

Implementing the Central Urban Work Conference: New Planning Practices Explored

An Academic Dialogue

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Editor's Introduction

The Central Urban Work Conference held in July 2025 has made systematic arrangements for urban work in the new era, focusing on accelerating the transformation of urban development models, promoting high-quality urban development, and building modern people's cities. It has also set higher requirements for planning practice. Centered on implementing the spirit of the Central Urban Work Conference, this academic dialogue invites more than ten experts from national planning management departments, local natural resources and planning authorities, and front-line planning practice to discuss new planning practices across different cities and regions. These discussions are not a collection of scattered experiences but are embedded within key dimensions including planning as judgment, restructuring of implementation mechanisms, transformation of development momentum, and renewal of planning methods, constituting a systematic response to the "new planning" practice.

1. New Actions: Reshaping Planning Roles and Development Logic

Zhang Bing, from the perspective of national governance and the territorial spatial planning system, clearly points out that against the backdrop of significantly improved urbanization levels and fundamental changes in growth conditions, planning must re-address the relationships between government and market, urban and rural areas, and old and new development drivers. Its role has shifted from a mere spatial allocation tool to an important institutional arrangement supporting the transformation of development models and modernized governance.

This judgment has received multiple responses at regional and local levels. Zhou Jian, Zheng Degao, and Zhang Shangwu further indicate from the perspective of planning systems and theory that in the new stage, planning needs to re-calibrate the boundaries between national strategies, spatial structure, and public interests, avoiding the risk of planning functions being subsumed by a single development logic. Men Xiaoying, drawing on Xinjiang's practice, emphasizes planning's fundamental role in implementing the main functional zoning strategy, coordinating regional coordinated development, and serving people's city construction. She points out that only by truly translating institutional requirements into spatial governance and implementation supervision mechanisms can "new planning" generate practical effects. In this sense, "new planning" is fundamentally new in its stage judgment and role positioning.

2. New Mechanisms: The Shift from Formulation-Oriented to Implementation-Coordinated Approaches

As urban development has entered a stock-dominated phase, the core challenges facing planning practice have become concentrated at the implementation level. When reflecting

on Nanjing's large-scale development practice, Ye Bin clearly points out that when large-scale development is reduced to a tool for land acquisition and project advancement, its public attributes and planning value are diminished. Institutional restructuring must be pursued to re-orient it toward optimizing spatial structure and high-quality development goals. Yang Jun, using Beijing as an example, proposes the "four-step, eight-list" approach to systematically integrate health assessments, plan negotiations, and implementation actions, promoting detailed planning's transition from a one-time deliverable to a rolling implementation mechanism. Wu Junqin's practice in Wuhan adopts "specialized functional zones" as units, responding to highly differentiated internal urban realities through differentiated target-setting and flexible management approaches. Yang Bin et al., drawing on Ningbo's practice, further explore new pathways for coordinated urban-rural spatial implementation from the perspectives of "integrating strategic and regulatory planning" and comprehensive territorial improvement. These explorations point toward a clear judgment: the key to "new planning" practice lies in whether an implementation mechanism for continuously organizing actions can be established.

3. New Drivers: Development Reconstruction Under Stock-Based Renewal and People's City Orientation

Guided by the goals of high-quality development and people's cities, planning practice has begun to more directly engage with issues of development momentum transformation. Based on Guangzhou's urban renewal practice, Deng Maoying proposes the need to systematically address relationships among property rights and compatible regulations, government-market division of responsibilities, and short-term investment versus long-term returns. Without this, renewal cannot form a sustainable mechanism. This judgment clearly directs planning toward institutional dimensions including property rights, public finance, and investment financing. Using Chengdu's Park City construction as an example, Zeng Jiuli emphasizes stimulating urban vitality through scene creation, public space systems, and coordinated industrial space development, translating the people's city goal into daily experiences perceptible to residents. In this dimension, "new planning" practice is becoming an important medium connecting spatial renewal, institutional arrangements, and urban vitality.

4. New Methods: Planning Transformation Enabled by Digital Intelligence and Resilience Orientation

Faced with increasingly uncertain urban operational environments, planning methods themselves are undergoing profound changes. Using Shanghai's Quantum City construction as an example, Zhang Yuxin systematically expounds the application of digital twins, spatial agents, and industry large models in super-sized city spatial governance, promoting planning's transition from experience-based judgment to real-time perception and dynamic projection.

Starting from Shenzhen's resilient city practice, Yu Lu emphasizes that under multi-system coupled risk conditions, planning should shift from static defense to dynamic adaptation, enhancing overall urban resilience through spatiotemporal coordination and social connectivity. Long Ning et al. supplement this with methodological innovations in planning for complex system management from the perspective of integrating governance and

technology. "New planning" practice is reconstructing planning methods and governance tools through digital intelligence and resilience orientation.

Through experts' practices across different cities and topics, this academic dialogue presents four key orientations of "new planning practice": innovation in planning's judgment of its role, innovation in organizing implementation mechanisms, innovation in cultivating development drivers, and innovation in planning methodology systems. It is in these concrete and authentic practices that the new concept of "new planning" has gained a solid practical foundation, providing valuable experiential basis for in-depth discussion on how planning can better serve high-quality urban development in the new era.

New Roles and New Practices in Planning

Zhang Bing

Chief Planner, Ministry of Natural Resources

We are approaching the 15th Five-Year Plan period—a critical period for consolidating the foundation for basically achieving socialist modernization and making comprehensive efforts. Thinking about new planning practice should not be new for the sake of being new. "New planning" is the new paradigm of planning practice that emerges naturally through addressing prominent problems in territorial spatial development, conservation, and utilization. It aligns planning work with the general trend of urban-rural development, oriented toward ecological civilization, across different government levels from central to local, at different spatial scales from macro to micro, and leveraging digital technology conditions.

Territorial spatial planning is an organic component of the national macroeconomic governance system, serving Chinese-style modernization comprehensively and promoting high-quality urban development. The basic work direction of territorial spatial planning must conform to several principles that must be followed in the new era of economic and social development.

First, in accordance with the principle of "giving full play to the decisive role of the market in resource allocation while better leveraging the role of government," we must deeply consider what planning should and should not do. The very existence of planning reflects an active government. The test for planning work is whether it can be "grounded," integrating concepts and measures for effectively serving the market throughout the entire planning process.

Second, we must grasp the general trend of urban and rural development. China's urbanization rate has reached 67%, and structural changes such as population aging and declining fertility have posed new challenges to economic development and social governance. Planning that serves the people must not only address challenges facing urban residents in living and working, through solutions at different spatial scales, but also pay attention to the fact that agricultural and rural modernization has relatively lagged behind despite the high urbanization rate. Rural residents need conditions for modern living and production. Planning must find pathways to serve urban-rural integration and assist rural development with a spirit of perseverance.

Third, we must seek to cultivate new drivers of urban development. The Chinese economy is changing, the global economy is changing, and the old model of economic development is changing. The task of transitioning from old to new drivers is extremely arduous. While

planning is not all-powerful, it must have a sense of responsibility and urgency, commit to innovating planning policies, stimulate urban-rural economic vitality, and serve urban-rural employment and resident income growth, making up for gaps in people's livelihood security with economic achievements.

Government and market, urban and rural, new and old drivers—these are the fundamental relationships that current and future planning practice must handle well.

Exploring New Urban Planning for Integrated Urban-Rural Development

The requirements of the 2015 Central Urban Work Conference regarding "one law and five balances" remain valid. Understanding, respecting, and following urban development laws first requires a deep grasp of the stage characteristics of China's urbanization, industrialization, informatization, and agricultural modernization in the context of the new globalization. On the road of urban-rural development after the urbanization rate reached 67%, exchanges between urban and rural areas are active. Rural areas are no longer merely sources of surplus labor but also bear the spillover of urban functions and economic activities. Although some barriers and policy bottlenecks remain in integrated urban-rural development, the continuous reform of land management systems has enabled deep integration of rural primary, secondary, and tertiary industries. Combined with the "multi-planning integration" reform advanced for over seven years, the planning management pattern of dividing "inside" and "outside" development zones has been broken. "Urban planning" is no longer spatial planning only within designated urban areas. Planning is not merely planning for cities, which was true even before the "multi-planning integration" reform in academic terms, and certainly should not be so after the reform, both academically and administratively. Under the unified system of territorial spatial land use control, urban planning should practice in the direction of integrated urban-rural development.

At high urbanization levels, following deepened understanding of urban functional systems and spatial structure evolution at different spatial scales and topics, we believe the new urban planning covering urban and rural spaces will gradually be cultivated in practice. In terms of its spatial nature, these "new planning" practices are ultimately beneficial explorations in constructing the territorial spatial planning system.

Promoting Diversified Planning Practices for Modern Urban System Optimization

The Central Urban Work Conference requires optimizing the modern urban system, emphasizing integrated development of city clusters and metropolitan coordination, enhancing the comprehensive competitiveness of megacities and large cities, improving the carrying capacity of small and medium-sized cities and county towns, granting more economic and social management authority to large towns, and dynamically optimizing infrastructure and public service supply. In city clusters, metropolitan areas, and other forms of densely populated regions, China's urbanization forms are diverse after the rapid urbanization phase. Some are not labeled "city clusters" or "metropolitan areas" but are "densely populated regions" with closely connected functions around central cities and surrounding towns. This situation exists in both eastern and central-western regions. Therefore, promoting coordinated development of large, medium, and small cities and small towns requires action not only at the national level but also across provinces or inter-administrative regions, where there are issues of regional cooperation and coordination. The space for planning practice is therefore considerable. As long as these plans are tailored to local conditions and solve problems of coordinated development at different development

stages based on actual circumstances, planning practice will be rich in innovation and diversity.

Exploring Planning Practices for Enhancing Main Functional Zoning Strategy Overlay Effects

Improving the main functional zoning institution system and strengthening mechanisms for optimizing territorial spatial development is an important task in the further comprehensive deepening reform guided by the Third Plenary Session of the 20th CPC Central Committee. The proposal for the 15th Five-Year Plan clearly states important tasks for optimizing regional economic layout and promoting regional coordinated development during the "15th Five-Year Plan" period, emphasizing the need to leverage the overlay effects of regional coordinated development strategy, major regional strategies, main functional zoning strategy, and new urbanization strategy. The National Territorial Spatial Planning Outline (2021-2035) clarifies areas and spatial directions for promoting comprehensive main functional layout. The scientific basis for this lies in the compound nature of spatial use at different scales.

Under the guidance of the main functional zoning strategic orientation, comprehensive layout must consider not only resource-environmental carrying capacity and land-sea coordination but also high-quality development from both ends: one end being more fundamental and comprehensive security capabilities, the other being more strategic and comprehensively coordinated development capabilities. The goal is to achieve higher-level coordinated development of population, industry, facilities, and space. That is, after strengthening territorial spatial planning's fundamental role and completing basic work such as delineation and management of three control lines, we should refine analysis and identification of various functional zones according to local conditions. Then, facing national strategic needs such as regional coordinated development strategy, major regional strategies, new urbanization strategy, and rural revitalization strategy, we should pursue comprehensive integration and seek higher strategic value. Based on binding conditions such as resources and environment, we should propose guiding planning requirements in terms of allocation efficiency of natural resources and territorial space, value enhancement of resource assets, and conforming to market trends, then implement these through new management measures.

Shaping New Planning for Stimulating Stock Space Value in the Digital Intelligence Era

Cultivating new urban drivers is a highly complex process. As an important means for allocating spatial resources and playing a macro-economic regulation role, territorial spatial planning can provide powerful spatial support for cultivating new drivers at different scales. The proposal for the "15th Five-Year Plan" explicitly recommends optimizing territorial spatial layout, improving the territorial spatial planning system, "exploring implementation of total construction land control models by planning period, and implementing integrated stock and increment land supply." Reform requirements are clearly stated from planning formulation through implementation management to policy mechanisms. Regarding reuse of large-scale stock space, how to construct a comprehensive set of mutually reinforcing planning policies from urban macro, meso, to micro levels, dynamically balance stock and incremental space supply, and regulate the market is both a policy and technical challenge.

In the digital intelligence era, dynamic control of market supply-demand relationships and rational allocation of stock and incremental space will have unprecedented capabilities. Indeed, digital intelligence-era planning practice is flourishing. For example, multiple regions have adopted smart planning practices based on digital intelligence technology for project

site selection, industrial project layout, and industrial chain spatial matching. Cities such as Shanghai and Hangzhou have conducted comprehensive big data analysis of land use nature, property rights, output efficiency, and taxation on unified base maps and platforms, identifying priority spatial units for stock space revitalization and optimization. This approach extends beyond analysis to the entire chain from investigation and analysis through plan formulation to dynamic improvement.

In contrast, past practices without unified base maps, standards, planning, or platforms led to organic renewal planning of stock space being biased toward morphological design, with relatively simple scene conception, easily lacking grasp of overall urban relationships and potentially failing to adapt to markets due to static schemes. Digital intelligence technology has also advanced planning's spatial analysis of micro-level behaviors. For example, Nanjing University's research on improving campus facility layout based on big data analysis, and Tongji University's concepts and experiments with electromagnetic field sensing and analysis agents, all demonstrate that spatial sensing and analysis technology development helps improve spatial planning and design quality and stimulates and enhances the value of stock space.

In summary, the novelty of planning practice lies in: reflecting national development stage characteristics with strategic vision; innovating solutions to challenges facing Chinese cities and rural areas, cities and regions with new approaches; exploring pathways for revitalizing planning as a discipline with internationally leading outcomes in planning theory and practice. Whether promoting integrated urban-rural development, optimizing modern urban systems, enhancing main functional zoning strategy overlay effects, or stimulating urban stock space value, planning workers need continuous learning of relevant disciplinary theories and knowledge, improving their ability to creatively solve practical problems. Ultimately, the experience of "multi-planning integration" reform tells us that new planning practices emerge through planning workers' efforts, depending on their initiative in learning, sincere cooperation across disciplines, and above all, their ability to raise correct questions in territorial spatial planning practice.

New Practices in Territorial Spatial Planning for People's Cities in Xinjiang

Men Xiaoying

Deputy Director-General, Department of Natural Resources of Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region

Xinjiang takes strengthening the sense of community for the Chinese nation as its overarching principle, aims to accelerate urban development model transformation and promote high-quality urban development, and leverages the governance, source governance, comprehensive governance, and law-based governance roles of the territorial spatial planning system. Through cities promoting industries, industries fostering cities, and business assembling people, Xinjiang builds interlocking social structures and community environments, creating social environments where people of all ethnic groups live, learn, build, and share together, work and thrive together.

1. Building a Modern Urban System Supporting the "Dual Circulation" to Assist Silk Road Economic Belt Core Area Construction

Implementing the State Council-approved autonomous regional territorial spatial plan, Xinjiang leverages its locational advantages, advances Silk Road Economic Belt core area

construction, incorporates Xinjiang's opening-up strategy into the national westward opening-up overall layout, accelerates planning and layout of opening-up corridors, and establishes a "one group, two belts, three circles" urbanization spatial pattern. Xinjiang has carried out Urumqi metropolitan area territorial spatial planning and research on coordinated Karasayar and Yining metropolitan area regional development, established mechanisms for coordinated construction land index management and joint annual land use planning within metropolitan areas. It has coordinated regional infrastructure and public service facility layout, focused on improving planning, construction, and governance standards for southern Xinjiang regional central cities, and narrowed development gaps between northern and southern Xinjiang.

2. Supporting the Modern Urban System with Main Functional Zoning Institution to Build People's Cities with Xinjiang Characteristics

Based on the five strategic positioning granted to the autonomous region by the Party Central Committee, Xinjiang has established a differentiated hierarchical institutional system gradually extending from national and autonomous region levels to prefectures. It emphasizes strengthening high-quality development and high-level security through spatial coordination, guiding efficient factor flow through classified precise policy measures, and forming synergy in urban spatial governance by coordinating relevant departments. Key work focuses on formulating differentiated supporting policies and transmission implementation mechanisms for cities rich in energy resources, border cities, and cities rich in natural and historical cultural resources. New urban scale is allocated toward characteristic industrial clusters, energy bases, and border ports. It provides planning and land policy support for mining land, industrial land, cultural tourism land, and cultural resource revitalization. Xinjiang has explored conducting urban resource asset surveys and evaluations, promoting establishment of main functional zoning statistical monitoring and assessment mechanisms.

3. Fulfilling "Two Unifications" Responsibilities to Enhance Central City Vitality Through Overall Spatial Factor Allocation

Xinjiang strictly implements approved territorial spatial plans at all levels, launches territorial spatial planning implementation assessments across the region, and promotes planning implementation better adapting to new situations and requirements. It reforms detailed planning management mechanisms, fully utilizing land reserve special bonds, planning permit exemption lists, land mixed use, and resource-asset combined supply and other planning-land fiscal policies to promote urban factor concentration and inefficient land revitalization, enhance central urban public space vitality, and build innovative, livable, beautiful, and resilient cities.

4. Utilizing Comprehensive Land Improvement and Urban Design Methods to Enhance Stock Space Quality

Xinjiang utilizes comprehensive land improvement policy tools to coordinate urban-rural spatial layout, strengthens multi-use of industrial-mining land, promotes spatial functional adaptation and quality enhancement, and strengthens urban design method application to excavate regional cultural characteristics and natural resource endowments. It highlights the diverse and inclusive Chinese cultural identity, building modern regional central cities with Xinjiang characteristics, modern atmosphere, and contemporary style.

5. Relying on Natural Resource Management and Territorial Spatial Planning "One Map" to Enhance Urban Planning Systematic Collaborative Governance Capacity

Xinjiang has connected 18 business systems within and between the Department of Natural Resources, integrated 611 spatial layers, constructed an Xinjiang natural resource management and territorial spatial planning "one map" covering "current status, planning, and management," enabling unified overview and management through one screen. Using geographic information, satellite remote sensing, real-scene 3D, unified natural resource survey results, and a unified property rights base plate, Xinjiang conducts urban planning formulation and implementation management. Through ministry-region joint construction, Xinjiang has established territorial spatial planning implementation monitoring networks and conducts planning implementation assessment and early warning. It has established "one map" convergence mechanisms for 23 departments including Transportation, Water Resources, and Agriculture and Rural Affairs, forming collaborative forces to jointly build innovative, livable, beautiful, resilient, civilized, and smart cities.

6. Reforming Land Approval and Planning Permit Systems for More Efficient Factor Security

Building on breaking down system data barriers, Xinjiang has reformed land approval mechanisms, refined approval processes, advanced "multi-simplification" and "multi-approval integration" reforms, established a "one-initiative" approval service system, promoted parallel approval of land use and planning permits, and shortened project approval cycles. It implements planning-land policy "toolkits" for different scenarios such as major projects, characteristic industries, urban renewal, and rural revitalization, forming a planning-land policy system supporting high-quality development.

Spatial Implementation Mechanisms: Reflections and Innovations from Nanjing's Large-Scale Development Practice

Ye Bin

Director, Nanjing Planning Bureau

1. Reflections on Large-Scale Development Practice

Problems with Existing Approaches

Large-scale development, as an important means of urban development and land resource allocation, has played an active role in promoting urban expansion and industrial development. However, with changes in the development environment and deepening of reform, its inherent problems have become increasingly prominent.

Land supply mismatches timing. Advanced land supply often coexists with land idling and project delays, while some projects face land scarcity. This temporal mismatch reduces land use efficiency and affects project implementation 进度.

Insufficient coordination with special planning. Transportation systems such as metro lines often disconnect from surrounding land development, missing opportunities for coordinated planning and integrated development.

Market-driven spatial arrangements. Land distribution often follows market fluctuations rather than systematic planning, leading to scattered development forms that constrain land use efficiency.

Divergent approval focuses. Under multi-planning integration, land and planning approvals still emphasize different priorities, creating coordination challenges in implementation.

These problems, which could be tolerated during rapid economic growth and large-scale expansion, will evolve into significant economic and social contradictions in the new

development stage.

Current Implementation Challenges

High-quality development and modernization governance requirements. New situations in planning implementation include: development focus shifting to stock land renewal and semi-urbanized area development; fiscal constraints; slowing development pace; need for industrial clustering along value chains; people-oriented approaches requiring both public service equalization and property value preservation; deepening urban-rural coordination including rural collective land in spatial planning management; and strengthening compliance requirements under the Civil Code, Ecological Code, and Territorial Spatial Planning Law.

New Mechanisms for Detailed Planning Implementation: Beijing's "Four-Step, Eight-List" Approach

Yang Jun

Director-General, Beijing Municipal Commission of Natural Resources and Planning

Beijing has explored a "four-step, eight-list" approach to reform detailed planning implementation mechanisms, systematically integrating health assessments, plan negotiations, and implementation actions, promoting detailed planning's transition from one-time deliverables to rolling implementation mechanisms.

Step One: Urban Health Assessment — conducting comprehensive "urban health checks" to identify problems, diagnose causes, and provide decision-making basis.

Step Two: Implementation Planning Formulation — based on assessment results, formulating differentiated implementation plans for different zones.

Step Three: Multi-Party Coordination and Consultation — establishing negotiation mechanisms among government, market, and residents to reach consensus.

Step Four: Dynamic Implementation and Adjustment — establishing feedback mechanisms for real-time monitoring and plan adjustments.

The "eight lists" include: problem lists, responsibility lists, timeline lists, progress lists, investment lists, effect lists, evaluation lists, and publicity lists, forming a closed-loop management system.

Wuhan's Practice: Specialized Functional Zoning and Flexible Management

Wu Junqin

Chief Planner, Wuhan Planning Bureau

Wuhan has explored a model of "specialized functional zones" as units, responding to highly differentiated internal urban realities through differentiated target-setting and flexible management approaches.

1. Differentiated Target-Setting

Based on each zone's resource endowments, development stage, and functional positioning, Wuhan sets differentiated development goals and planning indicators, avoiding uniform standards that fail to address local realities.

2. Flexible Management Mechanisms

Mixed land use flexibility. Allowing compatible land uses within zones to respond to evolving market demands.

Index flexibility. Permitting certain indicator adjustments within defined ranges to

accommodate implementation realities.

Timeline flexibility. Establishing phased implementation targets aligned with market conditions and fiscal capacity.

3. Governance Innovation

Wuhan has established mechanisms for market entity participation in zone development, government-market risk sharing, and resident involvement in decision-making, forming a collaborative governance model.

Ningbo's Practice: Integrated Strategic and Regulatory Planning and Comprehensive Territorial Improvement

Yang Bin, Wu Peng

Ningbo Municipal Bureau of Natural Resources and Planning

Ningbo has explored new pathways for coordinated urban-rural spatial implementation from the perspectives of "integrating strategic and regulatory planning" and comprehensive territorial improvement.

1. Integrated Planning Mechanisms

Vertical integration: Establishing mechanisms for hierarchical 传导 from city to district to town, ensuring strategic consistency while allowing local flexibility.

Horizontal integration: Coordinating planning across departments, integrating transportation, industrial, and social facility planning.

2. Comprehensive Territorial Improvement Practices

Ningbo has implemented comprehensive land improvement in pilot areas, exploring mechanisms for coordinating rural and urban land use, consolidating fragmented parcels, and creating developable land banks.

3. Flexible Management Mechanisms

Conditional Effectiveness Management

In response to uncertainties from adjustments to permanent basic farmland and ecological protection red lines, Ningbo has established "conditional effectiveness" mechanisms that allow plan modifications under specified conditions.

Phased Implementation

Combining with rural development timelines, implementing phased approval and construction to balance planning rigidity with future development flexibility.

4. Practical Outcomes

Significant spatial optimization. Fenghua Zhang Village achieved 90% concentrated contiguous cultivated land through comprehensive improvement, with 100% high-standard farmland coverage and village greening rate increased to 45%.

Efficient resource release. Yuyao Xiaocaoe Town successfully released space for rural workshops and agricultural product processing bases through spatial restructuring.

Shanghai's Quantum City: Digital Twin and Spatial Intelligence Applications

Zhang Yuxin

Director-General, Shanghai Municipal Planning and Natural Resources Bureau

Shanghai's Quantum City construction provides a paradigm for applying digital twin, spatial agent, and industry large model technologies in super-sized city spatial governance.

1. Digital Twin Foundations

Shanghai has built high-precision digital twin models covering the entire city, integrating real-time data streams from transportation, utilities, demographics, and economic activities.

2. Spatial Agent Applications

Autonomous decision support. Spatial agents can simulate policy impacts, optimize land use configurations, and predict development scenarios.

Real-time monitoring and early warning. Continuous monitoring of urban systems enables rapid response to emerging issues.

3. Large Model Integration

Industry large models trained on planning expertise can assist in plan review, provide decision recommendations, and generate planning alternatives.

4. Transformation Implications

These technologies are fundamentally transforming planning from experience-based judgment toward real-time perception and dynamic projection, enabling more responsive and adaptive governance.

Shenzhen's Resilient City Practice: Dynamic Adaptation Under Multi-System Coupling Risks

Yu Lu

Director, Shenzhen Urban Planning and Natural Resources Commission

Shenzhen's resilient city practice emphasizes that under multi-system coupled risk conditions, planning should shift from static defense to dynamic adaptation.

1. Resilience-Oriented Planning Principles

Systemic perspective. Recognizing urban systems as interconnected networks rather than independent components.

Adaptive capacity. Building flexibility and redundancy into urban systems to absorb disturbances.

Social connectivity. Recognizing social networks as critical infrastructure for resilience.

2. Spatiotemporal Coordination Approaches

Spatial redundancy. Maintaining developable reserves and alternative routes.

Temporal flexibility. Allowing phased implementation with adaptive pathways.

3. Multi-Scale Implementation

Shenzhen has implemented resilience planning at city, district, and neighborhood scales, addressing different risk profiles and governance capacities.

Guangzhou's Urban Renewal: Sustainable Mechanisms for Stock Space Revitalization

Deng Maoying

Deputy Director-General, Guangzhou Municipal Planning and Natural Resources Bureau

Guangzhou's urban renewal practice demonstrates the need to systematically address property rights, government-market division, and investment return relationships to enable sustainable renewal.

1. Institutional Innovation

Property rights consolidation mechanisms. Facilitating rights consolidation across fragmented parcels to enable comprehensive redevelopment.

Government-market coordination. Establishing clear roles and risk-sharing mechanisms between public and private sectors.

2. Policy Integration

Guangzhou has integrated policies including land increment 挂钩, requisition-compensation balance, and inefficient land redevelopment to create synergistic renewal tools.

3. Financial Mechanisms

Diverse funding models. Combining government investment, private capital, and community contributions.

Value capture mechanisms. Enabling project financial sustainability through value appreciation capture.

4. Implementation Challenges

Guangzhou continues to refine approaches to address complex property rights, coordination among multiple stakeholders, and ensuring inclusive renewal outcomes.

Chengdu's Park City: People-Centered Scene Creation

Zeng Jiuli

Director, Chengdu Planning Bureau

Chengdu's Park City practice demonstrates how planning can translate people's city goals into perceptible daily experiences through scene creation.

1. Park City Development Achievements

Since its designation as a Park City demonstration zone, Chengdu's comprehensive urban competitiveness and innovation capacity have continuously improved. It now hosts 155 national innovation platforms, 14,500 national high-tech enterprises, and over 6.5 million various types of talent. It maintains Beta+ status in the GaWC world city ranking and ranks 23rd globally in the Innovation Index.

2. People-Centered Scene Creation

Consumption scene diversification. Chengdu has built a "one circle, one zone, one belt" consumer spatial system spanning the entire city, creating diverse consumption scenes that integrate culture, commerce, tourism, and sports.

Community life circles. Chengdu has established hundreds of "15-minute community happy life circles," making daily services accessible to all residents.

Cultural integration. Integrating local culture into natural settings through projects such as Daming Bamboo Art Village and Sanyu Lion Cultural Village.

3. Future Outlook

Chengdu will continue implementing Central Urban Work Conference spirit, advancing Park City construction, and exploring new pathways for people-centered urban development.

New Changes in the "Planning Guidelines for Urban Stock Space Revitalization and Optimization"

Zhou Jian

National Engineering Survey and Design Master; Professor, College of Architecture and Urban Planning, Tongji University

On September 18, 2025, the Ministry of Natural Resources announced that the "Planning Guidelines for Urban Stock Space Revitalization and Optimization" (hereinafter referred to as the "Guidelines") industry standard will take effect in December 2025. Several new changes in this Guidelines, formulated and reviewed by the Ministry of Natural Resources, fully reflect

new trends and requirements of territorial spatial planning as China's urban development has entered a new stage of urban renewal.

1. Layered Detailed Planning: Balancing Certainty and Uncertainty

A significant change in the Guidelines is the establishment of a layered detailed planning system, dividing territorial spatial detailed planning into "planning units" and "implementation units."

Planning unit detailed planning is analogous to "area-based management," studying the overall characteristics, functional attributes, spatial form, overall scale, and supporting facilities of a planning unit holistically, with the goal of conducting overall guidance and control at the "area" level.

Implementation unit detailed planning is analogous to existing regulatory detailed planning, controlling individual plots for planning permit purposes.

Some large cities have already developed practices of embedding new planning levels between overall and regulatory detailed plans, including "planning units," "renewal units," "standard units," and "block regulatory plans."

The Guidelines' positioning for "planning unit" level detailed planning: first, to transmit and implement overall planning structure and mandatory requirements; second, to holistically control area development direction and respond to uncertainty. The layered system serves construction projects through needs-based implementation unit detailed planning, balancing certainty and uncertainty dynamically.

2. Dynamic Detailed Planning Formulation: Promoting Positive Layout Optimization and Project Legal Implementation

The Guidelines position implementation unit detailed planning as statutory planning serving project implementation, serving as the statutory basis for land transfer, planning design conditions, and project approval.

The existing one-time, full-coverage regulatory detailed planning formulation model cannot adapt to dynamic changes in various conditions during the stock era. The Guidelines therefore propose that implementation unit detailed planning should be formulated dynamically based on needs, varying with circumstances to achieve mutual matching between planning control and project needs.

The Guidelines allow construction project plot planning building area indicators to be allocated based on local conditions and specific circumstances of implementing entities, distributed as needed from the planning unit's total building capacity. Under special circumstances, cross-unit distribution may be permitted under conditions, achieving precise placement of different functional building capacities and other planning indicators to meet dynamic needs of diverse implementation entities and promote layout optimization and quality enhancement.

3. Value-Driven Empowerment: Supporting Modern People's City Construction and High-Quality Development

The Guidelines adhere to people-centered development philosophy, clarifying that stock space revitalization and optimization should be value-driven by "prioritizing people's welfare and public interests, conserving and intensively using land, and respecting legitimate rights." They establish planning principles of bottom-line control, conservation and intensification, green and low-carbon development, multi-party participation, resource optimization, and digital intelligence governance direction.

Under this fundamental transformation, the Guidelines specify incentivizing public interest floor area ratio determination principles, land and space compound use situations promoting transformation, intensive development, and spatial vitality, and propose that planning adopt positive and negative list management approaches. They also study differentiated, adaptive planning technical indicator requirements.

The Guidelines propose a new "optimization adjustment" category for dynamic maintenance of detailed planning management, targeting approved detailed plans needing optimization adjustments due to layout optimization, quality enhancement, and project implementation needs. The purpose is to address the complexity and differentiation of urban renewal objects and rights holders, promoting spatial planning's transition from blueprint control to dynamic governance.

Under the guidance of new development concepts, the Guidelines comprehensively organize the territorial spatial planning formulation system, constructing a rigid-flexible compatible hierarchical transmission system from overall planning strategic objectives and structural strategies through planning unit positioning, structure, and totals to implementation unit plot implementation. They comprehensively incorporate planning guidance and control content systems and planning research systems centered on stock space revitalization and optimization, including planning content and guidance approaches at various levels, as well as basic investigation research, urban design scheme research, multi-dimensional assessment research, planning technical standards research, and project evaluability research, supporting diverse urban renewal implementation models, enhancing detailed planning scientific rigor and operability, strengthening the statutory status of territorial spatial planning, and establishing a solid planning foundation for urban renewal implementation.

Promoting New Urban Planning Practices with Paradigm Transformation and Reform Courage Zheng Degao

Vice President, China Academy of Urban Planning and Design; Professor-level Senior Urban Planner; Executive Director, Chinese Society of Urban Planning

The 2025 Central Urban Work Conference holds milestone significance. China's urban development stands at a new historical juncture. Similarly, urban planning faces transformation to adapt to new social development needs. Urban planning essentially serves economic development and people's livelihood. New urban planning practices must proactively seek change, even promoting planning paradigm transformation with the courage of reform.

1. Strategic Planning: From "Spatial Planning" to "Space-Based Planning"

Urban construction is undergoing a massive transformation from "growth-ism" to "structuralism." Early urban strategic planning's core was meeting urban development's demand for rapid land expansion, therefore strategic planning mainly manifested in "new city and new district" construction, answering questions about where to develop new districts and what kind of new districts to build, focusing on spatial planning. The new-era urban development has shifted from incremental expansion to stock quality enhancement as the main approach, from a "blank sheet of paper" to planning on an "existing spatial map" with complex property relations and stock material capital. Strategic planning now focuses on answering: which existing spaces can support key development of what functions, meet

what population groups' needs, and what material asset revitalization is required.

Taking a new round of Guangzhou strategy as an example, it emphasizes integration of leading functions, people's needs, and spatial development guidelines. Spatial development guidelines have also shifted from spatial expansion in all directions to content-oriented development based on spatial foundations, incorporating comprehensive economic, social, and environmental objectives.

2. Detailed Planning: From "Planning Control" to "Planning Guidance"

Incremental-era detailed planning was mainly designed to better sell land and construct buildings. Therefore, indicators such as floor area ratio and building height controls were not only calculable in price but also designed to ensure fairness and protect public interests, avoiding power rent-seeking. In the stock era, buildings with more complex property relations already exist; simultaneously, "inefficient buildings," "inefficient industries," and "old buildings" requiring renewal mean constructing more houses is no longer the goal. Rather, how to revitalize more assets, strengthen governance investment, activate market operations, and encourage property owner participation become detailed planning's core content. Therefore, detailed planning is also transitioning from static, controlling, and regulatory planning to dynamic, guiding, and planning-oriented approaches.

In practice, some new detailed plans include property right maps, asset condition maps, problem inventory maps, needs inventory maps, planning recommendations maps, urban design guideline maps, and other content. They strengthen coordination with market operation entities and property owners, emphasizing joint construction work, shifting from planning control to guidance, seeking relative certainty in an era of uncertainty.

3. Implementation Planning: From "Grand Narrative" to "Small Incisions"

In the urban renewal era, planning implementation will not occur on a large scale or through grand narratives but will begin from one building or a small plot, gradually extending to a unit or an area. Therefore, implementation planning has also become current planning's key content, characterized by:

Starting from specific problems. Addressing particular issues such as supplementing gaps in public service facilities, aging infrastructure needing renewal, or inefficient buildings requiring redevelopment—small incisions as "catalysts."

Progressive development from "point" to "line" to "surface." From building renewal to unit renewal, developing progressively, while particularly emphasizing unit coordination in point renewal processes for balancing economic interests and public interests.

4. Institutional Reform: Designing Around "Full Lifecycle" Concepts for Planning, Construction, and Operation

New planning practice requires institutional reform support. The core is designing corresponding reforms around the "full lifecycle" concept for urban planning, construction, and operation. Incremental-era mechanisms focused on planning and construction design, while stock-era mechanisms should focus on renewal and operation, including improving policies for mixed functions, property owner participation and consolidation, and diversified investment and financing.

Many regions are exploring policies for "demolish-rebuild on same site" and joint construction, new reform directions requiring both top-down and bottom-up advancement to form broader reform consensus.

Enhancing Cross-Regional Spatial Governance Through Metropolitan Planning New Practices

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Cultivating modern metropolitan areas is an important task for optimizing regional economic layout and territorial spatial systems during the "15th Five-Year Plan." The Central Urban Work Conference proposed optimizing the modern urban system, and the Fourth Plenary Session further proposed leveraging national strategic overlay effects, highlighting metropolitan areas' major significance in constructing the national modernization new pattern and the importance of advancing regional planning work around metropolitan area construction.

1. New Understanding: From Spatial Phenomena to Development Models

City clusters and metropolitan areas are products of urbanization reaching a certain stage, resulting from urban regionalization and regional urbanization. In China, promoting healthy development of city clusters and metropolitan areas has been given strategic connotations transcending traditional academic understanding.

Cultivating modern metropolitan areas from the perspective of optimizing national spatial systems includes multiple overlaid functions:

Breaking regional barriers. Using metropolitan areas as important vehicles to promote regional coordinated development, enhancing urbanization carrying capacity, and promoting regional balance and complementary division of labor.

Breaking city barriers. Through coordinated development of central and surrounding cities, enhancing central city competitiveness while combining development driver cultivation, avoiding "one city dominating," and narrowing intra-regional gaps.

Breaking urban-rural barriers. Using metropolitan areas as important units to promote integrated urban-rural development, combining coordinated development of large, medium, and small cities with narrowing urban-rural gaps.

2. New Methods: From Planning Blueprints to Governance Processes

Metropolitan areas represent regionalized spatial phenomena. Administration-led development models have promoted local development but also intensified city competition, administrative barriers, and market segmentation, creating challenges for cross-regional factor flow, infrastructure connectivity, public service sharing, ecological environment co-protection and governance, and spatial coordinated control.

Metropolitan spatial organization has complexity; its spatial governance involves cross-level, cross-system, cross-regional, and multi-stakeholder participation, requiring innovative planning methods to explore new planning values:

Planning as process. Not only should formulation work itself explore equal consultation, seeking common ground while reserving differences, and building consensus, but work content should also explore governance paths combining top-down and bottom-up approaches around full lifecycle governance requirements.

Leveraging new planning technical tools. Utilizing digital intelligence technology to more accurately understand spatial evolution patterns and more precisely diagnose spatial supply-demand contradictions and factor flow blockages.

Grasping metropolitan high-quality development connotations. Taking cultivating economic development drivers and focusing on people's development as key issues, identifying and

strengthening functional connections, optimizing regional spatial relationships, and shaping multi-center, networked metropolitan spatial structures.

3. New Systems: From Technical Tools to Institutional Innovation

Planning's value lies in planning implementation effectiveness. Implementation orientation is metropolitan spatial planning's focus and difficulty, requiring coordinated innovation of technical systems and operational environments, involving regional planning positioning, planning system operation, and cross-regional policy mechanism systematic innovation.

Deepening "multi-planning integration" reform from improving the national strategic planning system perspective. Leveraging spatial planning's platform role, enhancing spatial planning's medium- to long-term strategic attributes, establishing mutually supportive relationships with development plans that serve as mutual foundations, and using spatial planning as a platform for advancing cross-regional policy mechanism innovation.

Using near-term planning as a carrier. Effectively connecting spatial planning with development planning and special planning, focusing on key areas, major domains, and key projects from key issues of cross-regional coordinated development, reflecting limited planning thinking oriented toward actions.

Promoting planning implementation focusing on "multi-planning integration" action capacity. Advancing regional coordination and planning operation system establishment around formulation and approval models, guidance and constraint forces, implementation assessment and feedback mechanisms.

4. New Explorations: From Policy Requirements to Local Adaptation

China's metropolitan areas have enormous differences in regional contexts and development stages. Against the national policy background of cultivating modern metropolitan areas, local metropolitan planning requires local adaptation based on actual conditions and exploration of differentiated development pathways.

Metropolitan planning practice needs to combine improving multi-level governance structures. China's metropolitan areas have different development levels; we should neither rush development unnaturally nor be constrained by institutional mechanisms from leveraging metropolitan functions:

National-level strategic guidance and top-level design are particularly important. Including dynamic monitoring of urbanization patterns, improving cross-regional major infrastructure layout, differentiated regional policy design, and strengthening classified guidance and policy assessment mechanisms.

******Within regions, according to metropolitan spatial governance goals, determining metropolitan planning scope and content tasks based on local conditions, exploring corresponding planning organizational approaches, implementation paths, and policy mechanism innovation priorities.

Promoting local development model transformation. Metropolitan healthy development ultimately depends on local sustainable development capacity.

In no particular order, with minor deletions due to space limitations.

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