

# Research on Urban Community Micro-regeneration from Perspective of Multi-actor Participation: the Case of Yangpu District in Shanghai

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**Abstract:** In today's megacity community, changes of family composition and content of life, as well as the aging of the built environment urgently require urban managers to respond timely. Community micro-regeneration is one of innovative implementation paths to stimulate community vitality through spatial intervention based on multi-actor participation with limited time and resources. Since 2018, Shanghai Yangpu District has hired a 'community planner' to provide professional consultation about community micro-regeneration for each grassroots administrative unit. A multi-participated, low-cost and easy-to-promote micro-regeneration model has been explored to find space issues and solve problems. Based on multi-actor theory and collaborative planning theory, this paper discusses the composition of multiple actors and their impact on the planning process and results. Through methods of participatory observation and semi-structured interview, whole process of one pilot project was tracked. The study pointed out that government departments, community planners, community residents, community organizations and professional organizations work together to formulate plans through institutionalized channels, adopting open working methods and continuous interaction should contribute to the participatory, fairness and controllability of community planning. In the process participation awareness and execution capacity of all players need to be improved to avoid increasing negotiation costs and restricting micro-regeneration effect.

**Keywords:** community micro-regeneration, multi-actor, collaborative plan, Shanghai



## 1. Introduction

As a space for small and medium-sized human settlements, community is a guarantee for personal development and dignity, health and safety, happiness and good life, and the development of sustainable human settlements. The population and population heterogeneity of megacities are increasing, resulting in increasingly complex situations in urban and rural communities. For example Shanghai, with a permanent population of more than 24 million including a floating population of nearly 10 million, is facing with increasingly contradiction between the decline of environmental facilities and the growing demand for life content of residents, and growing gap between living space and public resources available to different income groups. As the complexity and variability of community affairs intensify, power gradually approaches citizens and communities. The idea that management needs to be done by cooperation rather than by any individual or organization is recognized, and the concept of ‘governance’ is applied to community public affairs.

Governance can be understood as a change in the relationship between public, private, community and voluntary sectors to cope with an increasingly complex, uncertain and vibrant world (Kooiman, 1993). Since the 1990s, government has ceased to be the center of power above society and people. The dialogue between public and private actors has become a new trend, and the concept of modern governance has gradually been established, disseminated and widely used (Gaudin, 2002). In 2014, the Shanghai Municipal Committee and Municipal Government issued the ‘Opinions on Further Innovating Social Governance to Strengthen Grassroots Construction’ (hereinafter referred to as ‘Opinions’), taking urban and rural communities as the focus of social governance, ‘putting resources, services and management as much as possible to the grassroots level to enable the grassroots administrative unit to have the right to provide better and more accurate services and management for the masses’. The ‘Opinions’ also gave the grassroots administrative unit called ‘*jiedao banshichu*’ in Chinese ‘planning participation rights’ for the first time. The accumulation of community governance theory and the empowerment of Shanghai's ‘*jiedao banshichu*’ provide new ideas for improving community built environment and promoting community development.

Community space is closely related to the characteristics and quality of residents (Parker *et al*, 1968). Community space is the place where residents’ daily individual and collective activities occur, and its attributes and characteristics affect residents' daily life and even behavioral psychology. Small-scale public space is a kind of civilian public space at community and neighborhood level and the place-making has a positive effect on promoting neighborhood communication and enhancing community sense and fairness (Yang *et al*, 2017). With this regard, physical planning can be seen of practical significance for mitigating conflicts arising from urban social structural changes and social

spatial reconstruction (Yang, 2013). Recently more and more city managers regard community public space micro-regeneration as a path to achieve public space's perceivable quality improvement with limited time and resources, and realize the sharing of common wisdom and common creation. Yangpu District of Shanghai piloted a few community micro-regeneration projects in 2017 and expanded to the whole district in 2018. 'Community planners' who are professional in urban planning were introduced into community to help mobilize and coordinate the forces of different parties to participate in community planning and examine and control the quality of the plan. So who are the multiple actors? How do they affect micro-regeneration planning process and result? This paper would like to respond to the above questions based on observation and analysis of a micro-regeneration project in Yangpu District.

## **2. Literature review and research design**

### 2.1 Literature review

Community micro-regeneration is one of the types of urban regeneration. It is a method of regenerating inventory space to prevent community decline and improve environmental quality under the guidance of connotative development and refined management concepts. Multi-actor refers to interrelated network of individuals or organizations directly or indirectly related to community development in a certain region and period. They participate in community public behaviors. The micro-regeneration of small-scale public spaces closely related to daily life is a way to realize regeneration of community functions and enhance residents' sense of community. It is also a feasible way for the masses to transfer from private sector to public domain. Meanwhile through participation of multiple actors, it is possible to accumulate more knowledge and resources for projects, so that planning results can effectively work and gain wide recognition. Therefore community micro-regeneration is of great significance to the current community construction and community governance, and must be achieved through the participation of multiple actors.

The research on micro-regeneration of urban communities involving multiple actors mainly involves knowledge fields such as public management, sociology and urban planning in China. The former two pay more attention to governance structure or interaction mechanism of multiple actors in community space creation events, focusing on analysis of institutional supply, actor relationship, governance model, etc. (Wu, 2015; Ge, Li, 2016; Zou, Yu, 2017). Space is mostly used as a platform or object of public behavior. Urban planning discipline values the combination of space and society, and explores methods and strategies for multiple actors to participate in community planning. Such research includes but is not limited to, the constantly expanding and developing participatory planning practice centered on the value of community citizens in Taiwan (Wang, 2018), collaborative planning practice

in Guangzhou in a low-income community (Yuan, Chen, 2015), Xiamen's community-based participatory planning practice with theme of Joint Creation (Li *et al*, 2018), Colorful Community Action Planning practice in Shanghai Pudong New Area (Zhao, 2018) etc. However there are relatively few studies on urban micro-regeneration mechanisms in urban planning. Wang Benzhuang (2005) studied the roles and actions of the three types of actors of government, NGOs and community groups in order to achieve a win-win situation in the process of Taiwan community building. Wang Chenghui (2018) summarized types and mechanisms of existing community micro-regeneration, analyzed effectiveness and hidden concerns of existing mechanisms, and proposed an improvement strategy based on the good governance model. These studies have contributed to the accumulation of theory and practice of community micro-regeneration in China. Based on relevant theories, this paper examines the details of community micro-regeneration in order to clarify the composition of the multiple actors and their relationship, as well as the process by which they interact and influence the planning decisions according to their power resources.

According to China's planning law, multiple actors involved in urban planning often include government, compilation unit, construction unit, experts, the public, and other stakeholders (Wang, 2008). Wu and Hua (2005) classify them into four categories: management departments, various interest groups, urban planners and public. According to the 'Opinions', grassroots social governance system of Shanghai is the combination of 'leadership of the communist party', 'government dominates', 'participation of all parties in society' and 'mass autonomy'. As a way to achieve governance through planning interventions, all of the above aspects are the main considerations for community micro-regeneration. Multi-actor participation is often related to community public affairs including who participates, when to participate and how to participate. The theoretical circle has reached a consensus on the increase of actor types and number of participation in community behavior, as well as the necessity of establishing a re-contact with the public (Atkinson, 1994; Stoker, 1996). The discussion on participation phase is also more consistent. Taking Canada as an example of developed western countries, public participation phase of community planning includes 'decide to prepare a plan', 'solicit concerns and suggestions of the community', 'present the draft plan', 'decide on the plan by-law', 'province approves the plan', 'implement the plan' and 'review the plan' (Hodge, Gordon, 2014, pp.342-344). In China taking Beijing Qinghe community plan as an example, public participation runs through the whole planning process of task formulation, goal formulation, plan making, implementation as well as management and maintenance (Liu *et al*, 2017). Discussion about the way of participation is controversial. Some scholars advocate indirect participation, but many believe that more direct participation is needed (Roberts, 1997). There are also scholars who fear that the more open the participation process is, the more divisive the problem will become; and that 'the

broad but shallow interests represented by citizen' will be overwhelmed by 'the narrow and deep interests represented by organized groups' (Olson, 1965, cited in Innes, Booher, 2004, p.421).

The inclusion of government departments, citizens, profit and non-profit organizations and planners in a common framework of collaborative planning approaches that address problems through cooperation, dialogue, learning and action, is a useful attempt to involve multiple actors in planning (Innes, Booher, 2004). Community space has its intrinsic public attributes, so government departments has always been part of the collective activities of participation in space management and development, but the role of government in space governance arrangements can be variable (Healey, 2010; Adams, Tiesdell, 2013). Although there are few formal rights to planning decisions, the professional and technical knowledge of planners is sufficient to influence planning decisions. In collaborative planning process, planners should not discuss community issues solely from the standpoint of experts, but rather into interactions as actors in planning implementation (Sun, Yin, 2004). With the awakening and improvement of residents' community consciousness, their sense of participation has gradually increased. However it is more difficult for the public to talk directly with government or other organizations or groups as individuals, so community organizations can participate in collaboration as a medium (ibid.). This approach to building collaborative networks through power-sharing and addressing challenges through different collaborative approaches can both provide better public services to communities and facilitate the realization of public values.

## 2.2 Research design

This study is a qualitative study. Methods of participatory observation and semi-structural interview are used to study a case of community micro-regeneration practice. Firstly, according to literature and Shanghai policy, this paper combs out the types of multiple actors involved in this case and the public participation process of community micro-regeneration, which are the observation objects of this study. Secondly, the author carries on the tracking research to the case's planning process and several exchange interviews to different participating actors. Based on this, the article delves into and records the community micro-regeneration process: how multiple actors deploy appropriate power, resources, and knowledge through cooperation to create better community public space.

This paper takes the micro-regeneration project of greenbelt in the east side of S Neighborhood of X Community of Yangpu District as the case. The community is located in the northeast of central Shanghai and is positioned as internationalized, intelligent and ecological community. The S Neighborhood, which was completed in 1999, is one of the few old residential areas. The green belt is a protective green space for urban trunk roads and confluence pipelines, with an area of about 1.68 hectares. When completed, the land is zoned within the boundary range of the neighborhood, and the

developer has not formally handed over its management functions to the homeowners. At present the property company manager hired by the owners committee maintains the greenbelt with meager funds from property management fee. Green Belt has long been occupied by garbage, dead wood and debris, and the fast-growing poplar has fallen every year, as shown in Figure 1. *Jiedao banshichu* and district greening bureau hoped to transform land tenure into a public nature for unified management, but homeowners opposed it. In 2017, the developer had designed the landscape renovation plan and shelved it for some reason. The project was selected as a community micro-regeneration project in Yangpu District in 2018, which is a new opportunity for improvement. This case was chosen because all community micro-regeneration projects in Yangpu District are under the same institutional background; hence this case has certain representativeness.



Figure 1. Project location and status before regeneration (sources: the author)

### 3. Community micro-regeneration practice with multi-actor participation in X Community

In January 2018, Yangpu District piloted the ‘Community Planner System Implementation Measures’, which matched 12 community planners with 12 communities to provide long-term guidance for community regeneration work within the jurisdiction. The micro-regeneration of community public space is one of the projects. Micro-regeneration is a community place-making plan led by district committee and district government, coordinated by the district planning bureau, and organized and implemented by grassroots administrative units under the professional consultation of community planners. The spatial objects of community micro-regeneration are the public spaces and slow-moving systems inside street corners or old residential areas.

### 3.1 Community micro-regeneration planning process

Planning process of the project of X Community continued from the beginning of 2018 to the end of the year. According to literature and local policy, this paper divides the participation phases of community micro-regeneration planning into phases of planning recruitment, goal articulation, project survey, plan formulation and planning decision-making, and planning approval. In this process, relevant departments and individuals communicated, negotiated, disputed and compromised for their own interests and purposes, and jointly sought solutions to problems. Figure 2 shows some working scenarios of the important participating nodes at each stage. The following is a discussion of the process and result of the participation of multiple participants in different phases.



Figure 2. Important participating scenarios (sources: the author)

Planning recruitment. In January 2018, Yangpu District held a signing ceremony for community planners with the district government. The task arrangement was determined at the meeting: the district planning bureau took the lead in work coordination, related training and publicity, and the grassroots administrative units fully carried out the community regeneration work with assistance of community planners. At the meeting, X Community and community planner Y successfully paired up.

Goal articulation. Officers of grassroots administrative unit in X Community worked together with community planner Y to analyze the requirements of upper policy, current status of community and development appeals comprehensively, and discuss the common value of micro-regeneration work to guide the practice. These values include: 1) problem orientation: starting from the housing problem and improving the living environment of residents; 2) extensive participation: respecting the wishes of residents and combining professional design with residents' participation; 3) people-oriented space: creating comfortable space for citizens' individual and collective activities; 4) combination of

long-term planning and short-term planning: leading the work with overall plan, and boosting confidence with recent work. As the first project of X Community, the project is expected to be of strong willingness for residents to transform, suitable for neighboring activities, and can show the cultural characteristics of the community after regeneration.

Project survey consists of two parts, project selection and project awareness. During the selection phase of the project, the administrative officer and community planner collated and analyze public spatial and public environmental issues complained about by the crowd through the 12345 hotline in recent years and examined all alternative projects. Combining the residents' needs of transformation and the potential of space enhancement, the greenbelt was finally determined as the annual project. Then community planner, design unit and implementing unit have focused on on-site and off-site research on the project. At the same time, the residents' committee and the owners' council of S Neighborhood organized a collection of concerns and suggestions from community members. After bringing together the multi-actors' information, officer of grassroots administrative unit organize the consensus meeting, so that the multiple actors get together to know and understand each other, and explore problems and resources. The community planner, and representatives from the residents' committee, the owners' council, the developer, the district greening bureau, design unit, implementation unit participated. At the meeting, the community planner briefed the participants on the Community Planner system and the positioning of micro-regeneration work, and explained to the residents the starting point for choosing the project and the expectations for the project, as well as the residents' right to veto the project. Representatives from the residents' committee and the owners' council expressed the willingness of residents to implement micro-regeneration. This determines that the work would be advanced in the S Neighborhood.

Plan formulation and planning decision-making. The phase includes a series of workshops. After the decision to initiate plan making, the community planner proposed a conceptual plan as shown in Figure 3 for discussion. The plan aimed to create a cozy space for residents' culture and leisure activities. The venue was divided into functional areas for children, adolescents and the elderly. Usually the greenbelt was closed to daily activities of residents of S Neighborhood, and would be open to surrounding areas when the grassroots administrative unit holds monthly or quarterly cultural events. The residents' committee was concerned about the safety of opening the door and the difficulty of subsequent management of the site and facilities. The owners' council hoped to speed up planning and implementation progress as soon as possible for residents to use, and raised questions about funding source and who will maintain the greenbelt in the future. The officer explained that construction is supported by the district finance special funds, and the post-management will still be dominated by the neighborhood as they wished. The district greening bureau hoped that the project

can be linked to the regional public greening project, and pointed out that the plan should consider residents' ability to manage, and the facilities should be safe and easy to maintain. The administrative officer hoped that the project can satisfy with residents' needs and serve the surrounding residents, and the plan should be more conducive to safety and management. At the meeting a number of opinions were collected, and the next step was to modify and deepen the plan by the design unit.



Figure 3. Conceptual micro-regeneration plan (sources: community planner Y)

At the workshop in early March, based on principles of cost control, ease of implementation and durability, the design unit revised the conceptual plan to form a draft plan. The design unit then reported it to the grassroots administrative officer, community planner, district planning bureau and implementation unit, and the draft plan is shown in Figure 4. Representative of the district planning bureau indicated that she had participated in the discussion of the project for the first time. In view of the large size of the project, she suggested that the plan should be refined as early as possible in order to carry out construction schedule and costing. The problem of site maintenance after completion needed to be considered clearly in the early stage. Residents in X Community usually paid high attention to living environment thus communications were important. More details needed to be cautious, as it was not recommended to carry out extreme activities in the greenbelt. The grassroots administrative officer suggested a holistic approach to subtraction, with a focus on the activities of the children in the south and the integrated functions of the central community, supplemented by the elderly and adolescents. The cultural main line of the program needed to be strengthened; in addition, it was necessary to carefully consider the existing trees in the site. The poplars that have reached the life cycle would be moved completely. It was not recommended to arrange large-scale lawns and extreme sports venues in the site. The community planner suggested that the plan should be able to be divided, protect the rights of residents and consider the possibility of opening up to the surrounding area. The overall style of the project was mainly wild and simple, and it was not suitable for luxury

and exquisiteness. Trees in good condition could be kept. The function of cultural education should be strengthened; the design of environmental language should be original and highlight the local characteristics; the process of participatory design should be strengthened, and the sense of ownership of residents should be enhanced.



Figure 4. Draft micro-regeneration plan in March (sources: the design unit)

Based on the opinions, the design unit made simple modifications to the draft plan, including removing the extreme sports venues and retaining the trees in the multi-purpose square, and communicated with residents in late March. The residents' committee chaired the meeting, and the owners' council, resident representatives, community planner, and the district planning bureaus attended. Residents included residents adjacent to the greenbelts and other residents of the neighborhood. The more concentrated opinions of the residents were that they did not agree with the greenbelts to set up separate doors. Some residents could accept large-scale activities in specific days, and outsider could enter and leave from the current gates. The differences were that residents on the east side wanted to focus on greening and fitness trails, reducing activity venues and facilities, and other residents tended to have adequate activity venues and facilities. Some residents thought that venue for children could be kept, for the elderly could be weakened, and for young people was not necessarily needed. There were also residents who had expressed a desire to reduce this kind of discussion and quickly implemented the construction. The administrative officers still advised the residents to consider sharing with the surrounding residents, and the new doors could be closed on a daily basis and only opened during the event. The functional activities of the site should be commensurate with the demographic structure and human activities, and adolescents and young people were not without the need for community space, and space design needed to promote greater interaction between different people. In addition, the deepening of the detailed plan in conjunction with the multiple actors' views needed to be implemented as soon as possible.

Another workshop was held in mid-April, with the participation of the grassroots administrative officer, the community planner, the residents' committee, the owners' council and the design unit. According to the mapping of present situation, the design unit analyzed the preserved and transplanted trees, adjusted the spatial layout, simplified the functions and facilities, reduced the hard square and increased the greening, as shown in Figure 5. The administrative officer hope to refine the plan as soon as possible to make a budget, and the replaced tree species should be dust, noise reduction and safety. The community planner insisted that the plan needed to strengthen the accuracy and depth of drawings to guide construction; the current environmental design, site cohesion, materials and so on were not refined. In addition, the design should show the characteristics of the neighborhood, can design the characteristics of the motif, and the motif will continue to deduce through the site. The Council and the Industry Committee did not express their views on the proposal.



Figure 5. Draft micro-regeneration plan in April (sources: the design unit)

At the workshop in late April, the design unit reported the draft plan and the refinement to the grassroots administrative officer, the community planner, the residents' committee, the owners' council and implementing units. The participating subjects adopted the draft plan in principle and proposed further amendments to the draft plan: community micro-regeneration is a very meaningful work than just a planning and design task, so the human element should be embodied in the planning process and planning plan; the cultural connotation still needed to be strengthened and the main line should be prominent; greening planting is primarily to ensure safety, and trees, shrubs and grass should be matched reasonably etc. Based on the comments the design unit formed a plan to submit to the district planning committee for approval in early May. The plan was as shown in Figure 6.



Figure 6. Micro-regeneration plan for approval in May (sources: the design unit)

Planning approval. The plan was not approved at the plan review meeting held by the district planning committee in August because the budget of the project being 7.7 million was too high. The committee's proposal for district special funding for a single project was between 2 million and 3 million.

Plan modification and planning re-approval. The grassroots administrative officer and the community planner responded quickly as they were first informed of the special funding requirements. The officer negotiated with the developer and received support for the transformation cost of 2.8 million. The community planner suggested that the design unit divide the plan into two phases: the short-term implementation plan and the long-term plan. Based on financial support available in the current year, the plan would be simplified, with public activity space as the mainstay, guaranteeing basic facilities and reducing manual intervention. The plan also needed to reserve the interface for regeneration if re-acquisition of funds would be available in the future. The relevant district departments and the grassroots administrative unit also believed that the plan is feasible, and the door to open to the outsider would not be established in the near future. The modification scheme was shown in Figure 7. The district planning committee in November approved the plan and issued the minutes of the meeting in December. Since then, the micro-regeneration plan had been finalized.



Figure 7. Approved micro-regeneration plan (sources: the design unit)

### 3.2 Multi-actor structure and relationship

It can be seen that there are four types of diversified entities in the X Community, namely administrative departments, community residents and community organizations, community planner, and professional institutions, as shown in Figure 8. Specifically, it includes the district committee and district government, the district planning bureau, the district financial bureau, the district greening bureau, the grassroots administrative unit (*jiedao banshichu*), the residents, the residents' committee, the owners' council, the community planner, the developer, the design unit and the implementing unit. As for the government departments, the grassroots administrative unit as the main body of implementation, participated in the whole process of micro-regeneration, the district committee and district government participated in the planning recruitment and planning approval process, and the relevant district bureau offices helped to guide in the planning and formulation process. As users of community space, community residents directly participated in the planning process in a small number of times, and their opinions were scattered. More often, they are voiced and represented by the residents' committee, the owners' council to conduct dialogues with other actors. The community planner participated in most of the planning process in addition to the planning approval, which not only played a role in the quality of professional design, but also acted as a coordinator of the planning action. Professional institutions participated in the planning process of the corresponding stage for their own interests. See Table 1 for details of each actor's participation in important planning nodes.



Figure 8. Types of actors in the planning process (sources: the author)

The relationship between multiple actors is shown in Figure 9. The district committee and district government hires community planners to support the work of the grassroots administrative unit, and guides the relevant bureaus of the district to provide technical and economic support. The grassroots administrative unit is the implementation body of micro-regeneration work. Under the guidance and support of the district committee and district government, it organizes and raises the necessary resource for micro-regeneration and manages the whole planning process. With the assistance of the community planner, the grassroots administrative unit guides and mobilizes residents to participate in planning and decision-making process, introduces design units and implementing units with certain project experience in the region through procurement services, and coordinate the developers to provide certain economic support. Residents actively feedback their needs and comments, and participate in interaction with other actors through the residents' committee and the owners' council.

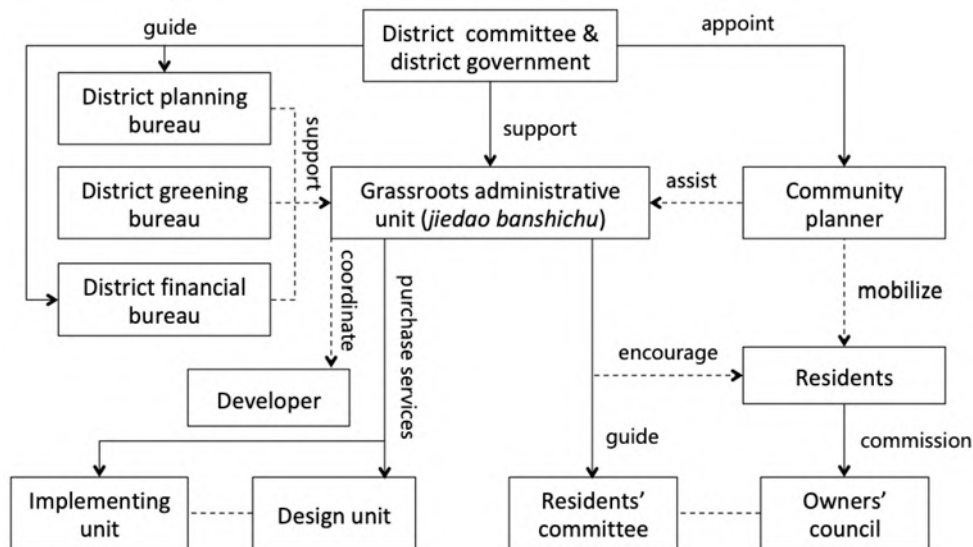


Figure 9. The relationship between multiple actors (sources: the author)

Table 1. Participation of actors in important planning nodes (sources: the author)

Actors		Administrative departments					Community planner	Community residents and organizations			Professional institutions		
		DC&DG	DP	DF	DG	GA	CP	R	RC	OC	D	DU	IU
Planning recruitment		√	√	√	—	√	√	—	—	—	—	—	—
Goal articulation		—	—	—	—	√	√	—	—	—	—	—	—
Project survey	1	—	—	—	—	√	√	√	√	√	—	—	—
	2	—	—	—	√	√	√	—	√	√	√	√	√
Plan formulation and planning decision making	1	—	—	—	√	√	√	—	√	√	√	√	√
	2	—	√	—	—	√	√	—	—	—	—	√	√
	3	—	√	—	—	√	√	√	√	√	—	√	—
	4	—	—	—	—	√	√	—	√	√	—	√	—
	5	—	—	—	—	√	√	—	√	√	—	√	√
Planning approval		√	√	—	—	√	√	—	—	—	—	—	—
Planning modification		—	√	—	√	√	√	—	—	—	√	√	√
Planning approval		√	√	—	—	√	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

Note: 1. √ indicates that the actor is participating in the node and - indicates that the actor is not participating in the node;

2. DC&DG, DP, DF, DG, GA, CP, R, RC, OC, D, DU, IU respectively represent the district committee and district government, district planning bureau, district financial bureau, district greening bureau, grassroots administrative unit (*jiedao banshichu*), community planner, residents, residents' committee, owners' council, developer, design unit and implementing unit.

### 3.3 The performance of Community micro-regeneration

As Simon (1997) puts it, all decisions are compromises. The final choice is only the best course of action that can be chosen at the time and the decision-making environment will inevitably limit the content and quantity of alternatives, thus setting the maximum possible degree of achievement. So, to what degree does the practice process achieve the desired goals? What about the result of the micro-regeneration plan?

In terms of target feedback, this paper believes that the planning formulation process has a high degree of matching with the expected goals. Firstly, the project is the public environment issue that community residents reflect the most and the loudest to the administrative departments. Secondly, the planning process involves multiple actors in various stages, especially in the residential areas for publicity and consultation, and organizes designers, residents' committee staff and volunteers to listen to comments and answer questions at a fixed time and place. Thirdly, the functions and venue design are mainly based on communication and activity space, and the rich and multi-level greening is equipped with simple and convenient facilities, which is friendly for users. Moreover, the plan includes two versions of short-term plan and long-term plan. In the near future, through greening and transformation, the venues and facilities will be arranged to provide recreation space for the residents of the neighborhood. The long-term expectation is connected with the public space layout of the region, and cultural events are open to the surrounding areas in some time periods. At present, it seems that the long-term plan has achieved greater resistance. On the one hand, residents are still controversial about opening up. On the other hand, whether the project can obtain financial support in the future is still uncertain.

From the perspective of plan itself, the plan has experienced several changes from the February concept plan, to the initial plan in March, the revision plan in April, the review plan in May, and the final approved plan in November. To facilitate the discussion below, these five plans are referred to as V<sub>1</sub>, V<sub>2</sub>, V<sub>3</sub>, V<sub>4</sub>, and V<sub>5</sub>, respectively. As can be seen from Figure 10, in the process of plan formulating, the grassroots administrative unit, the community planner and the design unit participated in the whole process; the district planning bureau and the district greening bureau provided guidance in some aspects; the residents personally participated in few consultations, and more of them were participated by the residents' committee and the owners' council; the implementation unit participated in many discussions, and the developer only participated in the discussion of the concept plan and the final plan. In general, the grassroots administrative unit, the community planner, the residents' committee and the owners' council, as well as the design unit and

the implementing unit play a major role in the formation of the plan; and the funds provided by the district government and the developer determine the extent to which the plan can be achieved.

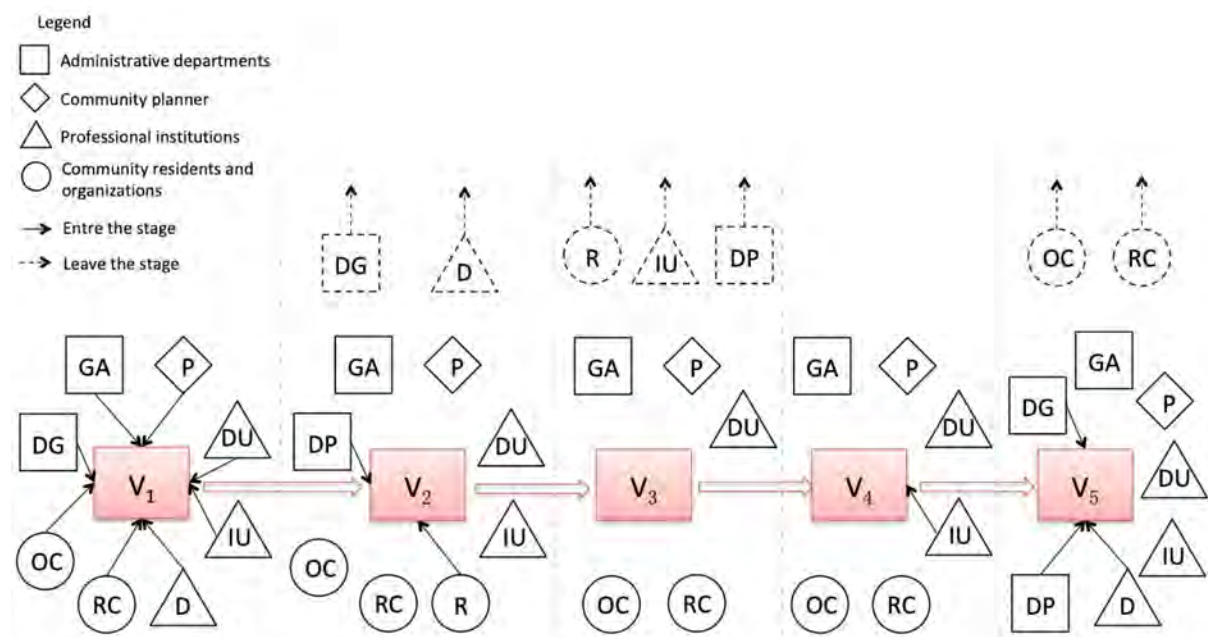


Figure 10. Multi-actor participation in the planning formulation process (sources: the author)

From the perspective of the program itself, the initial concept plan divides the functional area into children's activities, community cultural display, old-age activities and youth activities. It has experienced intermediate activities to retain children's activities and community cultural displays, weakened old-age activities, and eliminated youth activities. Activities will eventually form a functional area that is dominated by children's activities and community culture, supplemented by old-age activities and youth activities. In terms of site and facility design, due to factors such as budget, service scope and site safety, from the  $V_1$  to  $V_5$ , community squares, community stages and multi-purpose squares serving regional cultural events were cancelled, chess and stone tables and chairs, facilities such as the tree plaza and the children's park have also been cancelled or simplified. See Figure 11 for changes to the design elements of the site and facilities. The final short-term implementation provides leisure, fitness and social activities only to residents of the neighborhood. This is the result of multi-actor negotiation and compromise based on available resource conditions.

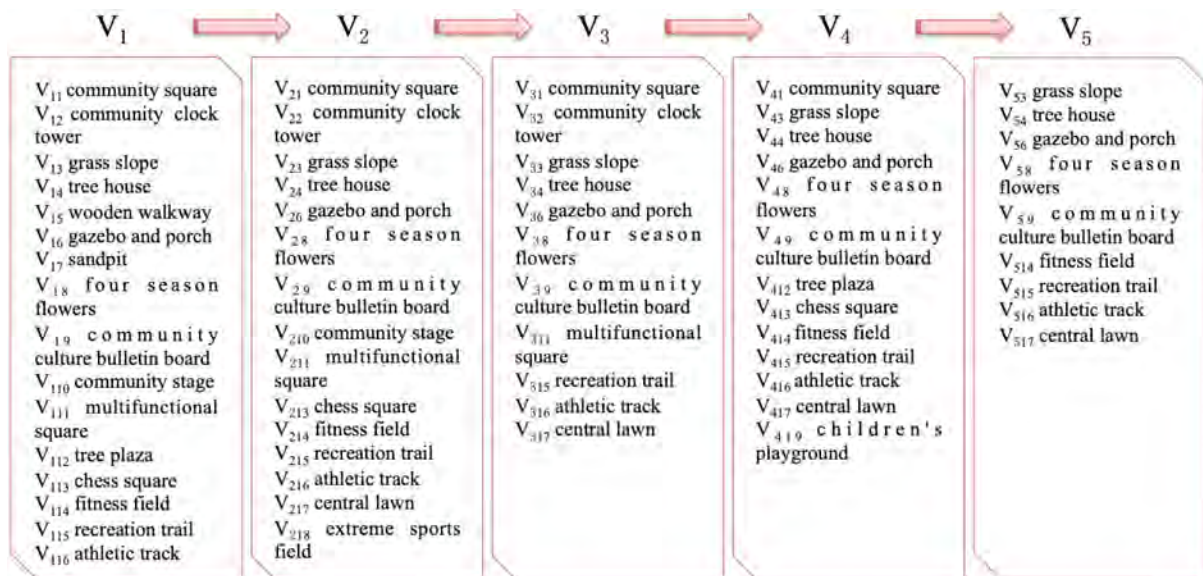


Figure 11. Changes in design elements of facilities and site at each plan (sources: the author)

#### 4. Research conclusions and reflections

This case is a practice of urban community micro-regeneration under the policy of community governance of Shanghai and the community planner system in Yangpu District. The idea of innovating social governance to strengthen grassroots construction and the ‘community planner system’ ensure the legitimacy of multi-actor participation in community planning process. Under the leadership of the district committee and district government, the administrative departments at different levels have worked hard to break down barriers and accumulate more resource and personnel for micro-regeneration, with the grassroots administrative unit as the main body. As technical experts, community planners provide quality assurance for micro-regeneration, and as coordinators of the planning process, promote the more orderly participation of the multiple actors. Residents' daily public life needs have produced projects, and residents participate in planning formulation and decision-making through community organizations such as the residents’ committee and the owners’ council. Professional institutions participate in planning through their knowledge, resources and technology to support the work. Overall, the practice is participatory, fair and controllable, and can be an effective way to improve the quality of living, promote public interaction, and strengthen community governance.

However the relationship between multiple actors and the ability of them to execute limit the effect of micro-regeneration to a certain extent currently. Whether it is fund raising, or participation network organization, the administrative force always dominates; it is a challenge to the organization and management capabilities of the public sector, and it also limits the growth of the resident

self-governing capacity. At present, public sector reform is still in its infancy, and better sharing of information between departments will take time to grind together. In particular, the grassroots administrative unit is the main body of responsibility and has close ties with all sectors, which has a high demand for staffs' knowledge and ability to organize and manage the project. As a direct beneficiary of the results of the residents, the residents have tried to express their needs and opinions on public affairs, and to participate in planning decisions, but they still lack sufficient skills and abilities to participate. What's more, the residents refuse to provide more support for the creation of public spaces, including a small portion of financial support in the construction of the project, or an appropriate increase in property costs for future maintenance of custody, which is not conducive to operation and maintenance of the project. The emerging position of community planner, which provides professional advice and technical support for projects, as well as political thinking and engagement, is also a challenge to the energy, experience and competencies of urban planners. In addition to urban planners, it is possible to have more attempts by professionals from other fields as community planners. The micro-regeneration project involves more space participation activities, but the profit is lower according to the current design fee. More consideration is needed on how to improve communication skills of technical service units rather than talking about unintelligible jargon, as well as increase their motivation to participate without compromising their economic interests.

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