

Enclosure

**Views from the Hong Kong Institution of Engineers on
“Planning for land supply in Hong Kong”**

Supplying Hong Kong with adequate land with reserves to provide the citizens with residences, support continued economic development and build necessary infrastructures and facilities always tops the concerns of all Hong Kong people. The Hong Kong Institution of Engineers (HKIE) has always advocated for developing Hong Kong under the overriding aims of enhancing the living quality and livelihood of the citizens as well as facilitating sustainable development. We welcome the Task Force on Land Supply to take steps in achieving the broadest consensus and drawing up a broad framework of recommendations on the overall land supply strategy for submission to the Government. The HKIE stresses our support for adopting a multi-pronged approach for land supply, and would like to put forward recommendations regarding the proposed land supply options in the ensuing paragraphs for consideration.

Short-to-medium Term Options

2. The HKIE supports efficient use of the existing land resources, and considers that developing brownfield sites is a practical option. There are about 1,300 hectares of land regarded as brownfield sites, of which around 540 hectares are covered under various New Development Area (NDA) projects readily available with the transportation network in the vicinity and water/ electricity supply in the area. It is expected that developing these existing under-utilised brownfield sites could also bring positive impacts to the surrounding environment and landscape. To address the concerns on the businesses of garages, car parks and container storage facilities currently operating in the brownfield sites, the Administration has to identify alternative sites with better land use planning to accommodate.

Medium-to-long Term Options

3. The HKIE considers that reclamation is an efficient method to generate few large pieces of new land which can allow high flexibility for comprehensive town planning. Over the last few decades, reclaimed land has supported the development of new towns (such as Tai Po, Sha Tin, Ma On Shan, etc.) to accommodate Hong Kong's booming population. Compared to other land supply options, reclamation can minimise the impacts on existing land use and avoid private land resumption or household resettlements. The new land obtained can also accommodate some offensive trades and facilities currently occupying the urban land, thus helping to release the urban land resources and enhancing the living condition of the existing community.

4. It is aware that there would be concerns on the environmental impacts brought from reclamation. However, every land supply option has its impacts to the environment. The issue is therefore on how we can better manage the impacts when

creating new land. As for reclamation, modern engineering technologies could help minimise negative impacts on water quality and ecology nearby. The non-dredged methods for reclamation have already been effectively applied to different mega projects, which can avoid dredging and disposal of marine mud and would reduce the amount of fill materials required for dredged trench. The adoption of deep cement mixing method in reclamation helps form a stable foundation that prevents the release of pollutants into water. More environmentally-sound examples of reclamation include the Three-runway System of the Hong Kong International Airport which adopts deep cement mixing in reclamation, as well as the artificial island supporting the Hong Kong Boundary Crossing Facilities of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge which is even the first project fully adopting non-dredged methods in Hong Kong.

5. It is noted that a number of assessment exercises have been substantially completed and have identified several potential nearshore reclamation sites, including Lung Kwu Tan for industrial uses, Siu Ho Wan for training and education facilities, Ma Liu Shui for high technology industries and housing, and Sunny Bay for leisure development. The assessment exercise has also suggested that there is great development potential for artificial islands in the Central Waters between Lantau and Hong Kong Island for developing the East Lantau Metropolis as one of the long-term strategic growth areas which are crucial for the future development of Hong Kong. We support the Administration to proceed in carrying out detailed planning and engineering studies for reclamation on these identified suitable sites and exploring other potential reclamation sites.

6. Meanwhile, we also support the Administration to explore the possibility of conversion of the existing seawall into eco-shoreline for enhancing the marine ecology and the public enjoyment along the seafront. To keep monitoring the reclamation footprints, stringent ecological impact assessments for any selected reclamation sites should be conducted at different stages.

7. Developing rock caverns with fewer negative impacts to the neighborhood is a desirable option, while underground space development is also feasible in the urban setting of Hong Kong. The HKIE believes that these two options can create/ release land in the developed areas for different commercial and public facilities. In particular to rock cavern development, there is proven local experience in cavern construction as demonstrated by various existing facilities built in Hong Kong, such as the MTR stations including Tai Koo Station and Sai Ying Pun Station. The rock cavern development would also bring lateral benefits by providing valuable sources of industrial and construction materials with the excavated debris. Noting that the Administration has completed the “Long-term Strategy for Cavern Development – Feasibility Study”, the Institution suggests the Administration to formulate action plans and put the study findings into implementation in a timely manner.

8. The Institution supports for more NDAs and new town extension projects in the New Territories, which could provide a major source of long-term land supply especially for housing. The NDA Projects also facilitate for an opportunity to consolidate brownfield operations.

Conceptual Options

9. The Institution considers that it is of importance to maintain the well-kept balance of the natural areas in the territory for maintaining Hong Kong as a green city. As for the initiative of identifying fringe of country parks for new land supply, the Administration is suggested to conduct careful planning with detailed analysis of the impact. Land at the fringe of the country parks with relatively low ecological and public enjoyment value might be considered if the areas are sparsely vegetated and are close to other developed areas and the existing transport network.

10. Since the rainfall pattern in Hong Kong could be unstable, every source of fresh water is essential to Hong Kong. The HKIE is of the view that any plan to reclaim the existing reservoirs for land supply should only be considered as the last resort.

Other Suggestions

11. Apart from looking for new land resources, the HKIE opines that urban regeneration as addressed in the “Hong Kong 2030+” is essential to meet the rolling housing supply target. The Administration is suggested to step up effective measures to rejuvenate the old districts while cost control and project management for undertaking private housing renewal projects should be closely monitored. Along the urban renewal initiatives, the uniqueness and characteristics of the urban districts should be preserved and designed to enrich the general living condition of the Hong Kong people.

12. Sustainable land planning and management is to plan for adequate land to meet current and anticipated demand, with readiness to improve liveability and capture opportunities, and preparation to cater for future uncertainties. The HKIE supports that extra land reserves should be pursued to meet various unforeseeable demands in the future and continuously improve our living environment. The Administration is also urged to develop a visionary blueprint and an attainable target for land supply in the long run with full consideration of the future trend in population growth. In order to gather consensus from the public and to facilitate an informed discussion of the subject matters in the community, the Administration should maintain high transparency in its information sharing with the public and full engagement with all stakeholders when finalising and prioritising the land supply options.