

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(1)606/07-08
(These minutes have been seen
by the Administration)

Ref : CB1/PL/DEV/1

Panel on Development

Minutes of meeting
held on Tuesday, 27 November 2007, at 2:30 pm
in Conference Room A of the Legislative Council Building

Members present : Hon LAU Wong-fat, GBM, GBS, JP (Chairman)
Prof Hon Patrick LAU Sau-shing, SBS, JP (Deputy Chairman)
Hon James TIEN Pei-chun, GBS, JP
Hon Albert HO Chun-yan
Ir Dr Hon Raymond HO Chung-tai, SBS, S.B.St.J., JP
Hon James TO Kun-sun
Hon CHAN Kam-lam, SBS, JP
Hon Mrs Sophie LEUNG LAU Yau-fun, GBS, JP
Hon Miriam LAU Kin-ye, GBS, JP
Hon Timothy FOK Tsun-ting, GBS, JP
Hon Albert CHAN Wai-yip
Hon LEE Wing-tat
Hon Daniel LAM Wai-keung, SBS, JP
Hon Alan LEONG Kah-kit, SC
Dr Hon KWOK Ka-ki
Hon CHEUNG Hok-ming, SBS, JP

Members attending : Hon CHAN Yuen-han, SBS, JP
Hon Vincent FANG Kang, JP

Members absent : Dr Hon Philip WONG Yu-hong, GBS
Hon CHOY So-yuk, JP
Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, SBS, JP

Public officers attending : **Agenda item V**

Mrs Carrie LAM
Secretary for Development

Ms Olivia NIP
Deputy Secretary for Development
(Planning and Lands) 2

Agenda item VI

Mrs Carrie LAM
Secretary for Development

Mrs MAK LOK Suet-ling, Susan
Deputy Secretary for Development
(Planning and Lands) 1

Mrs NG TSE Suk-ying, Ava
Director of Planning

Mr CHAI Sung-veng, John
Director of Civil Engineering and Development

Attendance by invitation : **Agenda item V**

Urban Renewal Authority

Mr Billy LAM
Managing Director

Mr Quinn LAW
Executive Director (Commercial and Corporate)

Mr Joseph LEE
District Development Director (Operation)

Mr Ian WONG
General Manager (Property and Lands)

Clerk in attendance : Ms Anita SIT
Chief Council Secretary (1)4

Staff in attendance : Mr WONG Siu-yee
Senior Council Secretary (1)7

Ms Christina SHIU
Legislative Assistant (1)7

Action

I Confirmation of minutes

(LC Paper No. CB(1)286/07-08 -- Minutes of special meeting on
15 October 2007)

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 October 2007 were confirmed.

II Information papers issued since last meeting

(LC Paper No. CB(1)130/07-08(01) -- Letter dated 7 June 2007 from
the Chief Secretary for
Administration on small house
policy

LC Paper No. CB(1)205/07-08(01) -- Letter dated 5 November 2007
from Dr Hon KWOK Ka-ki on
temporary reclamation for the
construction of the
Central-Wan Chai Bypass and
modification of the Island
Eastern Corridor Link

LC Paper No. CB(1)300/07-08(01) -- Information paper on "Capital
Works Reserve Fund Block
Allocations for 2008-2009"
provided by the
Administration

LC Paper No. CB(1)305/07-08(01) -- Information paper on "326WF
-- Integration of Lion Rock
high level fresh water primary
service reservoirs and Tseung
Kwan O fresh water primary
service reservoir" provided by
the Administration)

2. Members noted the information papers issued since last meeting.

III Items for discussion at the next meeting

(LC Paper No. CB(1)297/07-08(01) -- List of outstanding items for
discussion

LC Paper No. CB(1)297/07-08(02) -- List of follow-up actions)

3. Members agreed that the following items proposed by the Administration would be discussed at the next regular meeting scheduled for 18 December 2007 --

- (a) Landslip prevention and mitigation strategy;
- (b) Greening -- review and way forward; and
- (c) Proposed creation of a Chief Landscape Architect post.

IV Proposal to undertake an overseas duty visit

(LC Paper No. CB(1)297/07-08(03) -- Paper on "Proposed overseas duty visit for the studies of the Panel on town planning and urban renewal" prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat)

4. The Chairman invited members to give views on the proposal for the Panel to undertake an overseas duty visit to study experiences in other places on town planning and urban renewal. Prof Patrick LAU said that an overseas duty visit would be very helpful for the Panel in gaining first-hand information on relevant overseas experiences. By way of illustration, he pointed out that the duty visit to Bilbao by the Subcommittee on West Kowloon Cultural District Development in 2005 had made much contribution to the work of the Subcommittee. In order to allow an in-depth and detailed study on the subject matters of town planning and urban renewal, he suggested and members agreed to conduct an overseas duty visit to Amsterdam and Prague around Easter 2008. Members also agreed that the overseas duty visit would also be open to non-Panel members.

5. Mr Albert CHAN said that overseas experience in promoting cycling in the town planning process could be gained in visiting Amsterdam because it had good and comprehensive cycling tracks and other ancillary facilities for promoting cycling.

V Property acquisition policy of the Urban Renewal Authority and related issues

(LC Paper No. CB(1)169/07-08(01) -- Letter dated 26 October 2007 from Hon Alan LEONG Kah-kit

LC Paper No. CB(1)169/07-08(02) -- Letter dated 30 October 2007 from Prof Hon Patrick LAU Sau-shing

LC Paper No. CB(1)297/07-08(04) -- Information paper provided by

LC Paper No. CB(1)332/07-08(01) -- the Urban Renewal Authority
Letter dated 23 November
2007 from K28 Sport Shoes
Street Concern Group)

6. The Managing Director, Urban Renewal Authority (MD/URA) said that URA's acquisition policies were based on the Government's resumption policy which was agreed by the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council in 2001. In the past, an average of about 80% to 90% of the affected owners voluntarily accepted URA's acquisition offers. URA staff and social service teams operated by non-governmental organizations would provide professional assistance to help affected parties as much as practicable. URA's Review Committee would review URA's decisions in response to requests from affected parties. Calculation of the Home Purchase Allowance and Supplementary Allowance was based on the valuation of seven surveyors and their selection was made by the Chairmen and members of the relevant District Councils through balloting and observed by affected parties. He highlighted the four initiatives under URA's new package of enhancement policies devised in response to the community's changing needs and aspirations. Pointing out that some inconvenience to affected owners and tenants would be inevitable during the urban renewal process, he appealed to members for support of URA's work in improving the living conditions of some 110 000 residents in 1 400 dilapidated buildings.

Joint redevelopment and other compensation options

7. Ms Miriam LAU said that without URA, it would be difficult to implement urban renewal projects because the land interests of many old buildings were dispersed. She asked whether URA would only consider joint redevelopment with major owners. She considered that it should be possible for URA to adopt the same approach for other redevelopment projects by consolidating the dispersed land interests from owners who wanted to participate in joint redevelopment. As in the case of some private redevelopment projects, in order to solicit cooperation and facilitate the implementation of redevelopment projects, URA could consider providing flat-for-flat compensation through contractual arrangements to affected owners who did not wish to receive cash compensation.

8. Prof Patrick LAU considered it unfair if only major owners could participate in joint redevelopment. Owner participation in redevelopment projects was crucial and a people-oriented approach would mean providing a choice for affected parties so that those who wished to opt for cash compensation could move out, and those who wished to participate in joint redevelopment could have an opportunity to do so.

9. In response, MD/URA said that URA would continue its efforts in providing every possible choice for affected parties in response to the calls of the community. The feasibility of joint redevelopment with owners would depend on

the timeframe of the project concerned, overall planning for the district and interest from affected owners. As joint redevelopment was a long-term investment with high risks, not all affected owners would be interested in such an arrangement. URA should be prudent in considering whether to offer such a risky choice. In the past, the joint redevelopment arrangement had been implemented in a project at Hanoi Road of the former Land Development Corporation (LDC) where there was a major owner who had acquired a number of land interests. MD/URA further said that URA's cash compensation was very generous and flexible, and many affected owners preferred to receive cash compensation to improve their living environment as soon as possible. The expression of interest in purchasing arrangement for residential units was to cater for those affected owners who wished to purchase units in the same area where they once lived.

10. Mr Alan LEONG said that URA's four enhancement policies represented a step forward, but queried why there was no mention about joint redevelopment. He urged that the review of the Urban Renewal Strategy should include the issue. Sharing the view that providing a choice to affected parties was crucial in a people-oriented approach in urban renewal, he considered that only through owner participation could owners' aspirations be met. Referring to URA's different treatment for the Nga Tsin Wai Village project and the Peel Street/Graham Street project, he criticized that URA had no objective criteria in relation to joint redevelopment. URA should have transparent criteria in this regard, such as offering the option of joint redevelopment to affected owners when the total percentage of land interests of those owners interested in this option had reached a certain level.

11. In response, MD/URA explained that for the Nga Tsin Wai Village project, URA had invited small property owners to indicate whether they would be interested in participating in joint redevelopment, but most of them were not interested. Given that a major owner developer had acquired about 70% of the land interests, joint redevelopment with that developer would be a practical arrangement.

12. Mr Albert HO referred to the Lai Sing Court private redevelopment project and commented that the project was successful, profitable and implemented through negotiation between the developer and affected owners. He considered that URA should give further consideration to offering joint redevelopment as an option for affected owners. This would provide a win-win situation for all parties concerned and could avoid creating a confrontational situation. He sought clarification on the hearsay that if a major owner owned more than 40% of the land interests, URA would implement a redevelopment project only through negotiation and would not request to invoke the Land Resumption Ordinance. He considered such a policy unacceptable because the discretion of using statutory authority to resume land would be relinquished and URA would be putting itself in an unfavourable condition when faced with unreasonable requests from the major owner concerned. He further asked whether there were any

precedents in which URA had requested to invoke the Land Resumption Ordinance when an affected owner owned a majority of the land interests.

13. In response, MD/URA said that according to his understanding, the plot ratio of the site of the Lai Sing Court redevelopment project had not been fully utilized before redevelopment, thus making the redevelopment project profitable through raising the plot ratio. The project had also taken a long time to complete. For URA's redevelopment projects, the circumstances were different. The plot ratios of some sites had already been fully utilized; and there was urgency in implementing the priority projects, i.e. those 25 projects that had been announced by the former LDC. Private developers could launch redevelopment projects according to market situations but URA had to follow a predetermined timetable. He clarified that there was no rule that URA would offer joint redevelopment to a major owner owning more than 40% of the land interests. URA had discretion in this regard taking into account whether joint redevelopment for a particular redevelopment project would be in the interest of the community.

14. The Deputy Secretary for Development (Planning and Lands) 2 said that URA would usually request the Administration to invoke the Land Resumption Ordinance when 70% to 80% of the land interests had been acquired but there was difficulty in acquiring the remainder due to reasons such as not being able to reach an agreement with affected owners, land title problems and succession problems. She was not aware of any precedents in which URA had requested to invoke the Land Resumption Ordinance when a major owner owned a majority of the land interests. As one of URA's missions was to launch redevelopment projects which the private sector was incapable of launching, the Administration encouraged URA to cooperate with the major owners in implementing redevelopment projects.

15. In reply to Dr KWOK Ka-ki's enquiry on whether and why URA had changed its acquisition policy after the Hanoi Road project, MD/URA explained that the circumstances of the project were very complicated. Among the 100-odd land titles, a large developer had already acquired a majority of them, with market value of more than 70% of the total. The project was only a test point for joint redevelopment at that time. As most small owners affected by URA's redevelopment projects considered cash compensation flexible and wanted early implementation of the projects, URA had not offered the joint redevelopment option thereafter. However, URA would maintain an open mind on joint redevelopment.

16. Dr KWOK Ka-ki said that the Administration had always emphasized the importance of respecting private property ownership, but this was not the case for URA's redevelopment projects; URA did not provide any options and affected owners could only receive cash compensation. He considered the present acquisition policy unfair to affected owners. He shared the view that providing a choice for affected parties was the crux of the problem. The pace of urban

renewal could be expedited if affected owners could have a genuine choice. He asked whether the Administration would change its policy.

17. The Secretary for Development (SDEV) said that respecting private property ownership was an established Government policy. The Administration had many administrative safeguards. Only after URA had attempted all other means to reach an agreement with affected owners but failed would the Land Resumption Ordinance be invoked for the public interest.

18. Mr James TO shared the view that the detailed arrangements of the Hanoi Road project were indeed quite complicated and not every owner was willing to shoulder the risks involved in joint redevelopment. Nevertheless, providing such an option would make affected owners convinced.

19. In response to Mr Vincent FANG's suggestion that URA could consider offering joint redevelopment for the Sai Yee Street project by grouping together interested owners, MD/URA said that affected shop owners had diverse views on the issue.

20. For the Nga Tsin Wai Village project, Miss CHAN Yuen-han queried why URA only considered joint redevelopment with the developer but not other affected owners. She also criticized that flat-for-flat compensation and shop-for-shop compensation were not included in the enhancement policies for the Sai Yee Street project, and pointed out that the cash compensation would be insufficient for purchasing a unit in the same area unless there was a dramatic fall in property prices.

Preservation of special character

21. Mr LEE Wing-tat said that URA's enhancement policies represented a small step forward. However, many shop owners affected by the Sai Yee Street project were still dissatisfied with URA's compensation offer. Although affected sports shop operators would be offered priority to lease shop spaces at the then prevailing market rental after completion of the new development, the tenancy was up to three years only. He wondered whether it was a tactic to tempt the affected owners to accept URA's acquisition offers and asked whether there were any other better arrangements. He considered that there should be more flexibility by offering a longer or renewable tenancy and a lower rental. He also asked whether preservation of the special character of the affected areas should become a long-term policy when URA implemented redevelopment projects in future.

22. In response, MD/URA said that URA would continue to accumulate experience to further improve its work in preserving the special character of areas affected by its redevelopment projects and it would actively consider preserving long-established communities with special character if they were affected by URA's redevelopment projects. In this regard, the Local Sports Shops Arrangement enhancement policy was specifically devised to cater for the Sai Yee

Street project. As the market conditions might change, URA would allow some flexibility in tenancy arrangements taking into account the demand from other trades for shop spaces and the then prevailing market rental. URA would consider Mr LEE Wing-tat's suggestions based on individual circumstances.

23. Mr Albert CHAN criticized MD/URA for bureaucratizing URA and suffocating urban renewal during his tenure; and considered it a merit for him to depart from URA. He hoped that his successor, who should not be a retired Government official, would review the Sai Yee Street project. He was extremely dissatisfied with the work of URA. For the Tsuen Wan redevelopment project, he and the former LDC had constant communication and exchange of views, and LDC had heeded his views by changing the mode of handling its projects. However, for the Sai Yee Street project, URA's operation lacked transparency. It threatened and misled owners; adopted disgraceful and divisive tactics; and failed to discuss and cooperate with owners on how to redevelop the area. The Sai Yee Street project, as currently conceived by URA, would destroy the character of the area and an economic miracle, and turn a vibrant community into a shopping plaza managed by a single operator. He further criticized that URA was submissive in dealing with large developers and ignored small owners. He regretted that he had previously expressed support for the \$10 billion injection into URA and urged SDEV to review the Sai Yee Street project.

24. In response, SDEV said that Mr Albert CHAN's remark was unfair to MD/URA, and the Panel meeting was not an appropriate forum to comment on MD/URA. The discussion should be forward-looking on how to implement urban renewal under a people-oriented approach. She explained that the Sai Yee Street project was a former LDC project and there was limited flexibility in implementing the project. As the affected residents and shop owners/operators had different aspirations, it was not an easy task to strike a balance. Although the alternate proposal was found to be technically infeasible, the Sai Yee Street project would continue to proceed with a view to meeting various aspirations, as could be demonstrated by URA's new enhancement policies to preserve the character of the area.

25. MD/URA concurred that affected residents and shop owners/operators held different views because they had different interests and backgrounds. During the consultation process, many affected parties urged for redevelopment as soon as possible. URA had introduced the enhancement policies to facilitate preservation of the character of the area. As regards the work of URA, the community would have its judgment.

26. In relation to SDEV's comment that his remark was unfair to MD/URA, Mr Albert CHAN pointed out that URA's redevelopment work often completely destroyed the original community of the localities concerned and was unfair to affected communities and parties, and some people even lost their jobs as a result. As URA refused to explain why the alternate proposal for the Sai Yee Street project was infeasible, the Panel should consider holding a special meeting to seek

an explanation from URA. He pointed out that meetings conducted by URA with affected parties had failed to achieve mutual communication, and Legislative Council Members were refused to attend those meetings. URA had created conflicts between affected residents and shop owners. As many projects, such as the clock tower of the Star Ferry Pier, the Queen's Pier and developments at the West Rail Yuen Long Station and Nam Cheong Station, could be revisited, he queried why urban renewal projects decided long ago could not be examined again if there was a better proposal.

27. Mr James TO considered that as only about one-quarter of the sports shops in the area would be affected by the Sai Yee Street project, there should still be a critical mass to maintain vibrancy in the area. The area would flourish and prosper in future because the number of shops would increase upon completion of the redevelopment project. Instead of weakening, the character of the area would only strengthen.

28. Prof Patrick LAU pointed out that technical problems of the alternate proposal could be resolved and what was required was the Administration's acceptance. He queried why the Sai Yee Street project would not adopt the rehabilitation approach if the Administration and URA emphasized the importance of rehabilitation, and urged them to reconsider the matter. Redevelopment would take three to four years and there was little chance for shop owners to resume their business by then. He doubted to what extent URA had heard the views of the affected shop owners. He was disappointed and saddened that areas with special character, such as Peel Street/Graham Street, would be destroyed. He hoped that the review on the Urban Renewal Strategy would include the above issues.

29. In response, MD/URA said that URA had discussed with affected shop owners and residents on many occasions. Many residents wanted URA to implement the Sai Yee Street project as soon as possible, which was one of 25 projects announced in January 1998 by the former LDC. As the project was announced nearly a decade ago and former LDC projects would be given priority, many affected parties thought that it would soon be implemented and therefore did not maintain their buildings. As such, many residents, and even some shop owners, were eager for early implementation of the project. URA would continue its efforts in implementing the project as soon as possible in response to those calls.

30. Mr LEE Wing-tat asked whether URA would preserve an old grocery aged over a hundred years under the Peel Street/Graham Street project. As many even older buildings in Europe could be preserved, there should not be insurmountable technical difficulties in preserving the old grocery. While acknowledging that a price had to be paid for preservation, he urged URA to show more sincerity in its preservation endeavours.

31. In response, MD/URA said that URA would preserve three pre-war buildings under the Peel Street/Graham Street project. Whether the grocery could

be preserved would depend on the outcome of a study on its structural condition. URA's original intention was for the grocery to continue its business in the "Old Shop Street". He affirmed that URA had sincerity in its preservation endeavours but the outcome would depend on the overall redevelopment plan.

32. Dr KWOK Ka-ki opined that the existing old shops should be preserved rather than creating an "Old Shop Street" consisting of fake old shops or brand name shops. He urged URA to pledge to preserve the existing old shops.

33. In response, MD/URA said that the H18 Conservation Advisory Panel had been set up comprising long-time residents, District Council members and experts. The H18 Conservation Advisory Panel would collect views from relevant parties in formulating a proposal on how to take forward the project, addressing issues like the criteria for eligibility as an old shop, whether shops from other districts should be introduced, and whether enhancements to road surface materials and electricity and water supplies should be implemented.

Balance between development intensity and financial returns

34. Mr CHAN Kam-lam declared interest that he was a member of the URA Board. As the community had increasing aspirations on reducing development intensity through lowering building height and plot ratio and the adequate provision of community facilities, he asked what measures URA and the Administration would adopt to address the conflicting demands because urban renewal needed resources and financial sustainability was an issue. A reduction in the development intensity of a redevelopment project might lead to a deficit. URA should reassure the public on whether it aimed to maximize profits and development intensity.

35. In response, MD/URA said that URA was not a profit-making organization although it was operating under commercial principles. It had a social responsibility to respond to calls from society in relation to the environment, building height and intensity. URA would not maximize building height and intensity, as could be demonstrated by the fact that the maximum allowable gross floor area for the Wing Lee Street/Staunton Street project had been reduced by some 19%. The intensity of the Kwun Tong Town Centre project had also been reduced. URA would adopt stringent requirements in environmental impact assessment and take into account factors like air ventilation, orientation and sunshine in implementing its redevelopment projects, as could be witnessed by the fact that it would conduct non-mandatory air ventilation studies even for redevelopment sites with an area smaller than two hectares. At present, URA had a healthy financial status, but consideration would have to be given to how to balance its books in future. Meanwhile, URA would continue to shoulder its social responsibility in providing a quality living environment when implementing its redevelopment projects.

36. SDEV added that URA projects would basically be subject to the same requirements of the Town Planning Ordinance just like any private development. Sustainability in urban renewal was of prime importance and if URA's financial viability was affected as a result of responding to community aspirations on planning parameters, the Administration would revisit the matter. She confirmed that a review of the Urban Renewal Strategy would commence next year.

Other issues

37. Mr Alan LEONG sought clarification on whether URA had already acquired a property at 27A Gage Street, and, if so, the time and reason for the acquisition. As regards the Kwun Tong Town Centre project, he asked why it was impossible for URA to make acquisition offers first before completing the statutory planning process.

38. In response, MD/URA clarified that the property at 27A, Gage Street was acquired by the former LDC and URA used it as a test point for URA's rehabilitation schemes. The General Manager (Property and Lands), URA added that the property was acquired in 1990 by the former LDC and when URA was established in 2001, the property became vested under URA. For the Kwun Tong Town Centre project, MD/URA said that URA would make acquisition offers as soon as possible after obtaining appropriate planning approval from the Town Planning Board.

39. Mr James TO disagreed to the remarks made by some other members about MD/URA's work and departure. He said that although the work of MD/URA was not particularly outstanding and the pace of redevelopment projects was slower than originally planned due to changes in society's calls and values, MD/URA had spent considerable efforts in implementing rehabilitation projects. Mr TO was worried that collusion might arise if MD/URA's successor lacked a civil service background. As regards the enhancement policies, he considered expression of interest in purchasing arrangement a good policy, designation of space for social enterprises acceptable and additional payment of ex-gratia business allowance an enhancement. For the Local Sports Shops Arrangement, he considered it ornamental because the tenancy was only for three years and the market might have changed by then. URA should be decisive in launching the Sai Yee Street project as soon as possible because it was long overdue.

40. In response, MD/URA thanked Mr James TO for his comments and said that it would be undesirable to hold up the priority projects any longer. URA had the determination to launch the Sai Yee Street project within the current financial year.

41. Mr Vincent FANG said that he was concerned about the Sai Yee Street project because it was related to the retail industry. He understood that MD/URA was in a difficult position in the face of the different demands from various parties, and pointed out that urban renewal work would be even more difficult in future

because the community's aspirations had changed. Affected shop owners might be willing to move, but they had difficulty in finding another suitable shop unit in the area even if they were willing to pay the costs. In relation to the Local Sports Shops Arrangement, affected shop owners were concerned about the unpredictability of the then prevailing market rental level. If URA could offer an estimate of the rental and affected shop owners considered that it was affordable, they would wish to resume their business in the same area. They also expressed concern about the exact location of the "Sports Retail City". As the redevelopment project might take at least three to four years and there might be delays, affected owners found it difficult to plan ahead. He suggested that a target for completion of the redevelopment project, say three years, should be set.

42. In response, MD/URA said that URA's compensation package was already quite generous. In taking forward the matter, the most important thing was to discuss with the affected shop owners their individual concerns. Only about one-quarter of the sports shops in the area would be affected by the redevelopment project and the "Sports Retail City" would cater for the sports retail industry as far as possible. URA would also consider allocating some shops under the MacPherson Stadium project for selling sports goods subject to agreement with the Hong Kong Playground Association.

43. Miss CHAN Yuen-han said that the Kwun Tong Town Centre project could not achieve the purpose of integrating with nearby districts because of constraints imposed by the boundary of the redevelopment project. While Government policies rather than URA should take the blame for the deficiencies of the Kwun Tong Town Centre project, she was dissatisfied with the way in which URA had handled the Nga Tsin Wai Village project. The fact that many residents wanted to move out as soon as possible had no implication on preservation of the Nga Tsin Wai Village. Although MD/URA's diligence was beyond doubt, problem solving skills and sensitivity were even more important. She did not share the view that the future MD/URA should have a civil service background. She queried why urban renewal measures adopted in other places such as Shanghai and Zhongshan could not be implemented in Hong Kong and urged the Administration to take a forward-looking perspective in urban renewal. Although she still had some reservations, she acknowledged the merits of the enhancement policy of designation of space for social enterprises.

44. In response, MD/URA said that he and Members were all trying to take urban renewal matters forward, only their positions and approaches for achieving the objective differed.

VI Final Report of Hong Kong 2030: Planning Vision and Strategy

(LC Paper No. CB(1)169/07-08(02) -- Letter dated 30 October 2007
from Prof Hon Patrick LAU
Sau-shing

File Ref: (20) in -- Legislative Council Brief on

DEVB(PL-P)50/01/126 Pt. 34	"Hong Kong 2030: Planning Vision and Strategy Final Report"
LC Paper No. CB(1)297/07-08(05)	-- Information paper provided by the Administration
LC Paper No. CB(1)297/07-08(06)	-- Background brief on "Hong Kong 2030: Planning Vision and Strategy" prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat)

45. The Deputy Secretary for Development (Planning and Lands) 1 said that the Administration's paper (LC Paper No. CB(1)297/07-08(05)) provided additional information on the environmentally friendly and energy efficient measures relating to the implementation of New Development Areas (NDAs) recommended in the Study on Hong Kong 2030: Planning Vision and Strategy (HK 2030 Study). The planning and engineering review studies for the NDAs would commence in mid-2008 and Members were welcome to comment on the broad principles and recommendations for NDAs.

46. Dr KWOK Ka-ki was concerned about how to rectify problems resulted from poor planning in urban areas, such as developments creating the wall effect and high intensity developments. There was no mention in the HK 2030 Study on reviewing development parameters like plot ratio. He considered that the railway network should be expanded and road traffic should be reduced. Except for the NDAs located along railway lines, there were no concrete measures on how to reduce road traffic for developments in other areas such as East Kowloon and West Kowloon.

47. In response, the Director of Planning (DPlan) said that NDAs would mainly be medium density developments. NDAs located near mass transport systems like railway stations and transport interchanges would have a medium density with a population of about 100 000. Those further away would have a lower density. The actual development parameters for specific sites would be decided after completing the planning and engineering review studies. As most NDAs would be within walking distance to railway stations, roads could be reduced. The necessary major roads would be built at the periphery of the NDAs and sunken roads would be provided as far as possible for environmental protection. The share of railway passenger-trip of total trips after completion of the NDAs would be around 36% to 37% when compared with the existing 35%. Capitalizing on railway transport in implementing the NDAs would reduce road traffic. For urban areas, new railway lines, such as the Shatin to Central Link and West Hong Kong Island Line, were in the pipeline.

48. SDEV added that the Action Agenda (Annex B to LC Paper No. CB(1)297/07-08(05)) provided specific ongoing and new initiatives under the Development Bureau in line with the directions of the HK 2030 Study. The Chief

Executive's 2007-2008 Policy Address also contained concrete measures that would be implemented. These included review of existing Outline Zoning Plans, review of the intensity of the approved developments at the West Rail Nam Cheong Station and Yuen Long Station and the Hollywood Road Police Married Quarters site development, and implementation of the West Hong Kong Island Line and South Hong Kong Island Line. Although the review of existing Outline Zoning Plans would be a difficult task, as could be seen from a recent judicial review, it would still be one of the priority tasks.

49. Mr Albert CHAN said that he had submitted his views at every stage of the HK 2030 Study. The living of the citizens was of prime importance, but town planning in Hong Kong was often based on administrative convenience rather than the needs of the citizens, as could be witnessed from the planning for Tin Shui Wai and Tung Chung. Apart from formulating strategies for future developments, the HK 2030 Study should have put forward strategic remedial measures to enhance the living standard of existing districts and rectify the deficiencies. The Administration should have a clear action agenda for enhancing every district in the territory and provide a vision on how the districts would be like by 2030.

50. In response, SDEV said that the Administration had been implementing district improvement programmes and greening measures to enhance amenity and the living environment. The Development Bureau was conducting a study on ways to rejuvenate old industrial districts, and other bureaux were considering improvement measures under their portfolios in other districts. The Development Bureau would share with other bureaux Mr Albert CHAN's views on quality living.

51. Noting that each NDA would only accommodate a population of 100 000 to 200 000, Prof Patrick LAU asked how the Administration would accommodate the projected increase in population of 1.6 million by 2030 and how quality of life could be enhanced. He said that the Administration should consider upgrading the densely populated districts and using old industrial districts to accommodate some of the population. The demographic characteristics of the population were also important considerations in planning. As regards enhancing economic competitiveness, he asked whether employment opportunities would be provided in the NDAs.

52. In response, DPlan said that 70% of the increase in population would be absorbed by new towns like Tseung Kwan O and Tung Chung, which had capacity for further development. The Kai Tak Development and urban renewal process would also absorb part of the increase. The remaining 30% increase would be absorbed by NDAs under sustainable development principles. Brown field sites could be recycled if possible. For instance, the fringe areas of industrial districts might be used for residential developments if environmental problems could be resolved. As regards enhancing economic competitiveness, the crux was to ensure that there was enough land to accommodate economic activities to generate employment opportunities.

53. Mr LEE Wing-tat pointed out that there was community consensus on reducing the development intensity in urban areas and building height of waterfront areas. In order to better utilize land in the New Territories, a medium plot ratio could be adopted. As the Administration had not mentioned enhancement measures relating to container open storage uses in the rural areas, he could not see how quality life could be achieved if container storage areas were right next to residential sites. Relocating container open storage uses to Shenzhen might be a long-term solution. Town planning blunders like excessive development density in Tseung Kwan O and homogeneity in Tin Shui Wai should not recur in the NDAs. He also expressed concern on the scale of the planned public rental housing developments near Anderson Road. As regards leisure and cultural facilities, he considered that those facilities should be dispersed so that residents in the New Territories could readily benefit from those facilities.

54. In response, DPlan said that because of customs and taxation reasons, many container open storage uses were set up in Hong Kong in the past. However, the forecast was that they would gradually be relocated to the Mainland in future. Over the past few years, there had been zero growth in container open storage in the rural areas in Hong Kong. The Administration would consider consolidating dispersed container open storage uses into well-organized container back-up or storage zones at Ping Che/Ta Kwu Ling or Hung Shui Kiu, at locations far away from residential sites. For the NDAs, there would be an appropriate mix of public rental housing and private housing developments.

55. In response to the Chairman's enquiry on the measures through which rural areas would be enhanced, DPlan explained that the Administration would capitalize on the development of NDAs to upgrade the living standard and living environment of rural areas near the NDAs. There would be enhancements in infrastructure, water and electricity supplies, drainage and amenity.

56. Miss CHAN Yuen-han considered that good town planning should provide a place for people to dwell in and live. For the Kai Tak Development, there should be preservation of water bodies and monuments, as well as creation of employment opportunities. She criticized that the Kai Tak Development would be surrounded by roads with poor connectivity with neighbouring old districts. The Administration should promote walking rather than emphasizing roads in planning. As regards adaptive re-use of old industrial buildings, she suggested that they could be used for housing the creative industries at low rentals. The Administration should adopt a new thinking in town planning.

57. In response, DPlan said that the Administration would adopt new concepts in planning for the Grid Neighbourhood residential area in the Kai Tak Development. Although some district distributors would be necessary, roads would be kept to a minimum and built as sunken roads as far as possible. The Administration had all along been promoting walking, as could be demonstrated

by the footbridge network in Central. Promotion of walking could also be achieved in planning for new areas.

58. Acknowledging that some offensive facilities were indispensable, Mr Albert HO considered that the Administration should devise a comprehensive policy on the distribution of offensive facilities and compensation for affected communities. The Administration should devise a fairer and better distribution strategy and the appropriate scale of such facilities. Providing the affected community with desirable facilities as compensation might be a possible solution. Building offensive facilities of a smaller scale and distributing them across different districts might reduce discontent in society. The Chairman shared Mr Albert HO's views.

59. In response, SDEV said that she had taken note of Mr Albert HO's views and would give them due consideration in planning future land uses.

VII Any other business

60. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 4:45 pm.