

**Public Works Subcommittee Meeting on 23 January 2015
List of issues requiring follow-up actions by the Administration
before the relevant meeting of the Finance Committee**

**Item PWSC(2014-15)41
56RG – Government Complex in Area 14 (Siu Lun), Tuen Mun**

Issue

At the request of Hon WU Chi-wai, the Administration will provide information on –

- (a) the planning restrictions (including the plot ratio, building height and site coverage restrictions, etc.) on the site reserved for the proposed Government Complex in Area 14, Tuen Mun;

Response

The Government Complex at Siu Lun has maximized building height restriction of 8 storeys as stipulated in the Tuen Mun Outline Zoning Plan. With a plot ratio (PR) of 4, the Planning Department agreed that the proposed development has achieved an optimal site utilisation of this Government, Institution and Community (G/IC) site. To facilitate air ventilation and provision of greeneries apart from functional space required at ground floor level, this project has also made reference to the maximum site coverage requirements of not exceeding 75% under the Building (Planning) Regulations.

Issue

- (b) whether the site of the proposed Government Complex has been fully utilized under the proposal in light of the restrictions in (a); and

Response

The proposed development has achieved optimum site utilisation in terms of building height, site coverage and PR.

Issue

- (c) the existing mechanism to determine the Government departments/units to be accommodated in a Government complex and how to ensure the use of land has fully responded to the needs of the community.

Response

Optimising Site Utilisation of Capital Works Projects

It is the Government's established policy to optimise site utilisation of capital works projects including G/IC facilities. Arrangements are in place to ensure that relevant government bureaux and departments take steps to economise the use of land resources and optimise the utilisation of G/IC sites -

- (i) The Planning Department (PlanD) will conduct an independent assessment of the appropriate development parameters including height and plot ratio (PR), having regard to the surrounding planning context, prevailing planning parameters, site characteristics, development restrictions/constraints and the nature of the proposed G/IC facilities.
- (ii) The Architectural Services Department (ArchSD) will conduct an initial assessment on whether the proposed user requirements could be accommodated and the PR likely to be achieved.
- (iii) If the proposed development cannot fully achieve an optimal degree of site utilisation, the Government Property Agency (GPA) will advise the project proponent to further enhance site utilisation by exploring different measures, such as incorporating more facilities to the development, reducing the site area, identifying suitable joint user(s), etc. There had also been cases where the project proponent searched for another site, or used the reserved site on an interim basis whilst allowing room for possible full scale development of the site in future.

- (iv) In case the project proponent considers it necessary to take forward the project notwithstanding that the site potential cannot be optimised according to GPA's initial assessment, there is a mechanism in place whereby the project proponent is required to refer the case to a committee convened by the Treasury Branch of the Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau for a decision. The committee will consider the case taking into account of all relevant factors, including whether the site has other competing uses, the operational justifications for early implementation of the project, environmental considerations and efforts made to enhance utilisation of the site potential, etc.

Development Intensity for G/IC Facilities

Increasing Development Intensity for Residential Developments

As announced in the 2014 Policy Address, in order to maximize the utilization of scarce land resources and to meet the acute demand for housing land, the Government will, as a matter of policy, increase the maximum domestic PR that can be allowed in the relevant "Density Zones" of the Main Urban Areas and New Towns by around 20% as appropriate and where planning terms permit, except for the north of Hong Kong Island and Kowloon Peninsula which are already densely populated.

This however does not mean an automatic increase in development intensity for individual housing sites. The increase in the PR of individual housing sites would continue to be subject to necessary approval by the Town Planning Board (TPB) under the statutory planning mechanism, where applicable. In assessing such cases, the PlanD will continue to take into account relevant planning considerations such as the traffic and infrastructure capacity in the area; the existing characters and development intensity of the neighbourhood; the potential environmental, visual and air ventilation impacts, etc. in determining the domestic PR of each housing site. The increase in the maximum domestic PR of a site will continue to be subject to relevant planning principles and considerations, and will be pursued only when there is scope in terms of development capacity, and the various constraints and impacts so arising, if any, could be addressed or mitigated through appropriate measures.

Optimising Land Utilisation for G/IC Facilities

While the above policy of increasing the maximum domestic PR applies to residential developments, the Government is also mindful to maximise the utilisation of land resources in other cases, including G/IC facilities. For instance, G/IC facilities that may co-locate with other developments would be considered for incorporation into new residential and commercial developments, where appropriate. Where standalone G/IC facilities are to be developed as capital works projects, mechanisms are already in place as set out above to optimize the site utilization.

From the planning and urban design perspective, certain G/IC facilities together with other open-air or low-rise facilities in areas zoned “Open Space” and “Amenity Areas” often serve as buffer zones and visual and spatial relief in the urban core among high density developments to create design variations, and are often placed on visual or wind corridors to improve ventilation and visual permeability. Hence, facilities on these G/IC sites would not normally be developed to the same intensity and height as surrounding residential or commercial developments. Moreover, openness is required for some facilities such as schools, sports centres, community and cultural centres, either to provide appropriate educational environment, civic landmark and space for outdoor activities, or as urban relief in a densely populated neighbourhood.

When determining the reference PR for such G/IC facilities, more weight will be given to the above urban design considerations and special user requirements. PlanD would consult ArchSD on the special user requirements and design considerations and GPA on possible joint users. However, for development of other facilities that are similar to private developments, such as government offices and departmental quarters, PlanD will also make reference to the PR of surrounding developments and the relevant planning context and considerations in determining the optimal PR.