

MASTERPLAN LIMITED

Planning and Development Advisors

領賢規畫顧問有限公司

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The Legislative Council
Panel on Development

Proposed North East New Territories Development Areas

We are a company which has a long experience in urban development and conservation in the New Territories. Based on this experience we would like to provide the following professional comments for the benefit of the Panel. While we have experience working for many developers and organisations, these comments are made on our own behalf and do not represent any other organization.

1. Need for Proper New Town Planning

- We support the process of providing a fully planned New Town approach to accommodating future growth as opposed to ad-hoc development and rezoning of individual sites and areas;
- Experience has shown that proper integrated planning makes best use of the land, provides full community and public services and results in high quality living environments;
- The land use proposals are not just a solution for current problems but will be there forever – an astute approach needs to be taken.

2. Need to take a Long Term View

- There is a need to take a long term view of what is the appropriate form and content for development in the area, rather than over-react to short term issues;
- The extremely long public consultation process has not facilitated reaching a rational conclusion to the form and content of the development but has seen unnecessary reversals of approaches;
- Land is in short supply in Hong Kong and will become even shorter in supply. It is essential to optimize development intensity taking a long term view of the need to accommodate future population, rather than under-developing the area.

3. Need to Balance Land Uses

- The NDA's should adopt a rational process of balancing land uses in terms of needs for public facilities, recreation and open space. The focus should not just be on housing but more on quality of life provisions and quality of the new urban environment;
- The need for conservation areas and retention of agriculture in the area needs to be granted a lower priority than that of urban land uses that support the quality of life of the new urban residents;

- There are areas, such as Kwun Tong North and western portion of Fanling North, with too great a concentration of public housing without adequate provision of other uses and without a balanced mix with private housing.

4. Housing Imbalance


- The proposed housing balance of 60% public and 40% private appears to be an irrational reaction to public comments without adequate consideration of the consequences;
- Public aspirations for home ownership will not be met unless there is a significant increase in the provision of land for private housing so that flats for sale can be provided;
- Under-provision of private flats will result in a long term under-supply and high housing costs affecting affordability;
- Over-provision of land for public housing will mean that a very significant proportion of people are 'trapped' in public rental housing with little scope to up-grade into private sector housing;
- An over dominance of public housing provides the opportunity for the social problems that are evident at Tin Shui Wai to be repeated;
- The original housing mix of 40%:60% has major advantages in terms of social mix, achievement of home ownership; housing costs and should be reinstated;
- Alternatively a 50%:50% mix should be considered a maximum balance and implemented in the NENT NDA.

5. Densities too Low.

- The Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines specify plot ratios for New Town Development at R1 PR 8; R2 PR 5; R3 PR 3. The standards in the proposed schemes do not achieve these densities;
- Any development at plot ratios lower than this should not be accepted as it indicates an under-development of the scarce land resources. Exceptional justifications should be provided for lower plot ratios;
- Private residential development densities should be increased to a minimum of PR 5 so as to increase the provision of private housing;
- Urban densities should be looked at on a broad area wide basis rather than site by site; this would provide better provision of public urban spaces rather than sprawl;
- No low density zones should be provided within the NDA as this is a waste of land and there are adequate low-rise developments elsewhere;
- Artificial 'urban design' constraints such as a stepped building height profile should be rejected as they result in artificial underutilization of land.

6. Conclusion

- The proportion of public housing to private housing is too high;
- The development density of private housing is too low and should be increased;
- The land within the NDA is underutilized and could provide more flats for a greater population;
- The location of public housing should better dispersed and integrated with other land uses;
- A greater proportion should be for private housing so as to meet private housing aspirations and to promote housing market expansion;
- A long term view should be taken, and more public facilities and open space be provided to achieve a higher quality of life while accommodating a greater number of people.



Ian Brownlee
Managing Director
Masterplan Limited