

The Legislative Council Panel on Development,
Secretary of Panel on Development
Legislative Council Secretariat,
2/F Legislative Council Complex,
1 Legislative Council Road, Central, Hong Kong

Dear Sir,

Re: Submission of Comments on the North East New Territories New Development Areas Planning and Engineering Study

As a young, local professional planner, I have the following opinions on the study:

1. From my viewpoint, I think the “public consultation” process was done very poorly by the Government. This is the crux of the problem from the onset of the whole study, which has led to the present stalemate and strong opposition from many different stakeholders in the community against the Government’s plans. We can see that there is a strong distrust from the community on how the Government have been handling the whole study. What the heck went wrong? I went to one of the public consultation meetings before and I was shocked that the Government overlooked the fundamental issue of dealing with compensation and rehousing was not taken care of with the local residents, and the meeting was trying to get the people’s views on the design of the NDA which was supposed to be the last stage. There was an apparent miscommunication or the lack of information exchange between the local residences and the Government.
2. The NDAs don’t appear to be a part of a holistic housing policy to tackle the housing problems – shortage of affordable housing, ridiculously high housing prices, lack of land to develop housing and other supporting facilities. From my viewpoint, it looks like a short-term response to providing a little bit of housing and facilities, and hoping that it will be enough to satisfy the community demand. Even if it is part of a larger policy of the Government to tackle housing problem, I don’t see it! The Government is not providing any insight into their projects on how that would benefit the community in the long-term.
3. I do commend that a lot of effort, resources and sweat has been put on the public consultation process and design of NDAs to provide high quality living

environments and housing for the people. The design and strategic uses of the NDAs was chosen with great care and lots of studies and rationale to back it up, BUT, all this hard work really is a waste if fundamentally, the local residences there does not accept it, and the property owners does not support it. These are the people that will be affected the most and should have been the people consulted and engaged thoroughly, and get their support. A consensus must be made on how to deal with the land acquisition issue. This is the fundamentally important thing before anything can get done. The design and vision making is nothing if this is not supported.

My suggestions:

4. The way forward, I think is to gain back the trust of the community, by making the process transparent, engaging the public, and carry out a thorough review and look at the past 5 years of public consultation process. Find out what the heck went wrong ? This NDA study, like previous large projects (such as west Kowloon cultural district, and kai tak airport redevelopment), are poorly done public engagement. The Government needs to really reassess their process and come up with a better process. What they're doing now is a waste of resources!
5. A long-term housing strategy for Hong Kong like for 30 years should be made or at least start making one. There needs to be a clear long-term roadmap.
6. I object to the Government's "Conventional New Town Development Model" (CTM) for New Development Areas which excludes property owners and local residences. In light of the serious housing problem faced by our city now, we need to find the quickest way to implement the NDAs as soon as possible. To object to not including property owners (who are the most important and affected people) participating in the development process. The Government should adopt the Public-Private Partnership model to develop NDAs. The PPP is not collusion between the Government and private developers. Hong Kong's past housing developments has had a successful track record under the PPP, which has upheld the capitalist and free market economy.

Sincerely yours,

 (Please do not disclose)

26 November, 2012