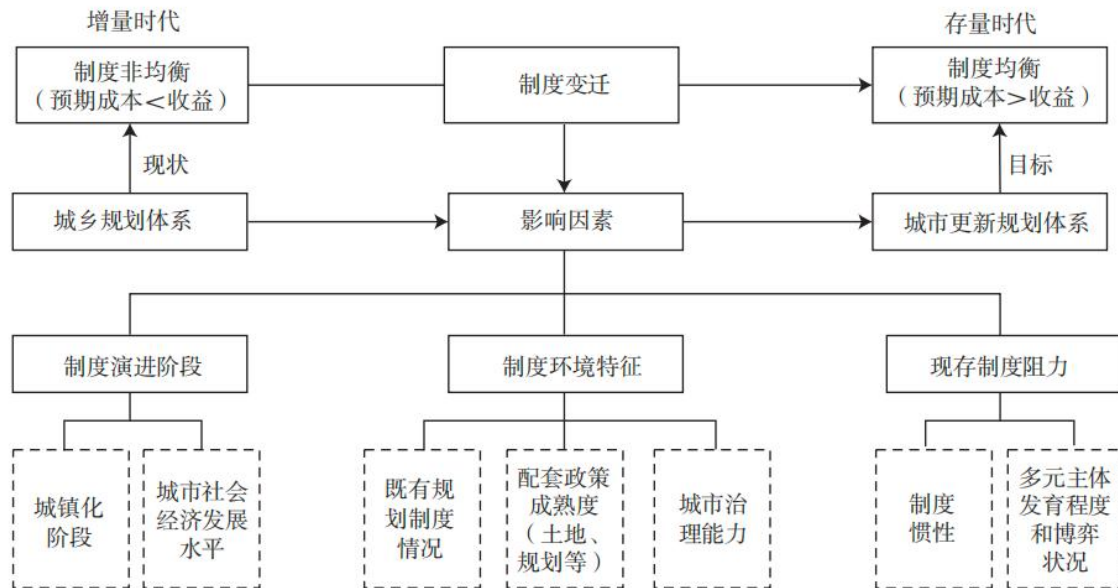


Fig.1 Interpretation of urban renewal planning system based on the theory of institutional change

2. Exploration of Renewal Planning Systems

Based on the degree of independence, three models exist: Integration (e.g., Beijing, Guangzhou), Parallel (e.g., Xiamen, Nanjing), and Substitution (e.g., Shenzhen).

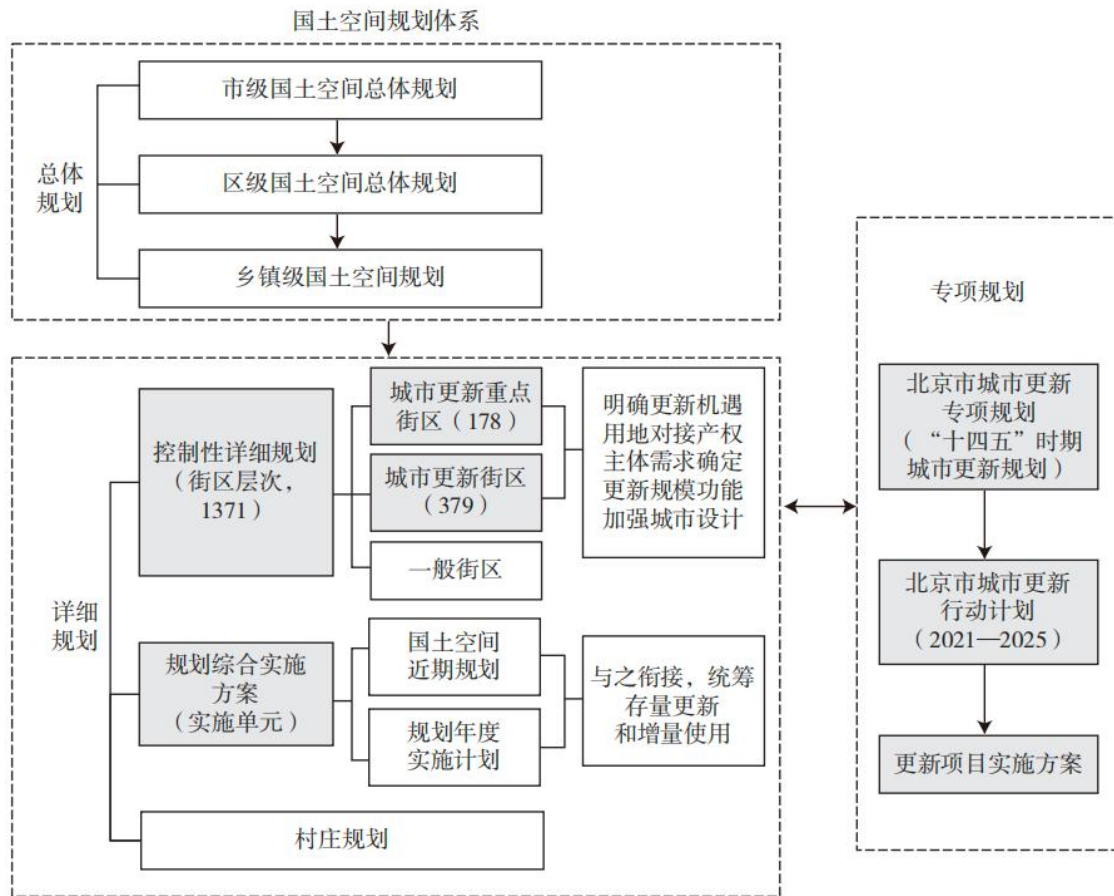


Fig.2 The relationship between the urban renewal plan and the territorial spatial plan of Beijing city

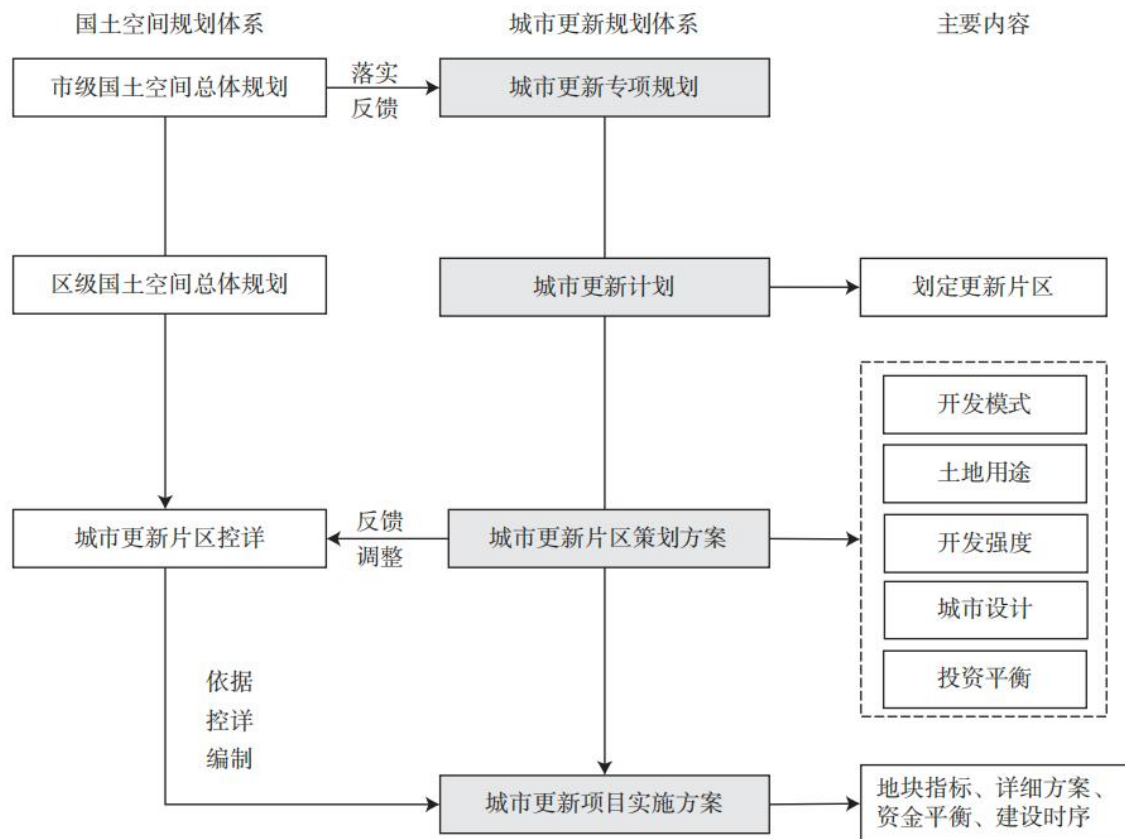


Fig.3 The relationship between the urban renewal plan and the territorial spatial plan of Xiamen city

3. The Yangzhou Practice

Yangzhou faces unique challenges: small district scales, weak financial capacities, and rich historical resources. To address this, Yangzhou implemented a 'specialized plan–unit plan' framework. Management units (approx. 3km²) are categorized by dominant renewal resources (e.g., old residential improvement, historical preservation, low-efficiency industrial upgrading) to coordinate public resources and project profitability vertically and horizontally.

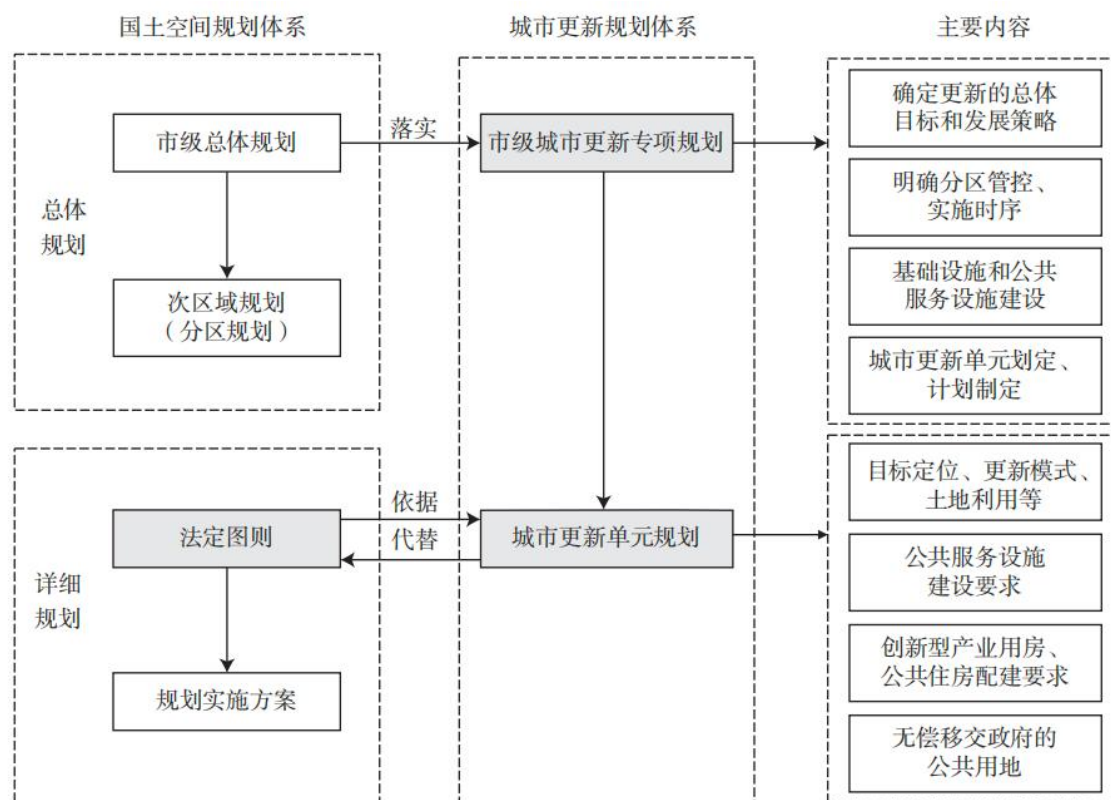


Fig.4 The relationship between the urban renewal plan and the territorial spatial plan of Shenzhen city

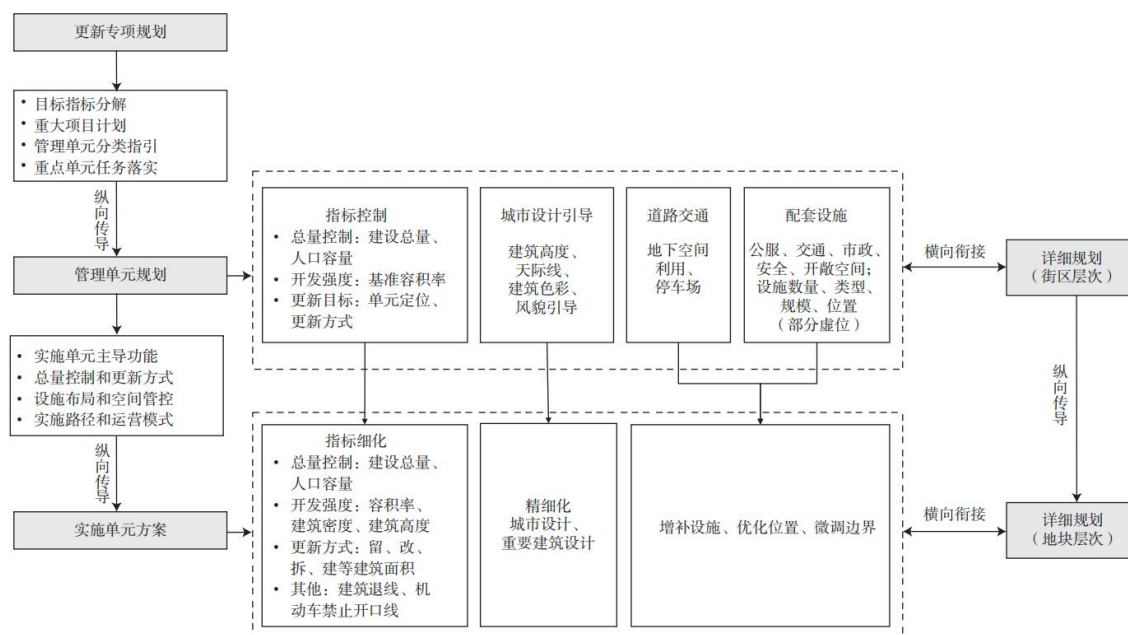


Fig.5 The main contents on transmission of urban renewal plan for Yangzhou city

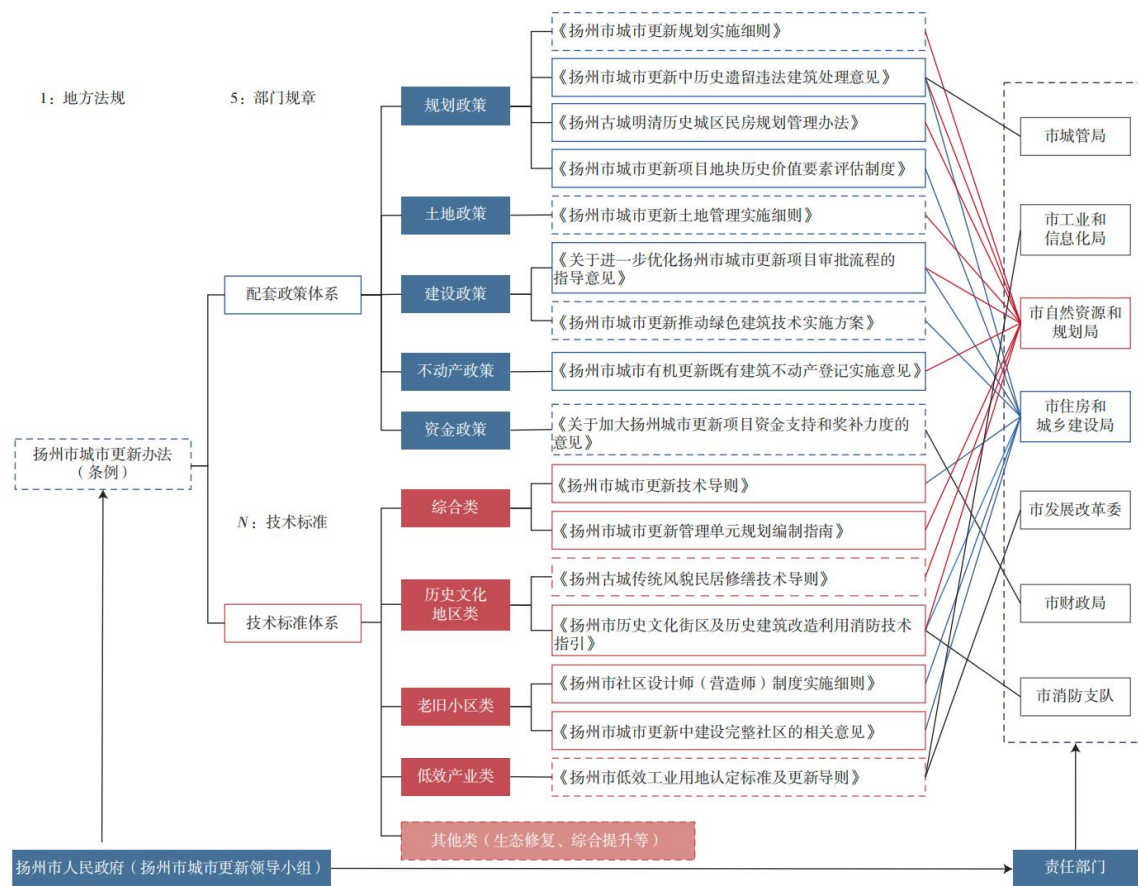


Fig.6 The urban renewal policies of Yangzhou city (the dotted box indicates that the policy has not been issued)

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