Renewal Strategies of Guangfunan District from the Perspective of Tactical Urbanism

A Dissertation Submitted for the Degree of Master

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Abstract

Against the broader backdrop of revitalization and renewal, the transformation of historical and cultural districts is undergoing a cognitive shift from the binary opposition between preservation and development to a more integrated approach. Traditional top-down planning and design methods face inherent limitations in balancing heritage conservation with dynamic revitalization. The challenges encountered in recent years during Guangzhou's revitalization practices highlight the urgency of adopting more refined, diversified, and culturally integrated design strategies.

Emerging in recent years, Tactical Urbanism, as a bottom-up, small-scale renewal approach, offers new perspectives for addressing these challenges. This study takes the Guangfunan Historical and Cultural District in Guangzhou as a case to systematically explore the adaptive strategies and practical pathways of Tactical Urbanism in the renewal of historic districts.

First, the paper outlines the theoretical framework, movement trajectory, and practical methodologies of Tactical Urbanism through literature review and case analysis. It extracts its epistemological and methodological breakthroughs beyond conventional normative approaches and reveals its mechanisms in driving long-term transformation, facilitating broader dissemination, and promoting pluralistic collaboration. By examining representative domestic and international cases, the study summarizes the core advantages of Tactical Urbanism in historic district renewal—namely light intervention, incrementalism, and innovation-distilling practical methodologies that inform the subsequent empirical research.

Second, in the empirical section, focusing on the Guangfunan Historical and Cultural District, the study analyzes its complex conditions from three dimensions: physical space, social groups, and industrial development. It identifies existing tensions, such as spatial conflicts along the streets, gaps in cultural cognition, and stagnation in industrial upgrading. Based on these findings, the study applies Tactical Urbanism to derive renewal strategies and develop a tailored toolbox of tactical interventions. Finally, the study presents a design proposal for a selected key node as part of the solution.

Overall, this research innovatively integrates Western Tactical Urbanism theory with local urban contexts, constructing an operational framework that balances the principles of historical preservation with contemporary functional needs. It is an ideal complement to traditional planning approaches and provides insight into resolving the longstanding tension between

conservation and development in historic districts. The paper follows a "theory – case – methodology – application" logic, using tactical thinking to envision the future renewal of Guangzhou's historic districts while offering a reference for other urban regeneration practices in China.

Keywords: Tactical Urbanism; Guangfunan; Historical and Cultural District; Revitalization and Renewal

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Chapter 1 Introduction

This chapter serves as the theoretical foundation of the dissertation by reviewing the evolution and practical challenges of historic and cultural district renewal. It traces the shift from "static preservation" to "revitalization-oriented renewal", highlighting the tension between preservation and development, and defines the core concepts of tactical urbanism and historic and cultural districts. The chapter ultimately aims to adopt tactical urbanism as a methodological tool to explore localized, incremental renewal strategies, using Guangzhou's Guangfunan as an empirical case to test the approach's applicability and scalability.

1.1 Research Background and Problem Statement

1.1.1 New Challenges in Historical and Cultural District Renewal

In the early stages of China's preservation efforts for historical and cultural districts, a "rigid conservation approach" model was widely adopted. This approach focused on the static retention of physical form while overlooking these areas' social and cultural functions as "living heritage." As a result, many districts experienced functional hollowing-out, accelerated population aging, and even "destructive preservation." In economically developed regions, driven by market interests, large-scale demolition and reconstruction took place, destroying vast amounts of historical and cultural heritage. Historic districts gradually declined in less developed regions due to limited funding, weak implementation, and low public awareness[1]. For example, in the early preservation stage in Sanfang Qixiang, Fuzhou, the government relocated original residents and reconstructed the area into an imitation-ancient commercial street. Although the architectural shells were preserved, the original neighborhood networks and vernacular street culture were severed, drawing criticism as "destructive renovation"[2]. Scholars have gradually realized that the rigid logic of frozen protection fails to respond to the needs of dynamic urban development and instead accelerates the "loss of social vitality" of historic districts.

Since the 21st century, scholars have proposed the concept of "revitalization and renewal," which emphasizes balancing material preservation with economic vitality, social equity, and cultural continuity. Historic districts are now understood as "dynamic living organisms" whose value lies in built form and the spirit of place embedded with collective memory. This shift is reflected in an integrated "preservation–utilization–regeneration logic." For instance, Tianzi Block in Shanghai achieved functional hybridity and social inclusion through bottom-up, incremental renewal that preserved original residential life while introducing creative industries[3].

In light of the large-scale demolition dilemma under the "new normal" of historic district renewal, scholars have advocated "micro-circulation" and "incremental" strategies—promoting small-scale, low-intervention renewal approaches. The Yangmeizhuxie Street project in Beijing follows this model by facilitating population resettlement through negotiated agreements, implementing partial restoration, and functional substitution while incorporating cultural and creative elements to rejuvenate the district. This approach emphasizes "temporal elasticity" and "process-oriented planning," whereby initial government investment leverages private capital to avoid one-time investment risks and adapt to the complexities of old urban areas[4].

This cognitive shift in Chinese urban scholarship signifies a paradigm transition from the binary of preservation versus development. The earlier model of static preservation, which overlooked socio-cultural dimensions, resulted in functional and social imbalances. The emergence of revitalization and renewal reflects a move toward dynamic and integrated regeneration. Scholars aim to create a flexible balance between material conservation and functional iteration through micro-scale, incremental, and small-scope interventions. These approaches avoid the social risks of large-scale redevelopment, provide institutional entry points for multi-actor participation, and help ensure the long-term vitality of historic districts[5]. This shift not only reconstructs the value framework of historic districts—from "heritage containers" to "living systems"—but also responds to emerging urban challenges in high-density cities, such as spatial justice and community resilience, providing theoretical guidance for historic district renewal in megacities like Guangzhou.

1.1.2 Implementation Dilemmas in Guangzhou

In revitalizing historical and cultural districts, Guangzhou faces several real-world dilemmas, with the core tension arising from the value conflict between preservation and development. Take the case of Yongqing Block on Enning Road: the first-phase project was criticized for excessive commercialization, which led to the displacement of original residents and weakened the community's cultural authenticity, a phenomenon scholars described as "gentrification-oriented renovation"[6]. Similarly, the renewal of the Guangfunan Historical and Cultural District revealed contradictions between the expansion of the garment wholesale industry and the preservation of historic character, reflecting a split between "preservation-first" and "economic-driven" development goals[7]. This value disjunction essentially stems from an insufficient understanding of the dynamic nature of living heritage in current planning paradigms. Protection policies often rigidly confine physical spatial forms yet fail to reconcile these with the demands of functional transformation under market logic. The Guangzhou

municipal government deepened its understanding of living heritage as policy practice progressed. Policy orientation has shifted from an exclusive focus on physical conservation to also accommodating developmental dynamics, aiming to balance the relationship between preservation and growth: expanding funding channels, refining object-specific preservation targets, reconciling competing interests, encouraging industrial and spatial functional evolution as well as social value enhancement; integrating historical and contemporary architecture; strengthening the cultural role of heritage spaces; and establishing assessment systems to support adaptive management mechanisms—all toward exploring a sustainable pathway for living heritage preservation and development[8]. Nonetheless, three significant challenges remain and demand further research and resolution.

First, the multi-value evaluation controversy has intensified the renewal decision-making complexity. Historic districts carry diverse cultural, economic, and social values, but different stakeholders assign conflicting priorities. While the government emphasizes cultural and economic value and seeks to achieve both via tourism development, residents are more concerned with social value, fearing that commercialization will degrade the quality of life and erode cultural authenticity. Due to the absence of a scientific evaluation system, it remains challenging to quantify and balance these values, leading to frequent disputes and increasing the difficulty of policy formulation and implementation. This divergence undermines both goal coherence and the sustainability of renewal outcomes.

Second, institutional barriers in the implementation pathway have limited renewal effectiveness. The government-led renewal model faces challenges in funding, policy execution, and public participation. Financially, it relies excessively on public funds and residents' contributions, with weak mechanisms for private capital engagement. On the policy level, the lack of operational details for innovative tools hinders effective policy delivery. Regarding participation, decision-making processes are imbalanced: residents' concerns lack effective dialogue with planning rationality, leading to a disconnect between spatial design and user needs.

Third, the lack of coordination across spatial scales has led to fragmentation. Aligning the renewal goals across the "district cluster – block unit – neighborhood" system remains a central challenge. The district cluster level focuses on holistic and systemic cultural placemaking and linking historic districts with the urban context. The goal at the block unit level is to fuse traditional spatial fabric with modern functionality, creating an authentic and integral urban mosaic. At the neighborhood level, fine-grained design is needed to address residents' needs

and cultivate locally distinctive community spaces. These challenges call for process innovation throughout the planning-to-implementation cycle to balance preservation and development dynamically[5].

These challenges operate at three interrelated levels: value assessment, institutional implementation, and spatial coordination, each posing distinct yet interconnected obstacles to sustainable historic district renewal. In 2022, Liwan District in Guangzhou launched comprehensive revitalization efforts across 14 historical and cultural districts, aiming to establish the Liwan Culture-Commerce-Tourism Vitality Zone (Figure 1-1). This initiative marks a new phase in Guangzhou's approach to historic district renewal. One of the key purposes of this paper is to draw lessons from past experiences and explore new theoretical frameworks to address these evolving challenges.

Figure 1-1 Liwan Culture-Commerce-Tourism Vitality Zone Planning Diagram (Source: Reference[9])

1.2 Definition of Core Concepts

1.2.1 Tactical Urbanism

The concept of Tactical Urbanism was systematically articulated in 2011 by American planners Mike Lydon and Anthony Garcia (Figure 1-2). According to their combined perspectives, Tactical Urbanism refers to an urban design approach that leverages short-term, flexible, and low-cost projects or interventions to trigger change in a phased manner. It aims to address local planning challenges, build social capital and organizational capacity, and ultimately achieve long-term goals—enhancing the quality of urban space, neighborhood vitality, and public service value.

These interventions may be initiated by citizens or promoted by government entities, often supported by local communities. They typically operate without altering existing infrastructure and are characterized by low risk and high return while emphasizing sustainability standards. Lydon emphasizes that the essence of Tactical Urbanism lies in "using small-scale actions to leverage systemic change." Its core logic is to test the feasibility of long-term plans through short-term implementation, thereby reducing urban regeneration's social and economic risks [10].

Tactical Urbanism reconstructs urban renewal pathways through the interlinked dimensions of space, time, and actors. Spatially, it focuses on activating small-scale public spaces (e.g., vacant lots, overly broad streets) and emphasizes human scale and everyday life. Temporally, it accumulates momentum for long-term transformation through short-term actions. In terms of actors, it encourages collaborative participation among government, market, and community sectors.

Since historical and cultural districts carry unique cultural values while facing the need for transformation, they have become key urban renewal areas requiring fresh and effective theoretical and practical strategies. Employing the well-developed, widely applied, and theoretically robust framework of Tactical Urbanism to study the renewal of these districts is thus both necessary and significant.

Figure 1-2 Selected Publications on Tactical Urbanism (Source: Reference[11])

1.2.2 Historical and Cultural Districts

The term historical and cultural district is unique to the Chinese context. It originated with a 1986 notice from the State Council announcing the second batch of National Famous Historical and Cultural Cities. Before that, such areas were referred to as historical and cultural conservation zones. In 2002, the Law of the People's Republic of China on the Protection of

Cultural Relics officially introduced the term, which has since become the focus of extensive scholarly attention. Theoretical research on historical and cultural districts encompasses regulatory frameworks, conservation principles, and various multidimensional perspectives. In terms of regulation, China gradually established a comprehensive system between 1982 and 2015, forming a three-tiered protection framework that includes cultural relics, historical and cultural districts, and famous historical cities. Conservation principles emphasize authenticity and dynamic preservation and also address aspects such as integrity and public participation[12]

In line with global shifts in World Heritage discourse, Chinese conservation practice has evolved from form-based spatial protection to a value-centered paradigm. This approach advocates safeguarding cultural meaning as the core of conservation and is increasingly influential domestically and internationally. It involves three interconnected processes: value identification (e.g., regional identity, environmental context), value continuity (e.g., material preservation, narrative documentation), and value activation (e.g., adaptive reuse, commercial-cultural integration)[13].

1.3 Research Objectives and Significance

1.3.1 Research Objectives

This study aims to explore localized pathways for theoretical adaptation and implementation of Tactical Urbanism by tracing its core tenets — light intervention, incrementalism, and innovation — concerning the dual contradiction of preservation and development in historical and cultural district renewal and the challenge of coordinating multiple competing values. It pursues three progressive goals:

First, to trace the evolution of Tactical Urbanism and distill its methodological features through analysis of representative domestic and international cases, thereby offering theoretical support for the renewal of historical and cultural districts.

Second, to develop a renewal approach that balances material heritage preservation with the dynamic transmission of cultural vitality and to introduce applicable strategies and tools from Tactical Urbanism in response to specific challenges such as value conflicts, unclear implementation pathways, and mismatched spatial scales in current renewal practices.

Third, to test the adaptability of Tactical Urbanism in local settings by applying it to the Guangfunan Historical and Cultural District in Guangzhou (hereafter referred to as Guangfunan), validating theory through tactical design solutions, and developing a replicable model for incremental renewal. The goal is an innovative response to the enduring dilemma between preservation and development in historic district revitalization.

1.3.2 Research Significance

The research offers valuable insights for both academic inquiry and practical application.

At the academic level, it systematically reviews the theoretical framework and practical tools of Western Tactical Urbanism, enriching domestic scholarship on bottom-up and self-organized urban renewal strategies and expanding the conceptual boundaries of historical and cultural district conservation.

At the practical level, it responds to entrenched contradictions in China's historic district renewal: the disconnect between preservation and development goals, the difficulty reconciling diverse stakeholder values, and the breakdown of coordination at micro-spatial scales. The study advocates a shift from "blueprint-based planning" to "tactical intervention thinking," providing a methodological alternative to the binary dilemma between static preservation and destructive development.

By integrating globally tested Tactical Urbanism practices with Chinese urban realities, this research seeks to promote a paradigm shift from static conservation to dynamic activation and offer a transferable reference for the sustainable and high-quality renewal of urban cultural heritage in the new era.

1.4 Research Methodology and Framework

1.4.1 Research Methods

1.4.1.1 Literature Review

This review forms the study's theoretical foundation by analyzing domestic and international research on Tactical Urbanism and the renewal of historical districts. It examines core principles like short-term interventions and public participation, comparing regional differences. It also analyzes official regulatory frameworks to establish boundaries and renewal constraints, providing a policy foundation for strategy development.

1.4.1.2 Field Research

Field research in the Guangfunan Historical and Cultural District uses both quantitative analysis (building density, space ratios, traffic patterns) and qualitative methods (participant observation). This approach highlights spatial inefficiencies and user needs, providing a comprehensive understanding of both physical space and social behavior.

1.4.1.3 Case Study

A case library of domestic and international precedents informs design strategies. Domestic cases include Beishan Village in Zhuhai and Hualou Street in Wuhan, while international examples include the Cavallerizza Reale in Italy and the Heritage Journey Project

in Santiago, Chile. These cases provide insights into civic engagement and adaptation of Tactical Urbanism approaches.

1.4.1.4 Interview Research

A mixed-methods approach gathers stakeholder perceptions through semi-structured interviews and surveys. Interviews with local chambers of commerce and long-term residents explore preservation–development trade-offs, while surveys target business owners and workers to assess needs related to industrial upgrading, space co-utilization, and cultural continuity.

1.4.2 Research Framework

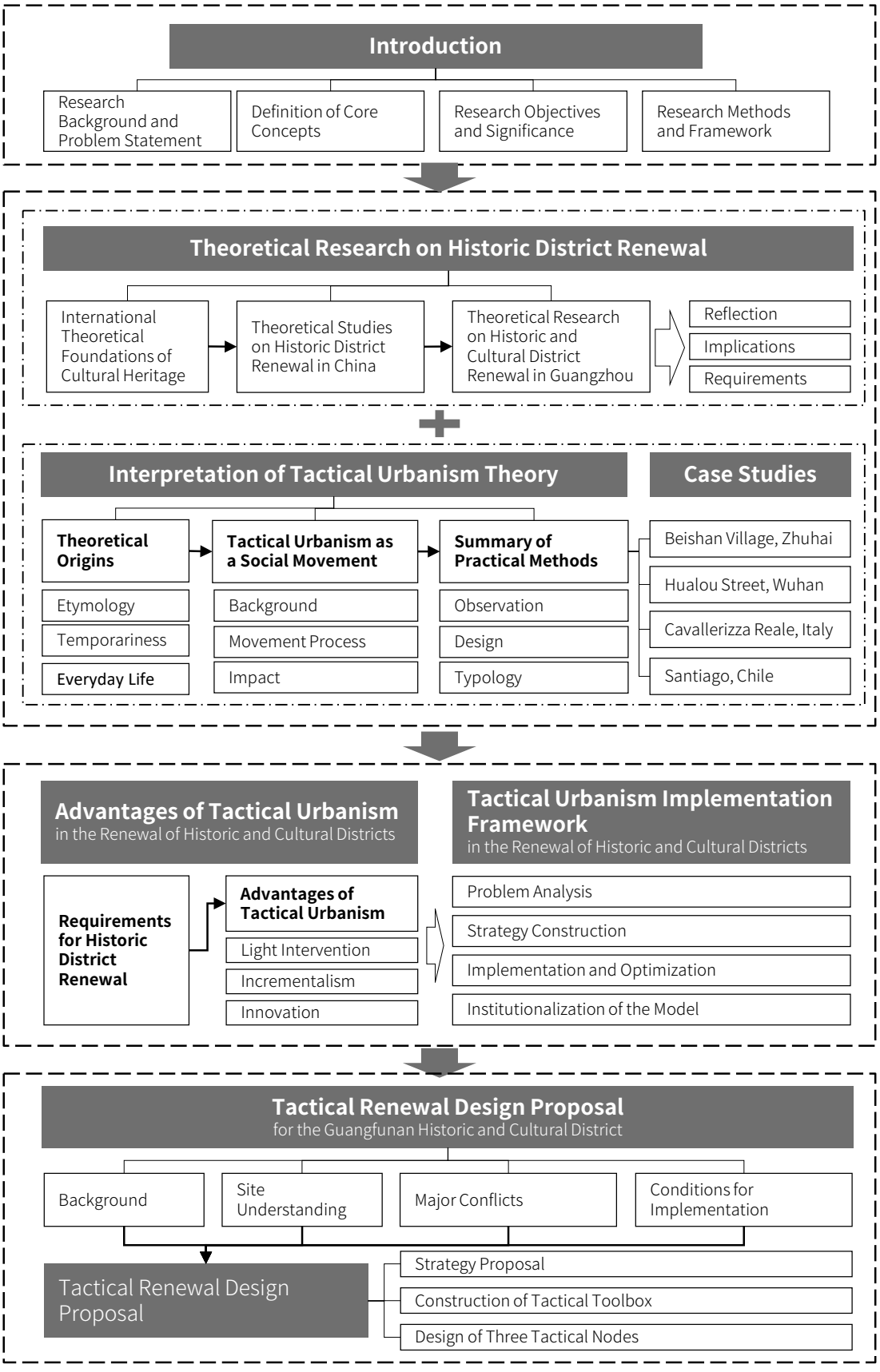

Figure 1-3 Framework (Source: Author)

Chapter 2 Related Foundational Studies

Building on the previous chapter's discussion, this chapter constructs a theoretical framework for the empirical analysis and strategy formulation that follows. It reviews domestic and international theories on historic and cultural district renewal, traces the evolution of renewal concepts, and aligns them with Guangzhou's local practices. It also examines the origins and approaches of tactical urbanism, establishing theoretical linkages with historic district renewal. Through integrated case studies, the chapter highlights the theoretical advantages of tactical urbanism and develops a tailored implementation framework for historic and cultural districts.

2.1 Theories of Historical and Cultural District Renewal

2.1.1 Heritage Conservation: Global Theoretical Foundations

2.1.1.1 Evolution of International Heritage Conservation Theory

The international development of cultural heritage conservation theory has been a long process, with key concepts gradually consolidated through major charters and recommendations. These have provided valuable global experience and can be divided into three phases (Table 2-1).

In the initial conceptualization phase (1930s–early 1970s), international awareness of heritage protection began to emerge.The 1931 Athens Charter for the Restoration of Historic Monuments first introduced the idea of protecting areas surrounding historic sites, initiating the concept of regional conservation. In 1933, the Athens Charter referenced "Historic Areas," though the definition was limited to protected buildings and their surroundings.The 1964 Venice Charter marked a breakthrough by proposing the "Historical Monuments" concept, extending heritage protection to cities, rural areas, and ordinary buildings that reflect civilization or historical events. This laid a solid foundation for the expansion of global heritage theories.

In the systematization phase (mid-1970s–late 1980s), the 1976 Nairobi Recommendation established the core concept of "Historic Areas" at the meso level, including prehistoric sites, old city quarters, historic towns, and villages.The 1987 Washington Charter advanced the concept of "Historic Urban Areas," emphasizing protection at the urban scale and laying the groundwork for heritage conservation theory at the meso level[14].

In the diversification phase (1990s–early 2000s), theoretical approaches to historic district renewal became more dynamic and diversified. Emerging concepts such as incremental renewal, prudent transformation, and urban healing theory broke away from traditional static preservation, emphasizing the revitalization of function and meaning.The 1996 International

Symposium on Historic District Conservation and subsequent policy developments enriched the global theoretical system[15].

Table 2-1 Summary of Major International Charters on Historic District Protection (Source: Author)

Year	Document	Concept Introduced	Definition
1931	Athens Charter for the Restoration of Historic Monuments	Surrounding area of heritage sites	Early concept of regional conservation, focusing on areas surrounding sites.
1933	Athens Charter	Historic Areas	Sites and surrounding environments of protected historic buildings.
1964	Venice Charter	Historical Monument	Urban/rural settings bear witness to civilization, including ordinary buildings.
1976	Nairobi Recommendation	Historic Areas	Covers prehistoric sites, towns, old urban quarters, villages, etc.
1987	Washington Charter	Historic Urban Areas	Urban-scale historic towns with cultural value in both natural and built environments.

2.1.1.2 Historic Urban Landscape (HUL)

With rapid global urbanization, historic cities face new challenges, such as tension between globalization and local development and shocks from fast-paced urban growth. Traditional legal frameworks have proven insufficient. The 1999 Vienna Memorandum introduced the concept of the Historic Urban Landscape (HUL) concept, emphasizing modern development's impact on citywide historical context and calling for updated strategies. 2011, the official HUL Recommendation was released, promoting public participation, multi-stakeholder collaboration, and integrated heritage planning.

The HUL framework has attracted growing interest in China. Scholars like Zhang Song suggest that it supports integrated protection and preservation of historical cityscapes[16], while Zhang Bing notes its alignment with China's protection challenges, particularly the need for relational understanding and systemic conservation[17]. HUL offers important insight: historic city protection must go beyond static heritage elements and address dynamic development needs.The HUL approach represents a new trend in cultural heritage theory. It shifts from individual monument preservation to a holistic urban environment, from static conservation to dynamic integration, and from passive protection to embedding heritage within urban cultural and economic development to achieve sustainability.

2.1.2 Theories of Historical and Cultural District Renewal in China

2.1.2.1 Three Stages of Theoretical Development

Theoretical studies on historic district renewal in China have closely paralleled urbanization, evolving through three stages:

In the initial stage (2000–2007), research was limited and focused mainly on heritage value assessment and case-based protection experience. This laid a foundation for future scholarship.

The rapid development stage (2008–2012) saw a surge in research output and diversification of content. Studies addressed renewal strategies, policy systems, and multiscale planning approaches with increased quantitative and empirical research.

In the deepening stage (2013–present), research became more people-centered and multidisciplinary, reflecting a shift in urban development toward quality and resource efficiency. There is a greater focus on community participation and social impact.

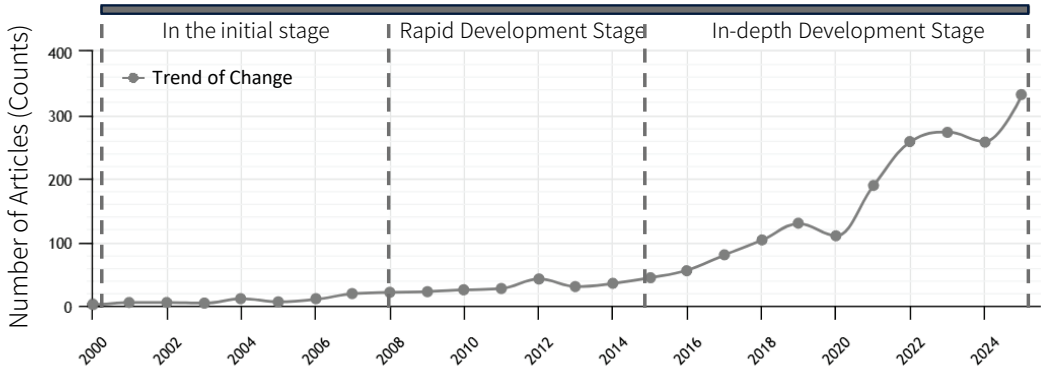

Figure 2-1 Annual Trends in Publications on Historical and Cultural Districts (Source: Author)

Research has focused on four primary areas: clarifying concepts and improving regulatory frameworks, especially around the evolution of "historical and cultural districts" and authenticity principles; exploring multidimensional protection, including architectural restoration, cultural activation, landscape coordination, and value assessment systems; proposing context-sensitive renewal strategies, customized by district type (e.g., commercial, industrial, mixed-use), with emphasis on micro-renewal and dynamic protection; innovating technical approaches, integrating digital tools, GIS-based evaluations, and stakeholder coordination mechanisms under a human-centered sustainable development perspective [12].

2.1.2.2 Exploration of Five Implementation Models

Various implementation models have taken shape in years of renewal practices across China's historical and cultural districts. These models differ significantly in terms of organizational structure and participant composition, which directly affects the effectiveness of their implementation. Based on practical experiences, five common types of implementation

models can be summarized (Table 2-2)[18].

Model 1: Government-led, large-scale project implementation. In this model, the government is the primary organizer and executor, advancing district renewal through significant infrastructure and public facility projects. It emphasizes the government's dominant role, aiming to enhance overall district quality through comprehensive, top-down investment.

Model 2: Government-guided, enterprise-implemented. The government provides policy incentives and financial support to encourage enterprise participation. Enterprises take the lead in executing specific renewal projects, while the government offers policy backing and regulatory oversight. This model leverages market resources and professional capacity.

Model 3: Government-led with democratic participation and micro-renewal implementation. The government continues to lead but actively encourages the involvement of community residents and civil society actors. Through small-scale, gradual interventions, this model incrementally improves neighborhood environments and facilities, focusing on enhancing residents' quality of life.

Model 4: Government-guided, resident-led. In this case, residents take the lead in project implementation under government policy support and funding guidance. It features bottom-up initiative and substantial flexibility, with residents determining the specific direction of renewal based on local needs.

Model 5: Top-down and bottom-up coordination with multi-stakeholder collaboration. This approach involves joint participation from government agencies, enterprises, community residents, and social organizations, fostering collective action and resource sharing. It is suitable for complex contexts that demand integrated, multi-actor cooperation.

These models continually evolve and refine through real-world application, offering diverse pathways for protecting and revitalizing historical and cultural districts[18].

Table 2-2 Common Implementation Models in China (Source: Author)

Implementation Model	**Organization**	**Participants**	**Features**	**Applicable Context**
Government-led, large-scale project	Government-led	Government	Large-scale, systematic	Weak infrastructure, overall quality improvement needed
Government-guided, enterprise-led	Government-guided	Enterprises	Professional, market-driven	Rich enterprise resources, strong market potential

Table 2-2 Common Implementation Models in China (Continued)

Implementation Model	Organization	Participants	Features	Applicable Context
Government-led, community-participatory micro-renewal	Government-led	Community residents	Small-scale, incremental	High community engagement, strong neighborhood cohesion
Government-guided, resident-led	Government-guided	Community residents	Bottom-up, flexible	High resident autonomy, precise local needs
Multi-party collaboration	Multi-stakeholder collaboration	Government, enterprises, residents, NGOs	Collaborative, comprehensive	Complex scenarios requiring multi-actor coordination

2.1.2.3 Summary

China's research on historical and cultural district renewal has entered a new phase characterized by several transformations: from material-focused preservation to integrated, multidimensional renewal, incorporating culture, function, and community participation; from large-scale reconstruction to micro-renewal and point-based conservation, balancing historical character with vitality; from government-led models to multi-actor participation, including residents, enterprises, and NGOs; from focusing solely on space to emphasizing human values, promoting sustainable development through cultural continuity and public engagement. These trends reflect a maturing integration of theory and practice, providing new directions for future renewal efforts.

2.1.3 Theories of Historical and Cultural District Renewal in Guangzhou

2.1.3.1 Overview of Research on Guangzhou's Historical and Cultural Districts

Guangzhou has a history of over 2,200 years as an established city. Known as a millennia-old commercial hub, it is not only the origin of the Maritime Silk Road, the birthplace of modern Chinese revolutions, and a frontier of reform and opening-up but also the cradle and stronghold of Cantonese culture. Since being designated as a national historical and cultural city in 1982, Guangzhou has continuously explored the targets, priorities, and systems for its protection. Between 1983 and 1988, a series of plans and regulations were successively released, including the Guangzhou Historical and Cultural City Protection and Urban Landscape Planning, the Guangzhou Master Plan (1981–2000), and the Implementation Rules for Urban Planning

Management, which helped gradually refine the city's heritage protection system.

Scholars have proposed various developmental phases over four decades of renewal and conservation. Wang Jin (2018) divides Guangzhou's urban renewal into three decades: the first is aggressive promotion, the second is led by the government and driven by major events, and the third is marked by rescue protection and reflective exploration[19]. Liao Kaihuai (2022) categorizes the city's renewal into a vague early phase of transformation, a market-driven demolition and redevelopment phase, and a government-led renovation of dilapidated areas. He emphasizes that balancing interests is now essential to revitalizing Guangzhou's historic districts[20]. Wang Lin (2017) outlines four phases: initial protection, value negotiation, enhancement, and legal protection—each with distinct ideas, achievements, and challenges, including unresolved tensions related to values, governance, and property rights[5].

The theoretical research on Guangzhou's historic districts started relatively late, with systematic studies emerging only in the 21st century. Recent efforts by scholars and practitioners have yielded notable results in historical analysis, urban morphology, and implementation mechanisms. Prof. Tian Yinsheng's South China University of Technology team applied the Conzenian School of Urban morphology to analyze several historical areas in Guangzhou[21]. Huang Huiming, based on typological and self-organizing morphological evolution, proposed practical tools for morphological design intervention[22]. Sun Xiang explored how Western planning ideas during the Republic era influenced Guangzhou's residential development[23]. Ye Haojun combined theory and practice to analyze Guangzhou's planning and morphological evolution from 1978 to 2010, identifying phase characteristics, driving forces, and internal dynamics[24].

2.1.3.2 Development Process of Guangzhou's Historic District Renewal

This study adopts Wang Lin's (2017) temporal framework[5], integrates insights from various scholars, and reviews the development process of historic district renewal in Guangzhou (Table 2-3):

Initial Protection Stage (1982–1991): In this early phase of establishing the heritage protection system, "historical and cultural districts" was not yet defined. Protection efforts gradually expanded from isolated cultural relics to "traditional residential areas" and were included in the city's master planning. Practice focused on relic utilization and the construction of modern Lingnan-style architecture, such as the archaeological excavation and preservation of the Nanyue King's Tomb.

Value Negotiation Stage (1992–2001): Protection concepts matured with the establishment

of institutions and publishing the Guangzhou Historical and Cultural City Protection Regulations. Planning and zoning of protected areas advanced, and an essential management system took shape. However, this period also saw rapid urban development and constructive destruction due to large-scale infrastructure, prompting emergency conservation and the exposure of tension between development and protection.

Protection Enhancement Stage (2002–2011): The term "historical and cultural district" was formally defined. The Famous City Protection Office was created, and detailed protection plans—such as for the Xinhopu Historic District—were developed. Constructive destruction declined, but renewal efforts slowed. The Lychee Bay water restoration became a highlight of this phase.

Legal Protection Stage (2012–2017): Heritage surveys were conducted, and systems for managing immovable cultural relics were established. Regulatory frameworks improved, and institutions such as the Urban Renewal Bureau were set up. Diverse planning methods emerged, and micro-renewal became a key strategy, with BOT models introduced for projects like Yongqing Block

Activation and Protection Stage (2017–present): Since 2017, Guangzhou has entered a new phase. The micro-renewal model piloted in Yongqing Block on Enning Road has been expanded citywide, marking a shift toward integrated strategies that balance heritage conservation with long-term development.

Table 2-3 Stages and Characteristics of Historic District Renewal in Guangzhou (Source: Author)

Stage	Key Focus	Practice Cases	Reflections and Improvements
Initial Protection Stage (1982–1991)	Expansion from relic-focused to traditional dwellings; integration into master plan	Nanyue King Mausoleum excavation and Lingnan architectural projects	--
Value Negotiation Stage (1992–2001)	Institutions and regulations formed; protection zoning and plans initiated	Emergency protection of historic sites	Over-reliance on real estate; damage to spatial fabric and identity; lack of shared value between conservation and renewal
Protection Enhancement (2002–2011)	Definition of terms, creation of protection offices, layered plans	Xinhopu District planning; Lychee Bay water restoration	Overemphasis on material protection; neglect of residents' needs and economic demands, resulting in "protective decay"

Table 2-3 Stages and Characteristics of Historic District Renewal in Guangzhou (Continued)

Stage	Key Focus	Practice Cases	Reflections and Improvements
Legal Protection (2012–2017)	Surveys, regulation system upgrades, institutions merged, diverse strategies applied	Micro-renewal of Yongqing Block via BOT model	Better institutional design; caution urged against commercial overreach in revitalization
Activation & protection (2017–now)	Expanded use of micro-renewal to balance preservation and development	Revitalization of Pantang Wuyue in Liwan District	

2.1.3.3 Reflection on Past Development

Despite achievements, problems remain, especially during the value negotiation and protection enhancement phases. In the value negotiation phase, actual estate-driven development led to widespread demolition or inappropriate renovation of historic buildings, undermining the original architectural texture and spatial structure. Large-scale commercial development, spurred by a weak understanding of cultural value, diluted district character and hindered the balance between cultural and economic goals[25]. This phase also suffered from unclear shared values between conservation and revitalization and weak planning-to-implementation coherence[5].

In the enhancement phase, despite the adoption of "holistic protection" and "element-based control," focus on physical forms failed to address residents' everyday and economic needs[26], causing the protective decline and vitality loss[27]. Conservation efforts lacked responsiveness to evolving district dynamics, weakening the intrinsic energy of these neighborhoods.

In the legal and activation stages, reflection expanded to institutional critiques. Some scholars questioned limited public participation in projects like Pantang Wuyue[28], while others warned against gentrification and cultural alienation in Yongqing Block due to excessive commercialization[29].

2.1.3.4 Emergence of New Approaches

In response to the challenges encountered in previous renewal processes, a new conceptual approach has gradually taken shape, marked by significant shifts in value orientation, implementation pathways, and approaches to cultural inheritance and innovation.

In value orientation, the shift is from relic-centered to human-centered conservation. For

example, in Pantang Wuyue, micro-renewal enhanced physical space and preserved intangible heritage, facilitated community cohesion, and empowered residents through participatory planning such as "Micro-renewal Tea Sessions"[30].

Implementation paths have evolved from top-down to multi-stakeholder and bottom-up models. Yongqing Block illustrates this: residents offered suggestions, Vanke Corporation brought funding and expertise, and the government played a guiding and regulatory role. This collaboration fostered a vibrant mixed-use community reflecting tradition and modernity, improving livelihoods and meeting public interest goals[31].

In cultural innovation, creative industries and events have enriched cultural depth. In Xinhopu, historical buildings like Kuiyuan host galleries and cafes, while others attract cultural tourism through exhibitions like the CPC Third Congress Memorial and the Five Overseas Chinese Villas, injecting vitality and transmitting heritage[32].

2.1.3.5 Conclusion

Guangzhou's historic district renewal has evolved from early exploration to diversified innovation, with theory maturing through practice. The experience shows that economic or material-based conservation alone is insufficient. New concepts prioritizing value diversity, resident participation, and collaborative governance have emerged in recent years, driving integrated conservation and revitalization.

Looking forward, research should (1) explore dynamic models of district development; (2) strengthen interdisciplinary integration with sociology, economics, and anthropology; (3) utilize digital technologies to enhance efficiency and engagement; and (4) study how to balance stakeholder interests for sustainable long-term renewal.

2.2 Interpretation of Tactical Urbanism Theory

2.2.1 Theoretical Origins

2.2.1.1 The Etymology of "Tactics"

The term "tactics" originates from the Greek word taktikē, initially referring to the art of military formation and maneuvering. In On War (1832), Carl von Clausewitz defined tactics as "the art of using military forces in battle." Tactics are typically contrasted with strategy: while strategy addresses macro-level goals and long-term planning, tactics respond to specific problems with flexible action, serving as the concrete execution and real-time strategy adjustment. Both are essential to achieving complex objectives.

In daily life, strategy refers to top-down policies and institutional frameworks, whereas tactics represent the bottom-up responses of individuals. French philosopher Michel de Certeau,

in The Practice of Everyday Life (1973), argued that social "elites" (e.g., managers and technicians) use strategy to rationally organize people and things, assigning roles and structuring production-consumption relations. In contrast, ordinary people, often seen as the weak, tactically adapt rules through everyday resistance and creative reappropriation to meet their needs [33].

Similarly, Henri Lefebvre, in The Production of Space (1974), pointed out that in capitalist societies, space is dominated by the bourgeoisie and capitalist institutions, becoming a tool for maintaining power and control. However, marginalized groups can resist through spatial tactics, redistributing space from below. From this perspective, tactics gain a new layer of meaning as a means of reclaiming space through everyday resistance[34].

"Tactical Urbanism" first appeared in a 2011 report titled Tactical Urbanism: Short-Term Action, Long-Term Change published on the SCRID website. This publication synthesized ideas by urban designers Mike Lydon and Anthony Garcia, developed during discussions on urban development issues in New Orleans[10].

2.2.1.2 Temporary Use: European Roots

The European concept of temporary use provided a methodological foundation for Tactical Urbanism. After World War II, many European cities were left with vacant land and underused spaces due to war damage and shifting urban development needs. Since the 1990s, European cities have experimented with temporary use strategies in response to economic restructuring and urban transformation[35]. For example, in Germany, numerous industrial relics and abandoned lots were repurposed for cultural venues or community gardens, injecting new vitality into the urban fabric. These practices led to the development of systematic methods for temporary use, including how to adapt space quickly, negotiate among stakeholders, and achieve multifunctional outcomes within limited timeframes and budgets. These became key building blocks for the later development of Temporary Urbanism.

On the other hand, pop-up activities contributed to a market-driven operational model. In European cities, pop-up shops, restaurants, and events are typical. These short-term projects creatively activate vacant space through design and branding, generating economic value in compressed timeframes. Take London's Boxpark as an example[36]: it transformed shipping containers into temporary commercial units housing trendy brands, eateries, and entertainment spaces, becoming a popular urban destination. These models offer low-risk business opportunities and cultural vibrancy while serving as scalable frameworks for activating urban space via flexible leases and entrepreneurial strategies.

2.2.1.3 Everyday Practices: North American Roots

The North American concept of Everyday Urbanism underscores the ethical value of daily life. It emphasizes that urban space should meet the diverse needs of residents and foster interpersonal interaction. Planning in North American cities has increasingly prioritized community-based public spaces like neighborhood plazas and pocket parks tailored to residents' daily habits, encouraging active participation in urban life[37]. This user-centered approach shaped Tactical Urbanism's North American orientation: projects are embedded in local contexts, respond to actual needs, and strengthen community identity.

In addition, DIY Urbanism and Guerrilla Urbanism have flourished in North America, providing Tactical Urbanism with a rich operational toolbox. DIY Urbanism promotes citizen-led transformation of urban spaces. Residents have taken the initiative to convert vacant lots into community gardens or abandoned warehouses into studios or event spaces. These practices highlight creativity and resourcefulness, offering practical methods for small-scale action. DIY Urbanism includes strategies for acquiring space, low-cost renovation, and community engagement[36], forming the operational core of many tactical projects.

Together, these theories and practices shaped a comprehensive and flexible theoretical framework for Tactical Urbanism (Figure 2-2), fueling its growth and vitality post-2011 (Figure 2-3).

Figure 2-2 Distribution of Literature of Tactical Urbanism (Source: Author based on[38-43])

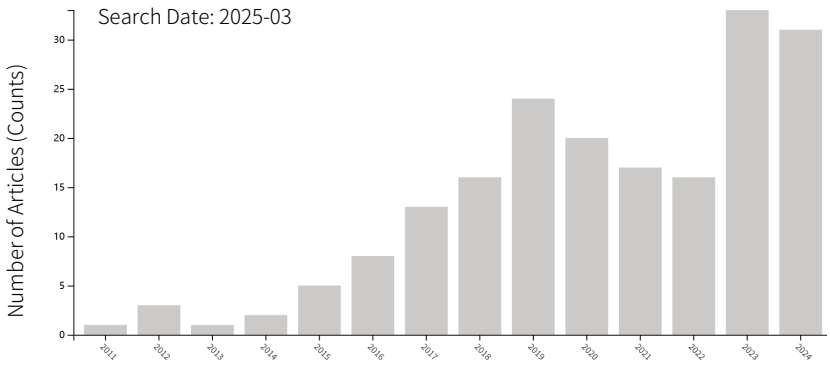

Figure 2-3 Annual Number of Publications on Tactical Urbanism (Source: Author)

2.2.1.4 Comparative Analysis of Related Theories

Tactical Urbanism is conceptually intertwined with several adjacent theories. In practice, one may often observe traces of multiple frameworks within the same project. The author believes Tactical Urbanism and its related concepts can be understood as practice-based theoretical frameworks. Focusing on their distinct practical characteristics offers a more precise lens to differentiate them (Table 2-4).

Informal Urbanism shares with Tactical Urbanism qualities such as spontaneity and the ability to circumvent formal planning systems. However, Informal Urbanism often arises from resource scarcity in developing countries and tends to be relatively long-term and stable, as seen in the emergence of slums in African cities. Tactical Urbanism, by contrast, is based on short-term strategies in developed urban contexts, employing small-scale interventions to drive gradual change—for example, residents in New York temporarily transformed a vacant lot into a community garden. These initiatives usually have clear timelines and development goals.

Temporary Urbanism also involves short-term spatial interventions. However, its emphasis is more on temporal usage, with sites typically returning to their original state post-event—such as Paris Plages, a temporary artificial beach. Tactical Urbanism, in contrast, emphasizes how short-term actions catalyze long-term transformation, often relying on public participation, such as residents setting up temporary bike lanes to advocate for permanent transportation improvements.

DIY Urbanism and Tactical Urbanism both value community engagement. DIY Urbanism stresses individual or collective self-initiated interventions, often without institutional collaboration—for example, residents in Australia beautifying the verge outside their homes. Tactical Urbanism also champions bottom-up action but emphasizes multi-stakeholder collaboration, such as local communities working with governments to repurpose abandoned streets.

Pop-Up Urbanism and Tactical Urbanism both embody temporality. Pop-up Urbanism tends to manifest as short-term commercial or cultural activities, such as pop-up shops or pop-up markets, characterized by impermanence and spontaneity. Tactical Urbanism encompasses broader ambitions, using short-term actions to pursue strategic urban goals, such as converting idle plots into public plazas through community-government cooperation.

Everyday Urbanism and Tactical Urbanism both focus on residents' lived experiences. Everyday Urbanism aims to enhance the details of daily life, such as creating comfortable walkways in Nordic cities. Tactical Urbanism focuses on initiating broader urban development through short-term actions, like adding street art installations in aging neighborhoods to boost vitality.

Urban Catalyst Theory and Tactical Urbanism both strive to stimulate positive urban change. Urban Catalyst Theory envisions small interventions sparking chain reactions, often over the long term—for example, transforming abandoned industrial sites in Germany to catalyze neighborhood development. While sharing this catalytic intent, Tactical Urbanism emphasizes speed and flexibility, such as hosting weekend street markets to activate public spaces quickly.

Table 2-4 Comparison of Theories Related to Tactical Urbanism (Source: Author)

Theory	Core Features	Governance & Participation	Temporal Nature
Tactical Urbanism	Urban space transformation through small-scale, low-cost, and quick interventions	Emphasizes bottom-up actions with broad public participation while also valuing multi-stakeholder collaboration; power is relatively decentralized and interaction-rich	Focuses on short-term actions aimed at long-term impacts
Informal Urbanism	Spontaneous emergence, often due to a lack of resources	Typically lacks formal institutional involvement	Long-term and relatively stable (e.g., informal settlements)
Temporary Urbanism	Short-term use of space	Often sanctioned by local authorities	Spaces usually revert to their original state after use

Table 2-4 Comparison of Theories Related to Tactical Urbanism (Continued)

Theory	Core Features	Governance & Participation	Temporal Nature
DIY Urbanism	Self-initiated urban interventions by individuals or communities	Emphasizes resident autonomy; usually lacks institutional coordination	Typically, short- to mid-term duration
Pop-Up Urbanism	Short-term commercial or cultural activation (e.g., pop-up shops or events)	Market-driven with limited public involvement	Highly temporary and event-driven
Everyday Urbanism	Focus on improving everyday urban experience and life quality	Prioritizes residents' needs and daily routines	Often continuous or ongoing
Urban Catalyst Theory	Small interventions designed to trigger broader urban change	Typically publicly led, strategically positioned	Oriented toward long-term development outcomes

2.2.2 Tactical Urbanism as a Movement

2.2.2.1 Context of the Movement

The emergence of tactical Urbanism as a movement is closely tied to the multifaceted challenges of global urban development from the late 20th century to the early 21st century. Amidst the rapid waves of urbanization and economic globalization, Western cities have encountered mounting issues such as spatial inequality, social fragmentation, and the decline of public space. Traditional urban planning—marked by long cycles, high costs, and lack of flexibility—has proven inadequate in addressing fast-evolving urban needs. Meanwhile, breakthroughs in internet technology have enabled new forms of public participation, catalyzing a shift toward small-scale, low-cost, and temporary interventions. This transformation not only reflects a critical reflection on conventional planning systems but also embodies a grassroots pursuit of spatial empowerment.

人 Changes in population structure are reshaping the spatial demands of cities. Between 1970 and 2011, the global urbanization rate surged from 36.5% to 51.9%, bringing the urban population to 3.63 billion and fueling the diversification of spatial needs. In the United States, younger generations have shown a clear preference shift. Since 1980, car ownership among those aged 18–32 has decreased by one-third, while more opt for central urban areas with accessible transport and mixed-use environments. This generational shift in lifestyle demands

both spatial expansion and adaptive and inclusive spatial systems capable of accommodating diverse social activities[44]. Coinciding with economic restructuring is a fundamental transformation in urban renewal models. The 2007 subprime mortgage crisis exposed the fragility of the "expansion-driven" model. As Anthony Schwartz noted, the myth of unlimited resources collapsed, prompting governments and citizens to recognize that community-based micro-renewal efforts could alleviate financial burdens while fostering civic engagement. This dual-force momentum has driven urban planning from top-down mega-projects toward collaborative, incremental Urbanism[10].

The complexity of public goods provision is further magnified in the era of stock renewal. As land availability plateaus, traditional government supply systems struggle to ensure equitable service coverage in older neighborhoods[45]. While market involvement can ease fiscal constraints, it often leads to the commodification and gentrification of public spaces—capital's profit-seeking tendencies thrive on spatial scarcity, creating structural tension with the inherently inclusive nature of public services. This dilemma motivates planners to seek a third path: through reversible, temporary micro-interventions, maintaining the public character of space while introducing market vitality.

Crucially, technological innovation offers new tools to address these challenges. From Bonnie Ora Sherk's early work transforming abandoned lots into living installations in San Francisco to Chicago's Hewn Parklet, which used crowdfunding to convert parking spaces into communal areas, the internet has reshaped public participation and fostered "urban hacker" thinking. This hybrid online-offline approach now fills the gaps that conventional planning fails to reach, forming a bottom-up mode of spatial production.

These intersecting socioeconomic dynamics delineate the backdrop in which tactical Urbanism emerged. Under constraints of limited resources and increasing demands, urban renewal has shifted from grand narratives to everyday spatial tactics, constructing a collaborative mechanism between government, market, and civil society through technological empowerment. This shift represents a critical inheritance of traditional planning and a vivid expression of urban governance innovation in the digital age.

2.2.2.2 Evolution of the Movement

The development of the Tactical Urbanism movement reflects profound shifts in contemporary urban governance paradigms. As a response to the rigidity of traditional planning, the movement restructures the relationships among government, market, and civil society through incremental spatial interventions. Its evolution has shown a clear trajectory—from

grassroots experimentation to institutional innovation, localized practices to global diffusion. This process reshaped the physical urban form and catalyzed the emergence of novel governance tools and participatory mechanisms, offering innovative solutions to complex urban challenges[46].

The emergence of tactical Urbanism can be traced back to early 21st-century grassroots practices. Architects and community groups initiated pioneering spatial experiments. A landmark case was the 2005 PARK(ing) Day event by the Rebar group in San Francisco (Figure 2-4), which involved temporarily renting parking spaces and transforming them into micro parks. This action revealed the fluid boundaries of urban spatial ownership[10]. Such guerrilla-style interventions rapidly gained traction across U.S. cities, garnering attention in the national planning discourse and being named the "Best Planning Trend of 2011–2012"[47].

In 2012, "Tactical Urbanism" was featured as the thematic inspiration for the U.S. Pavilion at the Venice Biennale—"Spontaneous Interventions: Design Actions for the Common Good"[48], which won the Special Jury Award. Since then, tactical Urbanism has been adopted globally as a conceptual framework and action guideline for diverse formal and informal practices.

Figure 2-4 Process documentation of PARK (ing) Day (Source: Reference[10])

Between 2011 and 2016, with the accumulation of hands-on experience, the movement entered a phase of institutionalized dissemination. In 2012, the New York City Department of Transportation issued the Urban Street Design Guide[49], incorporating tactical practices like the pedestrianization of Times Square into formal decision-making processes. This marked the emergence of the "strategic-tactical" paradigm (Figure 2-5).

The Tactical Urbanism handbook expanded into five volumes in subsequent years, extending case studies from North America to Spain, Italy, New Zealand, and Australia. Major interventions included improving walkability, introducing pop-up cultural and commercial programs, converting idle spaces into leisure landscapes, and facilitating community-based public engagement activities.

Figure 2-5 Before and after Times Square Pedestrianization (Source: Reference[49])

Globally, tactical Urbanism has demonstrated high adaptive capacity and technological integration. In Europe, practices focus on reconciling historic character with modern needs. For example, Les Bouquinistes—book vendors operating along the Seine since the 16th century—were recognized as a World Heritage Site in 2007, reflecting the balance between grassroots activation and formal heritage conservation[50]. In North America, practices emphasize community empowerment and urban vitality, such as the Build a Better Block project in Dallas, where community activists used low-cost materials and volunteerism to reinvigorate street life[10]. Latin American cases focus on social equity and sustainability. Bogotá's Ciclovía Bogotana, launched in 1974, closes roads to motor traffic on designated days, offering space for leisure and promoting sustainable transportation[51]. In Australia, tactical Urbanism emphasizes multipurpose use and collaborative governance, such as the Bondi Junction Complete Streets Project in Sydney, which introduced temporary facilities to shift car-dominated streets into people-centered public spaces. Public approval led to long-term urban design for Spring Street[52].

2.2.2.3 Impacts of the Movement

The impact of tactical Urbanism is essentially a deconstruction and reconstruction of the urban planning paradigm, achieving both epistemological and methodological breakthroughs through four types of rebellion.

First is the rebellion against conventional urban perspectives. Tactical interventions challenge elitist narratives of planning by refusing to treat cities as static objects to be "perfectly designed." Instead, they reveal the embedded contradictions in spatial power structures. While traditional planning tends toward utopian blueprints, tactical practices activate marginal spaces

like parking lots and vacant lots to respond to immediate community needs. For instance, decades of traffic infrastructure development in Milan led to neglected public spaces, poor pedestrian environments, and areas devoid of public use[53].

Second is the rebellion against authoritative decision-making. Tactical Urbanism disrupts top-down planning models by mobilizing public participation. Inspired by this movement, urban planning in Trondheim, Norway, incorporated participatory tools such as public hearings and multi-stakeholder collaboration throughout the planning process[54]. This democratized model gave voice to citizens and produced outcomes more aligned with community interests.

Third is the rebellion against traditional development models. Small-scale, bottom-up interventions have increasingly been adopted into official planning frameworks. Milan's Piazze Aperte initiative exemplifies this shift by converting streets and parking areas into public plazas. The project involved a multi-phase process including idea solicitation, proposal development, and collaborative design, where residents actively contributed to shaping safe, livable spaces[53].

Fourth is the rebellion against spatial definitions. Tactical Urbanism encourages rethinking the definition and potential of urban space. In Paris, the Paris Plages initiative transforms roadways along the Seine into temporary urban beaches with palm trees and sports zones each summer[55]. Milan's Arcobalena Square converted an unauthorized parking lot and dangerous intersection into a multifunctional community space through co-design, street art, and resident participation—demonstrating expanded possibilities for inclusive urban living[56].

2.2.3 Summary of Practical Methodologies

2.2.3.1 Observation Methods

Constructing observation methods in Tactical Urbanism practices originates from the governance paradigm shift necessitated by the atomization of contemporary urban society. Tactical Urbanism emphasizes the interaction within a network of diverse actors, using micro-tactics to activate marginal spaces and break through the rigid frameworks of traditional planning.

In today's urban environments, social atomization is increasingly prominent—connections between individuals are relatively loose, and social structures appear fragmented. Against this backdrop, micro-tactics demonstrate unique spatiotemporal tension. The Actor-Network Theory (ANT) effectively explains the significance of micro-tactics. This theory highlights the agency of non-human actors in collective action by viewing human and non-human agents as interconnected networks. Their interaction drives transformations within the entire system. For instance, modular and mobile design installations can effectively break the monotony of urban

spaces. Temporary setups such as moveable seating and small-scale greenery in plazas or streets can rapidly attract crowds, serving as ignition points for spatial vitality.

The "Reclaim the Lanes" project in the West End of Newcastle upon Tyne is a typical example (Figure 2-6) aimed at resolving issues of garbage accumulation in alleyways[57]. After identifying residents' needs, the organizers brought together diverse human actors—residents from different backgrounds and youth program members—with non-human actors like wall art and sports facilities. Through flexible interventions, they improved the alley environment. The project successfully broke social barriers by legally closing lanes for street parties, setting up moveable installations, using wall art to promote dialogue, playing music to attract participation, and engaging young residents to enliven the space. As demands evolved, murals and street cleaning were added as permanent improvements. This practice reflects a reframing of social network cognition. As traditional urban community ties diminish, micro-spatial interventions have become physical media for rebuilding these "weak ties." By creating shared spaces and activities, such interventions help reconnect people through meaningful interaction.

Figure 2-6 Reclaim the Lanes project process documentation (Source: Reference[57])

A systematic observation of marginal urban spaces has brought important methodological breakthroughs for tactical Urbanism. In conventional master planning, areas under viaducts, abandoned rail tracks, and interstitial building spaces are often overlooked. However, when viewed through the Tactical Urbanism lens, these seemingly fragmented or valueless spaces contain the genetic code of urban diversity.

Take the Skybeach project in Stuttgart, Germany, for example[36]. Before the transformation, the rooftop of a department store in the city center was an idle space. Inspired by Paris Plage, the creator introduced the beach concept to this uninspiring rooftop. The space became a popular urban retreat by adding sand, palm trees, and umbrellas and connecting it to the pedestrian shopping street via an elevator (Figure 2-7). Citizens come here to enjoy the sunshine and city views and participate in yoga and beach volleyball activities. This project's success lies in providing leisure space and catalyzing similar transformations of unused rooftops into vibrant social places. Under traditional planning, such "blank spaces" were passively reserved; under Tactical Urbanism, they are repurposed as nodes of urban resilience, nurturing creativity within rigid institutional frameworks.

Figure 2-7 Rooftop transformation in the Stuttgart Skybeach project (Source: Reference[36])

The heterogeneity of urban space poses a key challenge. To respond, Tactical Urbanism has developed a dynamic observation toolkit. At its core is a multi-level feedback system integrating methods to comprehensively capture spatial use patterns and user needs. Tools include big data heatmaps for identifying patterns of high footfall and temporal differences, in-situ recorders to track micro-level behaviors, and citizen workshops to gather subjective perceptions.

In a 2023 study of downtown Cairo, Ahmed H. Salama selected specific time slots to conduct macro-level observation across main streets, identifying the most crowded—similar to heatmap approaches. At the micro-scale, he conducted participatory observation at 12:00, 17:00, and 21:00 on weekdays (Figure 2-8), documenting land use types, informal activities (e.g., sidewalk cafes, street vendors), and pedestrian-vehicle interaction. This level of detail parallels that of field recorders, offering granular insights into spatial behavior[58].

Figure 2-8 Participatory observation in a central Cairo street study (Source: Reference[58])

2.2.3.2 Design Method

In Tactical Urbanism, the "Five-Step Design Method" represents a systematic design methodology (Figure 2-9). Its core is transforming complex social needs into actionable spatial intervention strategies through a progressively deepened design process. Each design phase carries a clear technical goal and a more profound social intention. Tactics, by nature, allow frequent revision and iteration, which promotes continual refinement of the system—a reflection of the integration between design thinking and urban governance[10].

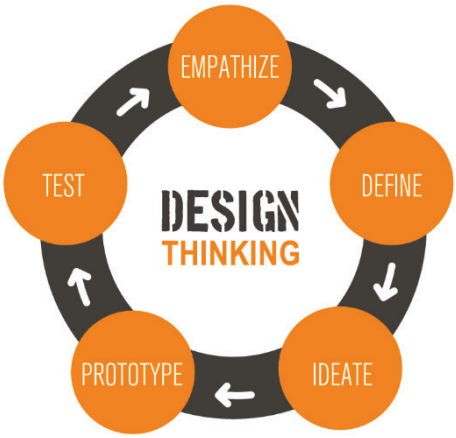

Figure 2-9 The Five-Step Design Thinking Process of Tactical Urbanism (Source: Reference[44])

Empathize: The key to this stage is building a cognitive bridge between designers and users, ensuring the design responds to real community needs. Designers must immerse themselves on-site, using observation, interviews, and workshops to understand users' behavior patterns and lived experiences.

Define: This step aims to translate vague social demands into clearly defined design problems, offering precise entry points for solutions. It calls for systematic data analysis to uncover the root of spatial issues.

Ideate: This stage encourages breaking free from conventional thinking and exploring innovative solutions. Designers must harness creative thinking to transform spatial disadvantages into unique design features.

Prototype: The goal here is to rapidly test the feasibility of ideas using low-cost, reversible interventions. Modular, flexible technical systems are developed to allow adaptable spatial functions.

Test: This step focuses on data-driven performance feedback. Designers should leverage digital tools to build a dynamic evaluation and optimization mechanism.

This evolving methodology fundamentally reshapes the power structure of urban space production. The five-step design model fosters a new paradigm of spatial governance, not merely through technical iteration, but by constructing a closed-loop system of "need identification – solution generation – impact evaluation," turning urban space into a dynamic carrier of social relations rather than a static reflection of planning blueprints.

2.2.3.3 Typological Approaches

Through the synthesis of extensive case studies, the implementation strategies of Tactical Urbanism projects can be broadly categorized into two core dimensions: spatial transformation and activity design, which often intertwine and reinforce one another in practice.

Regarding spatial transformation, efforts are centered on redefining and reprogramming existing urban spaces. For instance, street plaza projects employ temporary, cost-efficient materials to reallocate oversized traffic lanes, expand sidewalks and bike lanes, and convert vacant spaces into plazas—effectively shifting the function from vehicular traffic to public activity space. Street parks creatively utilize parking spots and disused bus stops by adding seating, greenery, and bike racks, crafting compact but functional micro spaces for rest and use. Pavement removal actions transform impermeable asphalt and parking surfaces into community green spaces or gardens, thereby improving the urban ecological environment.

On the activity design side, emphasis is placed on activating urban space through diverse forms of public engagement. Projects like open streets and play streets involve temporary road closures to motor vehicles, providing safe spaces for walking, cycling, and playing. Park (ing) Day events occupy former parking lots to create life-oriented temporary public spaces. Pop-up cafes, mobile retail, and vending stands diversify commercial formats and enhance local experiences. Meanwhile, temporary street theaters and musical performances inject urban spaces with cultural vibrancy and civic life.

The following table, systematically compiled by Zhang Hanqing and colleagues (Table

2-5), summarizes the typological approaches of Tactical Urbanism projects. It includes measures of various natures—official, semi-official, and non-official—offering a comprehensive perspective on the diversity and breadth of Tactical Urbanism in real-world urban practices.

Table 2-5 Summary of Tactical Urbanism Practice Types (Source: Reference[44])

Category	Tactic Type	Description	Organizer
Spatial Transformation	Pavement to plazas	Using temporary, low-cost materials to reconfigure wide roads, add sidewalks and bike lanes, and convert vacant land into plazas.	Official
	Parklets / Pavement to parks	Extending sidewalks and setting up seating, greenery, or bike racks in parking spaces or unused bus stops.	Official
	Park mobile	Deploying movable green installations to designated sites and enhancing vitality through added public seating.	Official
	Community fitness corners	Installing simple fitness equipment in idle roadside or park areas for convenient public exercise.	Official
	Park-making	Converting idle land or parking lots into public parks.	Semi-official
	Creative bus-stops	Creatively redesigning bus stops with greenery, art, or interactive displays to improve the waiting experience.	Semi-official
	Depave	Removing impervious surfaces like pavement and parking lots to create community green spaces and gardens.	Unofficial
	Informal bike parking	Adding informal bicycle parking spaces and racks at intersections or near shops.	Unofficial
	Intersection repair	Transforming intersections with kiosks, bulletin boards, or play zones to foster community interaction.	Unofficial

Table 2-5 Summary of Tactical Urbanism Practice Types (Continued)

Category	Tactic Type	Description	Organizer
Spatial Transformation	Reclaimed setbacks	Reclaiming underused setback areas between buildings and sidewalks via structures or landscaping.	Unofficial
	Chair bombing	Using reclaimed construction or industrial materials to build street furniture and enhance neglected areas.	Unofficial
	Ad-busting	Redesigning advertisements to reduce clutter, promote local culture, or enable community expression.	Unofficial
Activity Design	Open Streets	Temporarily closing streets to vehicles to allow safe walking, cycling, and skating.	Official
	Play streets	Closing off streets temporarily to offer a safe play space for children.	Official
	Pop-up cafes	Adding outdoor seating and dining space through temporary interventions coordinated by businesses and the government.	Official
	Micro-mixing	Integrating multiple business models within one space, such as cafes inside bookstores or bike shops.	Semi-official
	Shared tool stations	Setting up shared tool stations in neighborhoods for free community use in repairs or gardening.	Semi-official
	Neighborhood library corners	Establishing small library exchange corners in shops or cafes to foster cultural exchange.	Semi-official
	Food carts/trucks	Selling food from portable carts or vehicles in fixed stalls or rented parking spaces.	Unofficial

Table 2-5 Summary of Tactical Urbanism Practice Types (Continued)

Category	Tactic Type	Description	Organizer
Activity Design	Mobile vendors	Running mobile retail operations like booksellers or recyclers to support local livelihoods.	Unofficial
	Weed bombing	Coloring neglected grass areas to draw attention and encourage neighborhood beautification.	Unofficial
	Temporary street theaters	Hosting pop-up street theater performances to enrich cultural life.	Unofficial
	Community seed-swapping stations	Creating stations for sharing plant seeds to promote green living and neighbor interaction.	Unofficial
	Street concerts	Organizing small concerts in public areas to boost street vitality.	Unofficial
Blended Design & Transformation	Idle-item swap fairs	Creating informal markets where neighbors can swap idle household items.	Official
	Street mural projects	Painting murals on building walls to beautify and reflect local identity.	Official
	Public art installation exhibitions	Installing temporary or permanent art installations in public squares or parks.	Semi-official
	Parking day	Temporarily occupying parking spots with plants and furniture to activate streets.	Semi-official
	Pop-up town hall	Setting up temporary civic forums in neglected spaces using mobile structures.	Semi-official
	Site pre-visualization	Using vacant lots for community events, exhibitions, farming, or micro-retail pop-ups.	Unofficial

Table 2-5 Summary of Tactical Urbanism Practice Types (Continued)

Category	Tactic Type	Description	Organizer
Blended Design & Transformation	Pop-up retail	Hosting temporary or recurring sales in unexpected urban spaces like alleys or lots.	Unofficial
	Camps	Pitching tents in public spaces to catalyze longer-term transformations.	Unofficial
	Build a better block	Reactivating blocks through temporary street redesigns, furniture, and plantings.	Unofficial
	Guerrilla Gardening	Undertaking spontaneous gardening activities in public or private spaces, such as transforming vacant land into vegetable plots and planting greenery.	Unofficial
	Shared Garden Expansions	Expanding existing community gardens by spontaneously using nearby vacant land to grow more vegetables and flowers, fostering green lifestyles.	Unofficial

2.2.3.4 Evaluation Methods

Beyond traditional assessment methods in urban planning, Tactical Urbanism employs big data to evaluate project effectiveness from public attention and sentiment perspectives. According to the methodological framework proposed by Wei Hanxue (2018), the evaluation process involves the following steps:

Data Selection and Indicator Definition: Data are drawn from online platforms (e.g., Twitter, Google Trends) to assess project visibility. Search trends reflect the level of attention; the year with the highest project search volume is taken as a baseline, and other years are compared accordingly. A "halving time" metric is introduced to quantify attention decay. On social platforms, semantic analysis is used to identify the proportion of positive, negative, and neutral sentiment, which indirectly measures public satisfaction and helps assess the influence and evolution of the project.

Data Processing Methods: Natural Language Processing (NLP) is applied to conduct semantic analysis of social media data. Techniques such as sentiment polarity scoring and subjectivity evaluation are used to detect emotional tendencies and analyze the public's mood shifts regarding the project.

Case Selection Criteria: Selected cases must represent both spatial transformation and activity-oriented design, with significant impact, a high completion rate, and sufficient

documentation. Typical examples include the Times Square redevelopment and Peachtree Street activation projects, which embody Tactical Urbanism characteristics and facilitate comprehensive data collection, processing, and analysis.

Evaluation Result Analysis: Case study outcomes are categorized by attention patterns—e.g., sustained rise, short-term spike, or other types. Public sentiment is assessed from immediate urban impact, long-term urban effects, and whether the project intensifies emotional polarization. For instance, the redevelopment of Times Square reduced negative sentiment and suppressed positive emotions, while the Peachtree Street intervention led to a trend toward neutrality, highlighting how different projects affect public mood in distinct ways[44].

In the digital age, Tactical Urbanism's dynamic and adaptive nature aligns closely with big data technologies. Constructing real-time data monitoring and intelligent analysis models makes it possible to conduct continuous impact tracking, multi-dimensional evaluations, and precise feedback, thereby comprehensively revealing the social benefits and spatial effectiveness of tactical interventions (Figure 2-10).

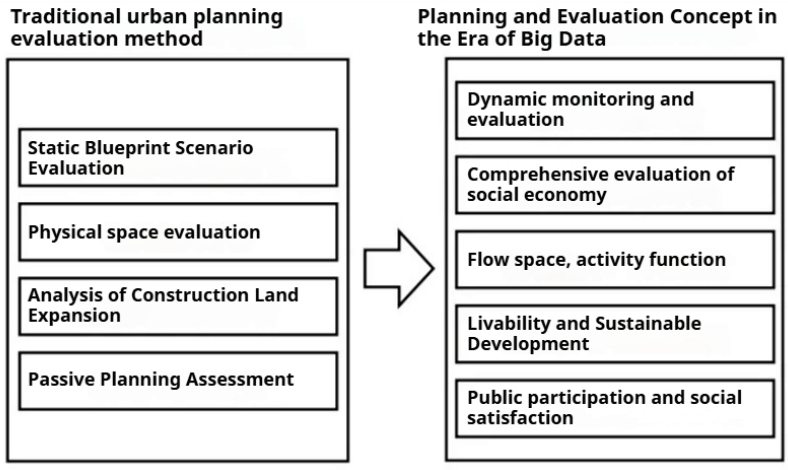

Figure 2-10 The Transformation of Evaluation Concepts in the Era of Big Data (Source: Reference[44])

2.3 Case Studies

2.3.1 Regeneration of Beishan Village, China (2005-Present)

2.3.1.1 Case Overview

Beishan Village, located in the southeastern part of Nanping Town, Xiangzhou District, Zhuhai, boasts a history of over 780 years and currently preserves 108 historic buildings. As Zhuhai's first nationally recognized ecological village and a designated historic cultural village of Guangdong Province, Beishan is rich in cultural heritage, including ancestral halls and traditional Cantonese residences (Figure 2-11). In recent years, Beishan has undergone a remarkable transformation from a centuries-old village into an "international village" by

adopting a development model of "culture-driven tourism, tourism-driven population, and population-driven industry," becoming a gathering hub for the new youth generation of the Greater Bay Area[59].

The regeneration of Beishan Village can be divided into the following phases:

Incubation Phase (2005–2007): Artist Zhang Tuosheng rented an abandoned ancestral hall vacant for over 20 years, restored it as an oil painting studio, and began hosting exhibitions. With support from the Zhuhai Oil Painting Artists Committee, "Beishan Artist Village" was officially established, attracting an increasing number of artists[60].

Initial Phase (2008–2009): In response to artist appeals emphasizing the value of historic architecture, the village collective introduced social capital to undertake heritage restoration. This revitalized sites such as Beishan Guild Hall and Beishan Courtyard[61]. In 2009, Beishan was officially listed as a Historic Cultural Village of Guangdong Province.

Development Phase (2010–2016): The Xue brothers utilized the restored Beishan Guild Hall and Courtyard as venues for music and cultural festivals such as the Beishan World Music Festival. These events enhanced the village's visibility, attracting many tourists and artists and encouraging increasing civil participation in the regeneration process[62].

Expansion Phase (2016–Present): Cultural and tourism outcomes became increasingly prominent. In 2016, Beishan Guild Hall and Courtyard were designated as Zhuhai Cultural and Creative Industry Bases, receiving substantial government funding. A "curator-led" entrepreneurial culture gradually emerged, and the area was selected as one of Guangdong's 2024 Outstanding Culture-Tourism Consumption Cases[59].

Figure 2-11 Aerial View and Building Distribution of Beishan Village (Source: Reference [63])

2.3.1.3 Tactical Urbanism Characteristics

The development trajectory of Beishan Village exemplifies key characteristics of Tactical Urbanism. Unlike tactical projects that gain short-lived attention before fading quickly, Beishan presents a continuously evolving paradigm of tactical practice.

During the initial phase, numerous localized and spontaneous tactical practices emerged. For instance, artists held pop-up exhibitions in abandoned spaces (Figure 2-12), integrating art into disused areas and enriching the cultural atmosphere of the village.

Villagers organized exhibitions of collected old objects to narrate local history and daily life. Graffiti projects were launched on the main streets, injecting color and creativity into the village landscape Figure 2-13). Pop-up concerts brought fresh cultural experiences to residents, while small-scale street upgrades improved the built environment.

These practices reinforced villagers' cultural identity and garnered significant public attention, laying the groundwork for subsequent larger-scale renewal.

As these bottom-up efforts accumulated, they created a strong demonstration effect. Under the guidance of the Beishan Community, various cultural institutions and entrepreneurs moved in. Unlike conventional commercial area development reliant on formal investment recruitment, new businesses in Beishan were required to activate the spaces they occupied proactively.Given small entrepreneurs' relatively high risks, tactical experimentation became a low-cost strategy. A resilient business ecosystem began to take shape through street vending, mobile markets, and "store-within-store" formats.

Figure 2-12 Pop-up Activities in the Beishan Regeneration Process (Source: Author)

Figure 2-13 Street Graffiti in the Beishan Regeneration Process (Source: Author)

Over time, the accumulation of localized outcomes propelled the long-term transformation of the entire village. The results of nearly two decades of bottom-up development were eventually incorporated into official planning agendas[63]. This process vividly illustrates how Beishan Village has successfully transformed from a site of passive historical preservation into a model of integrated cultural and economic revitalization.

The case of Beishan Village highlights the unique advantages of applying Tactical Urbanism to historic neighborhoods. Its flexible, rapid methods align with heritage conservation and deepen public awareness of historic value. Tactical practices grounded in daily life are widely embraced by residents and stimulate active participation, fostering a shared model of collaborative development.

Moreover, tactical initiatives in Beishan successfully interfaced with formal institutional forces, advancing cultural revitalization alongside historic preservation. With its innovative tactical approach, Beishan forged a distinct development path that creatively blends tradition and contemporary art, crafting a unique cultural identity that radiates across the Greater Bay Area.

2.3.2 Hualou Street Mapping Workshop, China (2015)

2.3.2.1 Case Overview

Led and participated in by He Zhisen and collaborators, the Wuhan Hualou Street Mapping

Workshop represents a practical application of Tactical Urbanism theory within a historic urban district. As a neighborhood steeped in cultural heritage, Hualou Street features a unique architectural character and a rich tapestry of everyday life. However, the area has been increasingly neglected in the face of rapid urban development, with traditional lifestyles gradually fading away.

The workshop aimed to investigate Hualou Street and its surrounding neighborhoods using mapping as a methodological tool to uncover spatial strategies and tactics hidden beneath apparent "chaos." The objective was to equip designers with observational tools and inspire innovative ideas for urban design and planning policies.

During the workshop, over 50 students were divided into seven groups, each selecting a specific target (e.g., Bengzichuang [folding beds], Tangpozi [traditional hot water bags], etc.) for long-term, multi-scalar observation and documentation. Students also assumed multiple roles to experience local life first-hand and presented their findings through illustrations and exhibitions.

The outcomes were substantial. Each group uncovered compelling phenomena and the embedded logic behind them—folding beds were found to foster neighborly ties, Tangpozi evoked the legacy of traditional copper craftsmanship on Da Tong Street, and pushcarts proved well-adapted to the narrow alleyway transport system.

Through this process, students not only gained insights into the practical wisdom of residents but also enhanced their skills in analytical thinking, spatial observation, and teamwork, ultimately reshaping their understanding of the relationship between design and daily life[64].

2.3.2.2 Characteristics of Tactical Urbanism

Although the workshop was not oriented toward generating conventional design outputs or implementing specific physical interventions, its mapping methodology strongly echoed the core observational principles of Tactical Urbanism.

One prominent feature emphasized the interactive networks between human and non-human actors, revealing how seemingly minor elements shape everyday life. In their fieldwork, students focused on objects such as Bengzichuang and Tangpozi. They discovered how folding bed repairs stimulated neighborhood interactions and Tangpozi carried cultural meaning and intergenerational narratives.

These small-scale objects demonstrated their latent influence on social bonding and cultural continuity, offering a deeper understanding of urban complexity (Figure 2-14).

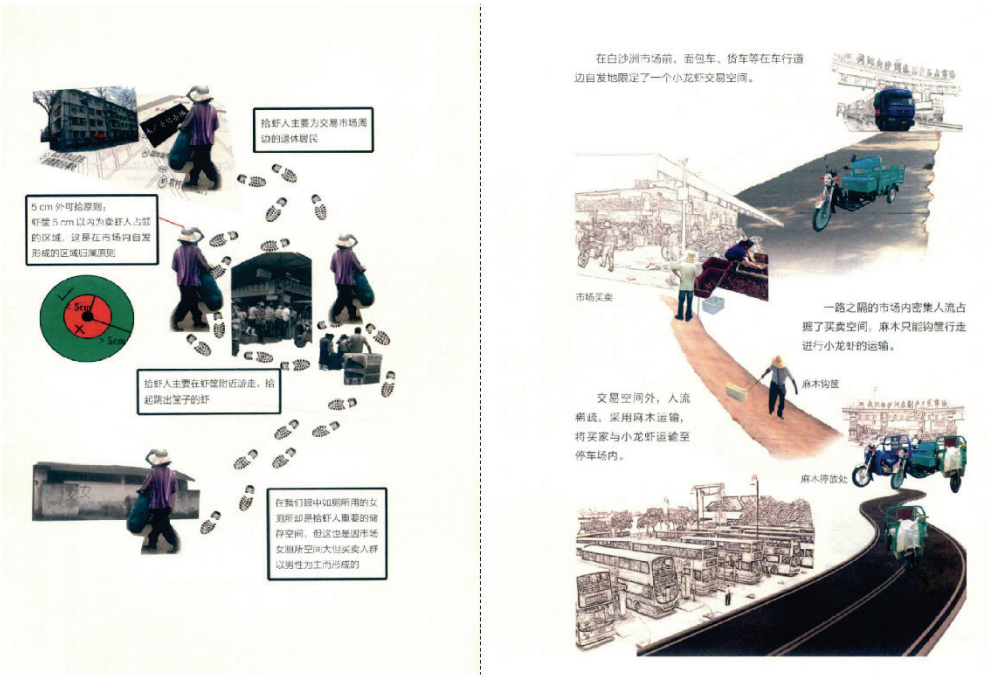

Figure 2-14 Interactions Between Human Actors and Non-Human Objects (Source: Reference [64])

The workshop also emphasized empathy-building through role-playing to comprehend diverse spatial needs better. For instance, students took on the role of pushcart laborers, engaging directly with residents to experience work conditions and spatial constraints. This immersive process fostered empathetic thinking, laying a foundation for inclusive and user-sensitive urban design.

In terms of presentation, innovative formats facilitated the absorption of findings by future designers. For example, the Tangpozi group employed a creative "exhibition board" format, while others used photography and video installations. These engaging formats captured attention during the final review session and offered new forms of design inspiration (Figure 2-15).

Figure 2-15 Design Review Session of the Hualou Street Workshop (Source: Reference [64])

Lastly, the workshop employed a multi-scalar analytical framework to examine the relationship between everyday practices and urban space comprehensively. At the micro-scale, students observed how goods were arranged on pushcarts; at the meso-scale, they analyzed spatial strategies used by street vendors; and at the macro-scale, they assessed Hualou Street's spatial links to its surrounding urban fabric. This holistic approach enabled students to construct a nuanced understanding of how localized behaviors operate within broader urban systems, offering valuable perspectives for urban design and planning.

2.3.3 Cavallerizza Reale, Italy (2014)

2.3.3.1 Case Overview

The Cavallerizza Reale building, located in the city center of Duling (Turin), was constructed between the 17th and 18th centuries as part of the Savoy Royal Residences. It was inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1997. In recent years, the city government's political decisions and financial arrangements led to the building's gradual decline and abandonment.

On May 23, 2014, a group of artists and citizens spontaneously convened a public meeting to debate the future of Cavallerizza Reale, which attracted around 3,000 participants. Following this, cultural meetings and public discussions were organized, focusing on themes related to nature and the role of public property in advancing civil rights (Figure 2-16).

Figure 2-16 Cavallerizza Reale Implementation Process (Source: Reference[65])

In April 2015, the Piedmont Regional Council approved a memorandum of understanding that allowed for partial economic development of the site. This prompted further civic reflection and initiated a participatory process to formulate a counter-proposal.

Today, the courtyards, gardens, and rooms of Cavallerizza Reale have been transformed into a self-organized ecological system. The outer courtyard includes meeting spaces and a communal kitchen; the ground floor hosts theaters and workshops; rooms on the upper floors offer legal consultation, dance classes, interdisciplinary art labs, and co-working spaces, encompassing educational and care functions [65].

2.3.3.2 Characteristics of Tactical Urbanism

Cavallerizza Reale's revitalization exemplifies Tactical Urbanism's core traits and significantly transforms urban space and community dynamics.

The bottom-up nature of its initiation is especially noteworthy. In response to abandonment due to political and financial decisions, citizens and artists spontaneously organized a public forum in May 2014 to debate the building's future, attracting some 3,000 participants. This marked a departure from conventional government-led redevelopment models and underscored the role of citizens as active agents of urban transformation.

The implementation process was low-cost and short-term in nature. Relying on citizen engagement rather than large-scale funding, the space was quickly transformed into a multi-functional, self-managed ecosystem, reviving the building's vitality in alignment with the tactical urbanist ethos of light, temporary, and flexible interventions.

In terms of long-term outcomes, the project catalyzed sustained cultural programming and participatory planning. It reinvigorated the historic structure and stimulated broader discourse on the civic use of public property, setting a precedent for sustainable urban development and increasing citizen agency in shaping the public realm.

2.3.4 Heritage Walks in Santiago, Chile (2007)

2.3.4.1 Case Overview

The "Recorridos Patrimoniales por Santiago" (RPS), or Heritage Walks in Santiago (Santiago), was initiated by the cultural group Cultura Mapocho in 2007. Since then, it has been held on the last Sunday of every month, offering a unique experience for citizens to walk through the streets and buildings of Santiago and rediscover the city's historical narratives (Figure 2-17). The aim is to connect participants' personal experiences with the nation's history and social evolution by highlighting architecturally significant and memory-laden urban landmarks.

The event is free and open to the public, making it highly inclusive. It has attracted over 3,000 participants, guiding people through seven of Santiago's most traditional neighborhoods[51].

Figure 2-17 Heritage Walks in Santiago, Chile (Source: Reference [51])

2.3.4.2 Characteristics of Tactical Urbanism

By engaging citizens in participatory heritage walks, the project reshapes public perceptions of urban history and strengthens cultural identity, contributing to the transmission of intangible heritage. The initiative is highly context-sensitive, selecting local neighborhoods and emblematic architecture to foster public understanding of the city's cultural evolution. Though the walks are held as short-term monthly events, they generate long-term cultural impacts, planting seeds of preservation consciousness in the public mind.

Despite uncertainties in attendance and impact, organizers have succeeded in mobilizing public attention and participation, enhancing neighborhood cohesion. Furthermore, the program encourages residents to step into public spaces, heightening civic engagement and turning citizens into active cultural stewards of their city.

2.3.5 Summary

Although differences in institutional contexts exist between domestic and international cases, all demonstrate the unique value of Tactical Urbanism in cultural continuity, spatial adaptability, and collaborative governance, laying the groundwork for further discussions on its systemic advantages.

On the cultural dimension, both Beishan Village's "adaptive reuse of heritage" and Duling's "occupy-to-preserve" approach affirm that light-touch interventions (e.g., reversible renovations, non-invasive updates) can effectively safeguard the material integrity of historic environments. Meanwhile, the Mapping Workshop in Wuhan and Santiago's Heritage Walks embed participatory cultural production into daily life, illuminating the more profound logic

that "space is a cultural medium."

From a regeneration model perspective, the contrasting approaches underscore Tactical Urbanism's dynamic flexibility: China's practices emphasize tri-party cooperation among government, capital, and community (e.g., phased development in Beishan Village) to swiftly respond to market demands, while international cases leverage citizen self-organization (e.g., functional reuse of the Turin site) for high-frequency spatial iteration. Both validate the feasibility of a "low-cost experimentation and incremental optimization" strategy.

Most crucially, whether through Beishan's integration of culture, commerce, and tourism or Santiago's collective heritage exploration, these initiatives illustrate a cost-sharing mechanism in which co-construction and feedback loops help overcome the dilemma of high conservation costs versus delayed returns.

Together, these cases provide empirical evidence for the innovative potential of Tactical Urbanism in historic neighborhood revitalization. No longer confined to passive preservation, historic districts are now arenas for spatial experimentation, where tradition and modernity co-evolve. As Henri Lefebvre suggested, such efforts recast spatial renewal not as technical planning but as a social process, offering theoretical foundations for the next chapter's discussion on the advantages of light, incremental, and innovative Urbanism.

2.4 Application of Tactical Urbanism in Historic Renewal

The preceding sections have systematically outlined the renewal strategies of historical and cultural districts and the theoretical framework of Tactical Urbanism. This section analyzes the specific demands and characteristics of such renewals and elaborates on the unique advantages of applying Tactical Urbanism to revitalize urban leftover spaces (Figure 2-18).

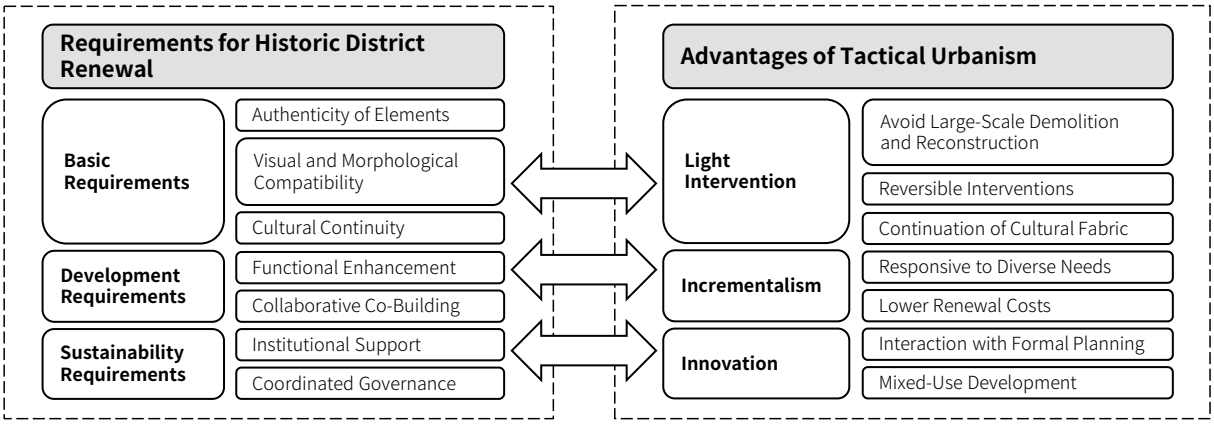

Figure 2-18 Advantages of Tactical Urbanism in Historic District Renewal (Source: Author)

2.4.1 Requirements for the Renewal of Historical and Cultural Districts

The foundational requirement of historic district renewal lies in the authenticity of protected elements. This involves the scientific preservation of material carriers such as historical buildings, street patterns, and traditional craftsmanship while safeguarding intangible cultural forms like folk customs and oral traditions. Beyond authenticity, visual coordination of urban character is crucial—new and old architectural elements must visually integrate through refined control of color, materials, and scale to avoid disrupting the historical atmosphere. Continuity of culture demands the activation of traditional symbols and collective memory through tools like public art and narrative spaces, transforming the district into a dynamic vessel of cultural evolution.

Regarding development, the focus is on enhancing spatial function and fostering community co-creation. Infrastructure and public service upgrades must occur within the boundaries of preservation—adaptive reuse can breathe modern value into historic buildings while maintaining heritage integrity. Community-based collaboration involves coordinated participation from residents, government, and experts, forming shared interest and risk-sharing mechanisms. Tools such as community deliberation platforms can engage residents in planning decisions and foster local cultural identity, preventing cultural hollowing and community fragmentation during renewal.

Sustainability demands a dual framework of institutional support and coordinated governance. This includes legal, regulatory, and funding mechanisms to define responsibilities and enforcement standards clearly—examples include special conservation funds or compensatory FAR (Floor Area Ratio) policies. Governance-wise, cross-sector collaboration, and long-term oversight must be established, supported by digital monitoring platforms and third-party evaluation bodies to ensure lasting results and maximize social benefit, thereby achieving a dynamic balance between heritage conservation and urban growth.

2.4.2 Advantages of Tactical Urbanism

The renewal of historic districts requires adherence to authenticity, coherence, and cultural continuity principles while establishing systematic frameworks for spatial function and governance. As a dynamic response mechanism, Tactical Urbanism offers a methodology that aligns with these demands through its light-touch interventions, gradual iteration, low-cost implementation, and innovative nature.

2.4.2.1 Light-Touch Interventions: Preserving Cultural and Historical Integrity

Tactical Urbanism emphasizes minimal physical intervention in heritage sites, preserving

architectural integrity to the greatest extent. Renovations avoid large-scale demolition, instead favoring micro-modifications. For example, in Beishan Village in Zhuhai, discarded historic materials were repurposed to repair buildings, preserving their original appearance and associated historical memory.

Moreover, street patterns are retained while spatial utilization is optimized. Tactical Urbanism transforms streets into multi-functional public spaces (Figure 2-19), hosting diverse activities such as recreation, fitness, and cultural events. Routes are designed to link key urban nodes while accommodating varying local needs and integrating public transit. Temporary facilities are added to support orderly, vibrant street life.[66]。

Figure 2-19 Tactical Interventions for Open Streets (Source: Reference [66])

For intangible heritage, Tactical Urbanism adopts a "daily-life integration" approach. Traditional craftsmanship and folk practices are embedded into everyday life through micro-installations such as cultural kiosks. Community-driven events—like traditional festivals organized by residents—promote local identity and pride, ensuring the living transmission of heritage.

For instance, Bogotá's Paradero ParaLibros ParaParques project (Figure 2-20) installs open-access libraries in public parks to foster reading and cultural exchange. Likewise, the Casagrande Collective initiated a poetic "bookmark airdrop" in war-torn cities, spreading verses from local poets at dusk to promote literary culture and remembrance.

Figure 2-20 Bogotá's Park Library Project (Left) and Bookmark Airdrop (Right) (Source: Reference[51])

2.4.2.2 Gradual Implementation: Adaptive, Low-Cost Renewal

In rapidly evolving urban contexts, the functions of historic districts must also adapt. Tactical Urbanism supports this evolution through flexible space repurposing. In Beijing's Nanluoguxiang, traditional residences have been transformed into creative stores and cafes, preserving architectural character while accommodating contemporary demands for leisure and cultural consumption.

The use of temporary, mobile facilities enables rapid deployment and iterative refinement. Small-scale interventions can be promptly adjusted based on user feedback and market shifts, ensuring relevance and minimizing risk.

Tactical Urbanism fosters multi-stakeholder engagement, allowing residents to co-design projects like community gardens tailored to local needs. Commercial goals are likewise supported through thoughtful spatial planning that balances economic development with heritage preservation.

From a cost perspective, Tactical Urbanism relies on low-budget, high-impact materials. Materials are selected based on project duration, goals, and local context—emphasizing reuse, local sourcing, and adaptive reconfiguration. For example, in the "GoHuman" initiative led by the SCAG in Long Beach, a one-day traffic island demonstration cost only $1,000 (Figure 2-21), using plastic bases, borrowed plants, and printed signage to simulate long-term design proposals[11].

Funding is often incremental, starting with small-scale pilots and expanding based on results. This lowers financial risk while increasing efficiency. Socially, Tactical Urbanism encourages cost-sharing: in Fort Worth, the early "Build a Better Block" project was realized with just $500 worth of materials. Temporary interventions later became permanent (Figure 2-22), even reviving surrounding retail space[50].

Figure 2-21 Flexible Materials Used in Long Beach's "GoHuman" Project (Source: Reference[11])

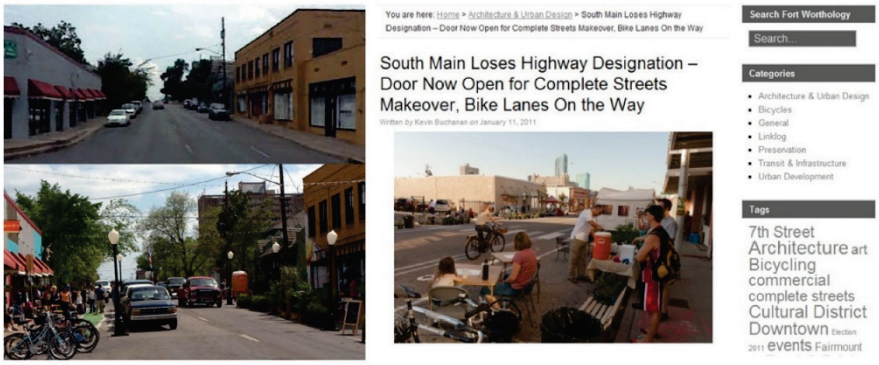

Figure 2-22 Temporary Interventions Adopted Permanently in Fort Worth (Source: Reference [50])

2.4.2.3 Innovation: Institutional and Practical Expansion

On the institutional level, Tactical Urbanism inspires planning system reform. Traditional renewal is typically top-down, with limited public input. Tactical Urbanism, however, promotes multi-actor collaborative governance involving governments, communities, businesses, NGOs, and academics. Each party contributes—policy and funding, participation and feedback, technical expertise, and cultural programming—creating a holistic and inclusive planning ecosystem.

It also enables flexible permitting mechanisms. Conventional approvals are often lengthy and inflexible, but tactical projects can benefit from fast-tracked trials and lightweight permits. In Trondheim, Norway, a temporary pedestrian intervention bypassed standard paperwork entirely, speeding up deployment and testing urban concepts[54].

Practically, Tactical Urbanism reimagines space use. It breaks rigid zoning conventions

through mixed-use innovation—such as repurposing historic buildings into spaces that combine lodging, coworking, and cultural venues. Technology is also leveraged: sensors for real-time monitoring, intelligent lighting systems, and 3D printing for custom furniture—all boosting modernization and cost efficiency.

For example, "The Rocks Pop-Up" in Sydney reused vacant heritage buildings for temporary creative uses. In Perth's "Why So Empty" project, a mobile app lets users identify and suggest uses for underutilized spaces[52].

2.5 Tactical Urbanism Implementation Framework

This section aims to elaborate on the implementation framework of tactical urbanism in the renewal of historic and cultural districts, which consists of four main components: first, adopting an empathic analytical perspective to gain a deep understanding of local social needs and identify authentic entry points for design intervention; second, initiating a self-organized model to develop low-cost, reversible, and replicable design prototypes; third, applying these prototypes to specific actors and environments, continuously adjusting and optimizing through experimentation; and finally, once the model proves effective, promoting its institutionalization to form a scalable and sustainable renewal paradigm.

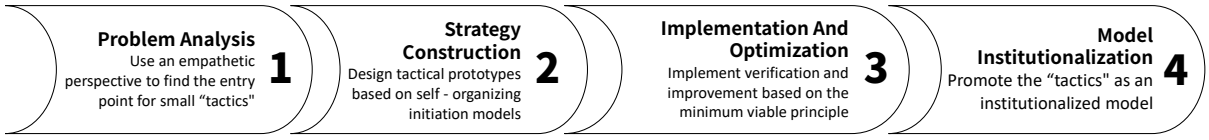

Figure 2-23 Tactical Urbanism Implementation Framework (Source: Author)

2.5.1 Problem Analysis

The renewal of historic and cultural districts is dominated by incremental redevelopment, rendering traditional planning approaches that rely on growth-driven solutions less applicable. This calls for more adaptive planning theories and practices. Tactical urbanism emphasizes human perception and treats urban space as a vessel of daily experience. It advocates for empathic observation and empathic design to uncover potential intervention opportunities and strategic entry points. This shift in analytical perspective highlights the importance of recognizing micro-level “tactics”.

Those devising “tactics” must understand the fragmented and complex nature of historic and cultural districts. On one hand, the very history of these areas is shaped by an accumulation of countless micro-tactics, reflecting their historical patchwork; on the other hand, current residents draw on their own ingenuity and tactical responses to cope with contemporary challenges, contributing to the present-day complexity. Thus, the physical attributes and value

meanings of urban space are not fixed but have been dynamically evolving over time since their inception.

In traditional planning discourse, such micro-tactics are often abstracted and simplified to construct a structured understanding, which then informs macro-level goals and unified plans. However, this approach can easily lead to a disconnect between planning intentions and actual outcomes in historic districts. In contrast, tactical urbanism encourages a departure from such tendencies, promoting a comprehensive observation of social meanings—ranging from events, identity, and historical memory to political activities and cultural elements. Through new micro-tactical interventions, it integrates into the dynamic evolution of districts in a bottom-up, gradual, participatory, and exploratory manner.

On a practical level, designers can employ tools such as on-site walk-throughs, street observations, behavioral mapping, and community interviews to build a nuanced understanding of local life. Focus should be placed on micro clues such as walking paths, pause points, usage conflicts, and spatial remnants to explore how users perceive, remember, and reconstruct their public environments. This emotionally invested mode of observation enables designers to identify "micro problems" that are often overlooked in macro-scale planning but are genuinely experienced by users.

2.5.2 Strategy Construction

In the complex context of historic and cultural districts, the traditional top-down planning logic often struggles to address the dynamic nature of real-world issues due to its large-scale interventions and rigid pathways. Tactical urbanism offers a more flexible and participatory approach, emphasizing "execution upon feasibility" as the means to advance micro-scale spatial updates. Particularly, the introduction of self-organizing mechanisms provides practical possibilities for constructing low-cost, reversible, and easily replicable prototypes. The term self-organization refers to how initiators of tactical actions, without reliance on the powers of conventional planning procedures (planners, construction teams, etc.), or predefined spatiotemporal goals, can overcome challenges through strategic planning. This includes the discovery and utilization of intervenable temporal and spatial materials, the mobilization of bottom-up forces, and the amplification of points of innovation and defiance.

Identifying spatial and temporal materials for intervention serves as the foundational condition for tactical implementation. Tactical Urbanism draws heavily from the concept of "temporary use" (Figure 2-24), which can be categorized into five types[37]. These interventions typically occur in leftover, marginal, vacant, or underutilized spaces—areas easily overlooked

in conventional planning but offering high latent potential when viewed from a user-centered perspective.

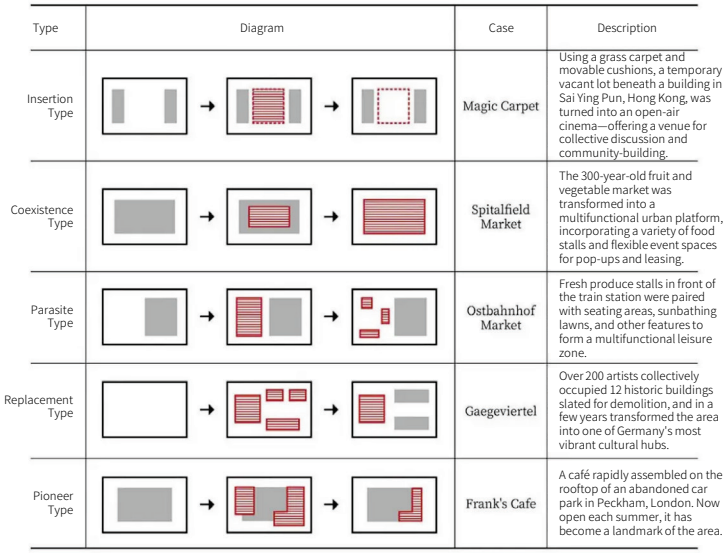

Figure 2-24 Five Types of Temporary Use (Source: Reference [37])

Mobilizing bottom-up forces requires an analysis of the interests and needs of diverse stakeholders. In historic districts, groups such as residents, merchants, and tourists often have differing expectations. Specific individuals may be motivated to act based on pressing needs, and their actions can create chain reactions that inspire broader participation. Identifying and activating these "first movers" is often the key to launching successful tactical interventions.

Creativity and rebellion serve as critical amplifiers for the broader impact of tactical projects. In the era of digital networks, "viral" visibility has become a defining feature of media. While this phenomenon has pros and cons, interventions that resonate with public sentiment often attract more resources and generate lasting change. Tactical planners must thus explore site-specific ideas through brainstorming and draw on communication theory and social psychology to broaden impact and attract widespread participation.

Among these strategies, visual art is efficient: for example (Figure 2-25), street murals at intersections, art-infused crosswalks, hybrid street paintings, or repurposed roadways; sidewalk and roadside installations; or murals on utility boxes, guardrails, and underpasses[67].

In conclusion, the development of a design prototype should not be seen as a one-time spatial outcome, but rather as a strategic model that continuously stimulates social action, dynamically adapts to site characteristics, and is constantly tested and revised. It provides a technically feasible pathway for subsequent implementation and institutionalization.

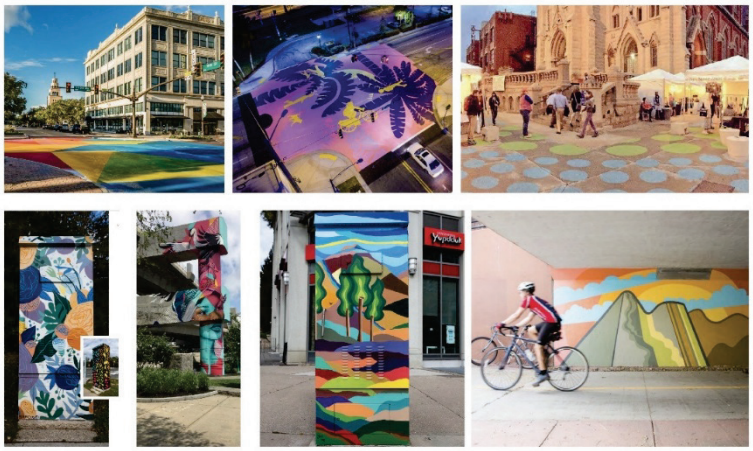

Figure 2-25 Application of Street Murals in Urban Spaces (Source: Reference [67])

2.5.3 Implementation and Optimization

Upon completing the tactical prototype design, the next step should be immediate on-site testing, following the principle of Minimum Viable Proposition (MVP) to facilitate rapid implementation. This involves initiating small-scale pilot interventions in representative blocks or segments using the simplest and most cost-effective methods—for instance, temporary pavement markings, movable seating, or phased lighting installations. These approaches allow the design intent to be manifested within limited budgets and timelines, while also enabling quick assessment of the feasibility and preliminary outcomes of the project.

During the pilot process, evaluation should be conducted simultaneously from both quantitative and qualitative perspectives. Quantitative evaluation can utilize pedestrian monitoring devices to track the number of people crossing, duration of stay, and changes in local business revenue. Meanwhile, qualitative feedback can be gathered through interviews, questionnaires, or comments on street bulletin boards, directly capturing the experiences, feelings, and suggestions of residents and visitors. The organic combination of these two data types provides not only clear performance metrics, but also uncovers subtle needs and emotional resonances that numbers alone may miss.

Based on the evaluation results, the prototype components should undergo iterative optimization. Materials, forms, and spatial locations can be flexibly adjusted on-site, using temporary materials such as recyclable modular tiles, portable planters, or quick-assembly wooden panels to rapidly redeploy layouts. This allows for continuous testing of various schemes to determine the best-fit solution in a real-world context. Once a prototype has gone through one or more rounds of iteration and reaches the expected level of feasibility and user approval, it can be replicated in the same block or adjacent areas to test its cross-site consistency

and effectiveness, thereby expanding practical experience.

Meanwhile, establishing a closed-loop feedback mechanism is essential. Each round of iteration should be documented into a standardized manual, including operational procedures, key parameters, and comparative outcomes. This facilitates rapid responses to new demands or unexpected issues, while providing clear guidance for day-to-day maintenance. By integrating local operation teams and social organizations into a regular monitoring network, the sustainability of small-scale trials can be ensured—laying a solid foundation for broader promotion and eventual institutionalization.

2.5.4 Institutionalization of the Model

In historic district renewal, establishing institutional models is essential for achieving sustainable outcomes. The integration of Tactical Urbanism with formal planning typically unfolds in three phases:

Phase I: Tactical Urbanism acts as a bridge between top-down and bottom-up forces, facilitating communication and collaboration among governments, community organizations, and residents.

Phase II: Through sustained evaluation, the value of tactical interventions is recognized, and successful tactics are formally incorporated into official design and planning processes.

Phase III: Authorities develop design manuals based on earlier tactical practices, encouraging residents to conduct future renewals according to standardized principles. These manuals serve as reference models for other districts and support the widespread adoption of successful strategies.

For example, in the Pearl Street Plaza transformation in DUMBO, New York, planners worked closely with community representatives and business organizations to convert an underused space into a vibrant pocket plaza. This marked Phase I, enhancing multilateral cooperation. In Phase II, the "Green Light for Midtown" project at Times Square demonstrated the success of tactical experimentation through detailed planning and post-intervention data analysis, leading to its inclusion in formal planning. By Phase III, New York City's Department of Transportation compiled the Urban Street Design Guide, institutionalizing these innovations. The guide has inspired similar efforts in cities such as San Francisco and Buenos Aires, helping promote global street sustainability[49].

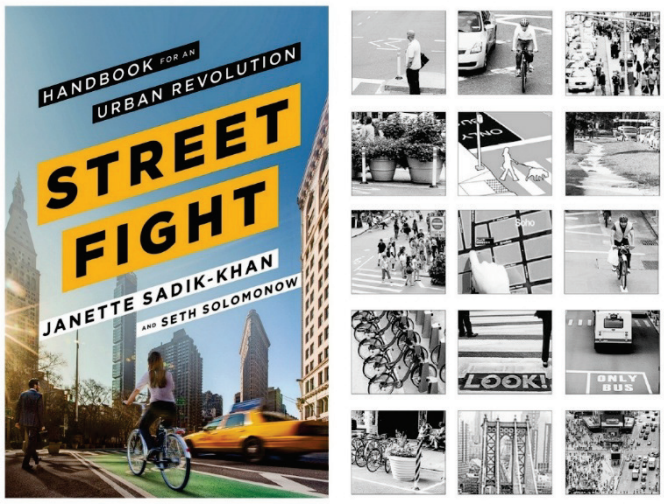

Figure 2-26 The institutionalization process of tactical experiments in NYC (Source: Reference[49])

2.6 Summary

This chapter reviews the theoretical foundations and practical approaches of historic district renewal and Tactical Urbanism, establishing their theoretical connections and practical value for further research.

It first traces the evolution of historic district renewal theory, highlighting the global shift from static conservation to dynamic, integrative models like the Historic Urban Landscape (HUL) framework. In China, research has evolved from material preservation to a more holistic approach involving micro-renewal and multi-stakeholder collaboration.

Next, it examines Guangzhou's historic district renewal, outlining four phases of its protective model. This shows a trend toward value pluralism, public participation, and collaborative governance while highlighting challenges such as over-commercialization. Future efforts should focus on dynamic development, interdisciplinary integration, and technological innovation.

The chapter then discusses the origins and development of Tactical Urbanism, summarizing its European and North American roots and core methods. Through four case studies, it demonstrates the advantages of Tactical Urbanism in historic district renewal—cultural continuity, spatial adaptability, and social collaboration—emphasizing its low cost, small scale, and flexibility.

Finally, the chapter outlines how Tactical Urbanism can address the needs of historic districts with light-touch interventions, incremental strategies, and innovative approaches. It concludes that Tactical Urbanism's bottom-up mechanisms and institutionalized pathways offer valuable references for sustainable regeneration.

Chapter 3 Interpreting Guangfunan Through Tactical Urbanism

This chapter applies the theoretical framework to Guangfunan Historic and Cultural District, using a tactical urbanism lens to analyze current conditions and inform intervention strategies. It traces the area's historical context, examines the interaction between space, people, and industry, defines the baseline for preservation, and identifies core site conflicts to support subsequent strategy development.

3.1 Overview of the Guangfunan Historical and Cultural District

The Guangfunan Historical and Cultural District is in the Liwan District of Guangzhou, formerly known as Xiguan (Figure 3-1). The Guangfunan Historical and Cultural District (hereinafter referred to as Guangfunan) exemplifies the typical dilemmas faced in revitalizing historical and cultural districts in Guangzhou. As a cultural landmark rich in history, the district retains its valuable heritage while also suffering from chaotic spatial order and functional hybridity. Notably, its traditional garment wholesale industry continues to generate economic momentum, underpinning a unique form of grassroots urban vitality. In contrast, the lack of historic building protection and worsening residential living conditions are intensifying. This feature of contradictory coexistence makes it an appropriate case for applying Tactical Urbanism theory.

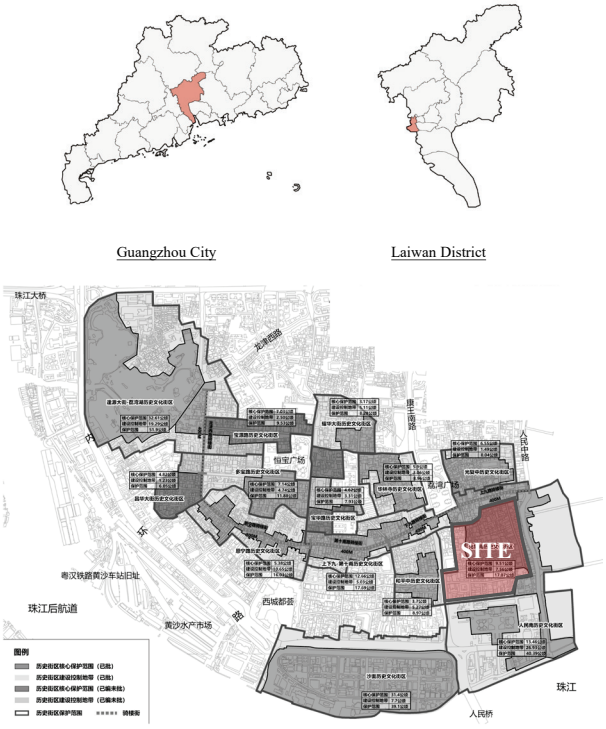

Figure 3-1 Location of the Guangfunan Historical and Cultural District (Source: Author)

3.1.1 Long History and Valuable Heritage

The historical evolution of Guangfunan is closely linked to the development of Guangzhou's treaty port commercial markets, dating back to the Ming and Qing dynasties. At that time, this area served as a significant venue where foreign merchants entered Guangzhou to request trade access, witnessing numerous iconic episodes of cross-cultural commercial exchange, such as the existence of Huaiyuan Post Station, which reflected official trading protocols and the Ming-Qing government's stance on international mutual trade.

During its development, the district continued to evolve, becoming a hinterland that supported the distinctive commercial development of the Xiguan area. It was once a hub for major stores, long-established shops, renowned retailers, and specialty markets, giving rise to numerous time-honored brands and specialized industries, with its commercial and trade function persisting today.

This district possesses significant historical and cultural value, serving as the site of the "first step of mutual trade into Guangdong" for foreign merchants outside Guangzhou during the Ming and Qing dynasties, and it embodies profound historical continuity.

Simultaneously, it remains an important bearer of Xiguan's distinctive commercial development, featuring diverse industrial types and functioning as a central hub for daily consumer goods wholesale distribution with a relatively integrated industrial chain model.

Moreover, the district is also one of the representative areas of urban texture from the late Qing and early Republic of China period, showcasing a Sino-Western hybrid Lingnan architectural style. It retains numerous buildings and street layouts from that era, forming an essential component of Guangzhou's image as a National Famous Historical and Cultural City.

According to the latest plan, the overall protected area of this historical and cultural district is 17.06 hectares, including a core protection zone of 9.50 hectares and a construction control zone of 7.55 hectares.

The district is rich in historical and cultural resources, with numerous architectural forms of tangible cultural heritage, including five immovable cultural relics, 51 historic buildings, three traditional architectural style structures, and 94 traditional architectural style traces, among which there are 21 sites of time-honored brands (Figure 3-2).

These abundant heritages are crucial carriers of the district's historical and cultural identity, bearing witness to its evolution and holding irreplaceable value[68].

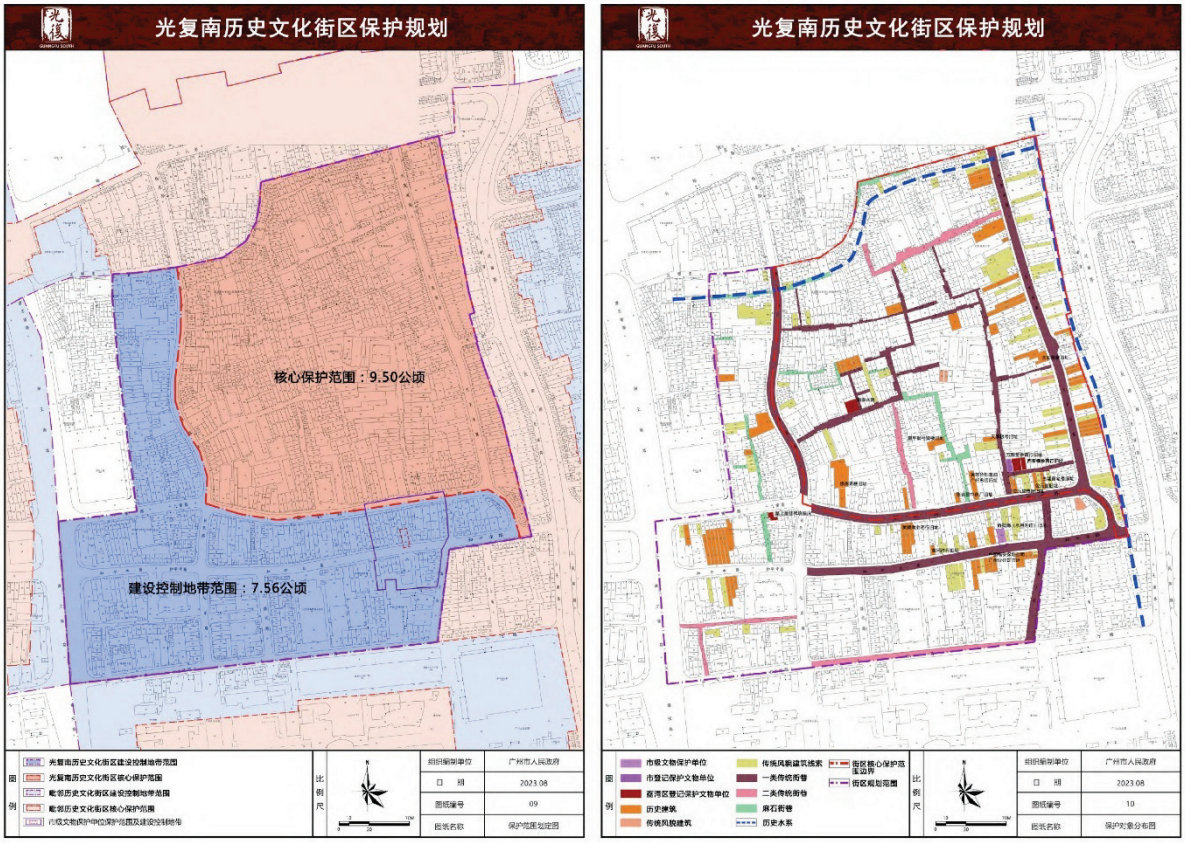

Figure 3-2 Protection Scope and Distribution of Protected Elements in the Guangfunan (Source: Reference[68])

3.1.2 Complex Current Conditions

The current condition of Guangfunan can be characterized as disordered and heterogeneous, with social perceptions, the use of physical space, and overall urban character differing markedly from those of most historic districts. While the area's heritage has not been well preserved, the district continues to exhibit sustained commercial vitality.

From a narrative perspective, Guangfunan, a district with a century-long commercial tradition, holds three overlapping layers of narratives ranging from recent to ancient. The most immediate is the story of a wholesale street for trendy apparel, currently the dominant clothing industry in the area, involving numerous vendors, workers, and service personnel. Looking back, it also reflects the district's history of shop-based wholesale trade and time-honored brands since the late Qing Dynasty. Going even further back, it touches upon the thirteen-hongs trading port, a site of major historical significance that left minimal material heritage, forming a broader macro-historical perspective.

These three levels of narrative overlap yet differ in expression, and merely referring to the district as a "century-old commercial district" fails to resolve its narrative complexity and

contradictions, thereby complicating its holistic positioning.

Regarding physical space, Guangfunan displays a clear state of heterogeneity (Figure 3-3). Regarding road traffic, the district is flanked by Renmin South Road and Kangwang South Road. Except for Guangfunan Road, which functions as a secondary arterial road, most vehicular roads are one-way side streets with one to two lanes, while the inner alleys consist of pedestrian lanes.

The municipal road right-of-way is mixed, with narrow sidewalks often obstructed by cargo and vehicular lanes crowded with pedestrians, pushcarts, non-motorized vehicles, and motor vehicles. The parking system is underdeveloped, with a shortage of public parking spaces and widespread illegal on-street parking that occupies bike lanes. Pedestrian paths are also congested by cargo and bicycles, resulting in severe mixed traffic between motorized and non-motorized vehicles, negatively impacting walking and cycling.

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In terms of public space, the high building density limits the availability of public activity areas, and the existing vacant land is often privately occupied, failing to meet residents' leisure needs.

Regarding building functions, many mixed-use residential and commercial buildings are present. While diverse in function, they exhibit chaotic spatial layouts, posing urban management and development challenges.

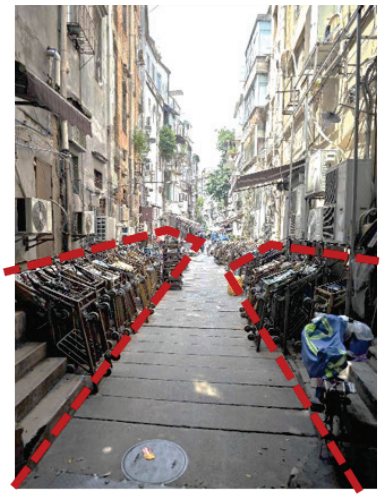
The urban character of the district also suffers from stylistic heterogeneity. In terms of architectural styles, there are traditional Lingnan buildings from the late Qing and early Republic period, as well as modern buildings and others with incongruent styles due to renovations at different times. These diverse forms coexist, leading to a lack of overall aesthetic cohesion.

Regarding infrastructure, some systems are outdated, insufficient, and characterized by messy wiring, such as the unburied three lines, which negatively impact residents' lives and the district's image. Additionally, specific infrastructure projects fail to respect the historic character, damaging the overall urban appearance.

The ground-floor functional layout is highly diverse in terms of commercial formats,

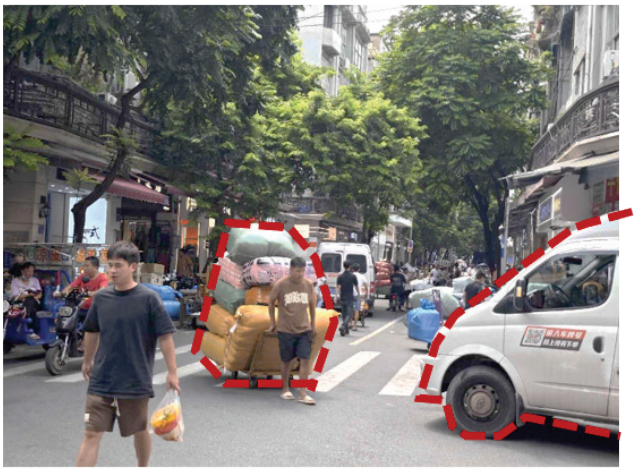
including residences, catering, service industries, clothing retail and wholesale, garment processing, retail, public service facilities, warehousing, logistics, and brand planning and advertising. However, these business types lack organic integration, with a scattered spatial layout, and some formats are incompatible with the historical and cultural characteristics of the district, thereby diminishing its overall quality.

Mixture of different styles



Encroaching upon the streets

Obstructing the facades of historical buildings



Occupying the streets

Figure 3-3 Heterogeneous Conditions of Guangfunan (Source: Author)

3.2 Preconditions for Renewal

Before introducing a specific analytical perspective of Tactical Urbanism, defining the boundary of tactical intervention in Guangfunan is necessary. As a historical and cultural district, inviolable bottom lines must be respected. The following section is based mainly on official planning documents and historical research. The tactical boundaries are delineated from material and cultural dimensions to identify the broadest possible consensus regarding the district's future development strategy.

3.2.1 Protection of Material Heritage

Architectural resources are an important material foundation of the district. For protected cultural heritage sites, such as the five immovable cultural relics, protection should follow approved cultural heritage protection laws and regulations based on historical records and photographs, adhering to the principle of preserving the authenticity of the buildings. For the 57 historic buildings and traditional style buildings, protection should cover key elements such as the main facades.

These components reflect historic stylistic features, materials, structures, and decorations, while other non-core elements should follow the principles of reversibility and identifiability. The 93 traditional style building traces should be maintained according to style guidelines, ensuring the appearance is preserved, and the interior conditions are upgraded to accommodate modern use without compromising the authenticity of the historical character.

The spatial structure of the district is a key embodiment of its historical and cultural identity and should be preserved. The traditional grid-pattern alleyway system of Xiguan, including numerous traditional alleys, T-shaped and straight alleys, and the resulting developed circulation network, forms an essential part of the district's spatial layout and requires preservation and repair.

The rich urban texture of early Xiguan mixed-use commercial-residential districts, the form of mixed-use streets, and the architectural style of shophouses integrating Chinese and Western elements—as reflected in the volume, height, and color of buildings along the street—should all be integrated with the original style of shophouses to preserve the traditional character of the district.

The low-rise, high-density architectural forms and textures and the characteristic image of the Xiguan vernacular residential areas, such as the narrow frontage, deep layout, setback construction, and compact urban grain, as well as the variety of building forms and appearances in the area, must be protected. Street-facing buildings' scale, material, and decorative elements should be carefully preserved.

3.2.2 Inheritance of Cultural Context

Commercial travel culture is a key feature of Guangfunan as a historical and cultural district, and its continuation is essential for the district's development. The area has historically served as an important trade marketplace, bearing witness to the exchange and integration of commercial cultures between China and other countries.This cultural feature should be thoroughly explored and showcased during the renewal process. Organizing various

commercial-cultural events and reviving traditional business formats can breathe new life into commercial travel culture in a modern context.

For instance, a historically themed commercial street could be developed, introducing traditional, time-honored brand shops and displaying traditional commercial techniques and cultures to attract tourists and consumers. This would promote local economic growth while preserving and promoting commercial travel culture.

The district's trade structure holds unique historical value, such as the "outer market–inner alley" functional pattern that has continued since the thirteen-hongs period. This model embodies the district's commercial characteristics and living conditions and should be retained and enhanced during renewal. Protecting and utilizing historic buildings can preserve the original alley patterns, the existing urban textures, and the living conditions of the "small bazaars and markets."

At the same time, improving service functions within the inner alley and expanding the functions of the outer market—for example, through the development of cultural creativity and fashion boutiques—can integrate the traditional trade structure with modern commercial development, realizing the inheritance and innovation of historical culture.

3.3 Site Perception from the Perspective of Tactical Urbanism

To fully comprehend the complexity of the current site conditions, this section attempts to analyze the interrelated network composed of physical space, social groups, and economic activities. This system-oriented perspective is more conducive to triggering tactical innovative thinking than formulaic planning frameworks. The dynamic interaction of elements reveals latent connections often obscured by conventional thematic research and more accurately identifies potential intervention points.

3.3.1 Collage Characteristics of the Site

"collage" originates from Colin Rowe and serves as a hybrid urban and architectural renewal strategy, expressing the city's past, present, and future in a fragmented form [69]. This section adopts this concept to unravel the current condition of Guangfunan, attempting to excavate and reveal the fragments behind the heterogeneous condition, thereby inspiring interventions within the framework of Tactical Urbanism.

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3.3.1.1 The Canvas of Collage: A Relatively Stable Modern-Traditional Commercial-Residential Texture

The historical emergence of Guangfunan is marked by the establishment of the thirteen - songs. In the 22nd year of the Qianlong reign (1757), the Qing court issued a decree allowing Western merchant ships to anchor and trade only in Guangdong, prohibiting access to Ningbo, thus ending the previously legal practice of choosing among the four ports set by the Kangxi Emperor. This initiated nearly a century of "single-port trade" in Guangzhou[70].

The modern urban texture framework of Guangfunan was established between the 1822 fire of the thirteen-hongs and 1900. The 1835 County Administrative Map of the Provincial Capital recorded detailed information on the area's roads, and the 1900 Map of the Eastern Provincial Capital provided even more comprehensive documentation of the local streets and alleys (Figure 3-4).

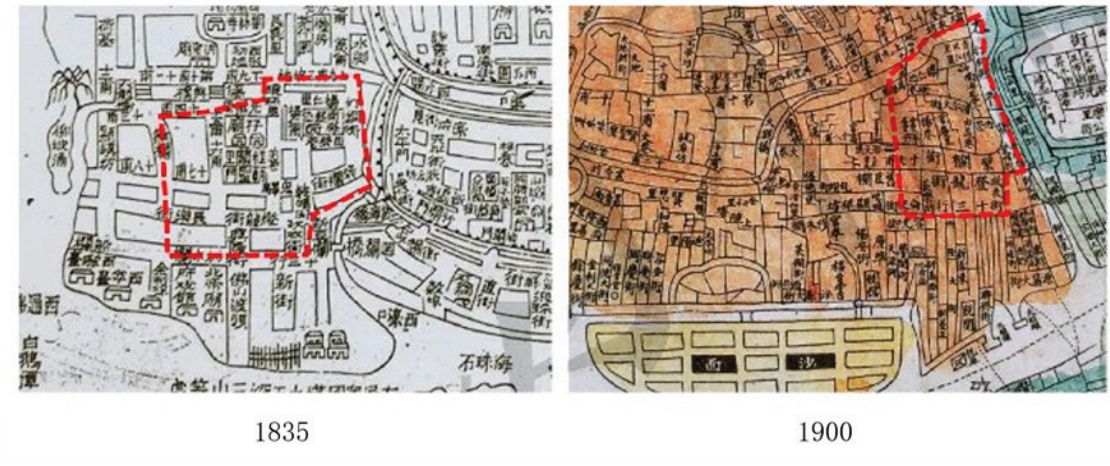


Figure 3-4 Road Records of Guangfunan in Different Historical Periods (Source: Reference[68])

In the subsequent development of Guangfunan, the area has consistently adhered to the street network framework established during this period (Figure 3-5). Functionally, it represents a typical modern traditional mixed-use district composed of Zhutong houses (tube-shaped houses), Xiguan Dawu (SaiKwan mansions), and other deep traditional dwellings, forming high-density residential blocks.

Over time, the dominant commercial formats of the main streets have changed repeatedly, but the spatial pattern of closely integrated commercial and residential uses has remained consistent, providing a fundamental framework for the area's various collaged elements[71].

Figure 3-5 Diagram of Historical Morphological Evolution (Source: Reference[71])

3.3.1.2 Interwoven Urban Fabric of Old and New

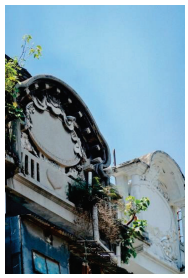
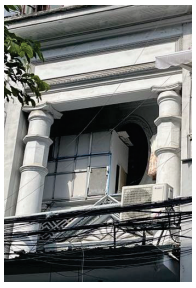
The Guangfunan area retains buildings from different historical periods, ranging from traditional Lingnan architecture of the late Qing and early Republican eras to modern architectural styles. While most buildings follow the overall form of Zhutong houses (tube-shaped houses) as controlled by the spatial texture of the block, their various collaged elements are primarily reflected in the facades (Figure 3-6).

Figure 3-6 Collaged Facades of Buildings with Diverse Styles (Source: Author)

Among them, the facades of historic buildings incorporate many architectural elements such as Windows, balconies, railings, pediments, and columns, reflecting a fusion of Western classical architectural influences and local stylistic features (Table 3-1).

The application of these elements is closely related to the thirteen-hongs' historical role as a hub of international trade, which indirectly fostered Western cultural influences

Table 3-1 Architectonic Components with Local Characteristics (Source: Author)

Element	Description	Current Photos
Windows	The glass Windows exhibit diverse colors (blue, red, yellow, green, etc.) and often adopt the style of the Manchu window, with window openings in rectangular or arched shapes. The styles are flexible and visually appealing.	
Balconies	Balconies appear in concave, convex, or combined forms, placing more emphasis on decoration than function, with plan forms including rectangles, curves, and polygons.	
Railings	The railings display rich facade forms, including hollowed-out, partially hollow, and solid masonry railings, with designs incorporating pattern mosaics, horizontal struts, and Baroque-style imitations.	
Pediments	The forms are dynamic and stylistically eclectic, ranging from simple flat pediments and circular scroll types to three-dimensional niche styles.	
Column Styles	The column types are highly varied, including square columns with bases and columns mimicking Western classical orders, often supporting cantilevered loads via pediment columns.	

The facade elements of other modern buildings are even more intricate, featuring a variety of functional components derived from utilitarian "ingenuity" — such as canopies, planting fixtures, and air-conditioner racks—as well as various "trendy storefront facades" shaped by the clothing wholesale boom (Figure 3-7). Although these features appear incompatible with the district's historic character, it is important to recognize their rationale as "tactics" employed by stakeholders within the district to fulfill their own needs. In light of typological behavioral studies, these "tactics" reflect a bottom-up and incremental micro-modification process[72].

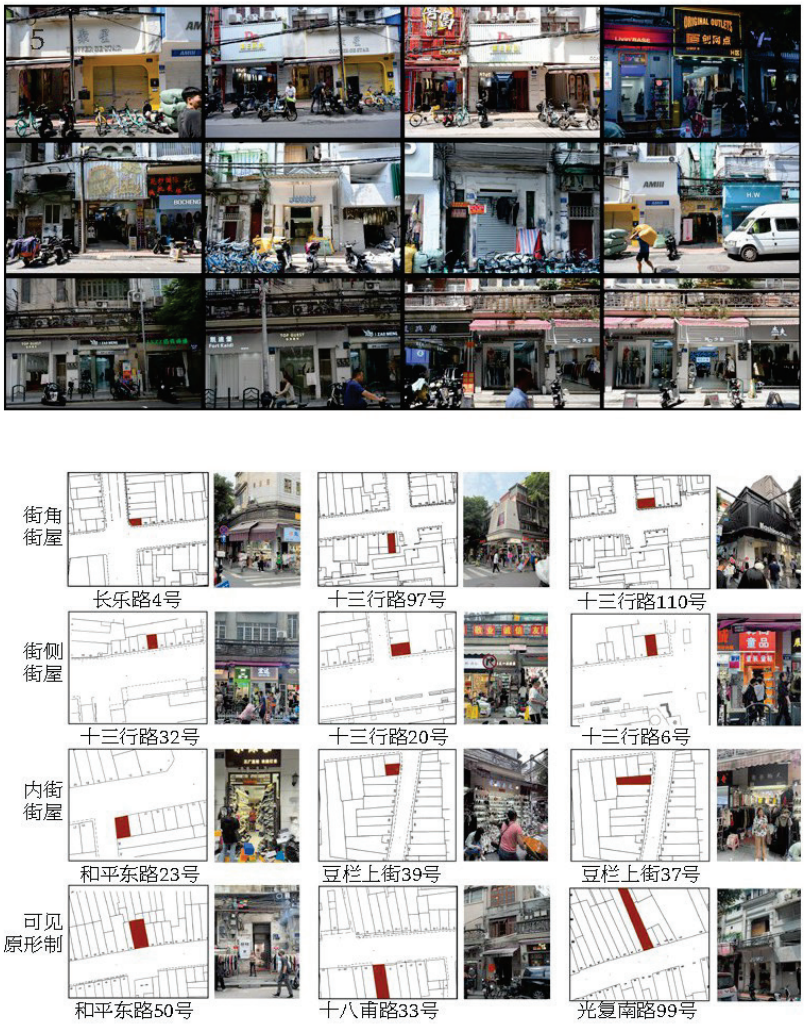


Figure 3-7 Study of Storefront Facades in Guangfunan and Adjacent Streets (Source: Reference[72])

In addition to architectural facades representing visual character elements, there are various other visual symbols of significance (Table 3-2). These include but are not limited to, various promotional signs, heritage stone steles, murals, partitions, vegetation, furnishings, and infrastructure. These elements reflect an interweaving of everyday life, commercial activity, and historical presence.

Table 3-2 Morphological Elements Within the Site(Source: Author)

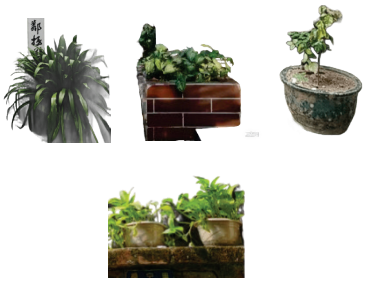
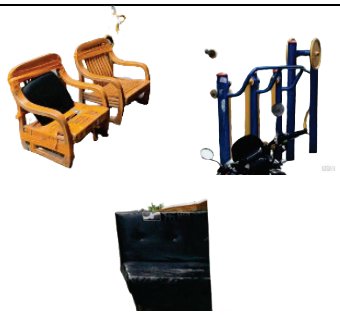
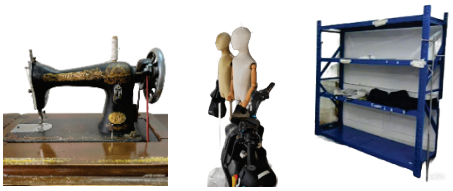
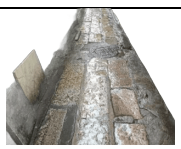
Category	Elements	Notes	Photos
Everyday Elements	Infrastructure	High frequency of appearance relatively difficult to utilize	
	Potted greenery	High frequency of appearance easy to utilize	
	Leisure facilities	Moderate frequency of appearance easy to utilize	
	Vehicles	High frequency of appearance relatively difficult to utilize They occupy public space	
	Atmospheric decorations	Moderate frequency of appearance, easy to utilize	

Table 3-2 Morphological Elements Within the Site(Continued)

Category	Elements	Notes	Photos
Commercial Elements	Logistics non-motorized vehicles	High frequency of appearance easy to utilize	
	Logistics packaging materials	High frequency of appearance easy to utilize	
	Production and sales equipment	Low frequency of appearance easy to utilize	
	Mobile stalls	Moderate frequency of appearance easy to utilize	
Historical Elements	Historical building plaques	Low frequency of appearance mostly obscured	
	Community signage	Low frequency of appearance	
	Stone-paved roads	Low frequency of appearance	

These diverse stylistic elements, serving as spatiotemporal witnesses to the district's development, collectively compose a layered and accumulated collage of historical landscapes. Their differences in style, materials, and functions intuitively reflect different historical periods' architectural characteristics and social demands.

The tactical intervention strategies proposed in this study are essentially innovative recombination based on the collage genes of the existing elements.

A deeper analysis of the compositional logic of the existing architectural elements will provide a core design methodology for incremental renewal.

3.3.1.3 Functional Collage of Building Spaces

In addition to the stylistic collage of the district, the functional spatial composition of buildings in the Guangfunan district also exhibits a state of collage.

As shown in the figure, the current building functions in Guangfunan are primarily composed of residential, wholesale, retail, storage and logistics, catering, and service sectors, with a near 1:1 ratio between residence and wholesale. The horizontal distribution of functions follows the pattern of "commercial streets on the outside, residential alleys on the inside" (Figure 3-8).

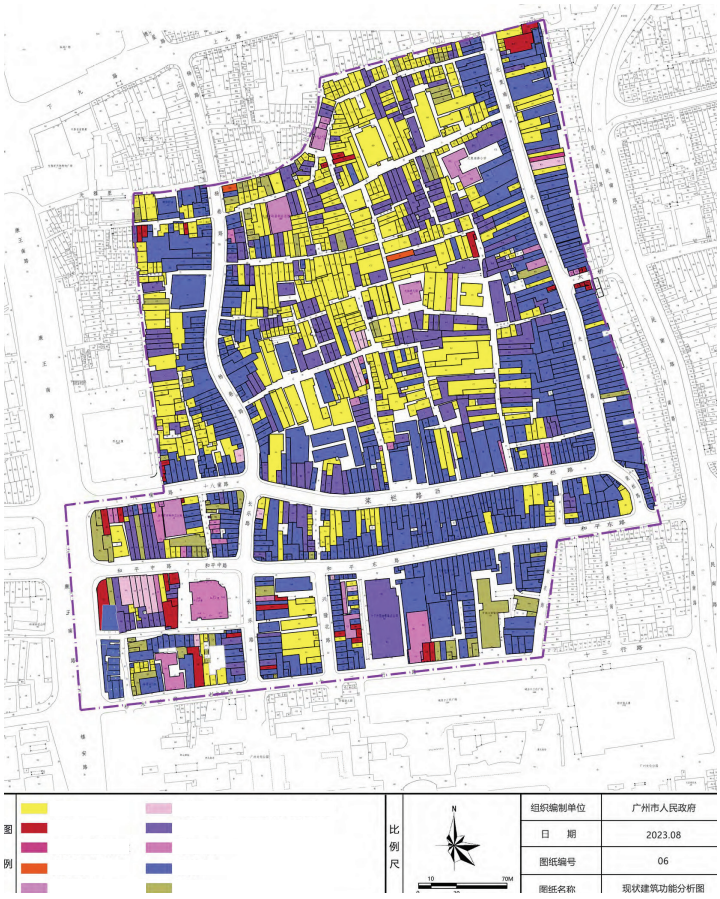


Figure 3-8 Functional Distribution of Existing Buildings in Guangfunan (Source: Reference[71])

In terms of vertical space, it follows the commercial use pattern on the ground floor and residential use above.

Due to the intersection of residential needs and commercial demands and the introduction of other building functions, various forms of functionally interwoven spatial configurations have emerged (Figure 3-9), such as designer studios and garden terraces atop shop buildings, cafes embedded in the inner courtyards of fashion malls, and coffee shops operating in niches carved from commercial storefronts.

Figure 3-9 Examples of Unconventional Spatial Use in the Current Context (Source: Author)

In recent years, the functional composition of the district has exhibited a notable trend: an increase in storage space and small stalls, manifesting across both horizontal and vertical levels. On the horizontal level, more residential space has been converted to commercial uses (such as wholesale stalls and warehouses).

It is estimated that over the past five years, approximately 20% of residential spaces within residential areas have been converted into wholesale warehouses (Figure 3-10), and there is a significant number of residential-to-warehouse conversions currently under renovation.

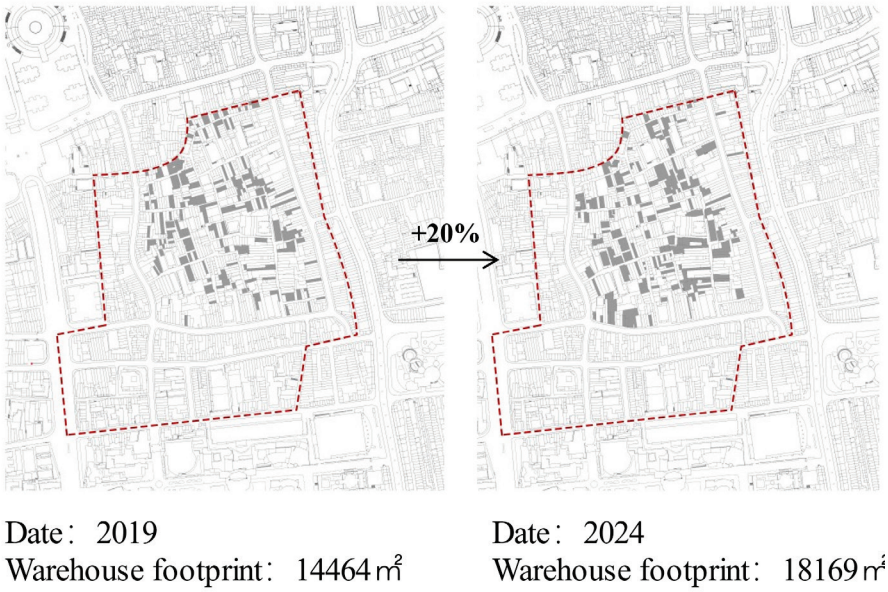


Figure 3-10 Comparison of Current and Five-Year-Ago Warehouse Area (Source: Author)

On the vertical level, traditional commercial functions are typically located on the ground floor, while the upper floors continue to serve residential purposes, with some entire residential buildings being repurposed for warehouse use (Figure 3-11).

Moreover, further segmentation has emerged in ground-floor commercial spaces, where shop spaces are increasingly subdivided rather than following the traditional one-stall-per-shop layout. This intensified stall configuration appears to be inspired by the shopping mall (garment city) model (Figure 3-12).

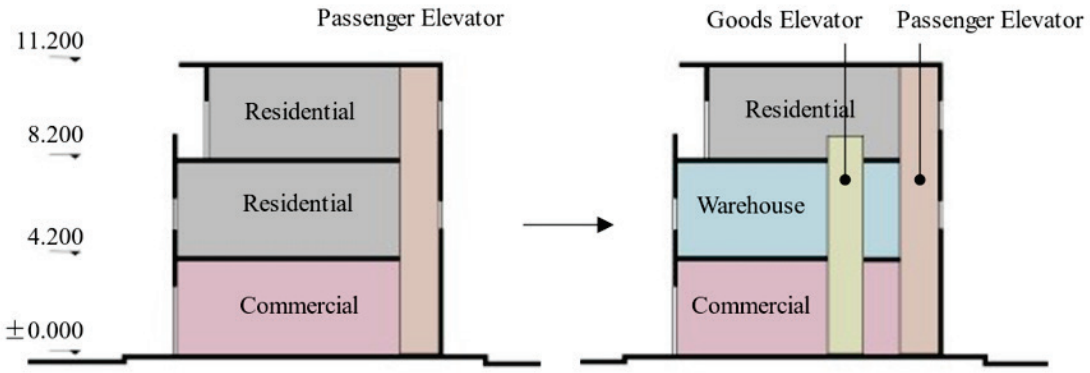


Figure 3-11 Composite Transformation of Vertical Space Functions (Source: Author)

In the distribution of urban spatial value, residential functions typically occupy a higher value position due to usage frequency and public livelihood relevance. However, the recent functional evolution of space in Guangfunan has shown the opposite trend. From the perspective of market dynamics, this can be attributed to several reasons: from the angle of

supply and demand, the expansion of the wholesale industry has generated a far greater demand for warehouse space than for residential rentals in nearby areas.

From the standpoint of landlord profitability, the "front store, back warehouse" model promotes bundled leasing of functional space, where entire rentals reduce transaction costs and minimize tenant instability, in contrast to subdivided residential leasing.

Figure 3-12 Subdivided Stall Renovation Model of Ground-Floor Shops (Source: Author)

3.3.1.4 Current Street Conditions with Mixed Right-of-Way

The main arterial roads surrounding the area are Renmin South Road and Kangwang South Road, constituting the "two verticals" in the "three horizontals and five verticals" road framework of the old city area of Liwan. The internal street network of the district presents a "main street–inner alley" structure.

Major streets include Guangfunan Road, Yangxiang Road, Jianglan Road, and Heping East Road, all categorized as urban secondary roads, with widths generally ranging between 7–14 meters. In contrast, the internal alleys are narrow, typically between 1–4 meters, mostly one-way, and some even end in cul-de-sacs (Figure 3-13).

Regarding traffic flow characteristics, the garment wholesale industry dominates the area, resulting in a high logistics transportation demand. Handcarts, tricycles, and other non-motorized vehicles frequently travel through the streets, mingling with motor vehicles and pedestrians, causing serious mutual interference.

Meanwhile, the lack of parking infrastructure leads to widespread on-street parking, especially along Jianglan Road and Yangxiang Road, where illegal parking is common, further exacerbating traffic congestion. In addition, sidewalks are often occupied by shopfronts and goods, forcing pedestrians to walk on the roadway, resulting in reduced circulation efficiency.

The garment wholesale industry on Guangfunan Street exhibits distinct business cycle fluctuations, significantly impacting traffic congestion. During business hours, particularly during the morning (7:00–9:00) and evening rush hours (17:00–19:00), merchants have substantial demand to load and unload goods, with numerous trucks and handcarts crowding the streets, severely occupying the road space. After closing (typically after 19:00), logistics vehicles depart en masse, and coupled with the operation of waste collection trucks, this further aggravates traffic congestion.

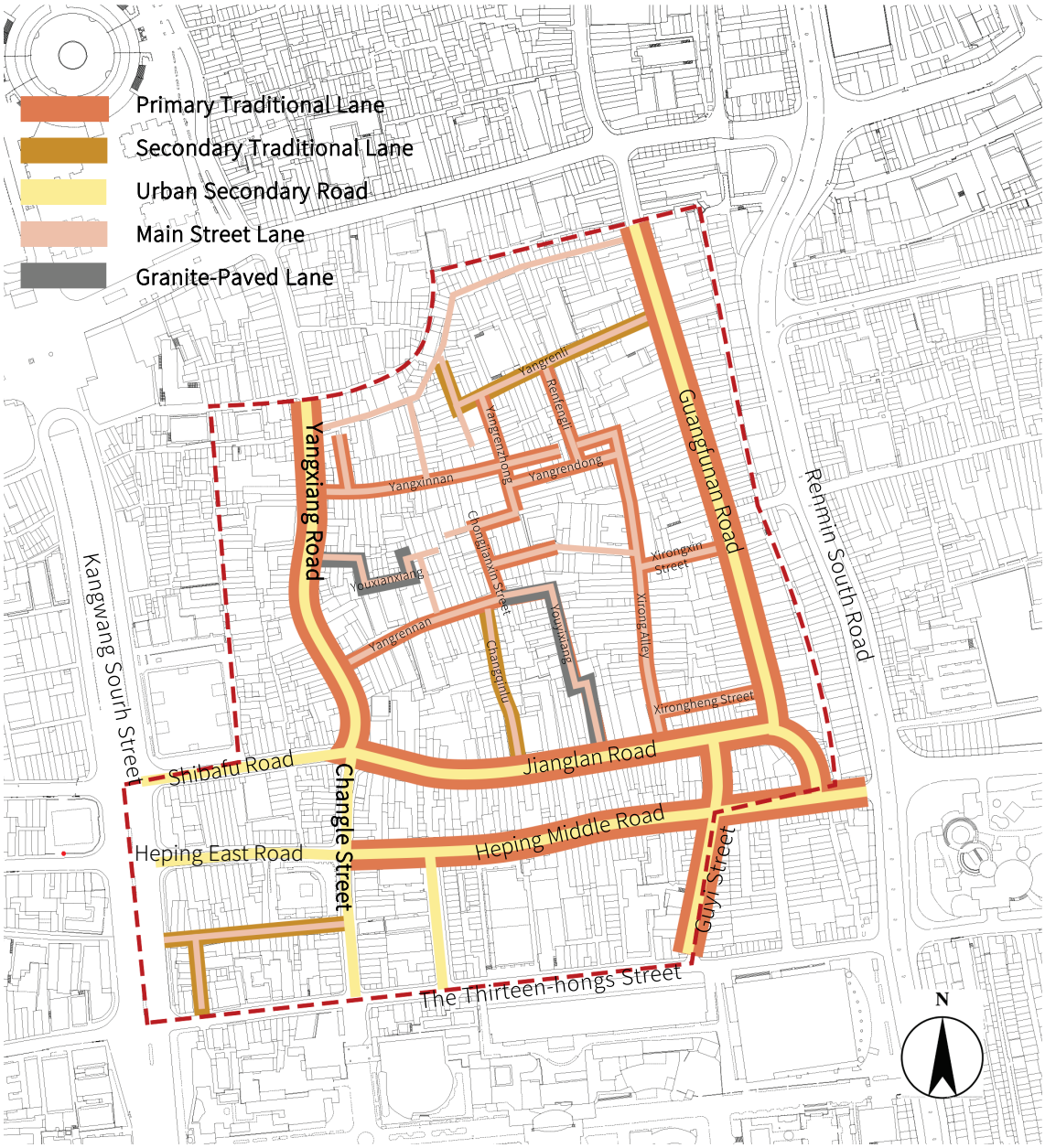


Figure 3-13 Street Hierarchy of Guangfunan District (Source: Author)

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The streets of Guangfunan accommodate various traffic stakeholders—residents, merchants, logistics providers, and tourists—each with different circulation demands, resulting in contested street rights.

Residents primarily rely on walking and non-motorized transport, seeking a safe and unimpeded pedestrian environment; merchants need convenient freight handling, desiring road access for truck parking; logistics vehicles prioritize efficiency, favoring uninterrupted travel; and tourists seek a pleasant visitor experience, requiring smooth traffic and accessible parking.

These conflicts of demand among different groups are reflected in several ways (Figure 3-15). First, there is a conflict between logistics and residents: logistics vehicles often block residential accessways while loading and unloading, impeding residents' daily movements. Additionally, noise from handcarts traveling through alleys disrupts residential life.

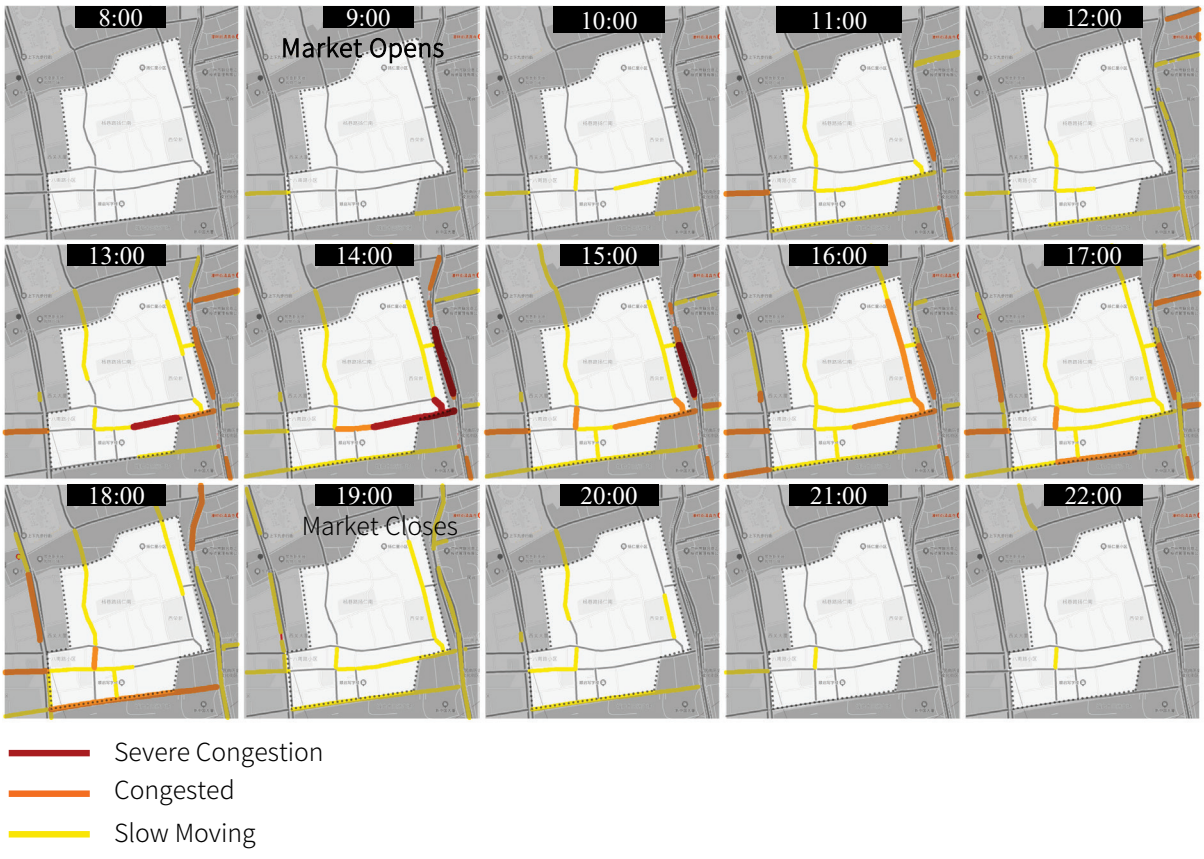


Figure 3-14 Time-Based Analysis of Road Congestion (Source:Author)

Second, there is a conflict between motorized and non-motorized vehicles: in narrow streets, the mixed traffic of both types competes for limited space, increasing the risk of traffic accidents. For instance, Guangfunan Road, as a secondary road, experiences high vehicle flow, while many non-motorized vehicles passing through significantly slow down vehicle traffic. Lastly, conflicts arise between commercial activities and circulation, where shopfront extensions and goods stacking occupy sidewalks, forcing pedestrians to walk in vehicular lanes and increasing safety risks. Moreover, promotional events draw large crowds, exacerbating congestion.

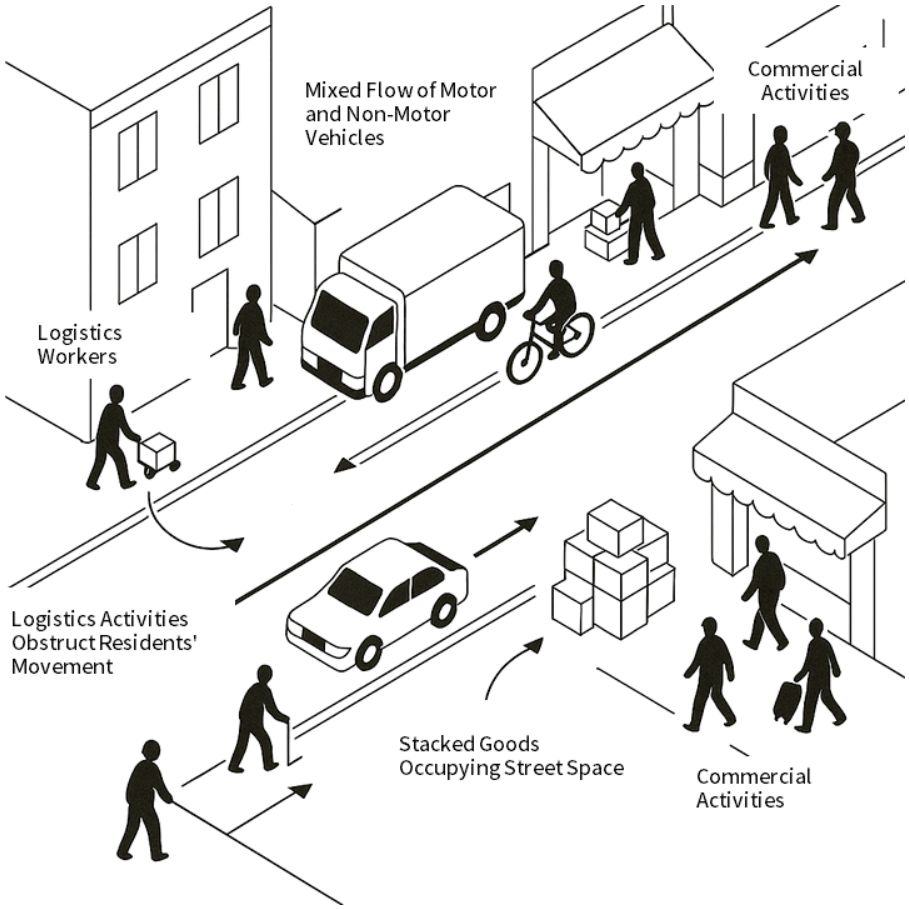


Figure 3-15 Conflicting Needs Among Different Stakeholders on Site (Source: Author)

3.3.1.5 Public Spaces Born from Alleyways

The collaged nature of public spaces in Guangfunan is also manifested within the public realm, where a multi-layered street system forms the structural foundation for various public spaces, and the high-density urban fabric determines the symbiotic relationship between public spaces and the alley network.

The urban secondary roads, which serve as the backbone of the district, are primarily traditional streets with a typical 13-meter-wide cross-section that accommodates both pedestrian and vehicular traffic. However, frequent shopfront loading and unloading activities

often occupy the road space, creating a disorderly mix of pedestrians and vehicles that significantly reduces traffic efficiency.

The internal road network enclosed by these secondary roads—namely, the main alleyways—is primarily pedestrian-oriented, accommodating short-distance transport such as electric scooters and handcarts while preserving the historically significant granite slab pavements and incorporating remnants of historic waterways, now partially covered by modern infrastructure.

The branch alleys, functioning as local connectors, mainly serve short-distance linkages between plots, and their miniaturized spatial form supports the mobility needs of specific land parcels or building clusters.

The public spaces in the Guangfunan district have organically emerged under the dynamic stimuli of different street hierarchies. Dense commercial activity has given rise to street vending and loading encroachments along the main roads, forming "shared streets" that transform vehicular spaces into extensions of everyday urban life.

The inner alleyways generate scattered pockets of residential activity around old trees, street corners, and doorways, where granite pavement textures are interspersed with cooling spots under large trees and chatting corners in front of porches.

Micro plazas formed by building setbacks, grey spaces beneath retractable canopy corridors, and 3–5 meter-wide spacious alleys collectively create five spatial typologies (Figure 3-16). Despite widespread maintenance deficiencies, these micro-spaces embody a "gap-filling" pragmatism, accommodating diverse scenarios ranging from cargo loading to neighborhood interactions.

This "small and messy" spatial character—marked by narrow alleys, irregular building setbacks, and fragmented public pockets—embodies the survival wisdom and adaptive resilience of high-density neighborhoods. It reflects a spatial logic shaped by informal negotiation, layered uses, and everyday practicalities.

However, this complexity also presents design challenges: how to retain the organic vitality embedded in these spaces while introducing tactical interventions that enhance usability, safety, and comfort. The key lies in upgrading spatial quality without erasing existing patterns of use—by introducing lightweight, reversible improvements that respond to residents' lived experiences, support diverse activities, and promote inclusivity within limited spatial thresholds.

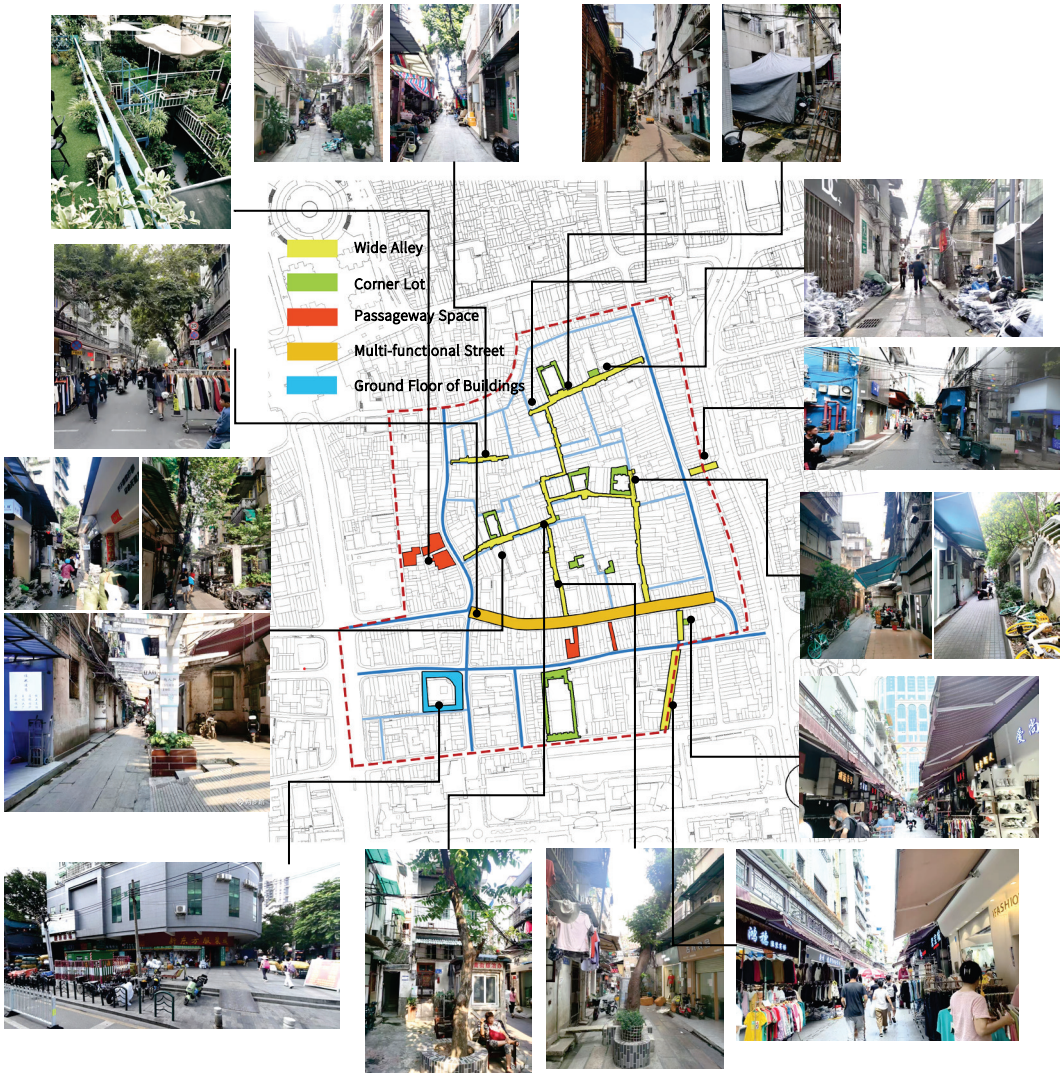


Figure 3-16 Analysis of Public Space Types (Source: Author)

3.3.2 Diversity of Resident Identity Labels

Resident identity labels are practical tools for classifying individuals based on multiple dimensions such as age, mobility, consumption capacity, and occupation (for instance, a migrant worker might simultaneously carry labels such as "aged 25–35", "high mobility," and "blue-collar occupation"). It is important to note that a single resident often carries multiple composite labels, each corresponding to the group's differentiated public and commercial services needs. Therefore, any tactical urban planning that involves targeting specific populations must clearly define the intended label combinations in advance to ensure precise resource allocation and avoid inefficiencies in implementation.

3.3.2.1 Population Mobility

From the perspective of population mobility, residents can be categorized into groups such as permanent residents, floating population, registered residents, migrant residents, owner-

occupiers, and tenants (Table 3-3). In terms of mobility dimension, the distinctions include permanent residents, migrants, and owner-occupied vs. rental households, with the proportion of tenants among permanent residents significantly exceeding that of owner-occupiers, thus forming a "more mobile than stable" structure and a "strong rental, weak ownership" housing pattern.

This type of population structure directly affects the logic of resource distribution—because of the significant disparity in numbers between the floating and permanent populations, public resources often prioritize the needs of the former.

Regarding spatial needs, the floating population primarily engages in commercial activities, thus requiring more storage and logistics commercial space, whereas residents prioritize the comfort of their living environment and the accessibility of public spaces, expecting more leisure activity areas.

For example, the floating population may use public space for goods stacking or temporary vending, affecting residents' daily lives and recreational needs.

Regarding temporal needs, the floating population usually has irregular work schedules, and their commercial activities tend to concentrate on specific periods, such as daytime logistics and trading, which may conflict with residents' daily routines, resulting in noise and traffic congestion.

Regarding developmental needs, the floating population is more concerned with business opportunities and economic returns, expecting the neighborhood to offer more commercial development space and favorable conditions. In contrast, residents prioritize the community's cultural continuity and sustainable development, wishing to preserve the area's historical and cultural character during the transformation process.

Table 3-3 Population Composition of Communities in Guangfunan (Source: Street Community Data)

Community	**Migrant Population**	**Permanent Population**	**Survey Sample: Owner-occupied and Rental**
Yangren East	8,100	194	16 owner-occupants, 14 tenants
Yangren West	500	7,300	10 tenants, 8 owner-occupants
Guyi Street	8,800	1,595	10 tenants, 5 owner-occupants
Huaiyuan	--	3,601	--
Total	approx. 17,400	approx. 12,600	--

3.3.2.2 Age Structure

The overall age structure of the district presents an olive-shaped distribution. The population within the working-age group (15–59 years old) accounts for 61%, while the elderly population makes up over 30%, and those over 65 exceed 17%, indicating a pronounced aging trend (Table 3-4). However, existing public services are limited, with only a few oriented toward the needs of senior residents, including community colleges for the elderly, charity canteens, and cultural activity centers (Figure 3-17).

Table 3-4 Age Distribution of Permanent Residents in Guangfunan (Based on Community Street Data)

Age Group	Total Population (persons)	Proportion of Total Permanent Population
65 years and above	2,225	17.53%
60–65 years	1,905	15.01%
15–59 years	7,787	61.36%
0–14 years	774	6.10%
Total	12,690	100%

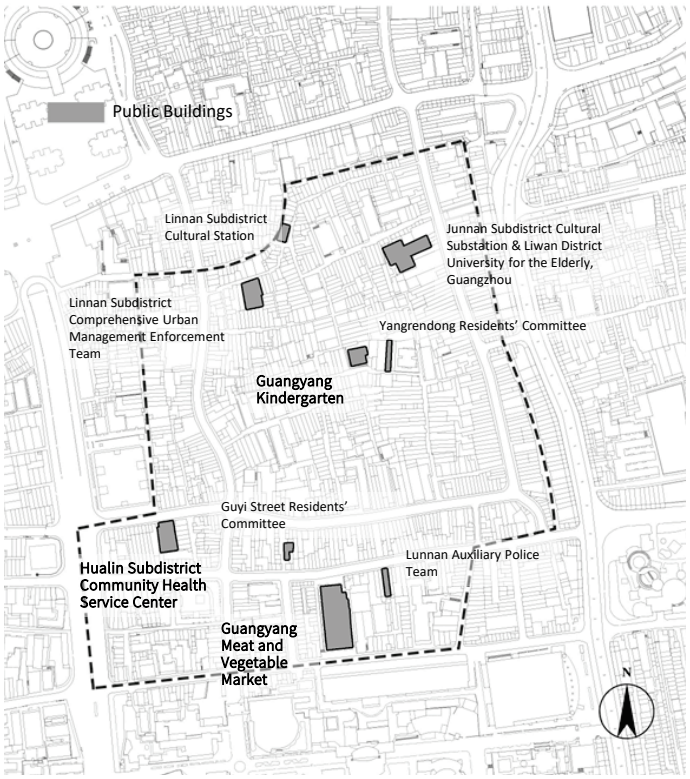


Figure 3-17 Current Distribution of Public Buildings (Source: Author)

However, there are significant differences in the needs of the elderly and young populations. Regarding infrastructure use, the elderly population has higher demands for

barrier-free medical facilities, hope that the district can provide convenient transportation and healthcare services. In contrast, the young population emphasizes digital facilities and recreational amenities, with higher expectations for the district's sense of fashion and entertainment value.

Regarding the shaping of district character, the elderly population tends to have a strong emotional attachment to the traditional streetscape, preferring to preserve the existing architectural style and living atmosphere. In contrast, the young population is more receptive to new architectural styles and cultural elements, showing a more open attitude towards urban renewal, which leads to specific conflicts in the design and perception of urban form.

3.3.2.3 Occupational Categories

With the dominance of the wholesale industry, the occupational distribution in this area exhibits a clear industry-related pattern. Different occupational groups form a tight social network through employment, service, regulation, and collaboration.

The specific occupational categories and their proportional statistics are presented below (Table 3-5), along with their sub-roles and social functions.

Table 3-5 Occupational Categories of Residents in Guangfunan (Source: Author)

Occupational Category	Proportion	Description
Sales Personnel	38%	The core group of the wholesale market, including full-time sales staff not further categorized.
Private Business Owners (Self-employed)	42%	Stall sales: stall owners (operators), sales assistants, logistics helpers, garment buyers across China, and food service staff.
Informal Workers (Street Vendors)	4%	Highly mobile hawkers, focused on low-threshold retail, relying on flexible operations to supplement income.
Transportation Workers	2%	Full-time logistics workers: pushcart workers (short-distance delivery), truck drivers (long-distance), and pickers (sorting staff).
Professional Technicians	2%	Fashion designers (style development) and tailors (customization and repair) serve the upstream of the industry chain.
Government / Public Institution Staff	2%	Involved in market regulation or public service roles.
Unemployed Persons	2%	Possibly related to the instability of temporary jobs.
Others	8%	Other unspecified occupations.

3.3.2.4 Education and Income Status

Field research and survey results indicate that merchants and sales personnel are the primary residents in daily activities in Guangfunan. The general educational attainment of the population is relatively low, with most residents having completed less than high school, while their income levels are comparatively high, primarily above 8,000 yuan (Figure 3-18).

Most of them express a strong willingness to improve their lives through personal effort, showing a spirit of hard work and perseverance and valuing the idea of more work, more gain. However, due to their low level of formal education, they exhibit limited sensitivity toward issues related to historical and cultural heritage (Figure 3-19).

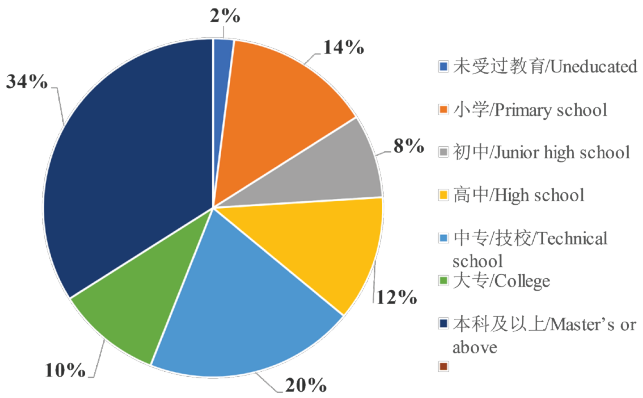


Figure 3-18 Educational Attainment of Guangfunan Residents (Source: Author)

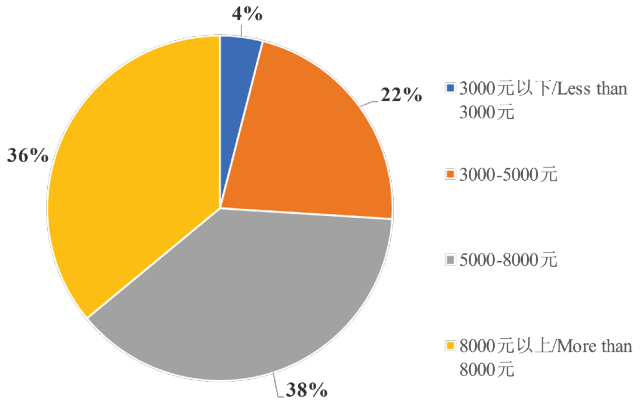


Figure 3-19 Income Levels of Guangfunan Residents (Source: Author)

3.3.3 Industrial Development Characteristics

The garment wholesale industry dominates all commercial activities in Guangfunan, significantly surpassing other business types regarding the number of practitioners and the physical space utilized. A historical review shows that Guangfunan has long evolved its wholesale characteristics by serving as an industrial hub for various trades. Historically, the

area was once a gathering point for specialized trades such as boat or making, medicinal herbs, flower markets, copperworking, funeral services, and imported Western goods.

After the founding of the People's Republic of China, hosting the South China Specialty Products Fair catalyzed the expansion of the fabric wholesale business from Yangxiang Road to surrounding areas. A turning point came with the completion of the New China Building on the Thirteen-Hongs Road in 1999, after which the district gradually transitioned into a garment wholesale hub in the early 21st century.

Around 2010, the rise of the "online wholesale" model revolutionized the traditional wholesale approach. With the increasing penetration of e-commerce platforms, demand for online fashion wholesale surged, prompting more entrepreneurs to acquire storefronts in Guangfunan and dive into this blue ocean competition.

The online wholesale model places less demand on shop size but requires strong support from storage and logistics. As a result, while the garment wholesale industry gradually occupied the street-facing shops, many residential units within the district were converted into warehouses. Numerous logistics stations were set up across the district, with packing and shipping staff constantly in motion.

Around 2015, the emergence of live-streaming e-commerce and growing awareness of branding triggered a wave of storefront renovations. Various influencer-inspired styles of signage and interior design swept across the district, bringing significant changes to the district's architectural character.

As shown through this historical overview (Table 3-6), the formation of the garment wholesale industry in its current form continues the area's traditional commerce and trade legacy and vividly reflects the distinct characteristics of the contemporary era.

Table 3-6 Functional and Commercial Evolution of Major Roads in Guangfunan (Source: Author)

Road Name	**Period/Time Point**	**Main Functional Industries**
Jianglan Road	Late Ming to Early Qing Dynasty	Professional oar market
	Before 1873	Distribution center for traditional Chinese medicine shops
	Early 20th century – mid-1950s	Central Flower Market of Guangzhou
	1980s	Clothing, gift packaging, and decoration trade
	1990s	Clothing wholesale distribution hub

Table3-6 Functional and Commercial Evolution of Major Roads in Guangfunan (Continued)

Road Name	Period/Time Point	Main Functional Industries
Guangfunan Road (formerly Datong Road)	Qianlong period of Qing Dynasty	Specialized street for copperware production and sales
	1926	Expanded into a road named to commemorate the Xinhai Revolution ("Recovering the Nation")
	Around 1950	Cluster of funeral-related businesses
	Around 1958	Decline of the copper industry
	Around 2008	Textile wholesale market
	Early 21st century	Clothing wholesale distribution hub
Yangxiang Road	Ming Dynasty	Government in (post station) built to receive foreign merchants and envoys; start of commercial atmosphere
	1835	Concentration of imported goods
	Before 1949	Textile distribution hub
	The early 2000s	Clothing wholesale distribution hub
The thirteen-hongs Road	Late 17th century	Concentration of foreign trading firms (hongs); designated trade area by Qing court
	Mid-18th century ("Single-port trade" period)	Key location for foreign trade, reaching its peak
	1856	The thirteen-hongs fire, destruction of firms and foreign consulates
	The late 1850s	Shamian became a British-French concession; the administrative power of Yue customs was taken.
	1920s	Reconstruction of commercial shophouses by merchants; general merchandise trade
	1937	Japanese bombing damaged commercial zones.
	1950s	Venue for South China specialty goods exhibition and trade fair
	2000s to present	Clothing wholesale distribution hub

Table3-6 Functional and Commercial Evolution of Major Roads in Guangfunan (Continued)

Road Name	Period/Time Point	Main Functional Industries
Huaiyuan Post Station	Yongle reign of Ming Dynasty	"State guesthouse" function, receiving foreign envoys for trade and residence
	Qianlong reign of Qing Dynasty	Abandoned due to distance from the riverbank
	The early 2000s	It became an ordinary inner alley.

3.3.3.1 Continuity of Commercial Culture

The functional organization model of "external-facing streets for trade, internal alleys for residence" from the thirteen-hongs era has continued and gradually evolved into a mature system. This is mainly reflected in two aspects: first, sales, storage, and production are highly interconnected yet spatially dispersed; second, the concentration of shops makes the area more inclined toward wholesale rather than retail. These characteristics make Guangfunan stand in stark contrast to consumer-oriented commercial districts like Shangxiajiu, emphasizing efficiency and scale more than shopping experience and customer service.

At the same time, entrepreneurial culture has also persisted in Guangfunan. The business model of wholesale trade aligns well with that of individual small merchants, and with the support of Guangzhou's comprehensive garment industry chain, an intense entrepreneurial atmosphere prevails. The industry includes seasoned veterans and young entrepreneurs seeking to pioneer new paths. In the early days, when the wholesale market was still a blue ocean, many shop owners started as assistants, gradually building wealth and transforming their social identity. Although economic cycles and the COVID-19 pandemic have made entrepreneurship increasingly challenging, the entrepreneurial spirit has become deeply embedded in the district's commercial model, serving as a unique driving force for its development.

Interviews with individuals engaged in the garment wholesale industry in the district offer partial confirmation of this collective consciousness. The following are excerpts from these interviews (Figure 3-20). Sister Wang, one of the few female porters in the area, shared her aspirations for work and life: "If I could get a stall inside someday, life would be so much better. Does being a man or not matter?" A female salesperson from a street-facing stall commented on the heavy workload: "The busiest floor in the Xinzhongguo Building costs over 400,000 yuan a month just in rent. Women must work like men, and men like beasts of burden." Ms. Liu, a fashion designer running her studio, discussed design plagiarism and cutthroat

competition: "On the one hand, I want to create my original designs, but that takes time. On the other hand, the faster I can release new designs, the higher the chance of creating a best-seller and the more money I can make. The menswear studio next door collapsed because of order issues—they moved into a 300-square-meter space at the start of the year and shut down by early March."

Opportunities and challenges coexist, yet Guangfunan's fashion practitioners constantly seek solutions amidst contradictions. In essence, the story of Guangfunan is a microcosm of China's manufacturing transformation. When a culture of "efficiency-first" in wholesale trade clashes with the demand for "innovation-driven" industrial upgrading, and when the entrepreneurial spirit is confronted by the overwhelming power of capital and technology, the street's struggles and resilience become all the more tangible and real.

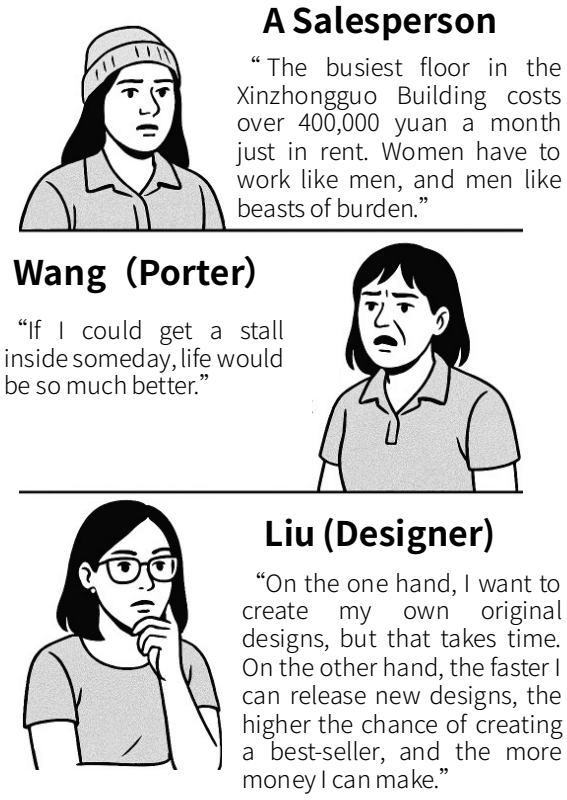


Figure 3-20 Excerpts from Interviews with Wholesale Industry Practitioners (Source: Author)

3.3.3.2 Transformation Phase of the Garment Wholesale Industry

The garment wholesale markets in the Guangfunan area serve as a critical hub within Guangzhou's garment industry chain, and their continued existence and development are heavily reliant on the broader regional garment industry. Guangzhou is the central node for garment production and trade in South China and the largest garment wholesale cluster in China and the world. Its wholesale markets and supply chains exert a global influence. Centered

around Guangzhou, the Pearl River Delta is a global hub for garment distribution, production, and sales, hosting one-third of China's garment manufacturing enterprises and over two-thirds of the national output[73].

Guangfunan's garment wholesale sector occupies a midstream position in the industry chain, forming an essential pillar of Guangzhou's garment industry and other major wholesale markets. However, in recent years, these traditional markets have faced unprecedented challenges regarding distribution channels, production factors, competition, and consumer demand (Figure 3-21). In response, merchants in Guangfunan have actively pursued transformation: some have embraced livestream e-commerce, exploring new online sales models; others have ventured into creating original brands with Guochao (Chinese trend) elements to enhance product value; still others have broken traditional taboos against serving individual customers, proactively attracting retail traffic and small-scale wholesale demand to respond to market changes flexibly.

Nevertheless, the historical and cultural district of Guangfunan faces severe difficulties in industrial upgrading. Although the district's garment wholesale-based industry has a particular scale and foundation, most merchants remain at the lower end of the industry chain, characterized by traditional business models, low product value-added, and weak brand influence.

As market competition intensifies and consumer demand evolves, the traditional garment wholesale model can no longer meet the needs of modern commercial development, making industrial upgrading an urgent necessity. However, capital shortages, a technological lag, and a lack of innovative talent have become significant upgrade obstacles.

With both opportunities and challenges, commerce remains the core driving force behind Guangfunan's development, and achieving industrial breakthroughs is key to realizing long-term sustainable growth. Branding and design are the foundation for positioning in the upstream garment industry.

Overcoming the predicament of low-end garment wholesaling and shifting from "volume-based competitiveness" to "quality-based competitiveness" is a pressing issue for Guangfunan and Guangzhou's garment wholesale industry. Only by enhancing product value-added, building differentiated brands, and optimizing supply chain management can Guangfunan achieve sustainable development and regain industrial competitiveness in a highly competitive market.

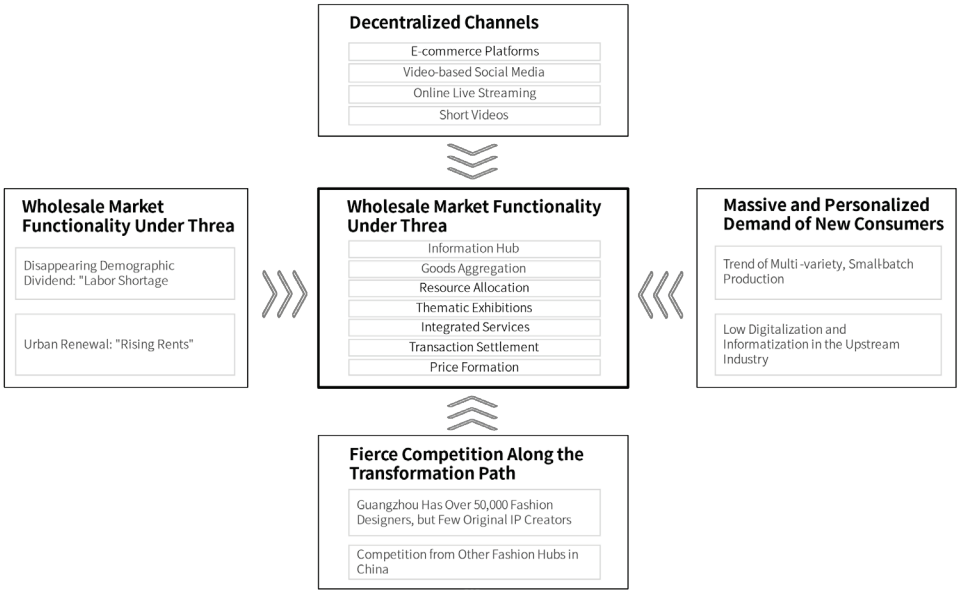


Figure 3-21 Challenges Faced by Guangzhou Wholesale Markets (Source: Reference[73])

3.3.3.3 Organizational Patterns of Interwoven Human and Goods Flows

The Guangfunan area exhibits distinct features in its business organization, particularly in the relationship between store and warehouse locations and interweaving human and goods flows. Regarding store-warehouse configurations, garment wholesale sales dominate and take four primary forms (Figure 3-22): store-below warehouse-above, store-front warehouse-behind, store-inside warehouse-outside, and store-outside warehouse-inside. These arrangements rely on large storage spaces to conduct commercial activities, but due to the prevalent use of fragmented storage and pickup practices by merchants, the spatial quality of the district has declined. This is manifested in issues such as traffic congestion and noise pollution, which negatively impact the surrounding environment and residents' daily lives.

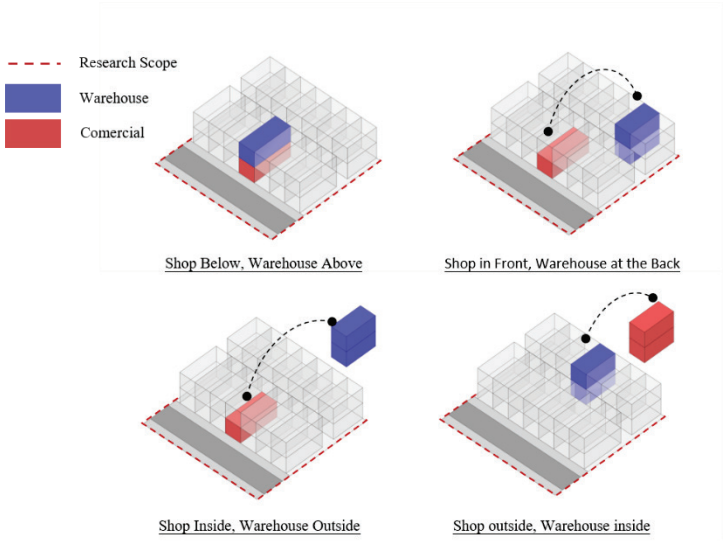


Figure 3-22 Four Organizational Patterns of Store and Warehouse Layouts (Source: Author)

Regarding interweaving human and goods flows, Guangfunan, a centralized wholesale distribution area for garments, experiences a highly intertwined flow of people and goods, forming a complex operational model (Figure 3-23). Regarding logistics, garment manufacturers deliver goods to First-class wholesalers, who may then choose to ship from a logistics point, place the goods in storage, or directly transport them to the store. When first-tier wholesalers deliver to secondary wholesalers, this may involve warehouse pickup or direct delivery. Additionally, second-tier wholesalers and individual buyers (retail customers) can place orders online with first-tier wholesalers, delivering delivery at the logistics point.

On the human flow side, individual buyers can make retail purchases in person from first-tier wholesalers. In comparison, second-tier wholesalers also frequently visit first-tier wholesalers to pick up goods directly, further increasing the mobility and complexity of the district.

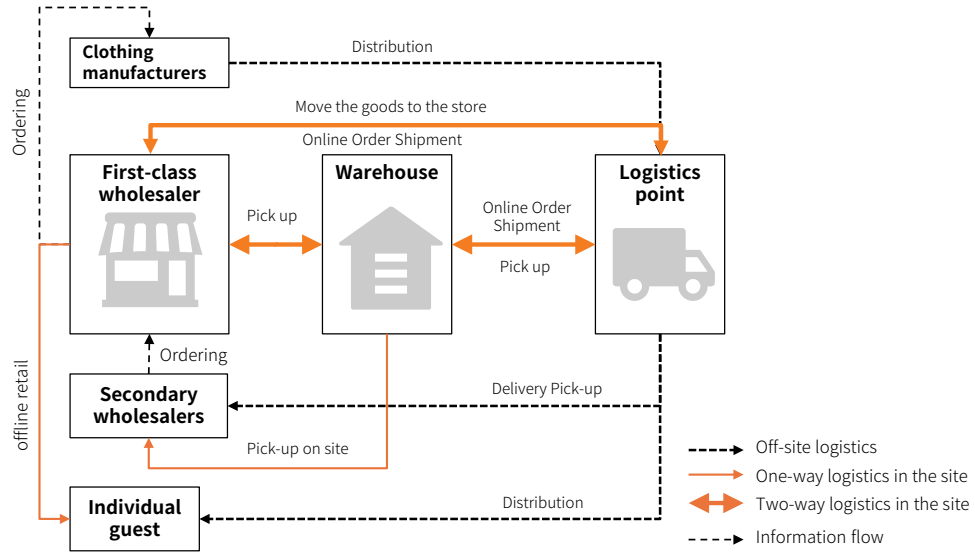


Figure 3-23 Operational Model of Human and Goods Flows within the Site (Source: Author)

The fundamental reason behind this organizational model lies in the mismatch between the spatial form required by the wholesale industry and the existing urban fabric of the district. Merchants have formed the current organizational mode through spontaneous adaptation and modification. However, this self-adaptive model significantly disrupts the regular use of public spaces, creating new issues such as noise and waste management, thereby posing challenges to the sustainable development of the district.

3.4 Key Contradictions in the Site Awaiting Tactical Intervention

The Guangfunan historical and cultural district faces complex challenges, primarily arising from conflicts between heritage conservation, spatial-functional renewal, and industrial

upgrading. These issues intertwine within a specific urban context, forming a unique system of contradictions. Through analyzing the district's spatial transformations, the evolution of commercial formats, and the needs of multiple social actors, these contradictions can be categorized into three levels: the explicit contradiction of public space usage rights, the latent contradiction of cultural disconnection, and the structural contradiction stemming from barriers to industrial upgrading. These contradictions accumulate over time and overlap in space, thus requiring targeted strategies tailored to specific conditions.

3.4.1 Explicit Contradiction: Contestation over Street Space Use

As the most surface-level explicit contradiction, the contestation over street space usage rights is primarily manifested in the ongoing encroachment of industrial functions on public space's essential public service functions. Guangfunan, as a high-density historic district, already suffers from limited public space, and this is further strained by the continuous expansion of the wholesale industry, making the conflict between the two particularly acute.

Regarding road space, during market hours, motor vehicles, non-motorized vehicles (including e-scooters, bicycles, and freight carts), and pedestrians share the same routes, each vying for priority, resulting in extremely low traffic efficiency. Storefronts require frequent loading and unloading, leading to long-term truck parking obstructing traffic. Additionally, logistics parcels are often carelessly piled on sidewalks, greatly hindering pedestrian movement. Many slow-moving freight carts often use motor vehicle lanes for transit (Figure 3-24).

Figure 3-24 Current Road Encroachment Conditions (Source: Author)

Regarding alley space, there is widespread disorderly storage of production materials, including food and freight carts, discarded logistics packaging, and construction materials (Figure 3-25). Under such circumstances, many residents resort to privately building sheds or enclosing adjacent residential areas to maximize their interests (Figure 3-26). These behaviors

erode interpersonal trust, degrade the overall quality of public space, and negatively impact the living experience of all residents.

Figure 3-25 Current Alley Encroachment by Goods (Source: Author)

Figure 3-26 Current Alley Encroachment by Residents (Source: Author)

At its core, this contradiction reflects an imbalanced allocation of limited spatial resources among multiple stakeholder needs. While regulatory enforcement is necessary to correct the imbalance, flexible mediation and interest-based compensation mechanisms must be employed more crucially to achieve a dynamic balance. For example, temporal allocation of right-of-way for different actors, proactive intervention in public space to reinforce its public nature, and establishing a "commerce-sustaining-public" model where merchants sponsor public amenities, thereby creating a mutual-benefit framework through a transfer of spatial rights.

3.4.2 Latent Contradiction: Cultural Cognition Discontinuity

A deeper analysis beyond the surface-level explicit contradictions reveals an underlying issue of cultural cognition discontinuity in the Guangfunan district. At its root lies the gradual erosion of local cultural identity among local business groups under the influence of globalization.

As previously discussed, the thirteen-hongs have maintained historical continuity in trade culture and functional organization, but the actual business types have undergone numerous iterations, resulting in a high turnover rate of shops today. As a result, shop operators tend to

view Guangfunan as a mere entrepreneurial testing ground, assessing its value solely from a commercial perspective. Today, not only are century-old stores absent, but even businesses that have lasted more than a decade are rare. In other words, Guangfunan's rich cultural heritage exists primarily in the collective memory of residents, relying on the historical symbolism of the thirteen-hongs to construct an outward-facing cultural narrative, yet failing to establish substantial heritage continuity through commercial practices.

A questionnaire survey further reveals this cognitive disconnection: only 12% of merchants could recognize the historical value of the buildings they occupy, while 76% of residents, although acknowledging the district's "commercial gene," refuse to participate in historical and cultural conservation efforts. This mismatch in users' perception of heritage value leads to an increasing disjunction between the physical space of the district and its mainstream narrative—with historical memory continuously eroded and internet-driven cultural symbols intruding chaotically, ultimately resulting in distortion and alienation of the spatial identity (Figure 3-27).

Figure 3-27 Urban Morphological Changes of Guangfunan over the Past Decade (Source: Author)

To resolve this contradiction, it is necessary to strengthen policy-level advocacy and oversight and, more importantly, build a systematic cultural regeneration mechanism—transforming historical elements into tangible cultural genes and reintegrating them into the collective consciousness of district users. Reconstruction of local cultural identity must follow a gradualist approach, relying on many refined, daily, tactical interventions to accumulate incremental changes that ultimately trigger a qualitative leap in cultural identity. Examples include organizing pop-up events exploring historical scenarios, historical walking tours, and

deploying visual communication based on historical symbols.

3.4.3 Structural Contradiction: Barriers to Industrial Upgrading

As the most fundamental structural contradiction, the stagnation of industrial upgrading reflects the mismatch between the spatial fabric shaped by traditional wholesale formats and the requirements of a modern innovation-driven economy.

Some propose a total ban on the garment wholesale industry in Guangfunan, but the author deems this approach impractical. The core reason is that the Xinzhongguo Building, as the wholesale hub of the area, generates a strong market spillover effect, making it nearly impossible for related wholesale formats to withdraw from Guangfunan in the short to medium term. Therefore, the key lies in exploring business organizational models aligned with the district's current spatial characteristics and achieving a gradual transformation by riding the wave of industrial upgrading, which has become the most viable and pragmatic path forward.

The ultimate goal of Guangfunan's industrial upgrading should focus on high-value-added segments of the industry chain, specifically towards garment design, R&D, and brand-oriented retail, thereby gradually breaking free from low-end wholesale models reliant on economies of scale. Implementation requires dual efforts: on the one hand, improving and transforming low-end formats, and on the other, fostering emerging industries that emphasize cultural empowerment, design innovation, and consumer experience. At the tactical level, this can be achieved through spatial function replacement experiments, new business pop-ups, and hybrid models that combine wholesale and retail.

Encouragingly, in recent years, some business owners have taken the initiative to experiment with such approaches—for example, adopting interior spatial designs that respect the historic architecture, exposing old plaster-mud walls and original wooden beams, or integrating fashion retail with coffee shops and other leisure functions.

Figure 3-28 Interior Design of the 11KN Garment Store in Guangfunan (Source: Reference[74])

3.5 Summary

This chapter presents a systematic analysis of the current conditions of the Guangfunan Historical and Cultural District, highlighting its representative significance and application potential as a practical case of Tactical Urbanism.

First, it traces the district's historical evolution and cultural context since the Ming and Qing dynasties, emphasizing its coexistence of historical remnants and contemporary commercial vitality and its distinctive character shaped by the intertwining of history and modernity.

Second, it investigates spatial issues within the district, including disorderly use of public space, chaotic commercial layouts, insufficient protection of historic buildings, and declining quality of residential life, reflecting the multidimensional contradictions in district governance.

The chapter then defines the boundary conditions for Tactical Urbanism interventions, reaffirming the principle of protecting material heritage and cultural continuity. Using collage theory, it analyzes the district’s complex structure across multiple dimensions, thereby providing a foundation for future intervention strategies.

The chapter also examines the district's demographic composition and industrial characteristics, highlighting both the diversity of the resident population and the dominant position of the garment wholesale industry and the challenges it faces amid pressures for modernization.

Finally, it summarizes the three core contradictions confronting the district: conflicts over public space usage, gaps in cultural cognition, and the structural dilemma of industrial transformation, thus identifying the key entry points for future tactical interventions.

In conclusion, this chapter lays a solid theoretical and practical foundation for developing Tactical Urbanism intervention strategies in the Guangfunan district.

Chapter 4 Renewal Design for Guangfuna

This chapter proposes a renewal scheme for Guangfunan based on the theory of tactical urbanism, aiming to address the threefold site contradictions identified in Chapter Three.

4.1 Proposal of Renewal Strategies

4.1.1 Identifying Conditions for Tactical Implementation

4.1.1.1 Uncovering Bottom-Up Forces

Upon understanding the site's current conditions, it becomes essential to identify the actors involved in tactical interventions. This involves analyzing stakeholders' needs, influence, and value preferences—such as capital investors, residents, and the media—to enable dynamic collaboration that activates spatial vitality, thereby advancing the tactical implementation process (Table 4-1).

Table 4-1 Summary of Characteristics of Diverse Stakeholder Groups (Source: Author)

Stakeholder Group	Group Needs	Group Influence	Preferences and Aversions
Active Private Capital	Increase commercial returns (rent/brand advertising), reduce costs, and fulfill logistics and warehousing needs.	Dominates building space renovations (storefront upgrades, functional conversions), drives business format restructuring, but may compromise historical character	Preferences: relaxed policies, prioritization of commercial interests;
Long-term Residents	Improve infrastructure (water, electricity, public space), reduce illegal constructions, and maintain essential living convenience.	Raise partial demands for community environment improvement but show low participation; demands from elderly residents are often overlooked.	Preferences: safe environment, everyday convenience;
Local Cultural Media	Expand media reach (especially on youth-oriented platforms) and guide public attention toward heritage conservation and current issues.	Shapes public opinion and raises awareness of cultural preservation, though traditional media has limited outreach	Preferences: uncovering cultural stories, covering social hot topics;

Table 4-1 Summary of Characteristics of Diverse Stakeholder Groups(Continued)

Stakeholder Group	Group Needs	Group Influence	Preferences and Aversions
Business Associations	Maintain industry norms (e.g., logistics regulations), coordinate merchant interests, and promote district-wide development.	Enforces behavioral norms through industry guidelines, balances multi-party interests, and facilitates the renewal process	Preferences: stable market order, merchant cooperation;
Design Institutions	Achieve stylistic coordination (heritage preservation) and enhance spatial aesthetics and functionality.	Shape architectural form through design schemes, influence directions for public space renovation (e.g., Huaiyuan Post Park case[75])	Preferences: professional leadership, priority on cultural preservation;
Non-local Consumers	Satisfy browsing and sightseeing needs (cultural-historical experience), meet long-tail needs (dining/cultural activities/leisure amenities)	Their demands drive business upgrades and indirectly push for functional improvement of the district, but current influence remains limited.	Preferences: distinctive cultural scenes, diverse services;

4.1.1.2 Identifying Intervenable Periods

From a daily temporal perspective, the wholesale market operates on a well-established schedule, typically from 9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. The most congested period is from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., with the areas around Jianglan Road, Heping East Road, and Guangfunan Road experiencing the most severe traffic congestion (Figure 3-14), mainly due to temporary loading and unloading by trucks, coupled with a large number of manual freight carts moving through the same space.

Therefore, during business hours, the intensity of human and goods flow is high, and the impact of interventions can be significantly amplified. However, interventions during this time must account for the potential conflicts with ongoing commercial activities. During off-hours, the human and goods flow is considerably lower, providing more favorable conditions for gentler tactical operations, and as citizens are typically off work, there is an increased demand for leisure activities.

From the perspective of seasonal change, the garment wholesale industry exhibits a

pronounced cyclical pattern, particularly evident during seasonal transitions. During these periods, shops clear remaining inventory through street-side stalls for off-season promotions rapidly; similar behavior is observed during key periods, such as the pre-Chinese New Year closure, resulting in intense clearance surges.

Seasonal transitions are marked by large numbers of individual consumers entering the district, primarily for leisure shopping, resulting in crowded pedestrian flow and near gridlock traffic (Figure 4-1). This seasonal fluctuation not only underscores the operational model of traditional wholesale commerce but also exposes a structural mismatch between the spatial carrying capacity of the district and the demands of commercial activity.

4.1.1.2 Identifying Intervenable Spaces

Spatial intervention opportunities on the site can be categorized into three types: public spaces, idle privately owned spaces, and publicly owned housing units.

In Guangfunan, public spaces are abundant, widely distributed, and relatively easy to utilize, with five main types identified.

Idle privately owned spaces, such as residential porches, vacant storefronts, and empty warehouses, are underutilized but owned. These spaces are temporally unstable and scattered, with use dependent on owner interest alignment.

Public housing falls into four categories: state-owned, entrusted, leasehold, and custodial properties (Figure 4-2). These buildings are managed by municipal housing authorities, requiring coordination with relevant agencies for intervention, renovation, and allocation in line with official renewal plans.

Figure 4-1 Street Clearance Sales by Guangfunan Shops (Source: Photographed by the author)

4.1.1.3 Identifying Usable Materials

Site materials are valuable resources for district renewal. Handcarts are numerous and distinctive as a standard transportation tool in the area.

These carts can be modified to serve not only functional purposes but also as cultural symbols, such as by painting historical and cultural motifs on their surfaces.

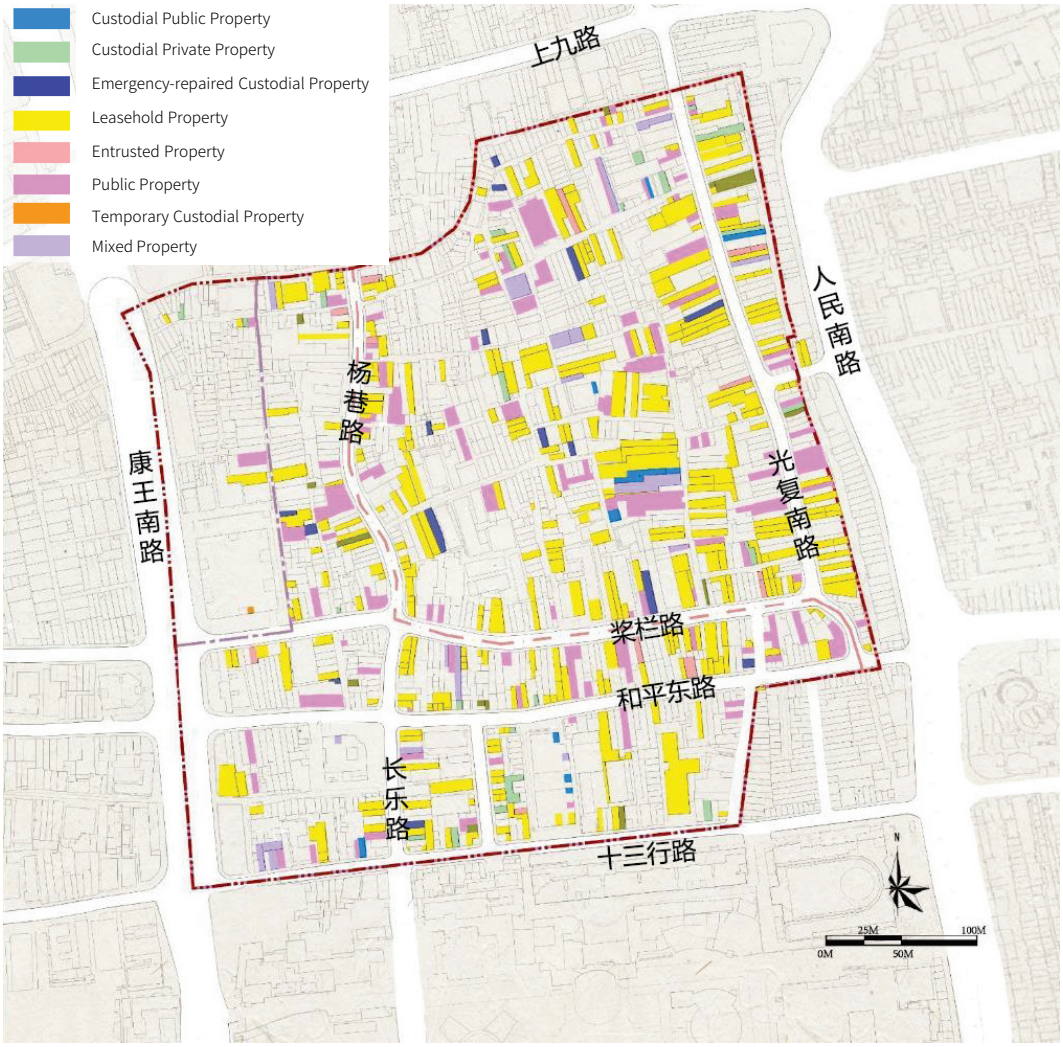


Figure 4-2 Distribution Map of Public Housing (Source: Author)

Logistics waste and garment scraps are also prevalent within the district, presenting opportunities for creative reuse and circular design. For instance, logistics packaging materials can be transformed into street furniture, signage, or decorative installations, contributing to a more distinctive streetscape. Likewise, leftover fabric from garment production can be repurposed into public artworks, community handicrafts, or fashion-themed displays, fostering local participation and artisanal expression. This approach not only helps reduce environmental waste but also enhances the cultural character and visual identity of the neighborhood, aligning sustainable practices with aesthetic and community-building goals (Figure 4-3).

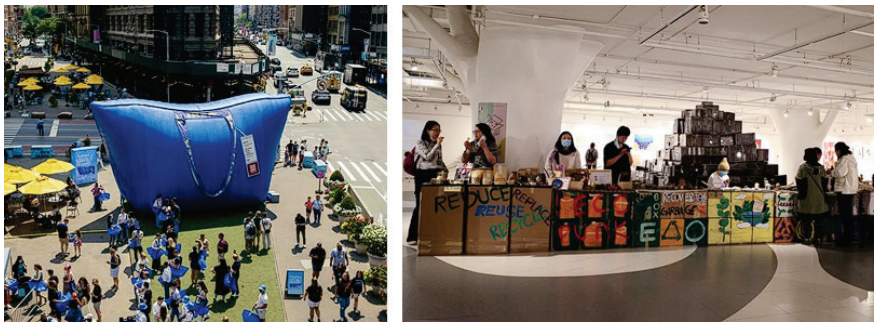


Figure 4-3 Event Featuring Recycled Logistics Packaging Materials (Source: Reference[76])

4.1.1.4 Identifying Opportunities for Innovation

When exploring innovation opportunities, emphasis is placed on their future development potential, ability to align with contemporary trends, and capacity to break from conventional mindsets to enable differentiated development.

(1) Guangfunan, a hub for garment wholesale, is closely linked to the fashion industry. The rise of fashion-related content on short video platforms and social media has helped the district move beyond its traditional commercial model. Events like "pop-up fashion shows" and "livestream shopping festivals" (Figure 4-4) integrate wholesale trade with fashion releases, using the influence of internet celebrities and designers to transform the district into a fashion incubator connecting online and offline platforms.

For example, temporary runways can be built in front of historic facades, inviting local brands to showcase clothing collections incorporating Lingnan cultural elements while simultaneously conducting live-streamed sales. This approach strengthens the district's "heritage + fashion" identity and helps businesses expand their customer base.

Figure 4-4 Street Runway Show on Yongyuan Road, Shanghai (Source: Reference [77])

(2) Designer-led Entrepreneurship: The district's dense garment industry chain and low-cost spaces provide a natural foundation for designer entrepreneurship. Vacant warehouses or traditional residential buildings can be converted into "shared studios for designers," offering one-stop services such as pattern making, fabric sourcing, and small-batch production, lowering the entry threshold for startup brands.

Platforms linking designers with wholesalers can facilitate the shift from original design to mass production. For instance, patterns and colors from the thirteen-hongs' historical archives can form a design database for secondary creation, preserving local culture while boosting product uniqueness.This model can attract young creative talent and promote the transformation of the wholesale industry from imitative processing to original design.

(3) Revitalization of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH): The district once hosted traditional trades such as pharmacies and copper workshops, whose intangible heritage techniques still hold untapped contemporary potential. A "scene reconstruction + function repurposing" strategy can be adopted: on the one hand, historic alleyways such as Huaiyuan Post can be used to reconstruct spaces like "old pharmacies" and "copper shops," using AR technology to reenact the processes of herbal medicine preparation and copper forging, thereby creating immersive cultural experience spaces.

ICH techniques can be integrated into modern lifestyles by creating cultural products like herbal sachets or copperware, incorporating them into the district’s retail formats. Collaborations with universities can facilitate ICH workshops, where craft inheritors teach traditional skills, fostering a closed-loop industry from heritage to product creation and e-commerce, transforming traditional culture into a sustainable economic resource.

4.1.1.5 Summary

Table 4-2 Summary of Conditions for Tactical Implementation (Source: Author)

Category	Favorable Conditions	Unfavorable Conditions
Stakeholder Forces	Active private capital: Financial and experiential support for spatial renovation (e.g., logistics and storage upgrades) Business associations: Regulate market order and reduce coordination costs (e.g., logistics scheduling) Design institutions: Professional expertise ensures coordination of historical style	Interest conflicts: Spontaneous renovations by merchants may damage historical appearance; residents protest against street encroachments Lack of engagement: Elderly residents and transient merchants lack a shared sense of initiative

Table 4-2 Summary of Conditions for Tactical Implementation (Continued)

Category	Favorable Conditions	Unfavorable Conditions
Spatiotemporal Conditions	Time Windows: Distinct peaks in pedestrian flow create high-exposure opportunities for activities Spatial Foundation: Public space ownership is clearly defined; public housing resources are relatively abundant	Traffic overload: Daily congestion lasts up to 12 hours, peaking between 13:00–16:00, hindering movement optimization Fragmented ownership: Idle yet privately owned spaces are scattered, increasing coordination costs.
Resource Potential	Material regeneration: Handcarts and logistics waste can be converted into cultural symbols at low cost Industrial base: The garment cluster supports designer entrepreneurship and incubation	Low-end dependency: Wholesalers rely on low-margin, high-volume models and resist design investment Cultural disconnect: 76% of merchants cannot identify heritage value, leading to superficial renovations
Opportunities for Innovation	Fashion dissemination: Short video and Livestream platforms reinforce the "heritage + fashion" identity ICH revitalization: AR technology and cultural product development activate traditional cultural genes	Path dependence: Traditional operational habits (e.g., imitation-based production) hinder innovation chain integration Cognitive disjunction: Disorderly influx of influencer-driven symbols leads to visual and spatial alienation

4.1.2 Strategy Derivation

To address the existing triple contradictions, the corresponding update strategy is proposed in conjunction with the excavated implementation conditions (Figure 4-5).

In response to the explicit contradiction—namely the contestation over street space usage rights—a strategic framework is proposed that focuses on spatiotemporal coordination and interest balancing, grounded in the existing spatial-temporal conditions and stakeholder distribution. Three interrelated sub-strategies are proposed: first, establish spatiotemporal decentralization rules to manage different periods and pathways in a differentiated manner, thereby separating conflicting functions; second, construct a compensation mechanism for

spatial rights, using interest exchange to encourage merchants to yield occupied space and enhance its public attributes; third, promote activation of public space by designing flexible facilities and rules that reshape shared spatial modes. These three aspects work in concert to transform street space from a zero-sum battleground into a flexible domain of multi-stakeholder co-governance.

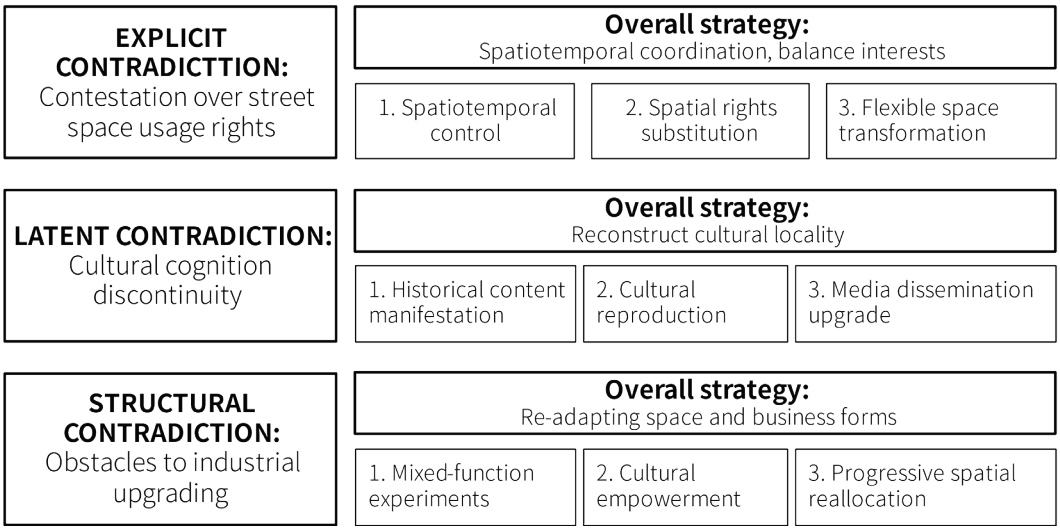


Figure 4-5 Derivation of Renewal Strategies (Source: Author)

In addressing the latent contradiction—the cultural cognition discontinuity—a comprehensive strategy is proposed to reconstruct cultural locality based on existing resource potential and innovation opportunities. This unfolds in a gradual path of "revelation–participation–dissemination": first, render abstract culture perceptible by revealing historical genetic elements and transforming them into tangible symbols; second, promote community co-governance, enabling residents and merchants to engage in cultural reproduction jointly; finally, upgrade media dissemination to break through social silos and shape a cultural narrative that integrates local identity with contemporary elements. This framework aims to resolve the disconnect between historical value and practical action, shifting cultural identity from passive acceptance to active construction.

The overarching strategy for the structural contradiction—namely, obstacles to industrial upgrading—centers on re-adapting space and business models. On the one hand, mixed-function experiments are employed to break the spatial rigidity of traditional formats and explore ways to embed high-value-added components; on the other, resources in design, R&D, and marketing are integrated via ecosystem collaboration, promoting a shift from low-end scale dependence to culturally empowered, value-driven industry. A progressive spatial reallocation mechanism is adopted to balance stock upgrading and incremental cultivation, thereby

mitigating systemic risks associated with overly radical transformations.

4.2 From Strategy to Tactics

4.2.1 Matching Tactical Prototypes

By conducting a brainstorming-based initial matching of common tactical types with specific strategies, a frequency ranking of tactics appropriate for different strategies is established (Figure 4-6). From the visualized intersection between strategies and tactics, it becomes evident that a single tactic often corresponds to multiple strategies and thus addresses multiple contradictions. In actual implementation, classifying tactical designs based on their operational context proves more practical for on-the-ground execution.

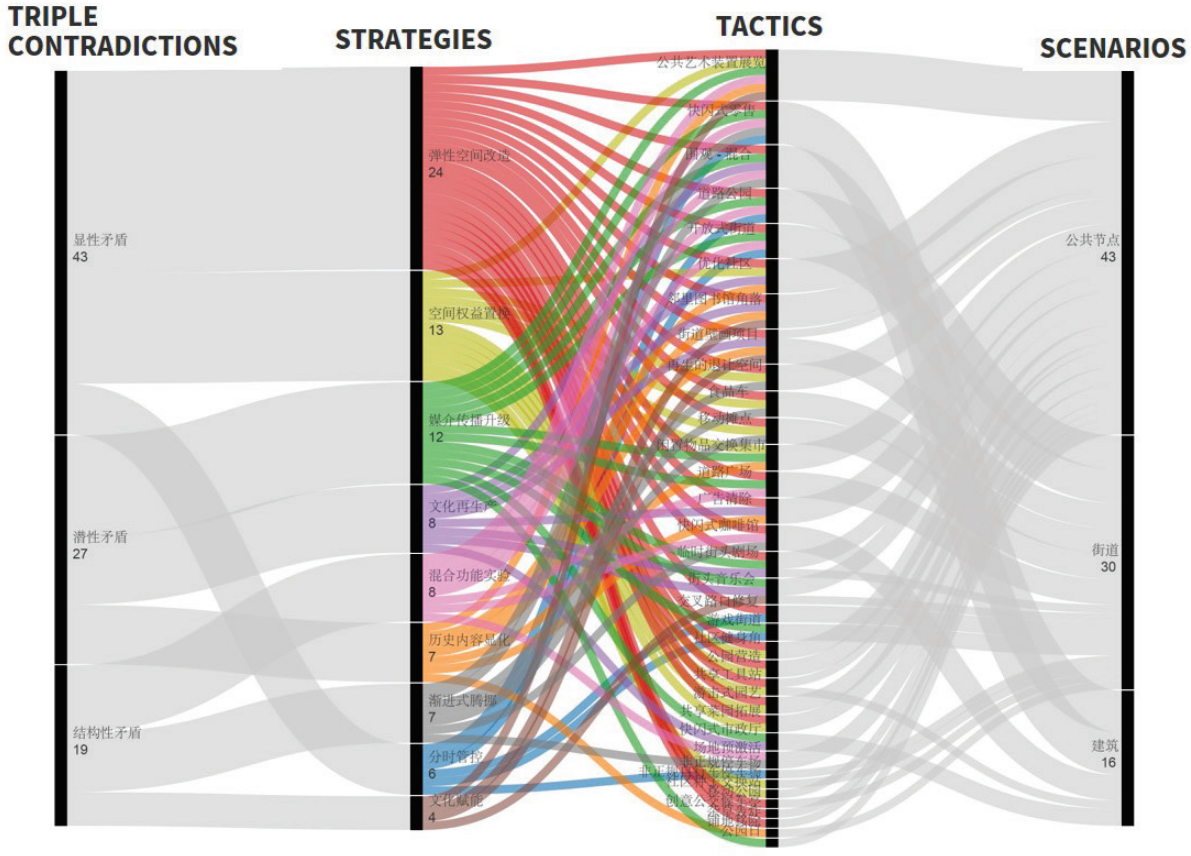


Figure 4-6 Matching Contradictions, Strategies, Tactics, and Scenarios (Source: Author)

These frequently used tactics can be categorized into three main types according to their application scenarios:

The first focuses on optimization of public nodes (e.g., public art installations, community enhancements, reclaimed setback space). The second involves street-level improvements (e.g., street parks, open streets, street plazas). The third targets building space optimization (e.g., pop-up retail, mixed-use functions). These high-frequency tactical prototypes provide an initial understanding of applicable tactic types for the site. However, due to the site's unique

characteristics, these prototypes must be further adjusted and contextualized based on the specific local conditions.

4.2.2 Building a Tactical Toolbox

Based on the preliminary matching results and the specific conditions of the Guangfunan site, a tactical toolbox is constructed around three tactics: street space activation, public node activation, and building unit renovation.

4.2.2.1 Street Tactics

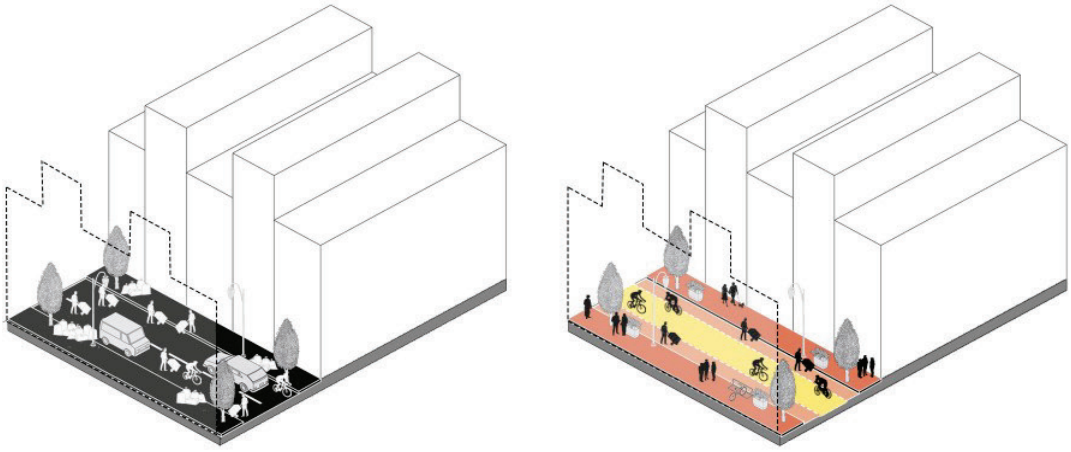
This tactic aims to address the dual issues of traffic congestion and insufficient commercial vitality, focusing on two key actions: street function reconstruction and flash economy cultivation. Potential implementation areas include the secondary streets within Guangfunan (such as Yangxiang Road, Jianglan Road, Guangfunan Road, etc.). The specific tactical approaches can be summarized into two categories:

The open street tactic (Figure 4-7) involves establishing a time-sharing pedestrian street system (retaining motor vehicle lanes during morning rush hours on weekdays, transforming them into pedestrian streets in the evenings and on weekends) and cross-sectional functional modifications (reserving space for truck unloading and handcart transport).

These measures aim to strengthen pedestrian priority while ensuring traffic order, ultimately creating a spatial environment characterized by the clear separation of pedestrian and vehicular flows. By reorganizing street functions and optimizing circulation patterns, the interventions reduce potential conflicts between different users and enhance overall accessibility and safety. At the same time, the creation of walkable, human-scaled environments contributes to improved pedestrian experience, encouraging longer stays and more active street life. This spatial restructuring not only elevates the commercial appeal and operational efficiency of retail frontages but also supports the long-term enhancement of public realm quality and urban vitality at the neighborhood scale.

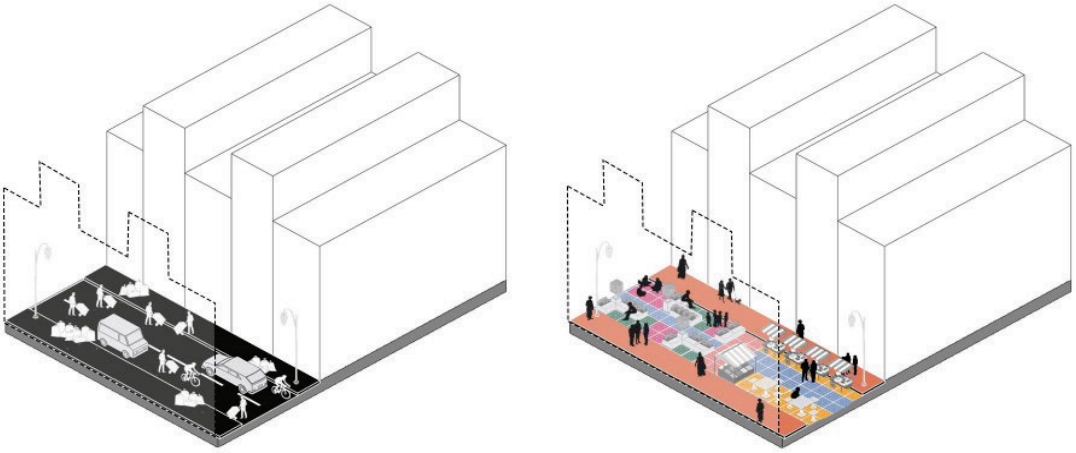
Pop-up events introduce diverse business formats through flexible, temporary stalls, creating theme-driven district activities during key periods. These events break traditional commercial models, creating differentiated, highly spontaneous consumer experiences and injecting innovative momentum into the regional industrial upgrade (Figure 4-8).

Based on the characteristics of the Jianglan Road area, the event themes are not limited to traditional promotional markets but can extend to fashion shows, music performances, fashion exhibitions, etc.



Open Street Tacties Description	
Objective	Restore orderly traffic, optimize pedestrian experience, enhance commercial atmosphere
Implementation Site	Main vehicular roadways of the venue
Specific Measures	I. Time - sharing Use: Limit the time periods for motor vehicle . II. Functional Zoning: From both sides to the middle, they are respectively pedestrian zones, freight vehicle zones, and bicycle/electric vehicle zones. III. Facility Supplement: Bicycle parking spots, greening and unloading areas.
Participants	Traffic department; citizens; shop owners; construction workers

Figure 4-7 Description of Open Street Tactics (Source: Author)



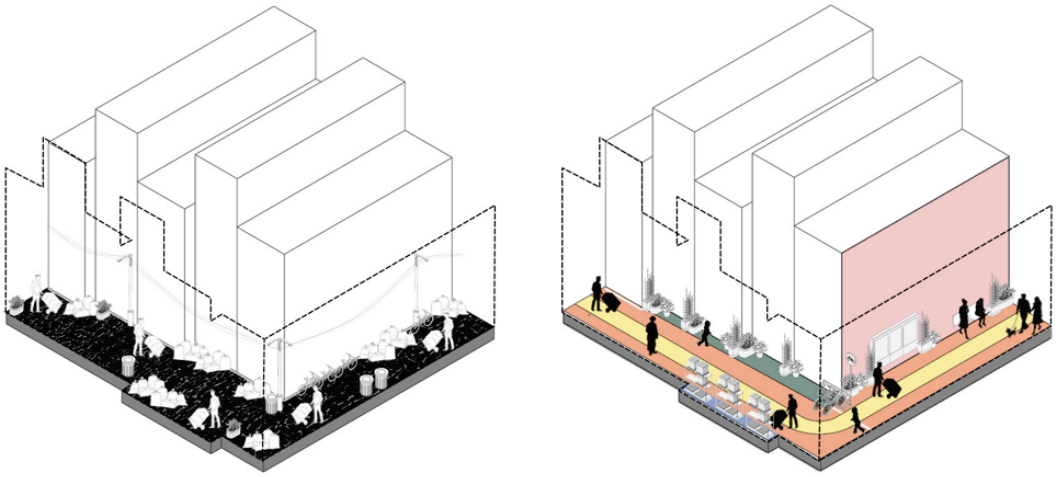
Pop-up Event Tactics Description	
Objective	Expand existing business forms and accumulate transformation momentum
Implementation Site	Main vehicular roadways of the venue
Specific Measures	I. Time - limited Activity: Transform into a completely pedestrian - only area within a certain period. II. Business - form Supplement: Supplement functions such as catering, greening, resting, retailing, exhibition, and fashion shows through mobile installations.
Participants	Traffic department; citizens; shop owners; small vendors

Figure 4-8 Description of Pop-up Event Tactics (Source: Author)

4.2.2.2 Public Node Tactics

Public node activation focuses on community alley intersections and neglected street corners—spaces that are often underutilized yet hold significant potential for social interaction and place-making. The strategy is driven by the deployment of modular, low-cost facilities such as seating, lighting, or cultural displays, alongside community-driven programming that encourages local participation and shared ownership. By reactivating these micro-nodes, the approach seeks to transform overlooked urban fragments into vibrant, inclusive public spaces that strengthen neighborhood identity and social cohesion. The specific tactics can be summarized into two categories:

The first category involves using temporary installations to activate public spaces made from materials commonly found in the area and crafted with the active participation of residents. These installations may include exhibition spaces, planting areas, fitness equipment, and resting spots (Figure 4-9).

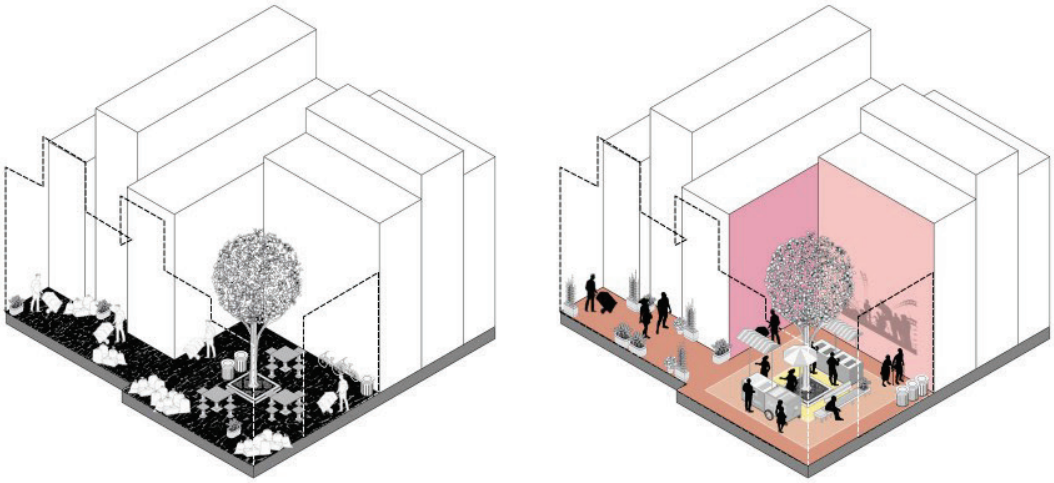


Temporary Installation Tactics Description	
Objective	Activate alleyway spaces and supplement community living facilities
Implementation Site	Main community alleyways of the venue
Specific Measures	I. Movable Installations: Green plants, exhibition boards, shelves, bicycle parking spots, seats. II. Surface Beautification: Lay noise - reducing freight channels and beautify gable walls with graffiti.
Participants	Residents; community administrators; shop/warehouse owners

Figure 4-9 Description of Temporary Installation Tactics (Source: Author)

The second category focuses on organizing neighbors to participate in community activities to co-build local culture. Specific forms include item exchange, shared tool stations, community gardens, seasonal theme activities, and festive events, gradually fostering a community governance atmosphere of "co-creation, co-governance, and sharing" and creating

a positive cycle of practical public space usage (Figure 4-10).



Co-built Community Tacties Description	
Objective	Enhance community cohesion and build community culture
Implementation Site	Public open spaces within the community
Specific Measures	I. Temporary Installations: Food trucks, stalls, seats. II. Group Activities: Second - hand item exchange, writing Spring Festival couplets, planting activities.
Participants	Residents; community administrators; shop/warehouse owners

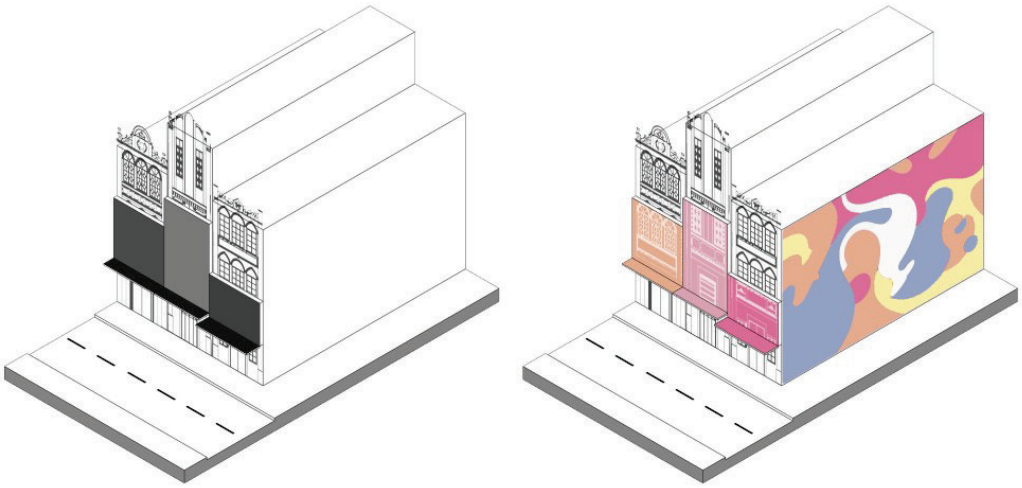
Figure 4-10 Description of Co-built Community Tactics (Source: Author)

4.2.2.3 Building Unit Tactics

Finally, tactics aimed at building units are considered. Potential implementation areas include government-managed public housing, shops with interest exchange needs, and vacant warehouses, with two possible forms of implementation:

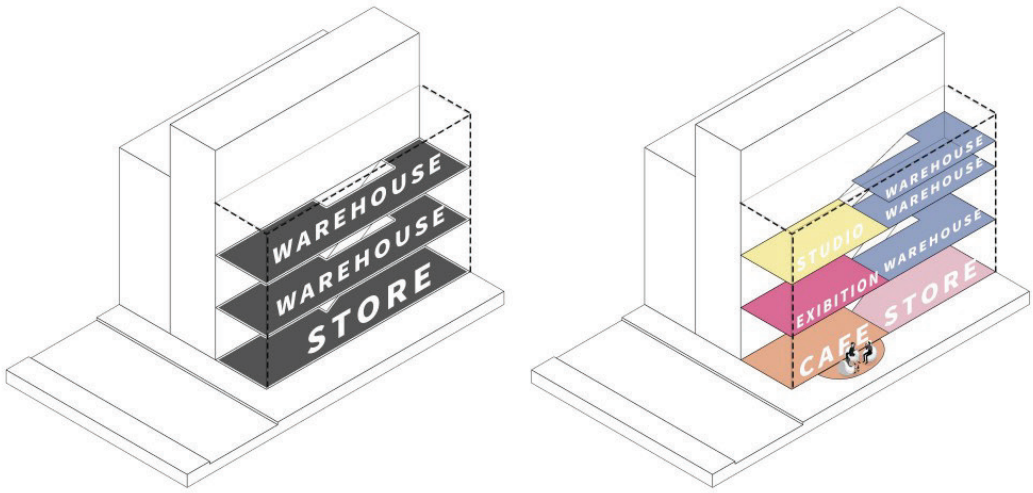
The first category involves temporary modifications to building exteriors, such as using graffiti, painting, and temporary components to highlight the district's historical and cultural elements, thereby enhancing the awareness of residents and wholesale industry practitioners regarding the value of historical content. Potential interventions may include blocked facades of historic buildings, overlaid historical water systems, and legacy historical business types (Figure 4-11).

The second category focuses on experimenting with functional mixing in building spaces, incorporating various functions (e.g., dining, recreation, exhibition, photography) into underutilized spaces (such as vacant stalls, surplus storefronts, and inefficient upper floors) or switching building functions at certain times (e.g., wholesale during the day, retail at night), thereby enriching the district's commercial offerings (Figure 4-12).



Building Exterior Tactics Description	
Objective	Re - create historical appearance and promote merchants' awareness of historical value.
Implementation Site	Historical buildings blocked by signboard advertisements in the venue and other adjacent buildings
Specific Measures	I. Flash - back to Original Appearance: Use original elevation line draft spray - painted drawings to cover current - state billboards. II. Historical Scroll Graffiti: Display historical fragments of the street area through creative graffiti.
Participants	Historical building protection department; shop owners; artists

Figure 4-11 Description of Building Exterior Tactics (Source: Author)



Mixed Function Building Tactics Description	
Objective	Enrich business forms and enhance the commercial added value of the environment.
Implementation Site	Street - side shops
Specific Measures	I. Shop - in - shop: Create other functional areas within existing stores. II. Utilization of Vacant Spaces: Use small unrented storefronts for exhibitions.
Participants	Shop owners; media; potential entrepreneurs; consumers

Figure 4-12 Description of Mixed Function Building Tactics (Source: Author)

4.2.2.4 Potential Application Areas

When identifying tactical application areas, it is essential to fully consider the existing site conditions and the specific characteristics of the three tactical categories. Street tactics can be implemented along the site's primary vehicular roads; public node tactics are best applied within the district's internal alleys and public spaces; and building unit tactics primarily rely on the site's historic buildings.

Ideal intervention nodes should meet the following criteria: medium to low vehicular traffic, wide alleyways, and broad building frontages in publicly owned structures. Due to the proximity to the garment wholesale center (including the Xinzhongguo Building and Shisanxing Plaza Building), the concentration of wholesale formats and logistics intensity along Heping East Road and its southern section is high, posing significant resistance to tactical implementation. Thus, this area is excluded from short-term considerations.

Based on the above considerations, nine typical nodes are preliminarily identified, including six distributed along major vehicular roads and two within internal community alleyways.

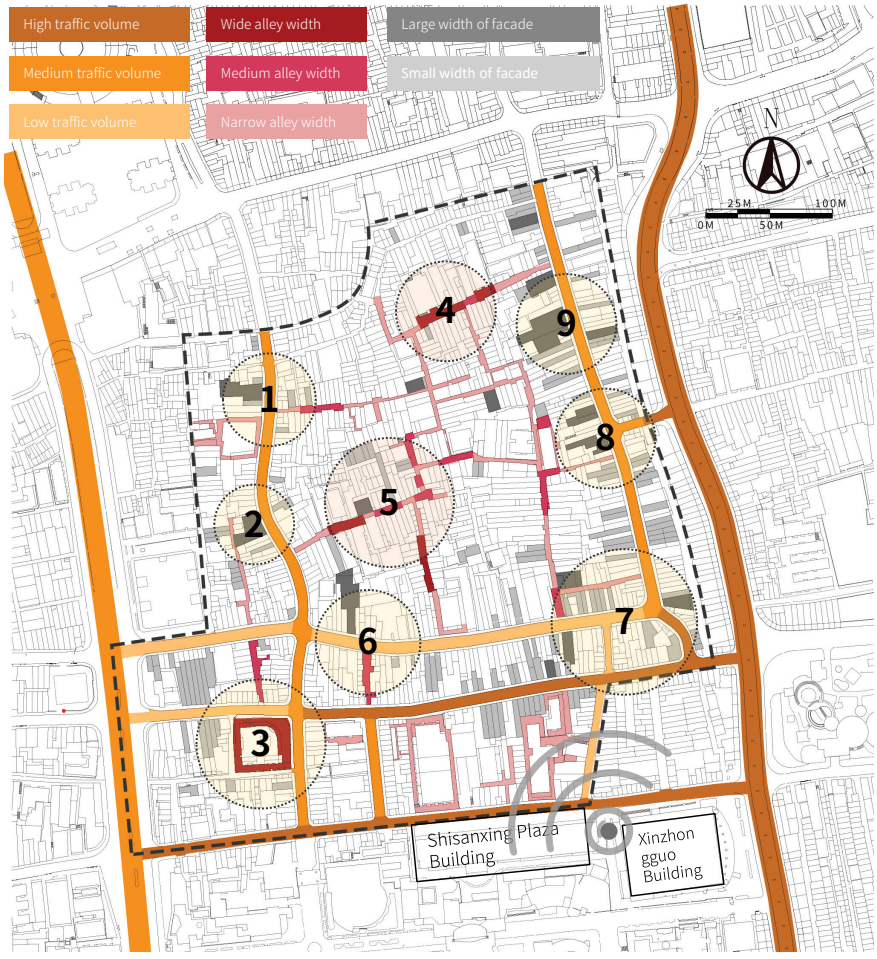


Figure 4-13 Distribution of Potential Application Areas (Source: Author)

4.2.3 Selection of Tactical Pilot Nodes

Based on a progressive implementation approach, specific nodes are selected from the potential application areas for tactical pilot simulation design. The node selection follows several guiding principles:

First is conflict focus: nodes are chosen based on prominent contradictions, concentrated needs, and typical spatial typologies, ensuring the practical relevance of interventions.

Second is resource compatibility: priority is given to areas with abundant public space, allocatable public housing resources, and temporarily idle spaces, meeting the spatiotemporal requirements for tactical implementation.

Finally, the feasibility of implementation is considered by prioritizing nodes with existing precedents of similar activities, thereby validating the operational viability of tactical tools through practice.

Three long-term tactical implementation corridors are identified based on a multidimensional evaluation of the nine candidate areas under the above criteria (Table 4-3). From these, three nodes with strong potential for renewal—based on contradiction intensity, tactical compatibility, and implementation conditions—are selected for tactical simulation design (Figure 4-14).

Table 4-3 Evaluation of Renewal Potential for 9 Candidate Areas (Source: Author)

	Location	**Prominent Contradictions**	**Available Resources**	**Implementation Precedent**	**Renewal Potential Assessment**
1	Yangxiang Road	Disordered right-of-way	Public housing with wide frontage	None	Low
2		Disordered right-of-way; historic buildings obscured	Public housing with wide frontage	Cafe established in the inner courtyard of a building	Medium
3	Plaza in front of He Le Building	Occupation of public space	Large-scale public node	None	Low
4	Yangrenli	Occupation of public space; low community vitality	Medium-to-large width alleys	None	Medium

Table 4-3 Evaluation of Renewal Potential for 9 Candidate Areas (Continued)

	Location	**Prominent Contradictions**	**Available Resources**	**Implementation Precedent**	**Renewal Potential Assessment**
5	Yangren South		Medium-to-large width alleys; historic buildings	Existing shading structures and rest facilities	High
6	Jianglan Road	Disordered right-of-way	Low-traffic streets; medium-width alleys; public housing with wide frontage	None	Medium
7				Historic architecture enthusiasts previously organized a guided tour of an old pharmacy site.	High
8	Guangfunan Road	Historic buildings obscured; disordered right-of-way	Public housing with wide frontage, low-traffic street	Existing murals; high pedestrian flow	High
9			Public housing with wide frontage	Existing experiments with mixed-use formats and intangible cultural heritage-related businesses	High

Node A (Street Activation Tactic): Located at the eastern starting point of the open street experimental corridor along Jianglan Road, this segment experiences acute traffic conflicts during the business hours of the garment wholesale industry, with illegal truck unloading causing severe congestion. Meanwhile, merchants spontaneously form street-side markets during seasonal transitions, indicating an endogenous demand for Pop-up events. The abundant historical architectural resources provide a rich backdrop for such activities. By implementing time-sharing of street usage rights and organizing pop-up events, the intervention aims to alleviate traffic pressure while stimulating commercial vitality.

Node B (Public Node Activation Tactic): Located on Yangren South Alley within the co-built community experimental corridor, this area is primarily residential on both sides. Currently, the site suffers from deteriorated public facilities and encroachment by private items, yet it retains a solid foundation of community life. Through the installation of temporary structures and community-building activities, the intervention seeks to redefine the service function of

public space and strengthen community cohesion.

Node C (Building Unit Renovation Tactic): Located at the Taiping Bridge area on the eastern entrance of Guangfunan Road within the innovation-oriented experimental corridor, this node serves as a connector for east-west commercial pedestrian flow. Issues include historic buildings obscured by billboards and homogeneous commercial formats. The intervention emphasizes recognizing historical narratives and multipurpose use of stall-module spaces, aiming to enhance the district's historical atmosphere while expanding commercial possibilities.

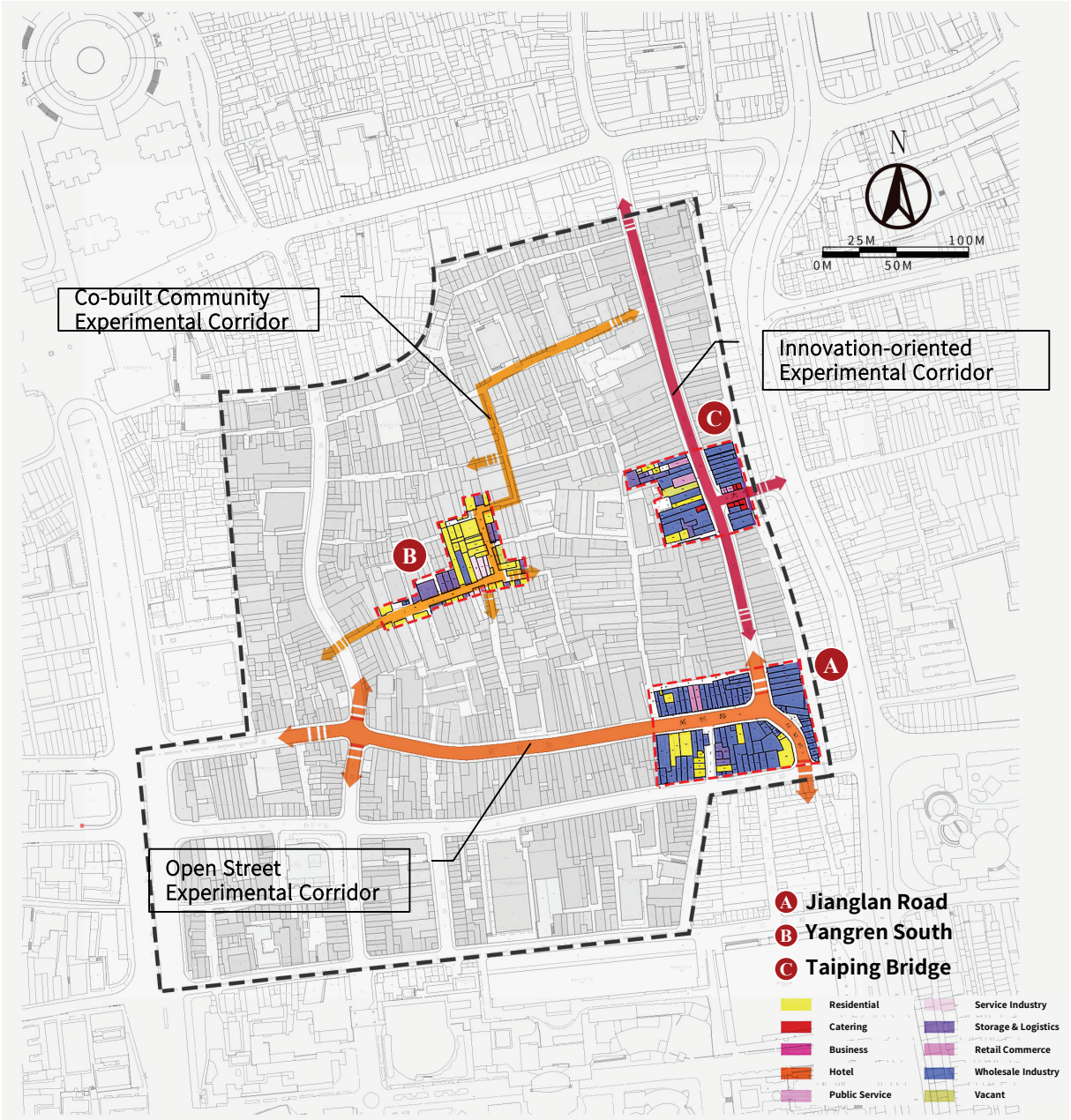


Figure 4-14 Selection of Tactical Experiment Nodes (Source: Author)

4.3 Tactical Renewal Design at Selected Nodes

Figure 4-15 Master Plan Overview (Source: Author)

4.3.1 Tactical Node A: Open Street Experiment

Node A on Jianglan Road is selected as a testing ground for the open street tactic, to promote street space's functional transformation and quality enhancement through a phased strategy. In the short term, the focus is on time-sharing usage to address issues such as mixed pedestrian-vehicle traffic, logistics congestion, and poor walkability. Pop-up events will be gradually introduced in the mid-term to stimulate commercial diversification and upgrading. In the long run, the vision is to turn Jianglan Road into a mature open street, eliminating the

disruptive effects of logistics and enabling a comprehensive renewal of its urban character and commercial model.

4.3.1.1 Site Analysis

Node A is located at the intersection of Guangfunan Road and Jianglan Road, flanked by over ten historically valuable buildings. The existing street layout, from inside to outside, consists of a one-way vehicular lane, a non-motorized vehicle lane/parking space, and a pedestrian sidewalk, with a total width of approximately 12 meters. According to previous traffic analysis, Jianglan Road experiences intense pedestrian and logistics pressure during wholesale business hours. The current traffic efficiency is low, and the street is unfriendly to pedestrians, indicating significant potential for improvement (Figure 4-16).

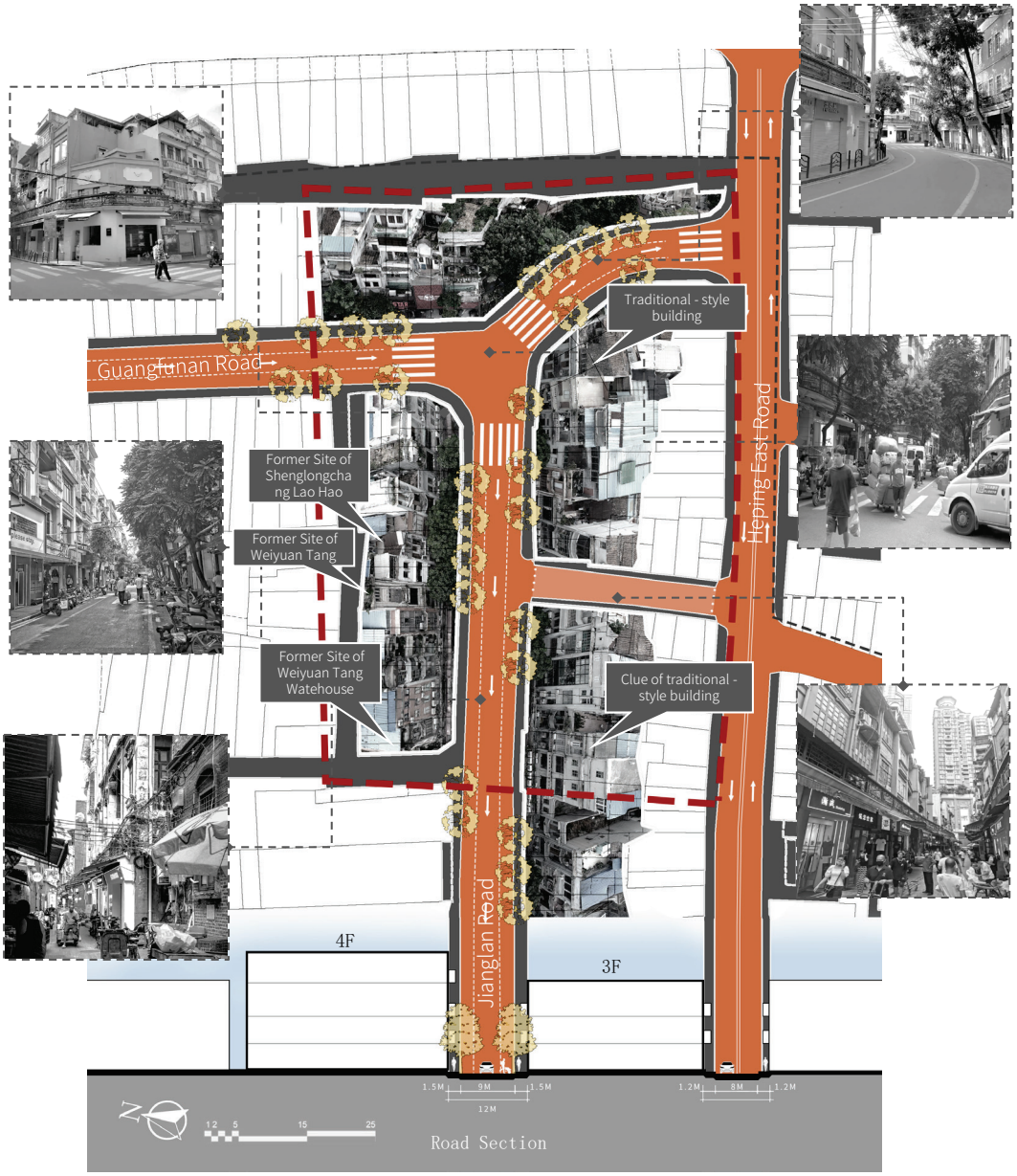


Figure 4-16 Site Analysis of Jianglan Road (Source: Author)

4.3.1.2 Stakeholder Analysis

The main stakeholders involved in this scheme include shop owners, citizens (both pedestrians and drivers), the traffic department, and logistics workers (Figure 4-17).

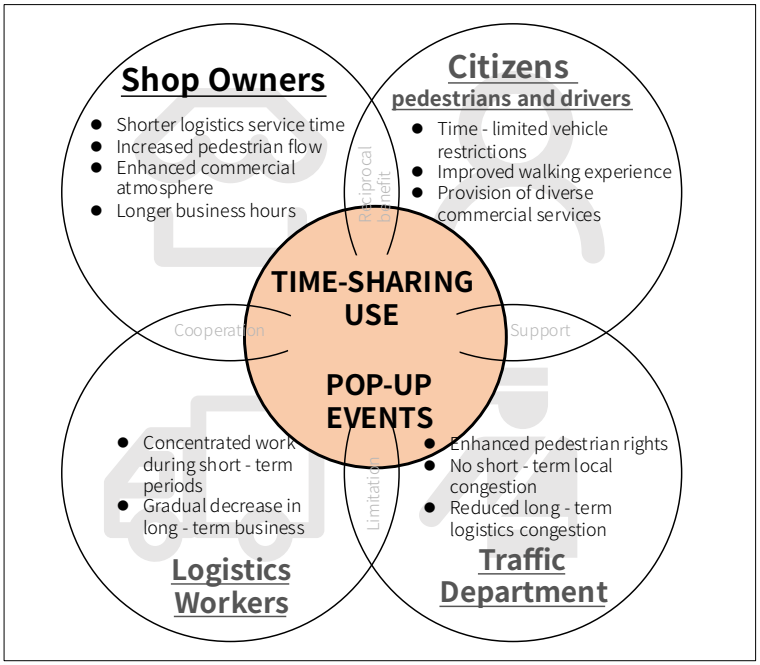


Figure 4-17 Stakeholder Analysis for Tactical Node A (Source: Author)

Assessment results suggest that time-sharing usage and pop-up event strategies will likely bring positive short-term benefits and long-term value (Figure 4-18), providing a feasible foundation for implementation. However, logistics workers may become a significant source of resistance, as their operations are susceptible to traffic control policies. Therefore, it is necessary to establish a close coordination mechanism with traffic authorities to facilitate policy adjustments and ongoing communication, ensuring a smooth transition.

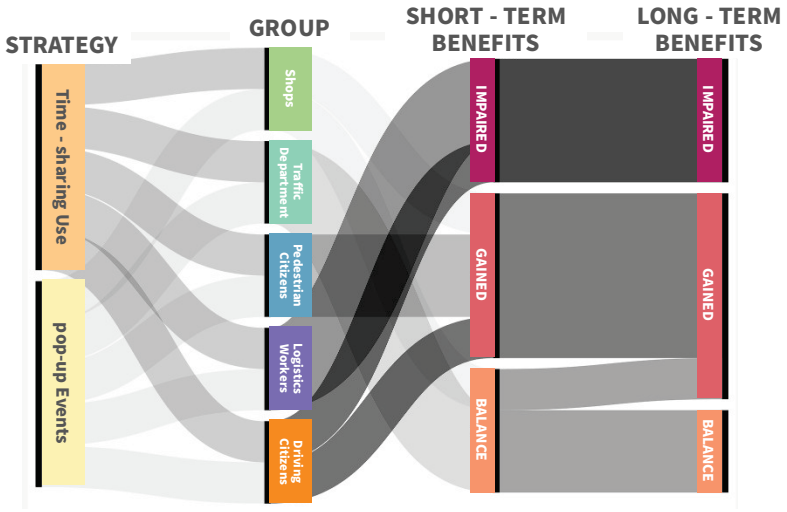


Figure 4-18 Detailed Stakeholder Assessment of Jianglan Road (Source: Author)

4.3.1.3 Tactical Plan

The short-term experiment centers on the time-sharing of road rights, with rational scheduling of pedestrian, vehicular, and non-motorized traffic periods based on existing usage patterns. The goal is to gradually reduce vehicular access time, ultimately achieving full pedestrianization of the street (Figure 4-19).

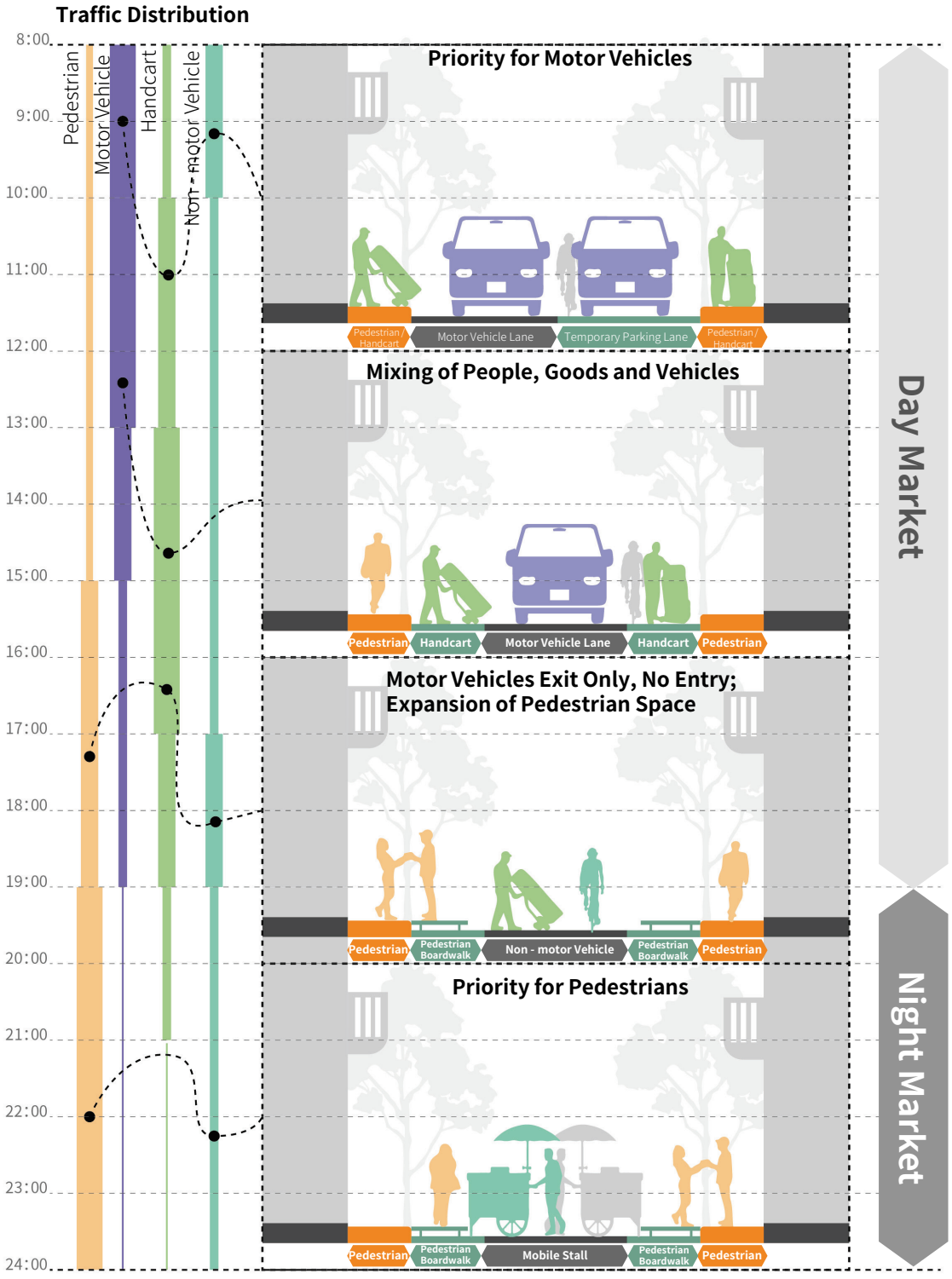


Figure 4-19 Time-Sharing Allocation Plan for Street Rights (Souce: Author)

Once the time-sharing experiment yields preliminary results and the site becomes suitable for pedestrian transformation, a mid-term optimization experiment will be launched, centering on pop-up events (Figure 4-20). Based on the inherent resources of the site and precedents from similar areas, two distinct thematic strategies are proposed: the first is a cultural experience type, involving art installations and interactive exhibitions to create immersive cultural settings; the second is a commercial interactive type, featuring pop-up brand stores and creative markets to generate new consumer environments.

Both models emphasize synergistic development with pedestrianization, using dynamic space activation to enhance the site's overall value.

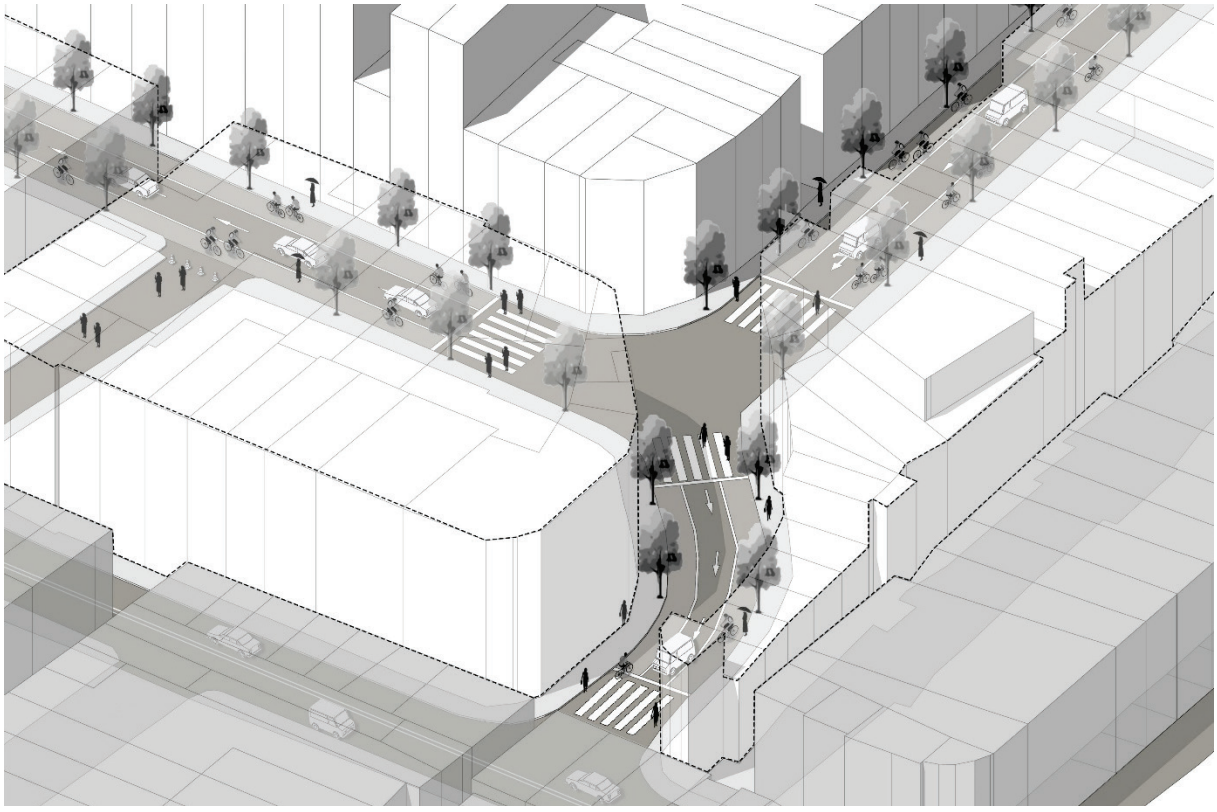


Figure 4-20 Current Conditions at the Node (Source: Author)

The first strategy is a thematic pop-up market, building upon the district's existing seasonal clearance practices, integrating light food and beverage outlets, rest stations, and other diverse business formats while embedding modular art installations and a dynamic wayfinding system(Figure 4-21).

By restructuring the street space flexibly, the aim is to create a hybrid environment with commercial vitality and public character, enabling an organic integration of temporary uses and existing functions, thereby enhancing the spatial experience.

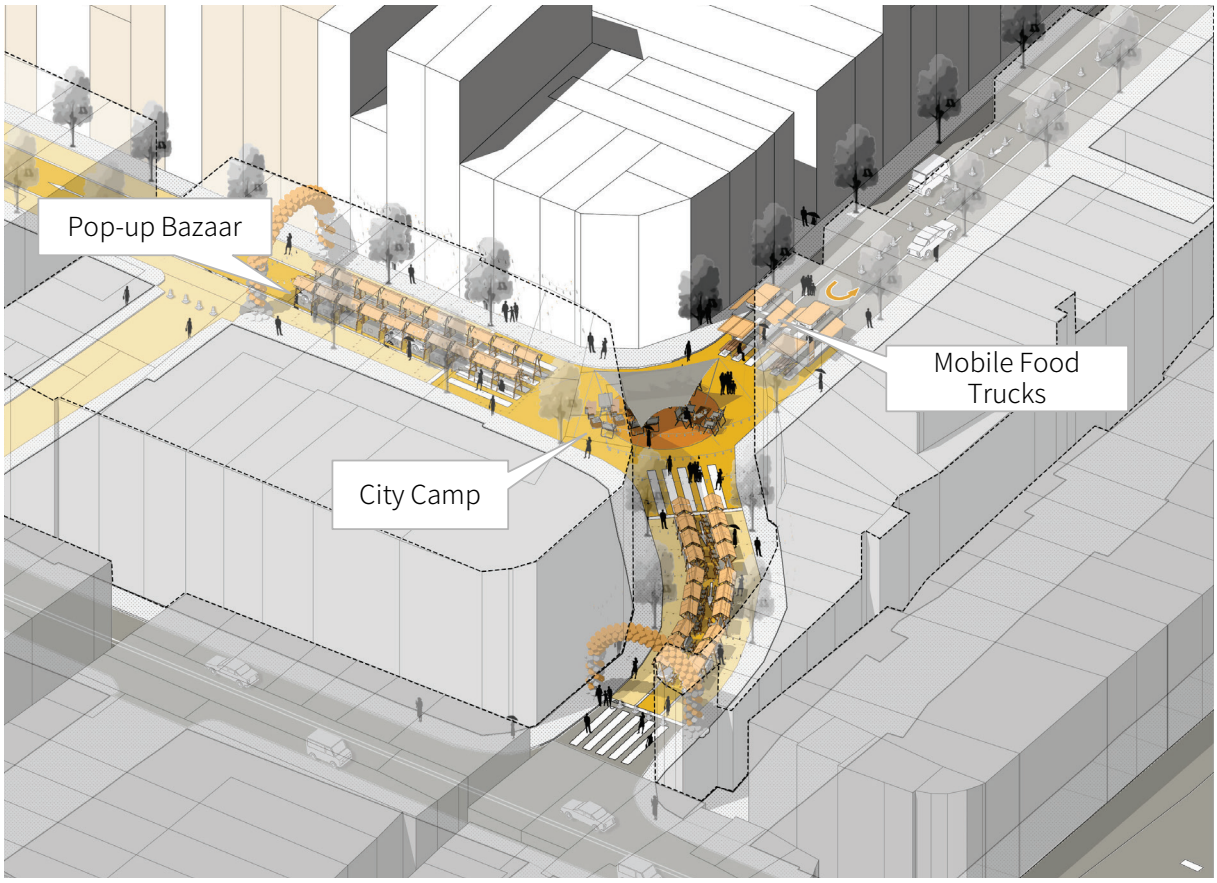


Figure 4-21 Pop-up Market in Operation (Source: Author)

The second strategy is a thematic fashion runway, drawing on the historic district's architectural fabric and cultural context and collaborating with local brands and merchants to create immersive fashion shows (Figure 4-22). Through streetscape micro-renewal and circulation optimization, runway stages are integrated with shopfronts and historic buildings, crafting a narrative space where tradition meets modernity.

This approach channels traffic to street-facing shops and creates viral social content through immersive scene-based programming. The event design emphasizes multi-sensory engagement, which empowers physical commerce while revitalizing cultural memory, injecting fashion energy into the historic neighborhood.

Once pop-up events become institutionalized and develop a stable brand effect, a dynamic iteration mechanism will continually refine operational strategies, driving business model upgrading; on this basis, Jianglan Road will gradually undergo permanent pedestrianization, accompanied by infrastructure enhancements such as pavement upgrades, intelligent lighting systems, and accessible facility improvements, ultimately forming an all-weather pedestrian district with cultural character and modern functionality. Throughout the transformation, emphasis will be placed on the continuity of historical context.

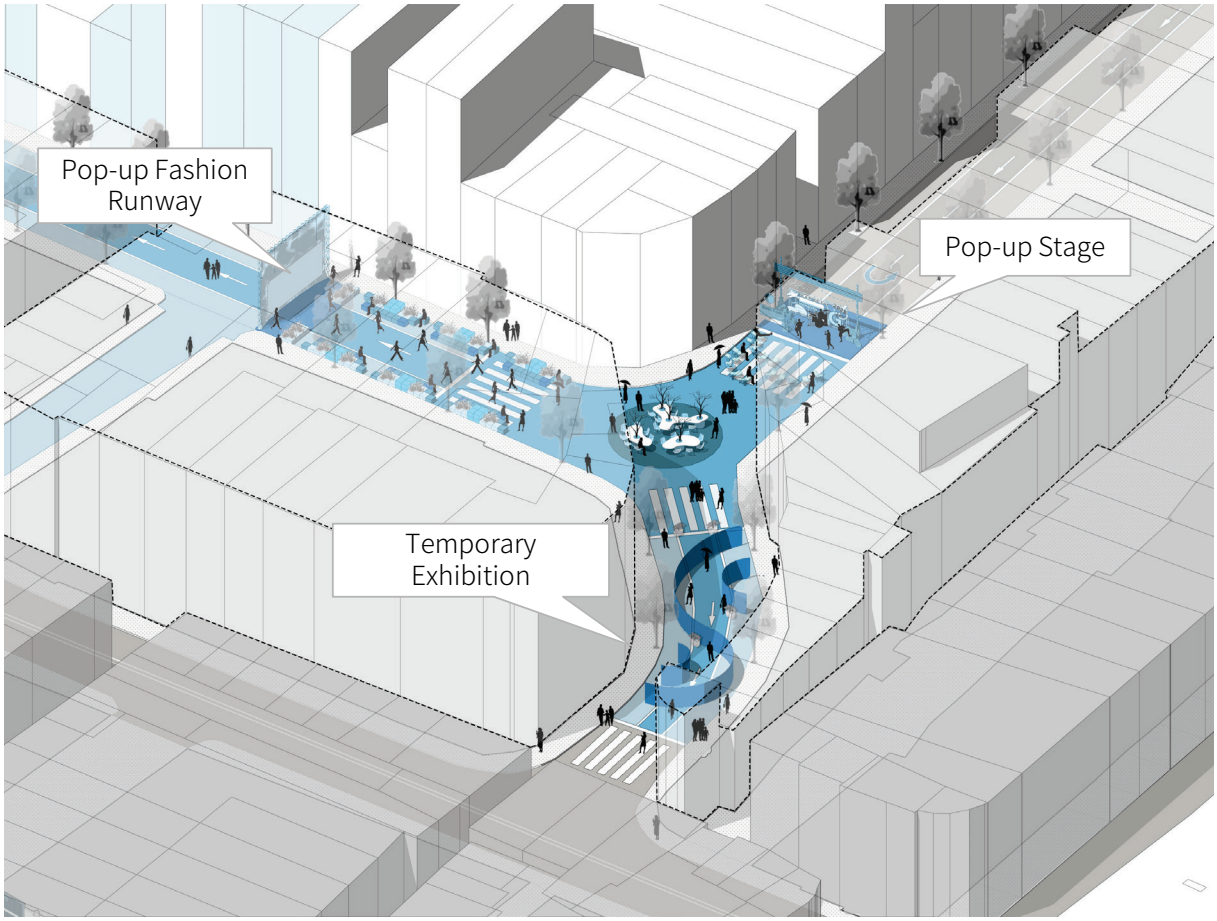


Figure 4-22 Pop-up Fashion Runway in Operation (Source: Author)

4.3.2 Tactical Node B: Co-Built Community Experiment

A node within Yangren South Alley is selected for tactical intervention using temporary installations and a co-built community strategy, aiming to enhance the quality of public space and compensate for the lack of essential public services in the neighborhood. In the short term, the approach focuses on spatial activation through rapidly deployable planting boxes and interactive art installations to address logistics encroachment and aging infrastructure while introducing emergency medical kits and shared tool walls for immediate upgrades. In the mid-term, the goal is to implement co-building tactics to create a community pocket park and thematic activities that enhance recreational convenience, enrich public life, and promote long-term sustainable development.

4.3.2.1 Site Analysis

Originally constructed during the Ming and Qing Dynasties, Yangren South Alley has long served as a vital carrier of community life, sustaining traditional scenes such as morning tea culture and neighborhood tea houses, thus preserving a rich historical and cultural memory repository. As a key historic district in Liwan, its existing fabric retains the Lingnan-style

alleyway structure. Shicui Mansion is a listed cultural relic, and three other historically significant structures are awaiting further verification. These remnants together form a cultural gene pool unique to the area. Currently, the space serves multiple everyday functions, such as social interaction and recreation, embodying the essence of Guangfu street life.

However, several issues severely limit the performance of public spaces in the alley: logistics operations and non-motorized vehicle parking occupy a significant portion of pedestrian space; infrastructure such as public lighting and seating has deteriorated to varying degrees; and insufficient provision of public service facilities fails to meet the growing quality-of-life expectations of residents (Figure 4-23). These challenges restrict community engagement and call for tactical means to revitalize spatial vitality.

Figure 4-23 Site Analysis of Yangren South Alley Node (Source: Author)

4.3.2.2 Stakeholder Analysis

This proposal establishes a multi-stakeholder coordination mechanism involving community residents, private property owners, warehouse businesses, and the neighborhood committee. Residents contribute by donating idle materials and participating in voluntary services; private owners lend adjacent spaces for public activity expansion; warehouse operators supply unused resources; and the community committee oversees policy coordination, funding integration, and long-term management (Figure 4-24).

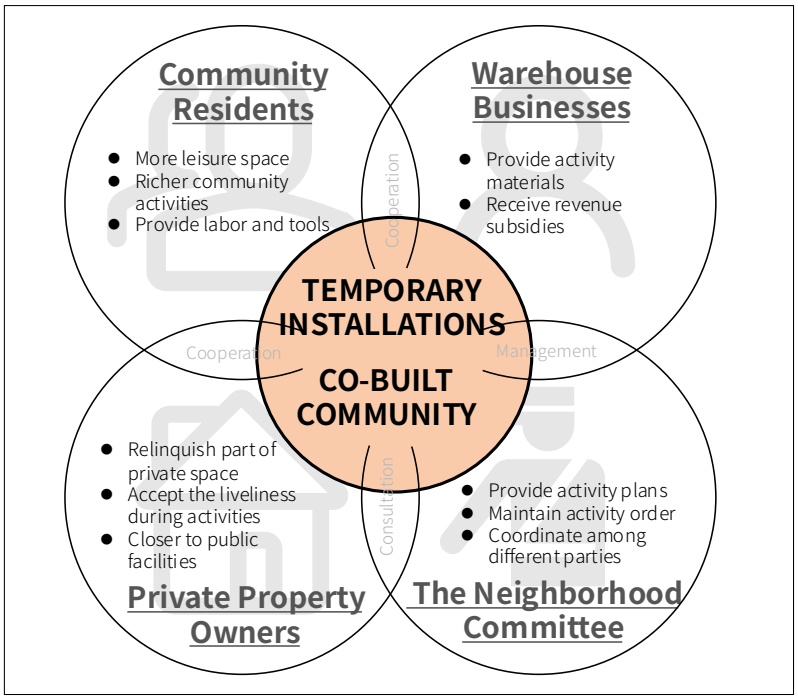


Figure 4-24 Stakeholder Analysis for Tactical Node B (Source: Author)

The main challenges lie in sourcing materials and removing obstructive objects from public space, often complicated by limited resources and unclear responsibilities. This proposal addresses both by reframing material supply and clearance as a reuse strategy. Discarded items such as trolleys and packaging waste are not removed but repurposed into tactical installations, serving as seating, signage, or display structures. This approach reduces costs, minimizes waste, and reinforces a localized design language rooted in the district's everyday material culture. Four reuse models are outlined:

The first model is a mobile planting cart (Figure 4-25), repurposing handcarts as mobile planting units. These include removable delivery boxes, waterproof wrapping layers, permeable water-retention structures, and adjustable brackets to enable vertical greening. The system solves encroachment issues and adds ecological vibrancy to the alley.

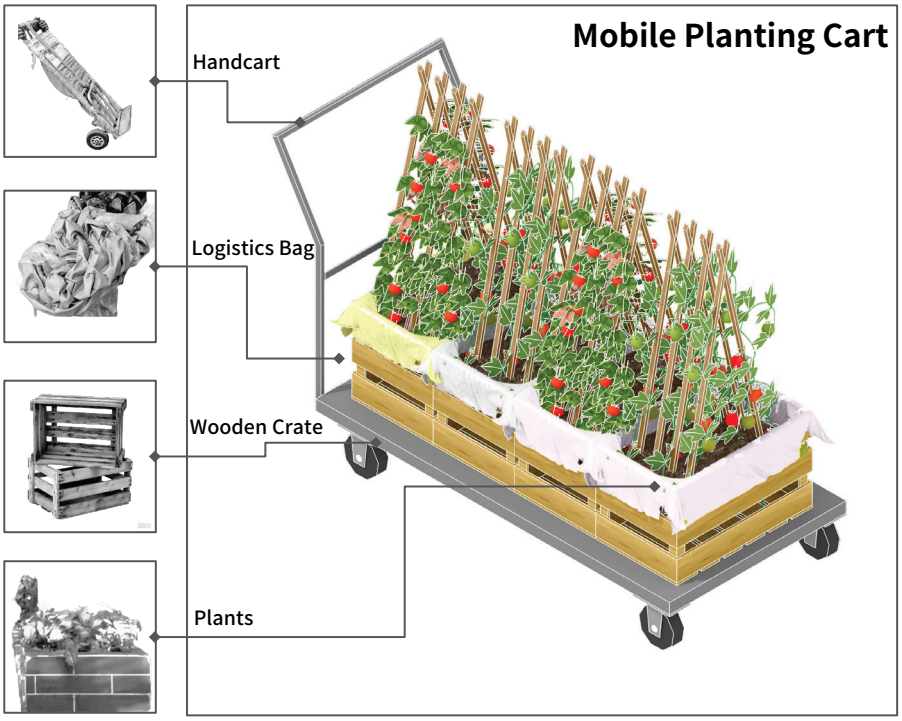


Figure 4-25 Material Composition of Mobile Planting Cart (Source: Author)

The second model is a recycled-material leisure sofa, combining cleaned waterproof packaging bags with discarded fabrics to create modular bean bag seating (Figure 4-26). These can be arranged as temporary rest zones or children's play corners, addressing the lack of public seating and promoting low-carbon reuse.

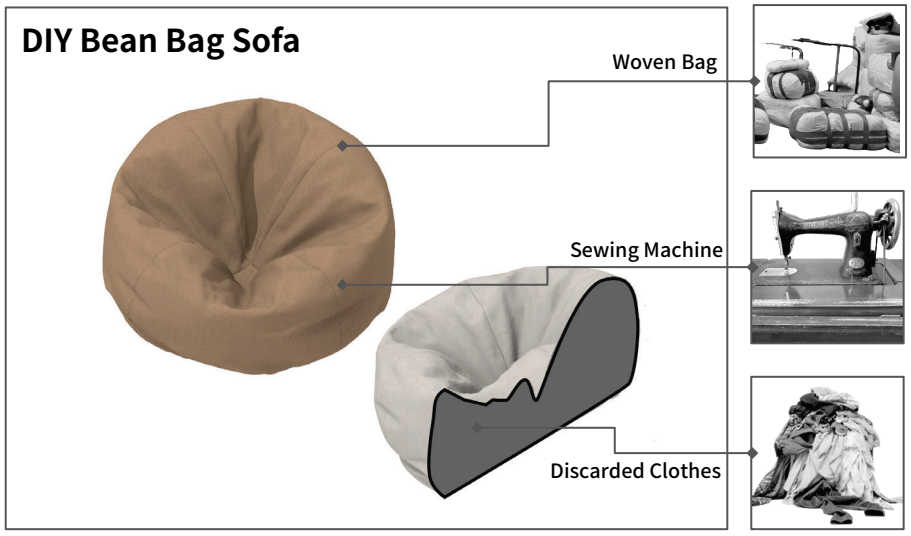


Figure 4-26 Material Composition of DIY Bean Bag Sofa (Source: Author)

The third model is a multi-functional lounge chair, using handcarts as the main frame, with plastic crates and wooden boxes forming modular seating and tables (Figure 4-27). These are ideal for corner nodes and offer a balance of semi-privacy and flexibility.

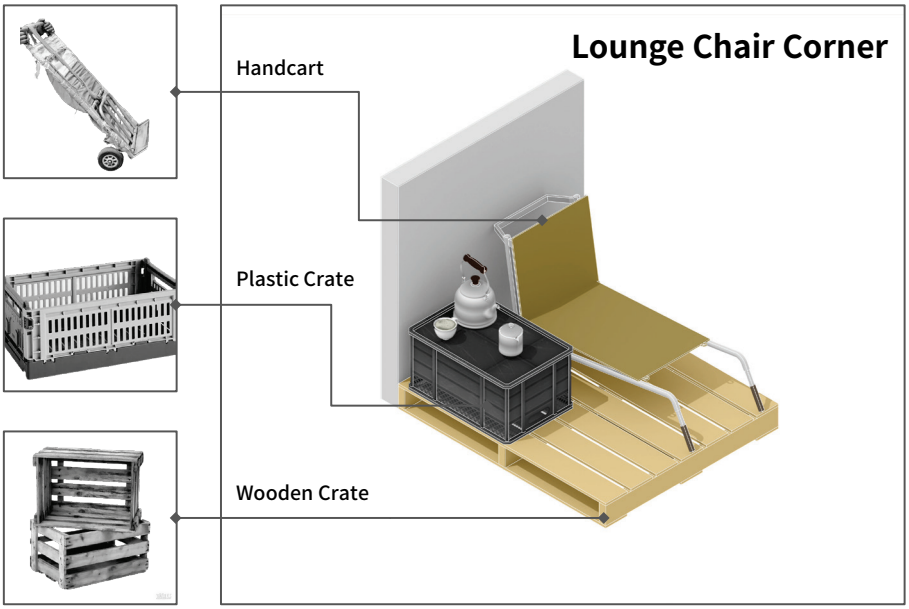


Figure 4-27 Material Composition of Lounge Chair Corner (Source: Author)

The fourth model is a flexible shelving stall, transforming unused shelves with removable planks into multi-level displays (Figure 4-28), allowing quick conversion into market booths or cultural stands.

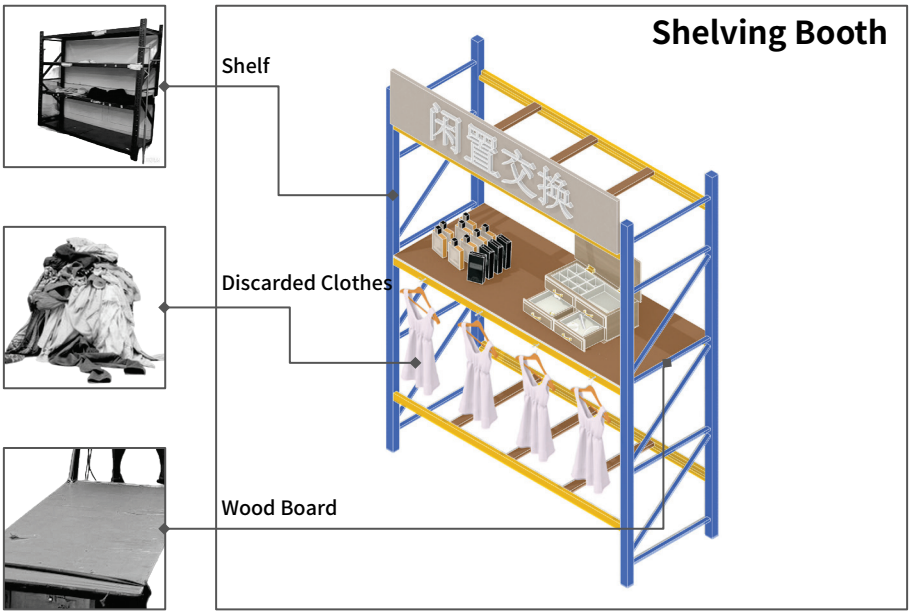


Figure 4-28 Material Composition of Shelving Booth (Source: Author)

4.3.2.3 Tactical Plan

The short-term experiment involves two phases. The first phase integrates resident-donated materials through a resource-sharing mechanism, transforming used handcarts and delivery boxes into planting units and movable seats equipped with smart drip irrigation and solar lighting (Figure 4-29). The process adopts a community workshop model, inviting

residents to co-design and assemble, fostering a participatory atmosphere (Figure 4-30).

Figure 4-29 Human Perspective of Yangren South Alley (Source: Author)

Figure 4-30 Co-Built Community Pocket Park (Source: Author)

In the second phase, once a collaborative environment is established, pop-up public events are held during holidays. The modular installation system enables flexible scene transformation—for example, into a weekend item-swap market, a Lunar New Year couplet

workshop, or a spring vertical farming area（Figure 4-31）.

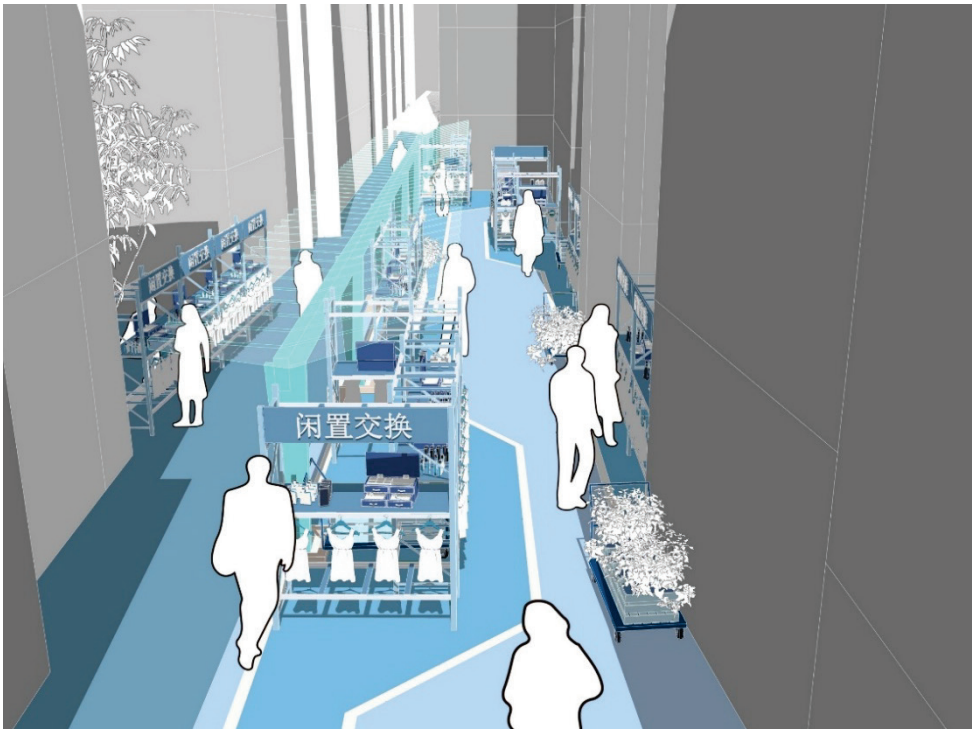


Figure 4-31 Community Idle Item Swap Event (Source: Author)

4.3.3 Tactical Node C: Historical Gateway Experiment

This study selects the site of the Taiping Bridge node located mid-section along Guangfunan Road for a historical gateway tactical experiment. The short-term objective is to uncover and showcase existing historical resources through architectural facade enhancements to generate widespread public awareness. The medium-term focus lies in exploring mixed-use strategies for interior spaces to diversify business formats, creating momentum to phase out incompatible warehouse uses and, from a long-term perspective, foster historical-cultural revitalization and industrial upgrading of the area.

4.3.3.1 Site Analysis

The Taiping Bridge area is located on the western edge of the Guangfunan Historical and Cultural District, adjacent to the Qilou Street and Zhuangyuanfang of the Renmin South Historic District. The area currently exhibits an intense commercial atmosphere. Historically, the Taiping Bridge functioned as a critical corridor between Guangzhou's inner and outer city, carrying substantial historical and cultural significance. The site contains two historic buildings, one of which is the former Taihe Teahouse, a large structure currently repurposed as a multi-stall wholesale center with considerable potential for renovation. In addition, the historic Xihou Canal passes along the eastern boundary, spanned by the Taiping Bridge. However, the district

now suffers from architectural incoherence due to the dominance of trendy American-style fashion wholesale, with "internet-celebrity aesthetics" applied to storefronts and interiors, leading to the obstruction of historic facades and the concealment of architectural heritage details (Figure 4-32).

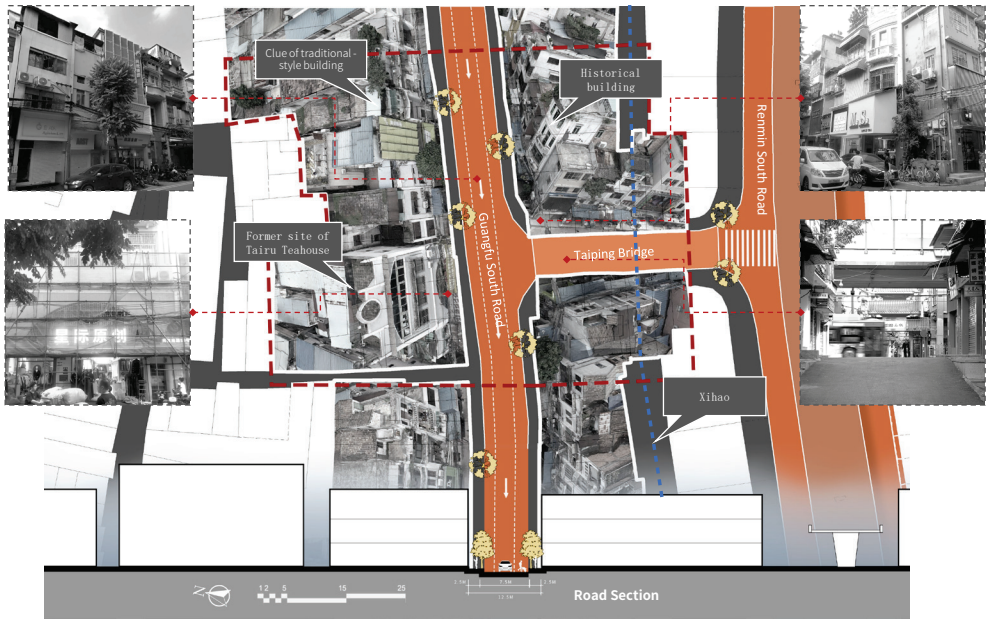


Figure 4-32 Current Condition of the Taiping Bridge Node (Source: Author)

4.3.3.2 Stakeholder Analysis

The stakeholders involved in this proposal include the general public, storefront businesses, heritage preservation authorities, and urban appearance departments (Figure 4-33).

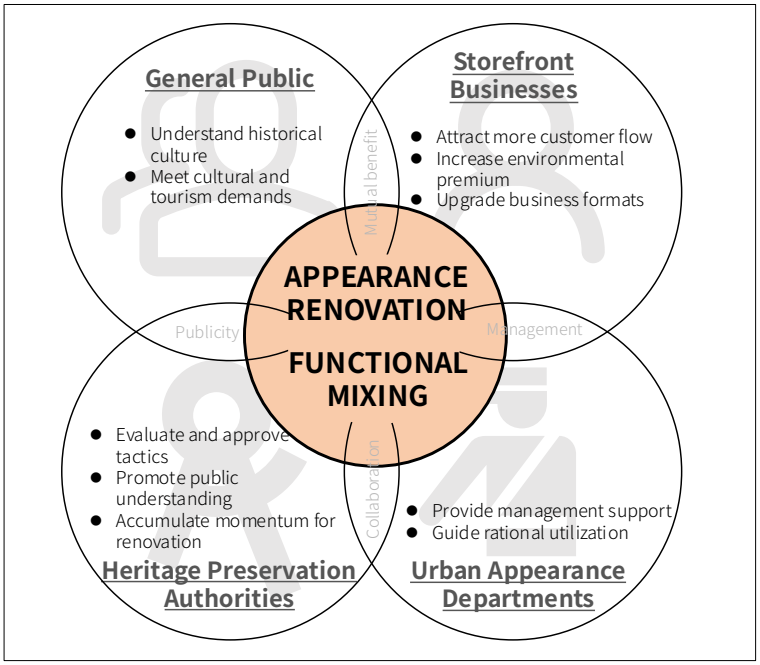


Figure 4-33 Stakeholder Analysis for Node C (Source: Author)

Historic resource discovery and public display rely on tools such as graffiti murals, temporary facade installations, and lighting projections to enrich the visual identity of the street and highlight its cultural layers. These interventions not only contribute to place-making but also serve as mediums for storytelling and heritage communication. However, their implementation is contingent upon official approval processes and interdepartmental coordination, particularly with cultural, planning, and municipal management authorities.

During architectural façade renovation and interior space adaptation, it is essential to actively involve business owners and property users through incentive-driven strategies that align with their practical interests. These incentives may include increasing foot traffic through curated events or improved pedestrian environments, enhancing media visibility via branding and promotional campaigns, or boosting rental value through upgraded spatial quality and commercial appeal. By demonstrating the tangible benefits of participation, such strategies help build trust, reduce resistance, and promote long-term cooperation among stakeholders, effectively bridging the gap between individual motivations and collective renewal objectives.

Field observations along Guangfunan Road reveal that some shop owners have already engaged in multi-functional space experimentation—for example, converting rooftops into photography sets or transforming wholesale venues into hybrid commercial spaces incorporating cafes with Xiguan-style decor. These existing practices offer inspirational precedents for the proposed tactical interventions (Figure 4-34).

Figure 4-34 Examples of Multi-Functional Space Use along Guangfunan Road (Source: Author)

4.3.3.3 Tactical Plan

To address the issue of obstructed historical facades (Figure 4-35), the proposal employs architectural light projection to achieve two goals: preserving commercial signage visibility while using dynamic visual effects to reveal and celebrate the building's historical value, thereby reconstructing its cultural narrative (Figure 4-36).

Figure 4-35 Obstruction of the Former Taihe Teahouse Facade (Source: Author)

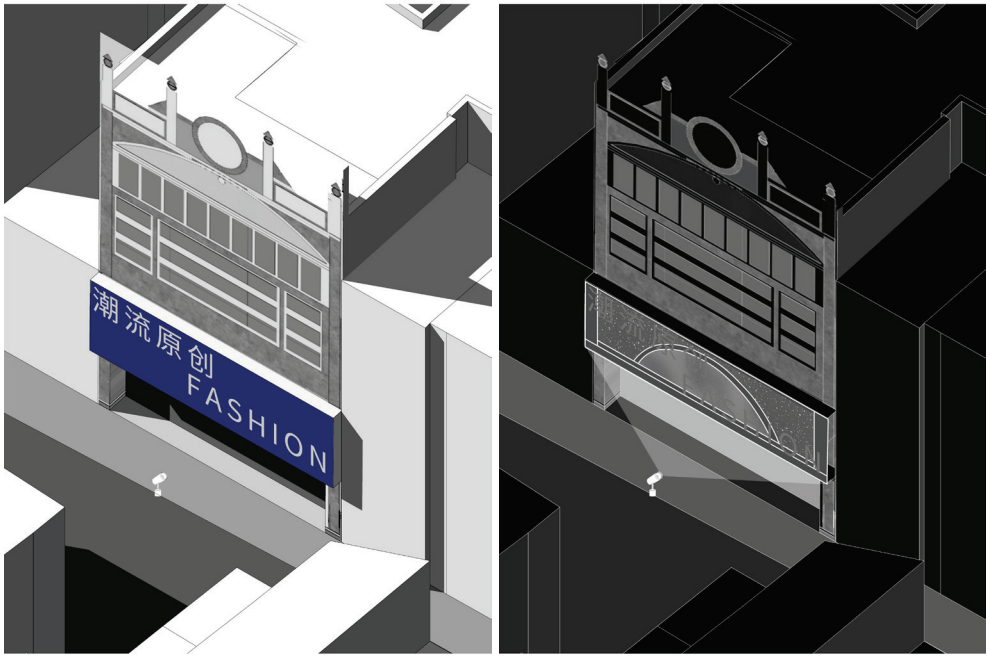
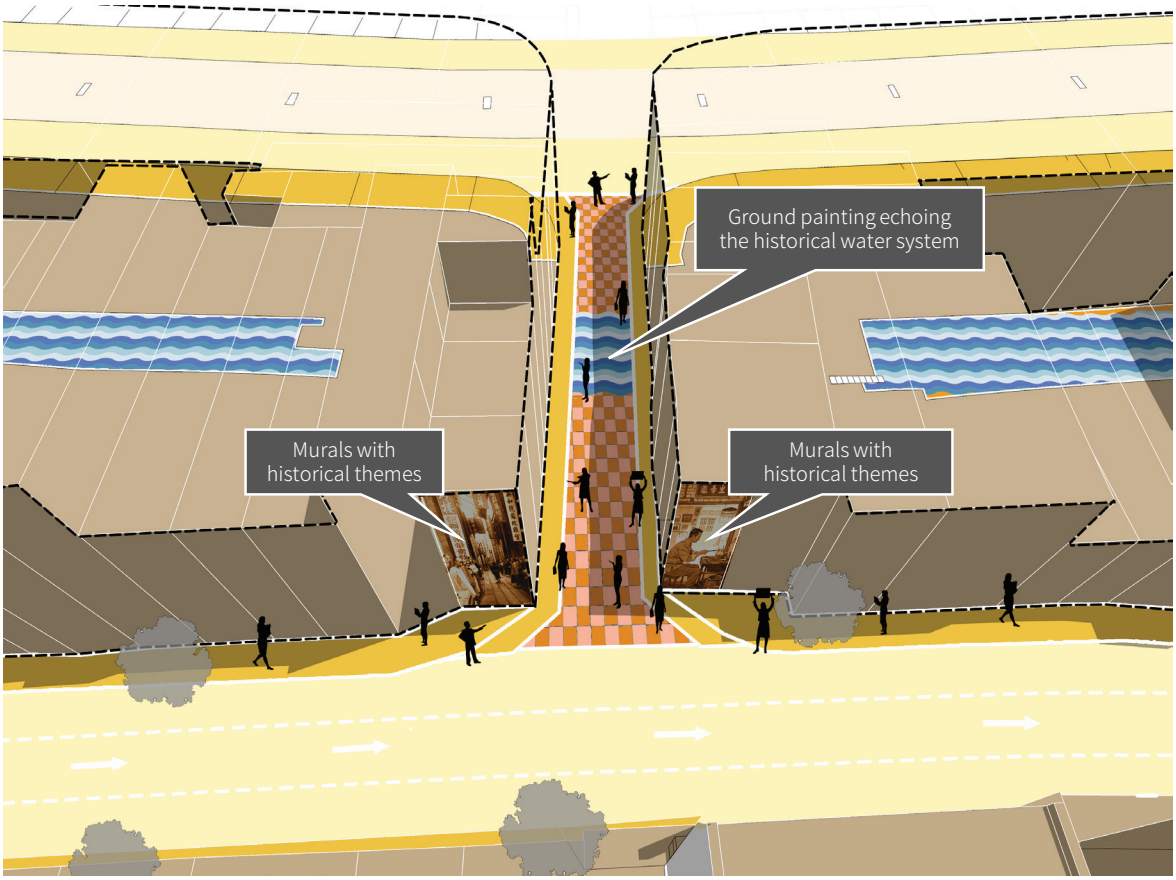


Figure 4-36 Nighttime Projection of Historical Facade: Former Taihe Teahouse (Source: Author)

For the concealed segment of the Xihou canal, ground-level murals will be applied to visually reference the original waterway, restoring its presence within the public's spatial memory (Figure 4-37).

Current Situation Of The Site



After Renovation

Figure 4-37 Before-and-After Comparison of Taiping Bridge Node Renovation (Source: Author)

The tactical strategy for this area is implemented in phases: in the short term, tactical experiments are conducted in public spaces to generate sustained attention and attract pedestrian

flow; in the mid-term, architectural and functional transformation is adopted to meet diversified consumer demands. Field research reveals many idle stall units within the existing garment wholesale complex (Figure 4-38). These units exhibit modular characteristics and present strong potential for tactical adaptation.

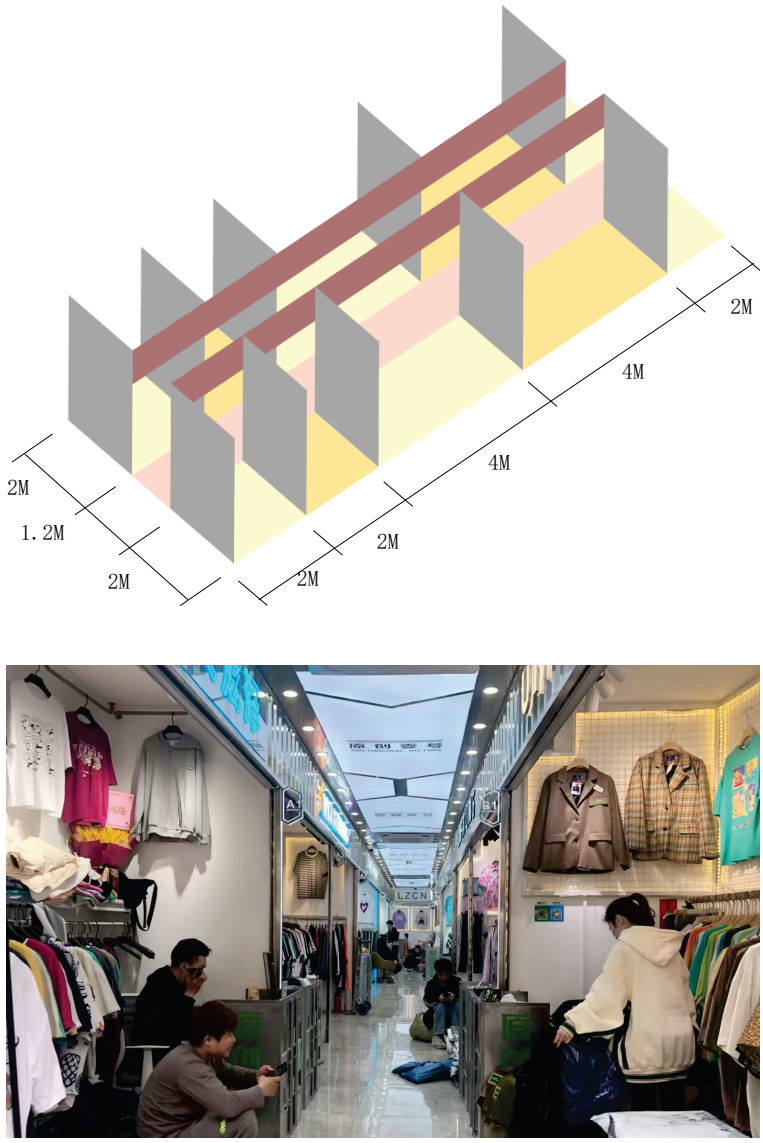


Figure 4-38 Typical Stall Layout in Guangfunan Wholesale Spaces (Source: Author)

By adopting mixed-use spatial programming, temporary exhibitions, photography workshops, and pop-up cafes are introduced to activate spatial vitality, attract customer retention, and promote commercial interaction—ultimately driving the area's business model toward a diversified and experience-oriented transformation (Figure 4-39).

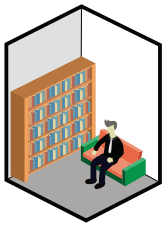
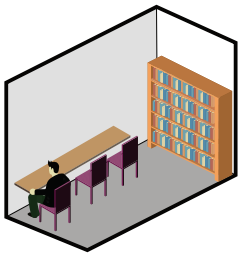
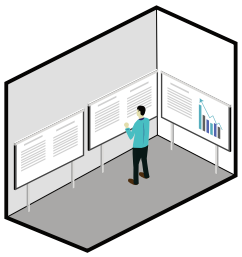
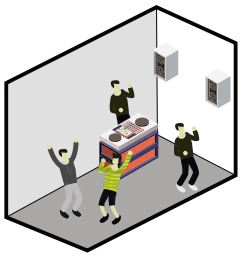
		2M*2M Stall Module Unit	2M*4M Stall Module Unit
Current Situation	Clothing Stall		
Multi-Functional Modular Stall Usage	Coffee Shop		
	Reading Corner		
	Exhibition Hall		
	Disco Room		

Figure 4-39 Multi-Functional Modular Stall Usage Diagram (Source: Author)

4.4 Projected Implementation Outcomes

4.4.1 Potential Risks and Bottlenecks

The project faces multi-dimensional potential risks and implementation bottlenecks during

its execution.

First, there is a prominent risk of interest coordination. Each project node involves multiple stakeholders, including logistics workers and shop owners, whose core demands are in sharp conflict. The rigid demand of logistics workers for vehicular access and the commercial interests of shop owners directly contradict the goals of pedestrianization and spatial reprogramming.

Therefore, establishing an efficient and sustainable communication and coordination mechanism to balance stakeholders' interests and mitigate potential resistance is key to project advancement.

Second, resource integration faces numerous challenges. In the process of public space renovation, the instability of material sources and the complexity of clearing existing clutter present dual obstacles.

Although innovative strategies that transform clutter into design resources have been adopted, considerable uncertainty remains in the scientific assessment of usable materials, formulation of rational transformation schemes, and mobilization of community participation. These factors directly affect the project's implementation schedule and final outcomes.

Third, policy and approval bottlenecks exist. The renovation of historic buildings and adjustment of street spatial functions must strictly comply with heritage protection policies and urban management regulations, posing risks of rejection during the approval process.

Meanwhile, how to effectively communicate project benefits to authorities and stakeholders, thereby gaining policy support and collaboration, remains a major barrier to implementation.

Finally, market and operational risks must not be overlooked. If the newly introduced business formats and functional transformations fail to accurately match market demand, pop-up events and diverse businesses may struggle to attract target audiences, ultimately resulting in underperformance of the spatial transformation and hindering goals for commercial upgrading and sustainable operation.

4.4.2 Prospects for Institutionalization

From a long-term development perspective, the outcomes of this project hold significant institutionalization potential and value.

In the field of urban regeneration, successful practices related to street function transformation and public space renewal can be systematically distilled into standardized operating procedures and regulatory frameworks, including road space allocation standards,

spatial redesign approval procedures, and infrastructure maintenance systems.

These outputs can serve as replicable and scalable models, effectively promoting the institutionalization and standardization of urban renewal efforts.

At the level of community governance, the project's exploration of a multi-stakeholder collaborative model offers potential to evolve into a comprehensive system, giving rise to resource-sharing schemes, resident participation incentive mechanisms, and public space management guidelines.

The establishment and refinement of such systems will promote a shift from traditional top-down management to collaborative co-governance, enhancing the institutionalization of community governance and offering valuable references for other community development efforts.

In the domain of historical and cultural preservation, the project's practical exploration of heritage resource activation and adaptive reuse of historic buildings contributes to improving policy frameworks for the protection and development of historic districts.

Through practical evaluation, a set of policy instruments can be developed, including approval and subsidy mechanisms for historic building renovation and culture-commerce integration guidelines, facilitating a positive interaction between cultural preservation and economic development, and advancing the institutionalization of heritage district conservation.

4.5 Summary

From the perspective of Tactical Urbanism, this chapter proposes a renewal strategy and specific tactical pathways for the Guangfunan District.

First, it establishes an overarching strategic framework, analyzing the characteristics and demands of multiple stakeholders (including capital investors, residents, media, and design institutions) and identifying the practical foundation for renewal. It responds to the district's three core contradictions—public space contestation, cultural cognition disjunction, and limitations in industrial upgrading—by proposing a corresponding set of strategies.

Second, based on strategy-tactic alignment, it develops a tactical toolbox centered on street space optimization, node activation, and architectural transformation, highlighting an implementation logic that prioritizes short-term, low-cost, and high-efficiency actions.

Then, it selects Jianglan Road, Yangren South Lane, and Taiping Bridge as typical experimental nodes to explore renewal approaches tailored to different spatial issues and goals—ranging from pedestrianization and pop-up economies to community co-creation and modular interventions and historic narrative and functional transformation.

In conclusion, this chapter presents a progressive, clearly defined, and operationalizable renewal roadmap, which not only offers practical solutions for the spatial, cultural, and industrial transformation of the Guangfunan District but also provides a valuable case reference for the localization of Tactical Urbanism in China’s historic districts.

Conclusion and Outlook

1. Conclusion

This study focuses on applying Tactical Urbanism in the renewal of historical and cultural districts, using the Guangfunan Historical and Cultural District in Guangzhou as a case study. A tactical renewal strategy is proposed that balances cultural conservation with cultural activation. By incorporating the core principles of Tactical Urbanism, it explores how to enhance the functionality and vitality of historic districts through gradual and light-touch interventions while respecting their cultural context.

First, a literature review and case analysis systematically outline the theoretical framework and practical, Tactical Urbanism methods. Its theoretical innovations are revealed compared to traditional planning approaches, including its mechanisms for generating long-term transformation through light interventions, facilitating practice-oriented diffusion, and stimulating multi-stakeholder collaboration. Drawing on exemplary cases from both domestic and international contexts, the study identifies Tactical Urbanism's key advantages—lightweight intervention, gradualism, and innovation—in the context of historic district renewal, extracting transferable insights to support empirical application.

Second, based on field investigations, the study analyzes the current conditions and challenges of the historic district, formulates renewal strategies under the Tactical Urbanism framework, and conducts tactical experiments to verify their feasibility. In the Guangfunan case, tactical renewal was tested across street spaces, public nodes, and individual buildings, exploring implementation paths built on multi-party collaboration.

This research demonstrates the advantages of Tactical Urbanism in historic district renewal, proposes replicable tactical methods, and simulates their real-world application in the Guangfunan case. It shows that Tactical Urbanism can effectively balance historic preservation with contemporary urban needs, supporting the sustainable development of heritage neighborhoods.

2. Innovations

(1) In terms of methodology, this study integrates Tactical Urbanism with historic district renewal theory, opening up a new path that addresses the limitations of traditional planning models. By building a tactical toolbox, it proposes cost-effective and adaptable strategies that offer practical solutions for historic district revitalization.

(2) In terms of application, the research provides a lightweight, incremental, and

innovative renewal framework that promotes the organic integration of historical culture and modern functions. This approach is suitable for the Guangfunan district and can be replicated in other historic neighborhoods as a scalable model for practice.

3. Reflections

Tactical Urbanism, as an emerging urban renewal paradigm, is still evolving, and its methodology requires refinement. Most studies focus on theoretical models and iconic case studies, with limited exploration of localized applications suited to the specific characteristics of Chinese cities.

While tactical solutions show theoretical innovation, practical challenges remain. Historic district renewal involves multiple stakeholders, such as government, developers, and residents, with systemic barriers in funding and benefit-sharing. Additionally, the strategy lacks depth in cultural identity development and a sustainable public participation framework. Current tactics are often short-term and spatially focused, without long-term management and maintenance mechanisms.

4. Outlook

Future research should continue expanding the theoretical exploration of Tactical Urbanism in urban renewal, particularly regarding its applicability to broader historic district contexts. It is also essential to deepen its integration with related fields such as urban operations, planning, architectural design, and cultural heritage conservation, forming a more holistic and systematic practice mode.

The value of this study extends beyond the Guangfunan context, offering several forms of generalizability that can inform other historic district preservation and renewal efforts:

(1) General applicability: The tactical design method proposed—characterized by light intervention and gradual transformation—can be applied to other historic districts with similar spatial characteristics.

(2) Promoting heritage preservation: In rapid urbanization, historic districts face risks of commercial homogenization and cultural alienation. This study presents a bottom-up renewal mechanism that preserves local identity and offers a reference for other cities aiming to sustain cultural diversity and a sense of place.

(3) Bridging theory and policy: The experience from this study can support policy formulation and implementation pathways, providing institutional backing for tactical experimentation and serving as a valuable complement to traditional planning processes.

(4) Facilitating multi-stakeholder participation: Tactical Urbanism's emphasis on

negotiated win-win outcomes enables resource coordination and benefit exchange mechanisms, offering a creative solution to challenges such as fragmented ownership, funding shortages, and low community engagement commonly seen in historic district renewal.

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Appendix

Guangfunan Historic District Resident Survey Questionnaire

Dear Resident: Thank you for participating in this survey! To better promote the conservation and revitalization of the Guangfunan Historic District, we sincerely invite you to share your views on the current state of the district and suggestions for its future development. All responses are for statistical analysis only. We appreciate your support!

Part 1: Basic Information (Please check the appropriate box ☐)

1. Gender

☐ Male ☐ Female

2. Age

☐ 0-14 ☐ 15-59 ☐ 60-65 ☐ Over 65

3. Years of Residence

☐ 1–5 years ☐ 6–10 years ☐ 11–20 years ☐ Over 20 years

4. Occupation (Single choice)

☐ Local resident ☐ Self-employed ☐ Street vendor ☐ Transport worker

☐ Professional/technical staff

☐ Civil servant / public institution staff ☐ Unemployed ☐ Other: ____

5. Education Level (Single choice)

☐ No formal education ☐ Primary school ☐ Middle school ☐ High school

☐ Vocational school ☐ Associate degree ☐ Bachelor's degree or above

6. Monthly Income (Single choice)

☐ Below 3,000 CNY ☐ 3,000–5,000 CNY ☐ 5,000–8,000 CNY ☐ Over 8,000 CNY

Part 2: Understanding of Historical Heritage (Multiple-choice where indicated)

7. How familiar are you with the history of Guangfunan Historic District? (Single choice)

☐ Very familiar (e.g., Huaiyuan Post, the thirteen-hongs)

☐ Somewhat familiar (e.g., Qilou buildings, granite alleyways)

☐ Not very familiar ☐ Not familiar at all

8. Which historical elements do you think are most worthy of preservation? (Multiple choice)

☐ Traditional buildings (e.g., Xiguan Mansion, the Zhutong house)

☐ Historic alleys (e.g., Yangxiang Road, Jianglan Road)

☐ Time-honored shops (e.g., Tiannan Teahouse, Wanyuantang)

☐ Intangible cultural heritage (e.g., snake soup making, Lingnan customs)

☐ Other: ____

9. How satisfied are you with the current protection measures for historic buildings? (Single choice)

☐ Very satisfied ☐ Satisfied ☐ Neutral ☐ Dissatisfied ☐ Very dissatisfied

☐ Not concerned

Part 3: Daily Public Space Needs

10. Which public spaces do you use most often? (Multiple choice)

☐ Street corner open space ☐ Community square ☐ Colonnade walkways

☐ Park / Green space ☐ Other: _____

11. What do you think is most needed to improve the current public space? (Multiple choice)

☐ Add seating / trash bins and other facilities ☐ Rectify illegal constructions and street-side businesses ☐ Improve greenery and landscape quality

☐ Add cultural displays (e.g., historical murals, signage) ☐ Other: _____

12. What types of new public spaces would you like to see added? (Multiple choice)

☐ Pocket park ☐ Community library / activity room ☐ Children's play areas

☐ Fitness trails ☐ Historical and cultural exhibition halls ☐ Other: _____

Part 4: Noise / traffic issues are severe, layout needs adjustment

13. What is your opinion on the current wholesale, warehousing, and logistics industries in the district? (Multiple choice)

☐ Support the local economy, should be retained and optimized

☐ Noise / traffic issues are severe, layout needs adjustment

☐ Not in harmony with the historical and cultural atmosphere, should gradually transform

☐ Does not affect daily life, indifferent

14. Do you support transforming some of the warehouse and wholesale markets into the following business types? (Multiple choice)

☐ Cultural and creative spaces (e.g., design studios, exhibitions)

☐ Specialty retail (e.g., time-honored brands, casual dining)

☐ E-commerce live-streaming bases ☐ High-end commerce ☐ Community service facilities ☐ Other: _____

15. What do you think is the impact of industrial transformation on residents' lives? (Single choice)

☐ Increases employment opportunities and improves life ☐ May bring new noise or crowding issues ☐ Doesn't concern me, I don't care ☐ Other: _____

16. What aspect of the transformation do you care about the most? (Multiple choice)

☐ Infrastructure (e.g., drainage, fire safety, electricity) ☐ Traffic optimization (e.g., shared streets, parking spaces)

☐ Environmental quality (e.g., waste sorting, noise control) ☐ Adaptive reuse of historic buildings (e.g., turning into cafes, cultural spaces) ☐ Other: _____

17. What is your attitude towards the adaptive reuse of historic buildings? (Single choice)

☐ Support (e.g., introducing new businesses to enhance vitality) ☐ Cautious (need to maintain the original appearance) ☐ Oppose (worried about damaging history)

☐ Indifferent

18. Are you willing to participate in public consultations or supervision of the district's transformation? (Single choice)

☐ Very willing ☐ Somewhat willing ☐ Neutral ☐ Unwillin

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