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Panel on Development

Meeting on 27 November 2007

**Background brief on
Hong Kong 2030: Planning Vision and Strategy**

Purpose

This paper provides some background information on the "Hong Kong 2030: Planning Vision and Strategy" (HK2030 Study) and relevant views and concern expressed by Members at the meetings of the Legislative Council and former Panel on Planning, Lands and Works (now renamed as Panel on Development) (the Panel).

Launch of the HK2030 Study

2. On 18 May 2000, the Administration briefed the Panel on a new approach to update the Territorial Development Strategy (TDS). TDS was started in 1991 and the then latest review of TDS was completed in 1996. To enable the Government to respond adequately and in good time to future demands for housing, employment, recreation and other facilities, the Administration considered it appropriate to start a new round of review to assess Hong Kong's future development needs in a wider regional perspective and for a longer time horizon, to be called "Hong Kong 2030: Planning Vision and Strategy".

3. The HK2030 Study was divided into four stages --

- (a) identification of planning objectives and key study areas (Stage One);
- (b) examination of key issues (Stage Two);
- (c) formulation of development scenarios and evaluation criteria (Stage Three); and

- (d) formulation of development strategies and response plans (Stage Four).

4. At the Panel meeting, members urged that the HK2030 Study should give special attention to cross-border developments, such as opening up more control points for travellers' convenience and promoting land development in regions near the border. There was also a suggestion of developing industries near the border so as to absorb the labour force of the two places.

5. On 9 June 2000, the Finance Committee approved a financial commitment of \$15 million for engaging various specialist consultants including economists, environmental specialists, transport model analysts and publicity and public relations specialists to carry out various special sectoral studies in the course of the HK2030 Study.

6. In response to members' concerns raised at the Finance Committee meeting, the Administration advised that the HK2030 Study would be a study on land resource utilization, underpinned by the sustainable development concept as a basic planning principle. Definitive proposals up to 2010 would be formulated while options would be put up for years beyond 2010. Whilst increasing interaction, in particular greater socio-economic integration, with the Mainland had become an inevitable trend, the Administration had no intention to interfere with this trend but would ensure that the future development strategy would be able to cater for the needs of the community. The HK2030 Study would not seek to blur the jurisdictional boundary of the two places.

Stage One to Stage Three Public Consultations and discussions at the Panel

Stage One

7. On 5 March 2001, the Administration briefed the Panel on the proposed planning objectives and key study areas put forward in the Stage One Public Consultation of the HK2030 Study. The following seven key **planning objectives** were proposed --

- (a) adhering to the principle of sustainable development;
- (b) enhancing Hong Kong's hub functions;
- (c) providing a good quality living environment;
- (d) meeting housing and community needs;

- (e) providing a framework to develop a safe, efficient, economically viable and environmentally friendly transport system;
- (f) promoting tourism; and
- (g) strengthening links with the Mainland.

The following key **areas of study** were also proposed --

- (a) international town planning experiences;
- (b) population forecasts and the implications for housing and employment;
- (c) new development opportunities;
- (d) requirements of port and other major infrastructure facilities;
- (e) environmental considerations and conservation;
- (f) improving links with the Mainland;
- (g) potential for tourism, recreation and cultural development; and
- (h) implications for information technology development.

8. The major issues raised during the Panel discussion include --

- (a) the need to set quantifiable planning indicators for individual policy areas which had direct impact on the livelihood of the public, such as housing policy and transport policy;
- (b) the need for more specific planning objectives;
- (c) the need for a comprehensive planning strategy for major transport and infrastructure facilities;
- (d) enhancing coordination and communication between the Mainland and Hong Kong authorities on planning matters; and
- (e) ensuring effective implementation of planning policies.

9. The Stage One consultation was completed in April 2001. A Public Consultation Report was released in November 2001. According to the Administration, the public were, in general, supportive of the proposed planning objectives. In view of some suggestions from the public, the Administration had

modified the planning objectives, especially to adopt the sustainable development concept as a guiding principle of the HK2030 Study to highlight its importance. The conservation of natural landscape and cultural heritage was also included as one of the planning objectives in the light of public views. There was also general support for stronger socio-economic ties with the Mainland, in particular the Pan-Pearl River Delta (PRD) region. Given the limited land resource, some respondents expressed the need for a population policy especially on setting a population limit for the future development of Hong Kong.

Stage Two

10. On 1 February 2002, the Administration briefed the Panel on the strategic planning issues for the formulation of long-term development options for Hong Kong, and the assumptions and criteria to be used to construct and evaluate the development options proposed under the Stage Two Public Consultation of the HK2030 Study.

11. The proposed nine **strategic planning issues** were --

- (a) closer links with the Mainland;
- (b) more responsiveness to special land needs;
- (c) more sustainable use of our land resource;
- (d) new development opportunities, better quality;
- (e) more jobs closer to homes;
- (f) facilitating businesses of tomorrow;
- (g) essential but unwelcome facilities;
- (h) better planning for waterfront uses; and
- (i) more choices for recreation and sports.

12. The Administration also proposed that the evaluation of development options to be formulated at the third stage of the HK2030 Study should be undertaken on five main streams of assessment, i.e. economic, environmental, land use planning, social and transport.

13. The major issues raised during the Panel discussion include --

- (a) channels for enhancing communications with the Mainland authorities on issues of common concern such as environmental protection and sustainable development;
- (b) reducing the size of the Frontier Closed Area and developing the land released therefrom;
- (c) whether and how far the conversion approach should be adopted to tackle the problem of obsolete industrial buildings vis-à-vis the redevelopment approach;
- (d) re-zoning of land uses in commercial districts to enliven the districts at night time and decentralization of jobs to the New Territories to relieve the high development density in the Metro Area; and
- (e) long-term development of the rural areas and management of land uses, particularly agricultural land, in these areas; and
- (f) land use implications associated with the ageing population, including the provision of housing and social service facilities for the elderly.

14. The Stage Two Public Consultation was completed in March 2002 and the Public Consultation Report was released in November 2002. The Administration reported that while most respondents expressed their support to the development of the Frontier Closed Area and cross-boundary connections, some pointed out that such development might endanger the ecology of the wetlands nearby and adversely impact on the natural landscape. The idea of converting obsolete vacant industrial buildings for loft apartment as a means of recycling building resources was well received by the community. On the creation of a land bank, public views were rather diverse. Some considered that it was good for attracting business, but some were concerned that it might lead to unfair competition.

Stage Three

15. On 25 November 2003, the Administration briefed the Panel on the key assumptions used in deriving the reference scenario, possible macro planning choices and options, spatial development patterns, and alternative scenarios. The following three **broad directions for development** were proposed --

- (a) providing a quality living environment;
- (b) enhancing economic competitiveness; and
- (c) strengthening links with the Mainland.

16. Two possible **spatial development patterns** were also proposed --
- (a) Consolidation pattern which focuses on the development of the existing urban areas first before extending the development to the New Territories; and
 - (b) Decentralization pattern which emphasizes on development of additional New Development Areas (NDAs) in the initial stage.

17. At the Panel briefing, members urged the Administration to adopt a people-oriented approach for planning. Criticizing that Tseung Kwan O was a planning blunder, they strongly requested the Administration to put more emphases on people's quality of life rather than the outlook of the city or economic developments. The Administration should actively engage the public and ensure that views received from the consultations were translated into actual policies for implementation. There was a suggestion that apart from plot ratios, other quantitative planning indicators with respect to people's quality of life should be devised in the HK2030 Study.

18. Noting members' concerns, the Administration stressed that "providing a quality living environment" was one of the three planning directions put forth in the Stage Three study having regard to the views received during the previous two stages of the study. As the population growth had slowed down, the need for housing and ancillary developments had become less pressing, thus allowing more room for the Administration and the community to consider the issues of development density, preservation of heritage etc.

19. Members also expressed the view that Hong Kong had a number of unique areas which displayed people's lifestyles and the characteristics of Hong Kong, and that future planning should place greater emphasis on the preservation of Hong Kong's unique features with a view to providing its inhabitants with a sense of belonging and pride and hence the building of a cohesive society.

20. The Stage Three consultation was completed in March 2004. A Public Consultation Report was released in December 2004. According to the Administration, most respondents supported the three planning directions. Public views on the Consolidation and Decentralization development patterns were also diverse. Irrespective of which option to adopt, the general view was that there should be a clear indication in the strategy as to whether the NDAs in Hung Shui Kiu, Kwu Tung North and Fanling North would be implemented. Other views received include the comments that the population assumption of 9.2 million by 2030 was on the high side and lower plot ratios should be introduced on new development sites especially those on the harbourfront.

Final Report of the HK2030 Study

21. On 11 October 2007, the Final Report of the HK2030 Study was released (Final Report). While upholding the three broad directions for development and the overarching goal of promoting sustainable development, the Final Report also sets out the following major recommendations --

- (a) future spatial development pattern should adopt the planning concept of prudent use of land resources by planning for more development around mass transit railway stations to facilitate fast and mass movement of people in an environmentally-friendly mode of transport;
- (b) a rehabilitation approach with emphasis on remedial measures should be adopted to upgrade the rural environment;
- (c) planning work on Kwu Tung North, Fanling North and Ping Che/Ta Kwu Ling NDAs and the Hung Shui Kiu NDA should commence as soon as possible. The NDAs should be planned for low to medium densities, with relatively higher plot ratios around the railway stations and lower plot ratios at the outskirts;
- (d) a balanced approach should be adopted to ensure that in the planning for all major new developments, urban design principles and environmental considerations would be adequately taken into account in the determination of development density levels. The densities of sites in congested localities and the distinctive harbourfront areas should be rigorously reviewed;
- (e) a steady supply of land for the so-called "Super Grade A Offices" at the central business district should be ensured; and
- (f) the development of cross-boundary infrastructure should be speeded up. Hong Kong could pursue a dual transport system with a rail-based network serving the more immediate PRD region, Guangdong and beyond, to be complemented by air services serving a much wider catchment.

22. The Administration has remarked that the actual implementation of individual policy initiatives envisioned is outside the scope of the HK2030 Study. The Study should therefore not be taken as a blueprint dictating either the form or timing of Hong Kong's future development. The reports published during these four stages as well as relevant papers are available from the dedicated website of the HK2030 Study at <http://www.hk2030.gov.hk>.

Members' views and concerns on planning matters expressed at recent Council and Panel meetings

23. A motion was carried at the Council meeting on 2 November 2005 urging the Government to comprehensively develop the border area between Hong Kong and Shenzhen in line with the principles of sustainable development and nature conservation. Another motion on "facilitating urban development" urging the Government to expeditiously review its policies affecting urban development and implement improvement measures so as to develop Hong Kong into a beautiful and vibrant world city in Asia was passed at the Council meeting on 28 June 2006. The wording of the motions is in **Appendices I** and **II** respectively.

24. The major views expressed by Panel members on planning issues at recent Panel meetings include --

- (a) a comprehensive review should be undertaken on existing statutory plans to incorporate proper development controls into the plans based on modern urban planning concepts;
- (b) the planning control and building approval mechanisms should also be reviewed to ensure that relevant planning intentions could be effectively implemented;
- (c) emphasis should be placed on public engagement in the planning process;
- (d) a proper balance should be struck between development to sustain economic growth and the conservation of heritage and the natural environment in undertaking new developments and redevelopments;
- (e) harbourfront developments must be carefully planned and opportunities should be capitalized to create a vibrant and attractive harbourfront that is continuous and easily accessible for all; and
- (f) due consideration should be given to ensuring the connectivity with neighbouring old districts when planning new developments in the urban area, so that the revitalization of old districts can be leveraged on new developments nearby.

25. A list of relevant papers issued previously on the subject is in **Appendix III**.

(Translation)

**Motion on "Facilitating urban development"
moved by Hon Patrick LAU Sau-shing
at the Legislative Council meeting
of Wednesday, 28 June 2006**

Wording of the Motion

"That, while countries and places around the world all consider urban development as the essential element to enhancing competitiveness and are vigorously expediting their pace of urban development, many barriers that hinder urban development still exist in Hong Kong, the competitive edge of which is gradually diminishing; as such, this Council urges the Government to expeditiously review its policies affecting urban development and implement improvement measures, including:

- (a) on the premise of sustainable development, commissioning a comprehensive consultancy study on such issues as planning enhancement, optimum land use, adjustment of development intensity, promotion of urban design, environment-friendly construction, infrastructures, community facilities, redevelopment of old areas, urban revitalization, preservation of cultural heritage, urban greening and air quality improvement, etc, as well as expeditiously implementing various works projects to resolve the unemployment problem in the construction industry;
- (b) setting up a high-level ad hoc committee to co-ordinate the various efforts in facilitating urban development, including extensively and efficiently soliciting public views, complementing the Eleventh Five-year Plan as well as the Shenzhen 2030 Development Strategy in the Mainland, and expeditiously publishing reports on the different stages of Hong Kong 2030: Planning Vision and Strategy; and
- (c) streamlining the approval procedures of the Town Planning Board, Lands Department and Buildings Department to shorten the construction time of works projects and improve the business environment,

with a view to expediting urban development, improving the public's quality of life, beautifying the environment, promoting tourism, creating job opportunities, attracting investment and boosting economic development, so as to develop Hong Kong into a beautiful and vibrant world city in Asia, thereby enhancing its competitiveness."

(Translation)

**Motion on
"Comprehensively developing the border area"
moved by Hon WONG Ting-kwong and amended by Hon SIN Chung-kai
at the Legislative Council meeting
of Wednesday, 2 November 2005**

Wording of the Motion

"That, as the Chief Executive has announced in his Policy Address the decision to significantly reduce the size of the closed area and to redraw the limits of the new closed area so as to release land for redevelopment, this Council urges the Government to expedite the completion of the realignment of the closed area and formulation of the planning proposals, and to devise an overall strategy on this basis to comprehensively develop the border area between Hong Kong and Shenzhen, so as to create new growth areas for Hong Kong's economy, promote co-operation between Hong Kong and Shenzhen, facilitate the development of Hong Kong's trade in services, industries and tourism, and create new employment opportunities; but given the presence of many sites of ecological and conservation value, such as wetlands and streams within the closed area, the Government must, in considering the development of these sites, ensure that the development plan is in line with the principles of sustainable development and nature conservation, and should conduct a comprehensive ecological assessment of the plan and then formulate suitable conservation measures and conduct planning in a prudent manner; the Government should also allow stakeholders, including green groups, to participate in the planning process with a view to ensuring that the policy of sustainable development can materialize."

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Hong Kong 2030: Planning Vision and Strategy

List of relevant papers

Date	Meeting/Event	References
18 May 2000	The then Panel on Planning, Lands and Works (the Panel) discussed with the Administration the subject of "Hong Kong 2030 - Planning vision and strategy".	<p>Information paper http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr99-00/english/panels/plw/papers/annex-a.pdf</p> <p>Minutes of meeting http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr99-00/english/panels/plw/minutes/pl180500.pdf</p>
5 March 2001	The Panel discussed with the Administration the subject of "Hong Kong 2030 - Planning vision and strategy".	<p>Information paper http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr00-01/english/panels/plw/papers/a693e05.pdf</p> <p>Minutes of meeting http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr00-01/english/panels/plw/minutes/pl050301.pdf</p> <p>Follow-up paper http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr00-01/chinese/panels/plw/papers/1175c.pdf</p>
1 February 2002	The Panel discussed with the Administration the subject of "Hong Kong 2030: Planning vision and strategy - stage two public consultation".	<p>Information paper http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr01-02/english/panels/plw/papers/plw0201cb1-907-5e.pdf</p> <p>Minutes of meeting http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr01-02/english/panels/plw/minutes/pl020201.pdf</p>

Date	Meeting/Event	References
25 November 2003	The Panel discussed with the Administration the subject of "Hong Kong 2030 Vision and Strategy".	<p>Information paper http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr03-04/english/panels/plw/papers/plw1125cb1-384-3e.pdf</p> <p>Information pack for stage three public consultation http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr03-04/english/panels/plw/papers/plw1125cb1-447-e-scan.pdf</p> <p>Background brief http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr03-04/english/panels/plw/papers/plw1125cb1-384-4e.pdf</p> <p>Minutes of meeting http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr03-04/english/panels/plw/minutes/pl031125.pdf</p> <p>Follow-up paper http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr03-04/english/panels/plw/papers/plw1125cb1-2425-1e.pdf</p>
2 November 2005	A motion on "comprehensively developing the border area" was carried at the Council meeting.	<p>Hansard (page 282) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr05-06/english/counmtg/hansard/cm1102ti-translate-e.pdf</p>
28 June 2006	A motion on "facilitating urban development" was carried at the Council meeting.	<p>Hansard (page 216) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr05-06/english/counmtg/hansard/cm0628-translate-e.pdf</p>
11 July 2007	Report of the Panel on Planning, Lands and Works for submission to the Legislative Council	<p>http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr06-07/english/panels/plw/reports/plwcb1-2062-e.pdf</p>