

Using Urban Revitalization Approaches in Areas Afflicted by Urban Decline-Case Study: District of Sang-e-Siah, Shiraz, Iran

A. Eshtiaghi*¹, M. Mofidi Shemirani²

¹ PhD Researcher, School of Architecture and Urban Studies, University of Science and Technology, Tehran, Iran

² Assistant Professor, School of Architecture and Urban Studies, University of Science and Technology, Tehran, Iran

*Corresponding author's Email: alieshtiaghi@gmail.com

ABSTRACT: The aim of this study is to compile goals, approaches, and policies suited to the *Sang-e-Siah* slum for the purpose of realizing urban revitalization program. In this study, primary elements of urban revitalization planning were first considered by studying relevant world literature and each one's status was explained. Then external and internal factors affecting the area under study were measured via evaluation matrices and finally, possible approaches were compiled by comparing external and internal factors in matrices of threats, opportunities, and pros and cons. According to the aim, this study attempts, through a quantitative-qualitative approach and by using methods like library researches, surveys, questionnaire, reports of upper-hand plans, and comparison of their pros and cons, as well as scrutinizing intervened limits, to determine early approaches according to physical and social criteria on the one hand and economical estimations on the other hand and ultimately, define strategic priorities by summarizing results of physical, social, and economical evaluation. Defined criteria could be used generally as guidelines for defining renovation and rehabilitation priorities in eroded historical textures. This study yields in a framework for prioritizing acceptable approaches in urban revitalization program of the *Sang-e-Siah* district.

Keywords: Urban Decline, Historical Texture, Urban Revitalization Planning, Participation, District of *Sang-E-Siah*

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INTRODUCTION

Central areas afflicted by urban decline and different living conditions of inhabitants in areas afflicted by decline compared with other urban districts and especially adjacent areas have created problems in the second half of the 20th century, make it inevitable to have a programmatic approach in facing such areas. Urban revitalization approach is one of approaches that have attracted attention of many urban decision-makers and planner over the last two decades of the twentieth century as an option for old urban districts to get out of urban decline (David, 2005).

The district of *Sang-e-Siah* as a sample under study is one of the old areas of Shiraz that is located within the limits of city's historical-cultural texture, with good capability for urban renewal due to its religious and commercial elements located in environmental edges and occasionally in the heart of the district. However, during two decades of 1980s and 90s it was stricken by social and economical and, subsequently physical and environmental decline. A considerable area of the district have small, erratic, eroded, and old lots and residential apartments with unstable non-resistant materials and build methods, giving them very inappropriate physical shape. This physical condition, along with inconvenient twisting access points, has accommodated a disproportionate demographics and social structures. It also lacks suitable infrastructure/superstructure services for life and activity endurance. If the current situation continues, social and economic declines will get worse, and subsequently will

lead to more intensified physical and environmental decline.

Statement of problem

Destruction of historical-cultural textures started exacerbating over ideological challenges of several organizations. On the one hand, certain and ambiguous circumstances and regulations could be addressed as one of renewal and occasionally improvement obstacles, that either gives no permit for any type of renovation or passageway-widening or recommends conditions so complex and costly that is neither economical for owners nor relevant organizations, thus leading to increased destruction. On the other hand, authorities' lack of practice-orientation and routine exercises, without considering special texture conditions and preservation of architecture values, identity and culture have led to increased destruction, and formation of an architecture with no identity and problematic urban planning.

The subject of revitalization of Shiraz's old texture (like other old urban textures) has been discussed for years, with several theoretic and practical topics and urban and architectural development plans prepared or under preparation concerning intervention in Shiraz's historical texture. In this regard, practical approaches to textural renewal have faced serious challenges, and practical and executive proceedings carried out have practically not resulted in motivation of spontaneous, continuous, and permanent textural renovation and improvement. What still exists in Shiraz historical district, involves continued physical and economical erosion and dejection, and hence social depression and its cultural abnormalities.

Continuity of the current erosion trend can result in demolition and destruction of parts of Shiraz which was once historical core of that and today, it is considered as the beating economical and religious/cultural heart of the city. It is clear that in addition to demolition and depreciation of residential compounds and textures, this trend has also afflicted the most precious historical buildings and elements. With current trend of renewal and renovation for these elements, lower relics of them can be found in near future in Shiraz's historical texture. A collection of what is currently present in depth of neighbourhoods involves gradual creation of poverty, reduced social, human, and economical capital, with physical erosion just being one of its obvious indications.

It has therefore been attempted in this paper, using upper-hand plan information-revision plan for Shiraz's comprehensive plan- as well as scrutinizing related areas, to provide initial approaches with the aim of urban revitalization given physical and social criteria on the one hand and economical estimations on the other hand, thus specify strategic priorities by summing results of physical, social and economic evaluation. It is clear that specified criteria can be used as indicators for determining renovation priorities in other eroded historical textures in a general way.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Given the aims and hypotheses propounded in this study, a combination of descriptive, analytical and comparative methods has been used.

To achieve a relevant and appropriate theoretic framework and identify dominant viewpoints and theories concerning the topic documental studies (library search) and research in foreign resources were used. Also to access characteristics and properties of the sample under study and to collect required data the survey method in the form of questionnaire and interview and feedback was utilized.

Finally, available software (Arc GIS™, Excel™, and Autodesk Map™) were used to analyze studies and make conclusions.

Major pillars of urban revitalization planning

Participation, strategy, and sustainability are three major pillars for urban revitalization program. These three provide a basis for comprehensive and detailed measure. Each of them plays major roles in strategies of urban revitalization approach (Figure 1).

A. Pillar 1: Participation and its position in urban revitalization planning

One of the most important urban revitalization planning pillars is participation. In participation, individuals are aware of affairs procedures and have perspectives in this regard. Also they somehow participate in decision-makings (Eshtiaghi, 2008). In its generic meaning, participation has been with humanity since early human life. However, it began with a new meaning in the field of politics after World War II (Bryson, 2002). Despite formation of the participation thought in all life dimensions, this perspective is not still observed scientifically and it cannot be molded as part of people's

culture and expand before it having a efficient and problem-solving philosophical background (ibid). Aimed participation of people is considered as a basis for all revitalization projects, which helps ensure competence of local people, ownership and local support, thus maximizing local people's benefits (Table 1).

B. Pillar 2: Strategic planning

Strategic programming has created a framework to develop of policies, new theoretical fields and empirical tools for urban planning (Bryson, 2002). This has found special role in urban revitalization plans. Strategic planning has the following three roles in urban revitalization:

1-Urban decline occurs due to different and complex phenomena an understanding of which requires a comprehensive insight.

2-The urban revitalization approach provides a detailed and multilateral resource to all issues. Strategic planning can, given its comprehensive insight, play an important role in providing detailed solution.

3-The urban revitalization approach involves all organizations, unofficial groups, and other groups with different goals and cultures. Strategic planning plays a critical role in this regard (ibid).

C. Pillar 3: Sustainability

Sustainability means that economic, social, and political atmosphere should ensure desired life quality and preserve topics like hygiene, education, welfare, freedom of expression, rights, etc. in a stable and persistent manner, so that future generations could make use of those resources. These concepts have special properties like social stability, social justice, novel moral framework, public convergence, and evaluation (Eshtiaghi, 2008). In terms of sustainable development, land and space are not merely elements to fulfil urban economical and physical needs. Rather, they are the major background for all citizens' activities and a necessary tool for human wants and wishes to get realized. From this perspective, urban land and space are probably the main public wealth, with a deeper and broader role than an economical good in public urban life and citizens' lives (ibid).



Figure 1. Main pillars of an urban revitalization planning (Roberts and Sykes, 2000)

Table 1. Participation types in urban revitalization approach (source: Roberts and Sykes, 2000)

Participation type	Area covered	Types of participants	Activities
Participation in common constructions and contracts	A small place or area e.g. downtown	Developers of private sectors, commission	Financial development without benefit motivation which creates mutual commercial interests
Participation through development/ construction commissions	Specific areas for renewal, e.g. neighbourhood units	Micro-societies especially societies independent from public commissions and local offices	Revitalization based on societies especially concerning creation and expansion of social interests
Participation through informal organizations	City or zone	Private sector	Location search for practice establishment, improving growth and financing, considering problems, adopting strategies that create mutual advantages for beneficiary groups
Participation through urban and sub-area offices	City or subarea	Offices from a secondary team consisting of participants or construction/development partnership companies independent from participants	Assuming different responsibilities in a definite time frame
Strategic participation	Subarea, metropolitan	All parts	Taking measures as an initial organizer for activity, taking measures as a guide for development, execution by a third party, taking measures as another organization that directs other organization in addition to development companies

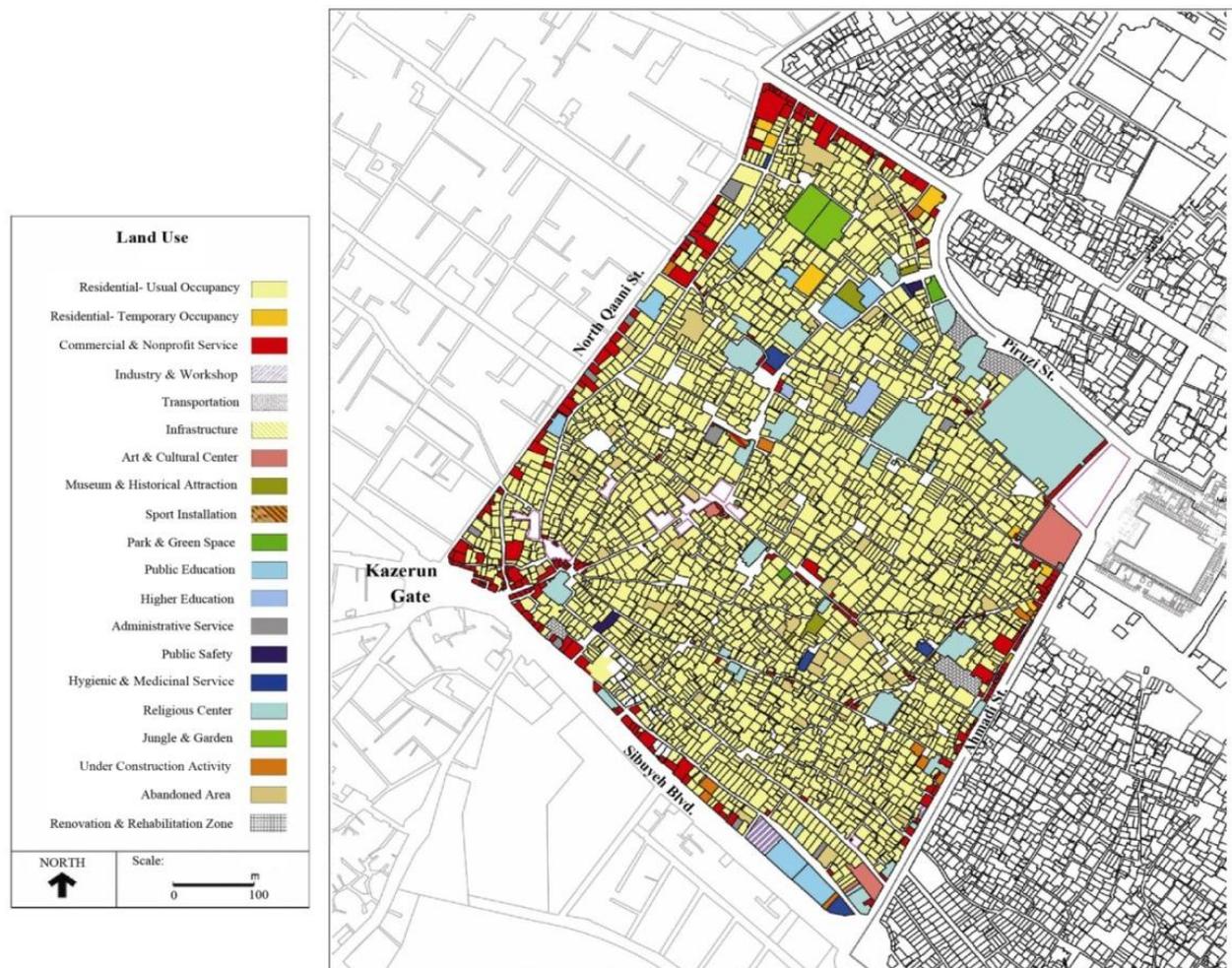


Figure 2. Land use of district of *Sang-e Siah* (redrawing by authors, source: Pardaraz, 2004)

Table 2. General properties for the area under study (source: Pardaraz, 2004 and authors' survey)

	Physical	Economic	Social	Participation
Access Network	1.lack of roadway access 2.lack of appropriate hierarchy 3.inequality of accesses	- low residents income - high custody load - common ownerships	- high population density - accepting migrants (attracting villagers and migrants seeking for job)	- lack of people's awareness and recognition regarding the district
Land use	1.high density of residents on the outer edge despite deficient variety and its number within the district 2.high level of residential usage 3.deficient in per-capita and diversity of land uses	- low price for estates especially in the inner parts of the district - weak in-district commercial units - strong commercial marginal units and their urban and regional performance	- population instability and inconstancy - presence of different semi-cultures - high illiteracy rate	- cluttering in neighborhood system and lack of identity thereof - people's lack of intent for participation in reconstruction or renovation of the district
Buildings Quality	1.Quality reduction of land use from outside inwards to inside of the district 2.Buildings density and condensed texture 3.Eroded textures			
Infrastructures and Equipments	1.Inability to provide services and give facilities due to type of access network 2.Weak urban infrastructures, installations, and equipments			

Introduction of the area under study: district of *sang-e-siah*, Shiraz

Sang-e-Siah is one of 11 old districts of Shiraz located in westernmost part of the old city. The name of this district is adopted from the black monument stone that is attributed to Sibuyeh, one of the greatest philosophers and scientists of the *Arabic Nahv* (Arabic syntax) of the 2nd Hijri century, is located in this district. The area is confined from south and southwest to the fort of the old city, from north to the districts of *Meydan-e-Shah*, and from east to district of *Sar-e-doزدak*. The district has a treasure of invaluable areas and elements.

The urban texture of *Sang-e-Siah* and its adjacent district i.e. *Sar-e-Bagh* are considered among the most important historical old-textured quarters of Shiraz (Pardaraz, 2004).

Another characteristic for the district of *Sang-e-Siah* is its high residential usage (Figure 2). It should also be added that as one goes from outer sectors into the district, the quality of land use is reduced, and inner structure of the texture are highly in contrast with the outer edge in quality terms. This should be distinguished from erosion, as erosion is a more general issue and includes characteristics like lack of activity diversity and low physical, social, and economic standards. Furthermore, erosion is in itself an "effect" not "cause", and hence it is considered as an "indication" of disease, and it is not, in itself, a "cause" for texture disease. In terms of buildings' materials, however, the texture is in good condition, and virtually all residential units have been built from heavy-duty materials. But the difference lies in how buildings are preserved, in such a way that in some parts, financial poverty in some parts does not even permit reconstruction of ruined walls. Thus, the

compressed and condensed urban texture inside the district is exposed to physical (and subsequently social/economic) damages. Deserted and destructed buildings, which represent general characteristics of old textures, are also visible within the texture of *Sang-e-Siah*, which cause social and hygienic insecurities, thus raising the rate original population escape from it. The overall characteristics of *Sang-e-Siah* are specified in Table 2

Evaluating outer and inner factors affecting the area under study

Outer and inner factors affecting *Sang-e-Siah* district are investigated via an evaluation matrix of outer and inner environment.

Step 1: Determining outer and inner factors affecting Sang-e-Siah district: Once outer and inner factors are considered, identified factors are placed in the evaluation matrix. The number of determined factor is in the range of 10-20, which involves pros and cons of *Sang-e-Siah* district. First, advantages and then disadvantages of this district are placed in the matrix.

Step 2: Determining level of importance for inner and outer factors: In this step are given weights (coefficients) to factors listed in the matrix of outer/inner agents according to importance of each one. These weights vary over the range of 0 (insignificant) to 1 (very important). Relative importance is a factor in urban revitalization planning. Strength points are given more weights (compared to weakness points). Sum of these weights has to be 1.

Step 3: Determining ratings for outer/inner factors: In this step each outer/inner factor in *Sang-e-Siah* district is given a rating of 1 to 4 according to their strengths and weaknesses. 1 denotes essential weakness, 2

denote little weakness, 3 indicates strength, and 4 denotes a very high strength of each factor for *Sang-e-Siah*.

Step 4: Determinin final ratings for outer/inner factors: In this stage, each factor's weight is initially multiplied by the rating related to that factor to produce the final rating. Next, final ratings for all factors present in the matrix are added up together to produce the factors' final rating sum.

Step 5: Evaluation of outer/inner factors: Disregarding the number of factors that are involved in the evaluation matrix, the sum for final ratings for the district will vary over the range of 1-4. If sum of the final ratings are less than 2.5, this means that the district has weaknesses regarding factors mentioned.

If this number is over 2.5, indicates that the district is strong in terms of the factors.

Devising initial strategies of urban revitalization program in *sang-e-siah*

Within the framework of devising strategies, the evaluation step includes tools that depend on information obtained from previous stages (evaluation of inner and outer environment) and compare outer opportunities/threats with inner weaknesses/ strengths. The procedure of comparing inner and outer factors plays a very important and determining part in formulation of initial strategies. This is why outer and inner factors within the threats matrix, opportunities, strengths, and weaknesses are compared to devise feasible strategies (Table 3).

Table 3. evaluation matrix for inner and outer factors(source: authors' study and survey)

Outer factors	Weight	Rating	Score	Inner factors	Weight	Rating	Score	
Opportunities	Regulations concerning conflicts in routes network	0.04	3.00	0.12	Using unstable materials in buildings	0.05	2.00	0.10
	Regulations regarding renovation of buildings	0.04	3.00	0.12	Lack of green space	0.04	1.50	0.06
	Determination of custodies to intervene in reconstruction of the district	0.07	4.00	0.28	Lack of recreation-sports spaces	0.04	1.50	0.06
	Hygienic and treatment centers in districts	0.04	3.00	0.12	Deficient public services in the area	0.04	2.50	0.10
	Educational centers located at nearby districts	0.04	3.00	0.12	Lack of cultural spaces	0.04	1.00	0.04
	Holy places around the district	0.03	3.00	0.09	Lack of educational spaces	0.03	2.00	0.06
	Relative consistency of buildings heights in the district and surrounding areas	0.01	2.00	0.02	Narrow and tight access	0.04	1.00	0.04
	District's downtown location	0.05	3.00	0.15	Lack of open urban space	0.03	1.00	0.03
	Cultural commonalities especially religious ones among residents	0.03	3.00	0.09	Lack of appropriate construction pattern	0.02	2.00	0.04
	Using state and foreign loans	0.07	3.00	0.21	Residential units with low areas	0.04	2.50	0.10
Threats	Gentle slope of area lands	0.04	3.00	0.12	Deficient urban installations and equipment	0.04	2.00	0.08
	Various deciding organizations regarding district's urban affairs	0.05	2.00	0.10	Lack of hygienic-medicinal centers	0.03	2.00	0.06
	Inconsistency among legislated regulations regarding relevant organizations	0.05	2.00	0.10	Using several residential units as depots	0.02	2.50	0.05
	Impossibility of attracting public participation with high economic power	0.08	1.00	0.08	Low employment rate	0.04	1.50	0.06
	Lack of reference groups in the district	0.06	3.00	0.18	Informal and fake jobs of district's inhabitants	0.04	1.50	0.06
	Non-associable nature of the society	0.06	2.0	0.12	Inhabitation of low-income and poor people in the district	0.04	1.50	0.06
	Lack of inclination for financing in districts afflicted with declining	0.08	2.00	0.16	Lack of security and social safety	0.05	2.50	0.13
	Negative perception of city inhabitants regarding the district	0.08	2.00	0.16	Aggregation of unfit people in <i>sang-e-siah</i> district	0.03	2.50	0.08
	Tendency for destroying the district	0.08	1.00	0.08	High household dimension	0.03	2.00	0.06
	Sum	1.00		2.42	Decreased district population	0.03	2.50	0.08
Strengths				Lack of sense of belonging to place and people's inclination for inhabitation out of the district	0.03	2.00	0.06	
				Low visual quality	0.05	2.00	0.10	
				Environmental pollutions	0.04	2.00	0.08	
				Lack of inhabitants' unrespectiveness onto environmental quality	0.04	2.50	0.10	
				Social integration in the district	0.04	3.00	0.12	
				Presence of initial kernel of district centers	0.04	4.00	0.16	
				Presence of identifying neighborhood elements	0.04	3.50	0.14	
				Sum	1.00		2.10	

attractiveness score is calculated by summing attractiveness scores of every column of the matrix for quantitative urban strategic planning. The final attractiveness score indicates which strategy is more attractive. Obvious difference between final attractiveness scores indicates desirability of a strategy in contrast to another strategy.

Stage 6: Prioritizing acceptable strategies: In this stage, using frequency curves and failure points of final attractiveness scores of the district's urban revitalization planning strategies, priority of every strategy is specified. For this purpose, frequency chart of final scores for strategies is first sketched, and then priority of each strategy is determined.

After specifying the final attractiveness score, urban revitalization strategies were determined using quantitative strategic planning and its priority via frequency curves and failure points of strategies in the framework of two priorities (Figure 3).

Strategies for the first priority: strategy 2, strategy 3, strategy 6, strategy 7, strategy 9, strategy 12, strategy 13, strategy 14, strategy 15, strategy 18, strategy 1, strategy 5, strategy 10, strategy 16.

Strategies for the second priority: strategy 4, strategy 8, strategy 11, strategy 17.

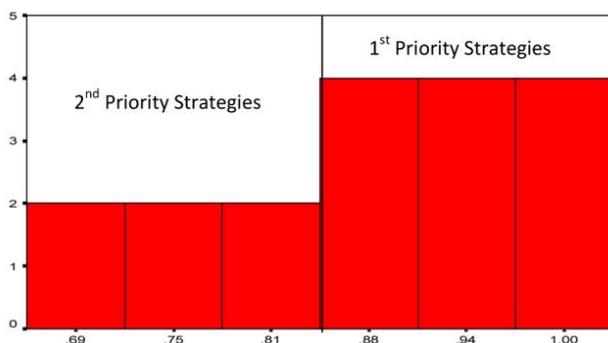


Figure 3. frequency curve and failure points of urban revitalization planning strategies for *Sang-e-Siah* district

CONCLUSION

In its trend of development and adaptability, strategic planning has adjusted some of its principles, thus approaching theoretical subjects, empirical plans, execution method, and partnership. Strategic planning is a systematic method for making decisions and doing activities in terms of shaping and directing a system, as well as its functionality and causes. What distinguishes strategic planning from other types of planning, involves methods for gathering selective information, targeted analysis and goal determination, participation of main decision-makers, explanation and evaluation of choices, considering future consequences for decisions and existing affairs, and most of all, emphasis on successful execution of plans. This process is cyclic and does not follow a linear procedure (Bryson, 2002).

In the process of strategic planning for urban revitalization, first an analysis of different dimensions of the urban area is provided for relative identification of that area. Next, internal and external factors are considered. As this procedure goes on, goals, strategies and policies suitable with that district's conditions are codified in order

to realize the urban revitalization program. Ultimately, measures are suggested with the purpose of making the codified goals and strategies operational.

The urban revitalization plan in *Sang-e-Siah* district suggests that using appropriate goals and strategies, very suitable life conditions could be provided in this district along with areas around it. However, utilizing the urban revitalization procedure sometimes faces complications, given the following circumstances:

1-Decision-makers' view of programs for opposing urban decline is one-dimensional and mostly physical; thus paying insufficient attention to the mutual effects of association among operators, decision-makers, and users are inevitable.

2-Given lack of inhabitants' tendency for financial participation in decline-afflicted districts due to low economic power, creating housing units, though appropriate, is not a motivation for their stay. Thus, people other than local inhabitants will inhabit them.

3-Positive and negative predicted and unpredicted effects that any urban revitalization plan might have on adjacent zones, makes it inevitable to study these areas.

4-Even if it is efficient to apply urban revitalization in *Sang-e-Siah*, there might be winners as well as losers therein. So attempts must be made to trade off these dissimilar results and identify those groups that benefit from urban revitalization of this district or incur a loss.

Furthermore, several major issues might come up in Iran's urban revitalization planning that could be summarized as follows:

5- Lack of a macro national strategy and insufficient financing and governmental support for the urban revitalization program.

6-Instability in Iranian urban management on the one hand and long-term urban revitalization programs on the other hand, might lead to problems for fulfillment them.

7-Lack of urban decision-makers' commitment to execution propounded plans in the form of urban programming documents, which could be generalized for executing urban revitalization plans too.

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