

Subcommittee to study the Urban Renewal Authority White Bill

Major concerns raised by organizations (As at 30 November 1999)

Issue	Concern	Relevant clauses	Names of organizations
1. Urban renewal strategy	No mention in the Bill of what is urban renewal strategy and how the strategy is formulated	Clause 5	HKIS HKGCC HKU
	Urban renewal not an appropriate term. Urban regeneration a better term to convey the multi-dimensions (social, economic, and environmental aspects) of the issue		HKCSS HKU Council
	The concept of urban renewal should be broader than the physical redevelopment of designated areas. Modern new urban design, improved townscape environment, sustainable development, preservation of heritage and local features are important elements of urban renewal. These should be expressly provided in the Bill		HKILA HKIP HKIS HKGCC HKSUR HKCSS Council HKU AAB TPB
	Urban renewal should be people-oriented which need to be expressly stated in the Bill		HKIP HKCSS HKU Council
	Maintaining existing buildings as important as redeveloping old buildings in urban renewal		HKIA HKIE HKIP HKIS HKSUR HKGCC TPB
2. Role of Government/ URA in urban renewal	URA should be a facilitator, not an undertaker of redevelopment. Private sector should play a major role in urban renewal		HKIA HKIS HKGCC HKSUR REDA HKIREA

	Enabling role of Government to facilitate private sector in urban renewal not adequate. Government need be more proactive in planning and resource utilization		HKU
	Owners should be given a choice to participate in redevelopment projects		HKGCC REDA
	Financial assistance be given to owners to facilitate redevelopment by themselves		HKSUR
3. Public participation	White Bill not an effective means for public consultation. The general public not aware of the consultation exercise. Should seek the assistance of community workers and district board members to explain urban renewal programme		Council
	Community participation in urban renewal process very important. Participation should be more than consultation. The community should be engaged in determining future development		HKGCC HKSUR HKCSS HKU Council HKIREA
	Establish community facilitation team to assist residents to voice out need		HKU
	Information on redevelopment be made available to members of the public. Public hearing be held on individual projects. Working group be set up under district boards to monitor progress of projects		HKCSS HKIP
	Cross-discipline resource centre be set up for each project to assist redevelopment work		HKCSS
4. Structure of URA	Executive-Chairman model not desirable because he/she involves in daily business and is inclined to defend decisions	Clause 4	LDC

	Conservation architects be employed by URA		AAB
	Financial controller of URA be appointed by the Board of URA		HKSUR
	Grassroot be represented in the Board of URA to enhance public accountability		Federation
	Should appoint persons who are not LDC Board members to the URA Board to revamp the image of LDC		HKSUR
5. Public accountability of URA	Public accountability need be enhanced. How the public could monitor the work of URA not stated in the Bill	Clauses 7,8 and 9	HKIP HKU
	Redevelopment projects be submitted to LegCo for approval		HKSUR
	URA not held accountable even loss incurred in projects. Should explore feasibility of setting up a trading fund for urban renewal programme		HKIREA
	URA should receive view, handle complaints and adjudicate cases relating to urban renewal		HKSUR Federation
6. Financial arrangement	Urban renewal is a social responsibility and should be supported by public resources	Clauses 10 to 17	HKIP HKCSS HKU

	The principle of self-financing constrains the work of URA. Social benefits of urban renewal cannot be quantified in money terms		HKIP AAB HKU
	On-going urban renewal programme would be an onerous financial burden if undertaken by Government. Public resources are limited and should be used to help renewal projects on a competitive basis		HKSUR
	Proposed financial arrangements like nil premium suitable and adequate		LDC
	No premium for URA sites distort market value		HKIREA
	Should explore options other than all-or-nil approach to premium calculation		HKGCC
	Relaxation of plot ratio and exempting G/I/C facilities from gross floor area calculation to URA sites only imply a double standard		TPB
	Increasing plot ratio may not enhance financial viability of projects because the plot ratio of some old urban areas has achieved the maximum permissible under the Buildings Ordinance		HKIP
	Financial report should show change in value of fixed assets transferred from LDC to URA. Separate accounts be kept on redevelopment items and certain items which should be transferred to the Government such as parks		HKSUR
	Not suitable to link viable and non-viable projects		HKGCC

7. Planning procedures	Impact assessment on community, economy, environment, and landscape on each development proposal needed in particular on the need of residents and effect of disintegration of social network	Clause 18	HKIP HKCSS HKU
	Not redeveloping an old urban area should be an option if outcomes of various impact assessments so recommend		HKCSS HKU
	One-month objection period for development projects too short	Clause 21	HKU
	SPEL's decision on objection to development projects being final. No appeal mechanism	Clause 21	HKU
	No channel for objecting development schemes under the Bill	Clause 22	REDA
	Basis for formulation of 5-year corporate plan and annual business plan be explained	Clause 18, 19	TPB
8. Redevelopment of buildings	Mechanism for the transfer of development right be set up		HKIA
	Redevelopment projects be packaged in a way suitable for different sizes of developers		HKIA
9. Rehabilitation of buildings	Financial ability and capability of building owners to manage buildings essential to success of urban renewal		HKIA
	Buildings Ordinance and Fire Services Ordinance should facilitate rehabilitation of buildings and the plan approval system for alteration works should be improved		HKIA HKIS

	Technical and scientific tender for maintenance and repair of buildings important. URA should set and update maintenance standards on scientific basis and social consideration		HKIE
	Present mortgage system need be changed to make investment in old buildings worthwhile		HKIA
	Responsibility between URA and the Buildings Authority be clearly delineated and co-ordinated		HKIS HKSUR Federation HKCSS
	The Building Authority should be responsible for building safety and work relating to the issue of repair orders in order not to overload the URA		HKSUR
	Public education on building maintenance be promoted		HKIA HKIE HKGCC HKSUR
	Criteria for selecting buildings for inclusion in the Preventive Maintenance Scheme and the scope of maintenance responsibility of owners be made known. The implementation cycle should be the same for buildings in and out of the target areas		HKIS
	URA be responsible for regular maintenance of historical buildings preserved under redevelopment programmes. Historical buildings falling outside redevelopment areas need be preserved and maintained too. Preservation of historical buildings on group basis within a large area highly recommended		AAB

10. Land resumption and disposal	URA's power to resume land be exercisable only in public interest and the meaning of public interest be clearly spelled out	Clause 24	HKIE
	Support greater power of URA to resume land		HKGCC LDC
	Great concern on power of URA to resume land without the need to negotiate with owners		Federation HKCSS
	Concern whether breaching human right or social justice if URA sell land resumed under the law to private developers who makes profit in redevelopment	Clause 25	HKIREA
11. Compensation for land resumption	Criteria for valuation of property be made public and the redevelopment value of the property be taken into account		HKIS
	Ex gratia payment be made to owners/occupiers of both residential and non-residential premises		HKIS
	A 5-year flat of a comparable size in the same locality should be the basis of compensation		Federation
	Sentimental value of property be taken into account		HKIREA
	Present compensation formula suitable		LDC
12. Rehousing	Proper rehousing significant. Support the need to secure the assistance of Housing Authority and Housing Society in rehousing affected persons		Federation Council HKU HKIP REDA HKCSS LDC TPB

	Obligation to rehouse residents displaced by URA projects be expressly provided in the Bill		HKIP HKCSS REDA HKU
	Loan schemes to purchase flats should be made available to affected tenants		REDA
13. Transitional matters	Important to ensure seamless transition from LDC to URA. Staff including senior staff be retained		LDC
14. Miscellaneous	Urban renewal provides a good opportunity for enhancing the art and technologies of construction and related engineering works		HKIE
	Mechanism be set up to resolve obsolete encumbrances. Quasi-judicial organizations suitable for such task		HKIS
	Land (Compulsory Sale for Redevelopment) Ordinance be amended to relax the threshold (acquiring 90% interest in the lot) for compulsory sale. "Scheme" should replace "lot" as the basis in calculating interest		HKIS HKSUR
	Better co-ordination and improved working procedures of Government departments involved in urban renewal needed		HKCSS HKU HKSUR

- HKIA - Hong Kong Institute of Architects
- HKILA - Hong Kong Institute of Landscape Architects
- HKIE - Hong Kong Institution of Engineers
- HKIS - Hong Kong Institute of Surveyors
- HKIP - Hong Kong Institute of Planners
- HKGCC - Hong Kong Chamber of Commerce
- HKSUR - Hong Kong Society of Urban Renewal

- Federation - The Federation of Hong Kong, Kowloon and New Territories
Public Housing Estates Resident and Shopowner Organization
- HKCSS - Hong Kong Council of Social services
- Council - Hong Kong People's Council on Housing Policy
- REDA - Real Estate Developers Association of Hong Kong
- HKU - Centre of Urban Planning and Environmental Management, The
University of Hong Kong
- HKIREA - Hong Kong Institute of Real Estate Administration
- LDC - Land Development Corporation
- AAB - Antiquities Advisory Board
- TPB - Town Planning Board