

# Improved uses of vacant land from sharing activity

Hangdong Fan\*, Kuanhe Ma†, Hanmo Wang‡§, Yanxi Wu¶

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## Abstract

To address the utilization of vacant land and abandoned buildings, this study utilizes case study methodology to highlight the potential of community groups in leveraging the sharing economy model. It highlights the model's valuable significance in revitalizing vacant resources and transforming them into community assets. Building on this finding, the study proposes a scalable model that capitalizes on community participation and resource sharing, ultimately contributing to developing healthy and resilient cities.

## 1 Introduction

In urban development, vacant land and abandoned buildings have become a problem that cannot be ignored. They constitute visual defects and bring many negative effects, such as increased security risks and exposing residents to potential dangers. The limited leisure and social space affects residents' quality of life; It puts pressure on their physical and mental health and causes a series of social problems. From an economic perspective, this underutilized space discourages investment, leading to a decline in property values and, in turn, a decline in urban economic vitality[1]. Because of the difficulties faced by traditional solutions to these problems, such as lack of funds, cumbersome procedures, and insufficient community participation, we urgently need to explore innovative ways, which is the original intention of this study.

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\*Shenzhen Sendelta International Academy, (518108), China, fhd2077@qq.com

†Beijing Huijia Private School, (102299), China, 2238863938@qq.com

‡Beanstalk International Bilingual School, (100093), China, mike060803@163.com

§Corresponding Author

¶Guangzhou Foreign Language School, (511455), China, 148014582@qq.com

This study takes the sharing economy model as the starting point to explore its feasibility and potential in improving the utilization efficiency of vacant land and abandoned buildings[2]. Through an extensive collection and in-depth analysis of community project cases, as well as a comprehensive interpretation of relevant policy frameworks, we reveal the processes and mechanisms by which community groups use the tools of the sharing economy to transform vacant resources into community assets (such as gardens, co-working spaces, and affordable housing), thereby attracting investment and promoting sustainable urban development.

Compared with the existing literature, the contribution of this study is significantly unique. Although the existing studies involve vacant land use, the analysis of the comprehensive role of the sharing economy model in it is not deep and systematic. Our research not only provides an in-depth analysis of how the sharing economy model accurately integrates idle resources but also elaborates on the key role of community participation and proposes community-led sustainable urban renewal strategies, which, to some extent, fill the research gap in this field. At the same time, based on the research results, we provide more targeted and actionable policy recommendations to provide clearer action guidelines for stakeholders[3].

The structure of this paper is as follows. In addition to the unexpected part of the introduction, the second part of this study systematically combs the literature in related fields, comprehensively summarizes the achievements and shortcomings of previous studies, and builds a solid theoretical foundation for subsequent studies[4]. The third part introduces in detail the research methods-analysis methods, including case analysis and policy interpretation, used in this study to ensure the scientific and reliability of the study. The fourth part is an in-depth analysis of various cases, covering policy cases from different regions, including community vacant land development policy, Baltimore abandoned housing policy, urban agricultural zoning policy, and practice cases from multiple organizations, which covers the Center for Community Progress, Plunkett Foundation, Nike, Amazon, Corporate Community Investment. To demonstrate the practical application effect of the sharing economy model from multiple dimensions, the fifth part discusses the research results in depth, summarizes the findings, frankly analyzes the limitations of the research, such as the limited logic depth, the lack of high school students' research experience, and puts forward the direction of improvement; The sixth part puts forward feasible policy recommendations based on the research conclusions, including land transformation, economic development, envi-

ronmental progress and crime prevention, aiming to provide a strong reference for government decision-making and investor behavior, and promote the city to develop in a healthier and sustainable direction.

## 2 Literature Review

At present, many governments, enterprises, individuals, and groups have devoted themselves to the reuse practice of abandoned places. For example, Lee and Sung's (2017) study on transforming vacant and abandoned houses into community gardens in a shrinking city in South Korea is representative. However, there is evidence that these projects are not fully extracting the maximum value from this resource.

To improve the utilization rate of abandoned buildings, innovative methods are indispensable. For example, in a series of case studies submitted to the Scottish Land Commission by Biggar Economics Ltd. (2020) on the reuse of vacant and derelict land, Wishaw MTB Mountain Bike Club and Socialtrack (2018) found that land use allocation can be optimized through innovative initiatives[5]. The Wishaw Hill Wood Pump Track, for example, not only provides a cycling practice venue for young people but also changes the look of the community and people's outlook on life, with the long-term goal of providing a channel for young people to actively participate. Internationally recognized as one of the best mountain biking trails in the UK, the derelict site effectively prevents local anti-social activities and has been transformed into an effective tool for local people to work with organizations to create a healthy living environment for residents while increasing income and driving local economic development.

In addition, Gravagnuolo, ORCID, and Varotto (2021) identified a sustainable and multifunctional approach to land management - terracing landscapes. These sustainable land use systems continue to improve, demonstrating rich cultural diversity and agricultural biodiversity[6].

In a similar context, Fabi, Vettori, and Faroldi (2021) identify abandoned buildings in Hot Springs as potential opportunity spaces that can be drivers of sustainable transformation based on 'fully circular' processes[7].

Therefore, we believe that the government should innovate in the construction of abandoned

open space, adopt sustainable development methods, and realize multi-functional use of land to maximize its economic and social value.

Targeted investments in underinvested communities can help reduce the negative impact of vacant and abandoned buildings while increasing social equity. Some studies and case studies highlight this potential by revealing a variety of successful practices.

In “Investing in Physical Space to Reduce Violence” (2021), Vey of the Brookings Institution explores the impact of developing physical infrastructure on curbing bad behavior[7]. Investing in parks and other public areas is strongly linked to lower crime rates and greater community engagement, which not only improves the built environment, but also enhances residents’ sense of pride and belonging, increases social equity, and creates safer areas (Urban Institute). Further, Theodos and Hangen’s (2018) analysis shows that these investments can promote further development in specific regions[8]. In Cleveland, for example, the use of zoning tools and public-private partnerships has successfully attracted private-sector investment in long-neglected neighborhoods, driving mixed-use development, creating jobs, and improving the economic and social well-being of residents (Urban Institute).

In this context, Gray (2018) details the use of social impact bonds (SIBs) in dealing with blighted properties. SIBs are a financial instrument that uses private money to finance public projects, such as the renovation of abandoned buildings[9]. Its effectiveness is measured by specific social outcomes, such as crime rates and property values, to ensure that investments are closely linked to social equity and improved social health (Urban Institute). This approach not only promotes the physical rebuilding of the community but also strengthens the social cohesion of the community.

Theodos and Hangen (2019) further explore how developers can use public-private partnerships to revitalize unused urban spaces[10]. By leveraging private capital to leverage public funding, these partnerships work to create sustainable and functional Urban structures to improve quality of life and promote social equity for target populations, thereby reducing disparities between different groups (Urban Institute). This collaborative model demonstrates how resources can be used effectively to address challenges in urban development through innovative financing mechanisms and partnerships.

Strategic upgrading of under-invested areas is an effective measure to deal with the negative impact of vacant and abandoned buildings. When these investments are supported by opportunity zones, social impact bonds, and public-private partnerships, and implemented effectively, they will help create jobs, reduce crime, and promote social equity. Such investments can not only improve the physical environment of cities but also enhance community cohesion and social inclusion at a deeper level, creating a more prosperous and equitable social environment for all residents[11]. Transforming run-down properties into functional commercial and emergency social spaces not only provides a physical upgrade to the environment but also promotes community cohesion and a healthier social environment.

By adopting innovative and sustainable approaches to a stronger and more inclusive environment, governments and community groups can maximize the social and economic value of their investments and ensure that the benefits are broadly shared aligned to achieve social equity and a better quality of life.

A sound policy framework is essential for the sustainable redevelopment of vacant land. Boar, Bastida, and Marimon (2020) assert that supported by strong policy measures, the sharing economy can significantly contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals[12]. Their systematic review highlights the need for regulatory frameworks to promote the integration of sharing economy principles into urban planning, and that policies that encourage the reuse of vacant land can yield significant environmental, social, and economic dividends by promoting sustainable land use practices.

Community engagement is central to achieving such local sustainable change. “How Vacant and Abandoned Buildings Affect the Community” by the Center for Community Progress (2022) is an example of how community activism promotes the renewal of vacant and abandoned buildings into valuable community assets[13]. Residents participate in the planning and implementation of redevelopment projects to ensure that the project meets the actual needs and encourages residents to own and care for the renovated area, which not only brings the community together but also ensures project sustainability.

Many case studies show that policy frameworks and community integration work well. Rana’s article “Infrastructure Sharing in Cities” (2022) in the Yale Law Journal states that governments

work with communities to facilitate the successful conversion of vacant land[14]. Social initiatives such as community gardens and social enterprise sites on vacant land increase access to local food and create employment opportunities, highlighting the need for community support policies to continue to encourage public participation in redevelopment projects.

### **3 Methodology**

The relevant companies and solutions to be analyzed in this study are derived from secondary data. Much of the policy-related information comes from official interviews, video replays of conferences, and official websites of relevant regions. Research tools, concepts, and theories come from academic papers and case studies, such as the website “Statista”, which can provide cases of what we need. To answer the research question, it is necessary to fully understand the implications of the project. While explaining the importance of community improvement and the proper development and use of abandoned buildings and vacant land, we also need to understand other factors that may contribute to this success.

All of these resources are designed to give us a deeper understanding of the project, which will be discussed in the subsequent analysis section[15]. By analyzing the favorable factors brought about by some successful cases and linking them with the sharing economy, the indispensable role of the sharing economy in promoting economic development can be highlighted.

### **4 Analysis**

#### **4.1 Evaluation of Policies on Developing Vacant Land for Community Use**

The core objective of the current vacant land development policy is to transform abandoned and underutilized spaces for the benefit of the community, with a focus on improving the environment of communities affected by vacant properties. At present, the existence of vacant space causes many problems, such as low quality of life and environmental degradation[16]. With this in mind, our goal is to turn vacant space into an asset that has both practical and social value, addressing the root causes of these problems. The redevelopment of vacant space is important because it can in-

ject vitality into the local community, resulting in improved living conditions and a steady increase in property values, which in turn can contribute to a thriving local economy. Empty, abandoned properties are often a breeding ground for crime and wreak havoc on the environment, but transforming them into green spaces such as parks and urban gardens can be a powerful contribution to environmental sustainability and a real boost to residents' happiness. At the same time, this series of renovation measures will act as a magnet for investment to create a lot of jobs, increase tax revenue, contribute to local economic growth, and ultimately achieve the overall economy to take off.

On the other hand, this policy on the renovation of unused spaces has also had a profound impact on the construction of social cohesion within the community. When local residents actively participate in the transformation process of the abandoned land into a practical space, wonderful changes quietly occur, their inner sense of belonging and pride arise, interpersonal relationships become more harmonious, and the enthusiasm for community participation increases. It is particularly worth mentioning that once the vacant land is successfully revitalized, the property value will be significantly increased, which will undoubtedly attract more people to choose to move here and further stimulate all kinds of economic activities to flourish[17]. In addition, when green spaces such as parks and urban farms are built, people have places to relax and have easy access to fresh produce, which contributes to overall health and quality of life.

Although the data do not give exhaustive results, the potential positive effects are clear. Property prices are expected to rise, investment will increase, and new business creation will bring long-term economic benefits. These developments will create jobs and improve the living standards of local residents. As communities become more active in transforming their communities, social cohesion and community-led initiatives are likely to increase, further contributing to sustainable development. By using vacant space for environmental purposes such as urban agriculture and greening, the policy also helps address environmental issues such as pollution and biodiversity loss. This shift underpins a thriving sharing economy that mobilizes resources and people through initiatives such as crowdfunding and co-ownership to keep revitalization projects moving forward.

## **4.2 Assessment of Policy on Abandoned Housing in Baltimore**

In Baltimore, faced with the negative impact of abandoned homes on the community, local policies focused on the restoration and reuse of these properties. These abandoned homes not only accelerate urban decay, attract criminal activity, and reduce the value of surrounding properties, but also seriously threaten the stability of communities[18]. Currently, some communities face many problems, such as abandoned houses, sluggish economic development, and housing shortages, and the policy is designed to solve these difficulties. At its core, it aims to revitalize the community by renovating abandoned properties, giving old homes a new look, and improving the living standards of residents. The rezoning of vacant homes is also a key part of the process so that it can attract more foreign investment, like a magnet attracts iron shafting, bringing in new residents, injecting fresh blood into the community, stabilizing the community's already loose structure, and ultimately lighting up the local economy like an engine.

The renovation of abandoned houses is of great significance. From the perspective of public security, it can effectively reduce the breeding soil of crime. From the perspective of housing supply, it can increase the number of houses and ease the housing shortage[19]. It also serves as a signal light, encouraging people to continue to invest money in poor areas, and inject a steady stream of power for regional development. In addition, the policy cleverly addresses the housing shortage by increasing the number of properties available on the market, attracting new residents to settle in and new businesses to take root. Although the details of the results have not yet been made public, there is high hope that these measures will most likely lead to a steady decline in crime, an increase in housing standards, a comprehensive revitalization of the community, and a rock of community cohesion. From an economic perspective, it is expected to drive the value of real estate up and open up a broad world for the development of local enterprises. Observing from a social perspective can strengthen the bonds between community members and greatly improve the quality of life of residents. The concept and practice of the sharing economy are like a strong adhesive, providing solid support for the successful landing of this policy. The sharing economy builds a convenient platform that makes community participation and resource sharing easy[20]. For example, shared ownership models and cooperative housing projects are like magic brushes that can outline abandoned buildings into affordable housing and solve residents' housing con-

cerns. Community-supported agriculture and shared facilities, like a clarion call, can increase the enthusiasm and enthusiasm of local residents to participate in the revitalization of the community.

### **4.3 Policy on Zoning for Urban Agriculture**

In the process of urban development, the rational utilization of land resources is increasingly critical. The urban agriculture policy came into being, aiming to cleverly transform vacant urban land into arable land capable of producing agricultural products. This zoning initiative has far-reaching implications. On the one hand, it can greatly increase local food production, just like expanding the city's food storage pool, effectively alleviating food shortages. On the other hand, these newly cultivated lands are transformed into green spaces and become a link for community residents to interact and communicate, greatly promoting community participation. By promoting urban agriculture, the policy targets food access, environmental sustainability, and community health[21]. Urban agriculture is a treasure trove of benefits, with a steady stream of fresh, locally grown food that puts healthy energy on the table and has a positive and far-reaching impact on public health by optimizing diets. Moreover, urban agriculture acts as a “green guardian” of cities, helping to mitigate the urban heat island effect, contributing to improved air quality, providing habitat for local wildlife, and contributing to a more sustainable urban environment.

The impact of this policy is broad and deep. From the perspective of residents' lives, it makes it more convenient for people to obtain healthy food and enjoy fresh ingredients easily. From the employment and economic level, it has spawned a large number of jobs, whether it is the agricultural planting link, or the subsequent processing and distribution process, which requires human input. At the same time, it attracts new commercial investment and focuses on the urban agriculture field, injecting new impetus into economic development. More importantly, urban agriculture acts as an emotional link that brings people together, engaging them in the food production process and practicing sustainable lifestyles, thereby significantly enhancing community cohesion and contributing to the harmonious development of the city[22]. In addition, converting wasteland to green space can help reduce pollution and improve the overall environmental health of urban areas.

The sharing economy plays a key role in supporting urban agriculture by providing a platform for resource-sharing and community collaboration. Initiatives like Community Supported Agricul-

ture (CSA) can help urban farmers access markets, and sharing facilities and equipment can reduce farm costs. Digital platforms can also facilitate knowledge sharing among urban farmers, driving the adoption of best practices and innovative approaches.

#### **4.4 Real Example: Community Progress**

The Center for Community Progress focuses on solving the problem of vacant and abandoned properties in the community, aiming to improve the quality of life in the community. It has taken a series of positive measures, firstly, through elaborating strategic planning, clear work direction and steps, and actively carrying out community participation activities to gather the strength of community residents[23]. We will vigorously advocate policies and create a favorable policy environment for solving problems. Through these efforts, the initiative aims to bring these unused and abandoned properties back to life, transforming them into community spaces that can drive economic growth and enhance social cohesion.

Throughout the process, it is crucial to actively engage residents in the revitalization process. This practice empowers the community and makes residents feel like an important part of the community, greatly enhancing their sense of belonging. At the same time, community residents are more closely connected, and social capital can be continuously accumulated and improved.

Since the implementation of the initiative, remarkable results have been achieved, and many positive effects have come. On the one hand, property values have risen significantly, which opens the door for owners to increase their wealth and brings real economic dividends. At the same time, the crime rate has dropped significantly, the community seems to be surrounded by a security shield, the environment is becoming safer and more stable, and residents can live in peace of mind[24]. Not only that, the living conditions of residents have also been greatly improved, all kinds of living facilities have been continuously improved, daily life has become more comfortable and convenient, and the quality of life has been linearly improved. The reuse of vacant properties is even more significant, sowing seeds of hope in barren areas, creating a large number of new economic opportunities, providing fertile ground for local businesses to thrive, creating a large number of jobs, and increasing residents' incomes.

The sharing economy plays a central role in the successful implementation of this initiative.

With the help of effective mechanisms such as crowdfunding and cooperative ownership, the sharing economy is like a magical resource allocation master, successfully activating and gathering various resources, laying a solid foundation for community investment, and providing a strong guarantee. It is thanks to the concerted efforts of community residents that those once-forgotten corners can be successfully revitalized, and vibrant community spaces emerge as The Times demands. Every resident can bask in the glory of community development, enjoy the benefits brought by development, and enjoy a better life.

#### **4.5 Case Study: The Plunkett Foundation**

In community development, the Plunkett Foundation's "More than a Pub" project shines brightly. It vividly demonstrates the wonderful power of sharing economy tools, which can be used to bring vacant properties back to life and turn them around for the benefit of the community[25]. In the process of advancing the project, the community gathered their strength and showed strong solidarity, jointly funding the acquisition and successful renovation of as many as 63 bars. These once deserted, slightly depressed bars have transformed into vibrant social spaces, like a shining pearl in the community, greatly enriching the daily social life of residents and injecting a steady stream of vitality into community life. The project highlights the critical importance of community ownership and community mobilization in activating vacant spaces as powerful engines that not only fuel local economic development but also act as strong bonds that significantly strengthen social connections within communities.

The success of this project is undoubtedly a powerful testimony to the power of community-led initiatives, which act like a powerful magnet to attract investment efficiently while at the same time bringing many positive social impacts. By carefully transforming vacant properties into vibrant community hubs, the project highlights the potential of the sharing economy to boost local development[25]. A series of remarkable results followed: the crime rate was reduced as the tide receded, the community environment became safer and more stable, and the residents felt like they were in a haven; Employment opportunities mushroomed, opening up a wider range of ways for people to make a living and make their lives more secure; The cohesion of the community has been greatly improved, and the neighbors have become more harmonious and harmonious, and the

laughter and laughter have echoed in every corner of the community. Taken together, these positive influences form a powerful force to help build a stronger and more resilient local economy, lay a solid foundation for sustainable development of the community, and push the community towards a better future.

#### **4.6 Nike's \$40 Million Gift to the Black Community**

Nike's \$40 million commitment to the black community is another example of how sharing economy principles are being applied to advance community development[26]. Focusing on key areas such as education, employment, and social justice, the investment aims to address systemic inequalities and provide strong support for local initiatives. Through partnerships with community organizations, Nike actively helps raise resources for programs that promote social change and empower local communities.

This case highlights the important role that large companies can play in supporting the sharing economy. They can do this by investing in their communities and addressing pressing social issues. Specifically, Nike makes targeted investments in education, housing construction, and job creation that help build stronger, more resilient communities. Strong and resilient communities can attract more investment, which in turn comprehensively improves the overall quality of life of residents, forming a virtuous circle and injecting a steady stream of momentum into the sustainable development of communities.

#### **4.7 Amazon's Community Investment in Arlington, Virginia**

Amazon's community investment in Arlington, Virginia, is another example of a company using its resources to help local communities grow. Through its Housing Equity Fund, Amazon supports residents in a variety of ways, including promoting affordable housing projects, job training, and education. This investment is of great significance. On the one hand, it can effectively alleviate the local affordable housing crisis and effectively improve the living conditions of residents. On the other hand, it can also enhance the vitality and resilience of the local economy by creating more job opportunities and improving the quality of residents. By channeling resources

to community development, Amazon actively engages in and promotes a collaborative economic model that benefits both the company and the community.

For community groups, Amazon's approach is highly instructive. They can follow Amazon's example and actively engage in building their communities, courting investors who want to create social impact. In the actual operation process, community groups should focus on areas of social demand such as affordable housing construction and job creation, and make full use of the support of enterprises to drive local development, improve the quality of life of residents in an all-round way, so that the community can glow with new vitality and vitality.

## **4.8 Enterprise Community Investment**

Enterprise Community Investment focuses on solving the problem of vacant properties. On the one hand, it uses its own funds and development expertise to provide support for revitalizing vacant and dilapidated space. On the other hand, we actively cooperate with local governments, non-profit organizations, and private institutions to develop affordable housing and supporting facilities for the advantage of all parties[27].

This model has produced remarkable results. It has greatly improved people's quality of life, provided housing for those in need, created jobs, boosted income, and activated local economies. It also demonstrates the advantages of joint investment and sharing economy, promotes social inclusion, practices environmental protection concepts, promotes economic growth, empowers sustainable community development, and becomes a new driving force for urban progress.

## **5 Discussion**

Through our analysis of policies, company cases, and relevant data, it is clear that investing in abandoned buildings and vacant land development to build sharing economy relationships, such as turning these areas into public assets, can bring significant benefits to communities and investors, including environmental protection, reduced crime, and increased employment opportunities, which is consistent with our initial expectations. This proves the positive significance of investment in vacant areas. However, there are still many problems to be solved.

On the one hand, few investors pay attention to investment in abandoned areas, which prevents communities and investors from fully obtaining the benefits they deserve. Despite the success stories in the past, there are still many challenges in the development policy of vacant land in the community, such as the difficulty in selecting suitable land and the cumbersome bureaucratic procedures that hinder the progress of projects. Even if some reconstruction measures can reduce the crime rate in the short term, it is difficult to maintain these reconstruction areas in the long term due to limited resources, and without the coordination of other social programs and community policing measures, the effect of crime reduction will not be sustainable. Moreover, such developments often fail to produce the desired economic benefits in poor urban areas.

To address these issues, it is essential to adopt a comprehensive approach that combines social programs with community policing. This will not only ensure that the benefits of investment reach all communities but especially those living in areas with high economic and social disparities. However, we are also aware of the limitations of this study, for example, the logic is too simple, the topic connotation cannot be deeply explored to achieve professional depth, and because we are senior high school students, we lack the knowledge and experience of professional journalists, so the effectiveness of the research results is lower than that of professional journals. However, our determination to pursue progress is unwavering, and we will continue to strive to improve research in the future.

## **6 Suggestions**

While the investors are actively searching for a successful investment path, there are many findings based on our research that can benefit governments and investors.

For policy development, we have the following recommendations: Renovating vacant and abandoned properties can significantly increase employment by increasing property values. Rebuilding vacant land can boost local economic growth by attracting investment, raising tax revenues, and fostering enterprise. In addition, the development of policies to transform vacant areas into parks or gardens will greatly improve the environment, thereby benefiting people's health and providing fresh produce.

Finally, investors who succeed in turning vacant areas into public assets can play an important role in reducing crime rates in specific areas. This is because the region provides a stable social environment for people, thereby reducing crime rates and protecting people's lives.

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