



香港規劃師學會  
THE HONG KONG INSTITUTE OF PLANNERS

Unit No.201, 2/F, Prosperity Millennia Plaza  
663 King's Road, North Point, Hong Kong  
E-mail: info@hkip.org.hk  
Web Site: www.hkip.org.hk  
Tel: 2915 6212 Fax: 2915 7616

**The Hong Kong Institute of Planners (HKIP)**  
**Suggestions for Policy Address 2022**

**Planning and Land Supply Policies**

- (a) With a new term of government since July 2022, HKIP is of the view that the planning and land supply policies should be kept intact, unless new policies are formulated with justifications and going through proper processes and supported by social consensus. In this connection, we also maintain our previous comments outlined in our relevant position papers at this juncture. In particular, **we do not consider it fruitful to reactivate the notion of converting designated country parks areas for housing (which only occupy about 40% of land in Hong Kong)**, given that there should be adequate land available for consideration for urban development, as we have only developed about 25% of land and there is still 35% of our land are neither country park nor developed. **Attention should instead focus on timely implementation.**

**Implementation Programme of Land Supply and Housing in Long Term Housing Strategy**

- (b) We note that the implementation programme of land supply and housing as documented in the Long Term Housing Strategy is still not firmed up and there are many possibilities of slippages. We urge the Government to pay extra efforts in ensuring the smooth and timely delivery of the land supply and housing. **Government procedurals and practices such as land resumption to public housing development procedures, should be streamlined to achieve greater efficiency.**

### **Proposed Land Supply Commission and Creation of Land Reserve**

- (c) Our suggestions of setting up a **Land Supply Commission with public participation** and the creation of a **land reserve** should be given due consideration by the Government, for securing social support.

### **Strategic Development Plan and Programme**

- (d) There are two major strategic development projects under active planning by the Government, namely the Northern Metropolis and the Lantau Tomorrow. So far, no detailed development programme for the two strategic projects has been drawn up by the Government. Given the enormous resources involved, we urge the Government to draw up a well-defined programme, taking into account the Greater Bay Area development, socio-economic demographic development, financial and manpower resources, environment and infrastructure considerations, such that the Hong Kong society and the Government can work together to take the strategic plans forward. A co-ordinated strategic development plan and programme is critically important for Hong Kong's sustainable development in social, economic and environmental terms. Hong Kong needs to prepare a territorial-wide town planning and strategic development plan similar to **mayors' or city plans in other international cities** to encompass planning vision, planning frameworks and key strategic developments to guide development and ensure the competitiveness of Hong Kong for international talents and businesses.

### **Macro Trends and Need for Long-term Strategic Planning**

- (e) We are facing macro demographic, social, economic, environment and regional trends and changes. In particular, global warming, climate change, urban heat island and sea-level rise are posing serious threats to our quality of life. Hong Kong has to address these new challenges with a **comprehensive citywide plan to achieve sustainable development, carbon neutrality, desirable urban climate and social justice**. Quoting an example, the potential adverse weather, flooding and conservation implications should be duly considered and addressed in the planning for Northern Metropolis and Lantau tomorrow. We suggest the Government to continuously monitor and review the Hong Kong's Territorial Development Strategy, i.e. **Hong Kong 2030+**, and local district planning especially older urban areas to address the macro trends.



### **Transitional Housing and Ways to Speed Up Housing Construction**

- (f) Hong Kong is now facing shortage of affordable housing. Waiting time for a public housing unit now extends over 6 years, significantly longer than the policy target of 3 years. We support the construction of transitional housing units to mitigate the problem in the short term. Innovative approaches, e.g. making use of land pending permanent uses yet to be developed, in identifying suitable land for such temporary units should be adopted. However, we wish to point out that transitional housing is only a stop-gap measure, and we urge the Government to speed up the construction of permanent public housing. In this connection, we suggest the Government should suitably tap in private sector recourses for building public housing similar to the Private Sector Participation Scheme in the past with enhancement. Hong Kong faces an aggravating construction labour shortage and ageing problem especially with various key development projects planned. To improve construction efficiency, the Government needs to promote and facilitate new construction technologies, such as Modular Integrated Construction (MiC), robotic technologies and various measures to recruit, train and import sufficient construction labour.

### **Mass Transit, Public Transport, Car Parking and Green Cars**

- (g) We note the recent amendment of the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines stipulating the significantly higher provision requirement of car parking spaces. We also note the recent surge in the popular demand for private cars, hence rapid rise in the number of private cars, their use and parking spaces. However, as a compact city, we simply have limited road spaces, particularly in the inner urban areas, and we cannot cater for high car ownership and usage rate as other land-extensive cities. As such, **it is important to provide for convenient and attractive public transport to cater for public mobility needs, and to contain, regulate and manage car usage within reasonable limits to optimise mobility, safeguard health of pedestrian/residents and avoid traffic congestions.** Timely and speedy improvements to mass transit, including the Northern Link and other much needed railway links, are essential. The recently completed Shatin Central Line is a good example to demonstrate the public benefits of continuous improvement to our mass transit system. Moreover, we support the conversion of fossil fuel cars to electric or hydrogen cars, which, however, have many implications on the provision of charging facilities and filling stations and the implications have to be studied and addressed now.



### **Planning for Pedestrians**

- (h) We are facing a rapid rise in ageing population which has a strong bearing on pedestrians. It is expected that more elderly would be among our pedestrians, the use of walking aids and wheel chairs will increase significantly where our narrow pavements will not be able to cope with the demand. Urgent planning and implementing wider pavements and improvement to pedestrian facilities and environment including full or time-specific pedestrianisation is needed. Action is also urgently needed to regulate vehicular traffic and minimize on-street parking especially in older districts.

### **Green Buildings**

- (i) More active policies to promote construction of green buildings are needed. Besides incentives, some mandatory measures should be considered. The **Buildings Ordinance including the Building (Planning) Regulations**, which are often deemed by relevant professionals as inflexible and non-facilitating for green building features. We suggest Government to draw up steps to gradually review and update in this regard.

### **Smart City and Smart Planning**

- (j) Smart planning and governance are the basis of smart city. Smart planning should give due consideration to climate change, technological advancement, social aspirations, inclusiveness and social justice issues and target flexibility and mixed uses, quality of life, zero carbon, smart mobility, walkability, resilient infrastructures, water conservation and protection against adverse weather. Adequate land should be reserved for such purposes with state-of-art design and engineering. The Government is suggested to conduct a detailed study to formulate a smart, green and resilient planning and infrastructure framework for Hong Kong as a whole. Collaboration with the Greater Bay Area in creating a smart urban region, particularly in green energy production, resources and nature conservation and smart transport network including autonomous vehicles operation should be undertaken.



### **Double Ageing Problem and Urban Renewal**

- (k) Hong Kong is facing double ageing problem. There are about 350,000 flats over 50 years old now. The current redevelopment pace is only about 2000 flats a year and even if we assume a significant increase to 5000 flats a year, it would take 70 years for a complete redevelopment of the 350,000 flats. Obviously, redevelopment alone is not a complete solution to the problem at hand. It is also important to remember that our vision and target is not simply redeveloping the old housing units, but comprehensive regeneration of the older urban areas for better quality of life and sustainable development. Hence, **the government is suggested to conduct a timely review of the Urban Renewal Strategy**, which should address the urban renewal issues in a holistic and comprehensive manner, formulating a realistic and practical urban renewal plan for the medium, long and very long term befitting into the overall planning and development context of Hong Kong. Rehabilitation and adequate maintenance of our existing building fabric is definitely needed to contain urban deterioration problem and allow time for renewing the building fabric. In this context, the Urban Renewal Authority cannot deal with the enormous problem just with its own resources. Urban renewal should not be dictated by financial considerations which justifies increase development intensity, overall city planning, quality of environment and wellness of citizens should be the key considerations. **The Government has to be prepared to inject funding into URA and review the existing over-generous compensation policies to ensure adequate resources for implementing the Urban Renewal Strategy.**

### **Planning for Healthy City**

- (l) The Covid-19 Pandemic is a wake-up call for a change in planning paradigm for Hong Kong. We have to pay more attention to planning for a healthy city. We have to strengthen our preparedness to containing the spread of pandemic, with a well-defined planning framework of, both permanent and temporary, hospitals, medical and quarantine facilities. More public and green spaces are needed to promote exercises, active living and social distancing for both physical and mental health. Open spaces and public facilities should be actively managed for public use during normal and pandemic times instead of closing. The new living styles, including work-from-home and health

consciousness, will be translated into social needs for more spacious living and mixed uses of co-locating work and living spaces. In particular, the overcrowding in elderly residential facilities needs urgent upgrading to safeguard against spread of pandemics. In sum, we suggest the Government to formulate a comprehensive planning framework for healthy city initiatives and facilities, planning standards, design approaches, implementation and operation programmes for urgent actions.



**The Hong Kong Institute of Planners (HKIP)**

**Public Affairs Committee**

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