SUBMISSION

To

**Subcommittee to study the Urban Renewal Authority White Bill
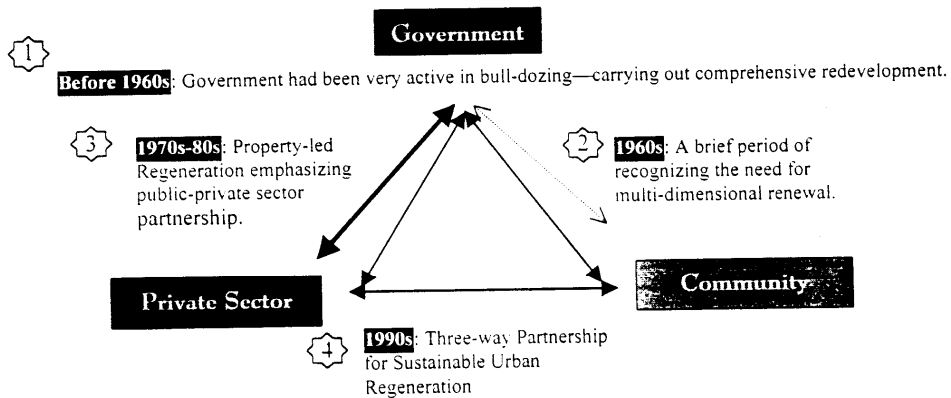Legislative Council**

November 24, 1999

**The Inadequacies of the *Urban Renewal Authority White Bill*
in Tackling Hong Kong's Renewal Problems**

Urban Regeneration Research Team[1]
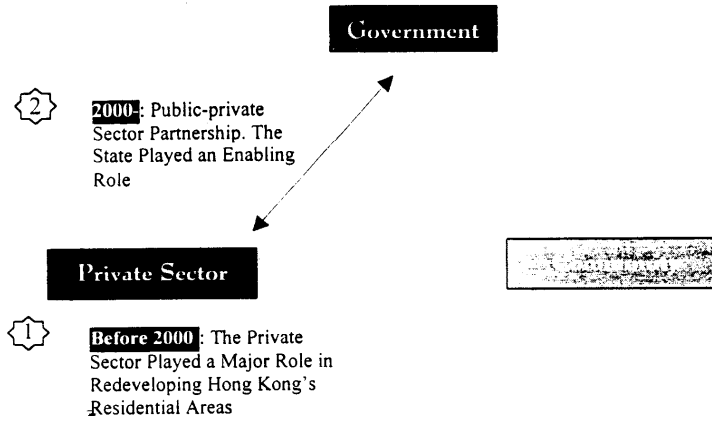The University of Hong Kong

1.   Histories of Urban Renewal: Hong Kong's Uniqueness

Figure 1: History of Urban Renewal in Western Countries: A Generalization

{1} **Government**

Before 1960s: Government had been very active in bull-dozing—carrying out comprehensive redevelopment.

{3} **1970s-80s**: Property-led
Regeneration emphasizing
public-private sector
partnership.

{2} **1960s**: A brief period of
recognizing the need for
multi-dimensional renewal.

Private Sector

Community

{4} **1990s**: Three-way Partnership
for Sustainable Urban
Regeneration

Figure 2: History of Urban Renewal in Hong Kong

Government

{2} **2000**: Public-private
Sector Partnership. The
State Played an Enabling
Role

Private Sector

{1} **Before 2000**: The Private
Sector Played a Major Role in
Redeveloping Hong Kong's
Residential Areas

The above graphic relationship can also be captured in the following tables:

The History of Urban Regeneration in Hong Kong

Phase	State	Private Sector	Community
Post-WWII-1960s	Clearance (in U.K., rehousing of affected residents provided)	Rebuilding/redevelopment	
1960s-1970s	Decreasing emphasis on bulldozing and comprehensive redevelopment. Emphasis on <u>rehabilitation</u>.		Multi-dimensional redevelopment and rehabilitation
1970s-1980s	Public-private partnership in property-led urban regeneration.		
1990s-	"New (three-way) partnership" (state, private sector and community) for sustainable and simultaneous economic, physical and human regeneration.		

Lessons Hong Kong Should Learn from Other Restructuring Countries

Regeneration Lessons from Other Countries	Hong Kong's Situation
Regeneration is more than just clearing the rapidly deteriorating physical fabric.	Hong Kong government still considers regeneration as basically a problem of physical redevelopment.
Redevelopment and rehabilitation have to be "multi-dimensional".	
Public-private partnership in property-led urban regeneration alone will not lead to sustainable rejuvenation.	Public-private partnership in property-led urban regeneration is the basic approach adopted by the Land Development Corporation.
A three-way partnership is essential for multi-dimensional regeneration.	The community is almost invisible in Hong Kong's regeneration efforts.
Non-market based means are explored for urban regeneration.	The Government is obsessed with financial calculations in property market-led redevelopment.

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2.   Multi-dimensional Restructuring Processes in Hong Kong

We contend that the Western experience is of direct relevance to Hong Kong for formulating an urban renewal strategy and the related policy measures. Economic restructuring has given rise to the need for varying degrees of physical change over space. While the market plays an important role in the "destructive creation" and the "creative destruction" of "outdated" urban spaces, there are often areas the "invisible hand" (the market) never visits. These are usually areas where physical dilapidation coincides with social exclusion. In Hong Kong, as our economic restructuring processes deepen and as the Asian Financial Crisis continues to unfold, we are not dissimilar to other countries, which have to tackle simultaneously issues related to physical, economic and human resources regeneration.

Economic Restructuring

Hong Kong has faced rapid deindustrialization in recent decades. Manufacturing industries' contribution to GDP has declined from 23.7% in 1980 to 17.6% in 1990, and to 6.5% in 1997 (CSD, 1996 p.62; 1999, p.68). In 1980, 41.7% of the workforce was in the manufacturing sector. The figure dropped to 27.4% in 1990 and 9.7% in 1997 (Ng, 1999). In August 1998 144,000 people lost their jobs and 88,000 were under-employed. The unemployment rate has increased to 6% after running at around 2.5% for several years.

On the other hand, we saw the growth of a speculative economy. The Hang Seng Index was about 3,000 points in 1990, increased to 16,800 points in 1997, fell to 6,544 points in 1998, and now stands at around 14,000-15,000. Property prices increased six-fold from 1990 to 1997. The bubble economy burst as a result of the Asian Financial Crisis, and property prices have fallen substantially.

Social Polarization

Economic restructuring has worsened social polarization. According to a research done by HKCSS & Oxfam Hong Kong (1996, viii), there were 250,000 households (15.5%) or 640,000 people (11%) living in abject poverty in 1994 and 1995. The income of the highest income bracket is, on average, 38 times that of the lowest (Yeung, 1997).

Physical restructuring (magnitude of redevelopment problems)

According to the Government, over half of the 50,000 buildings in the urban areas are over 20 years old. Some 7,000 are over 40 years old. In a few years time, 40 per cent of these buildings will be 30 years old, reaching the end of their useful life due to poor construction standards and lack of maintenance.

The unpublished "Urban Renewal Strategy-an Outline" identifies 8,500 buildings over 30 years old: 2,400 buildings are in reasonable condition and can last for a number of years, given proper maintenance; 3,900 buildings may require rehabilitation (but not redevelopment); and 2,200 buildings may require redevelopment (1,300 buildings will be redeveloped by the URA; 300 buildings may be redeveloped by the private developers or building owners on their own; and 600 buildings will be rehabilitated).

As shown in the case studies of redevelopment projects by the team members (Chui, 1999; Ng and Tam, 1999), physical dilapidation in old urban areas often coincides with poverty,

social exclusion and environmental pollution, etc[2]. One can almost be sure that those living within the old urban areas would never benefit in the gentrification process. Hence, Government should intervene to help improve their quality of life so that they could better contribute to society in the longer term. In other words, instead of just doing business calculations in redeveloping individual projects, Government needs to be convinced of the value of a long term investment in the environment and the people.

3.   Urban Renewal Strategy: "First Things First"

We Need to Know the Contents of the Urban Renewal Strategy

In *The Consultation Paper on the Urban Renewal Authority Bill*, it is stated that:
- "[t]he Authority will implement an urban renewal programme which is based on the <u>urban renewal strategy</u>" (paragraph 7, p.4);
- "The Government will formulate <u>an urban renewal strategy</u> which identifies projects for priority implementation by the Authority" (paragraph 16, p.6); and
- "The Authority [URA] will no longer have to seek the Government's approval on a proposal-by-proposal basis as long as the Authority operates within the parameters and guidelines set out in the Government's <u>urban renewal strategy</u>" (paragraph 17, p.7, my emphases).

As can be seen from Western countries' experience and in the above paragraphs, the <u>urban renewal strategy</u> is of prime importance for us to judge the appropriateness of the URA for implementing the strategy. However, unfortunately, the <u>urban renewal strategy</u> is *not* even discussed in the *Bill*. It is, therefore, difficult to assess if the *Bill* is the answer to our urban regeneration problem.
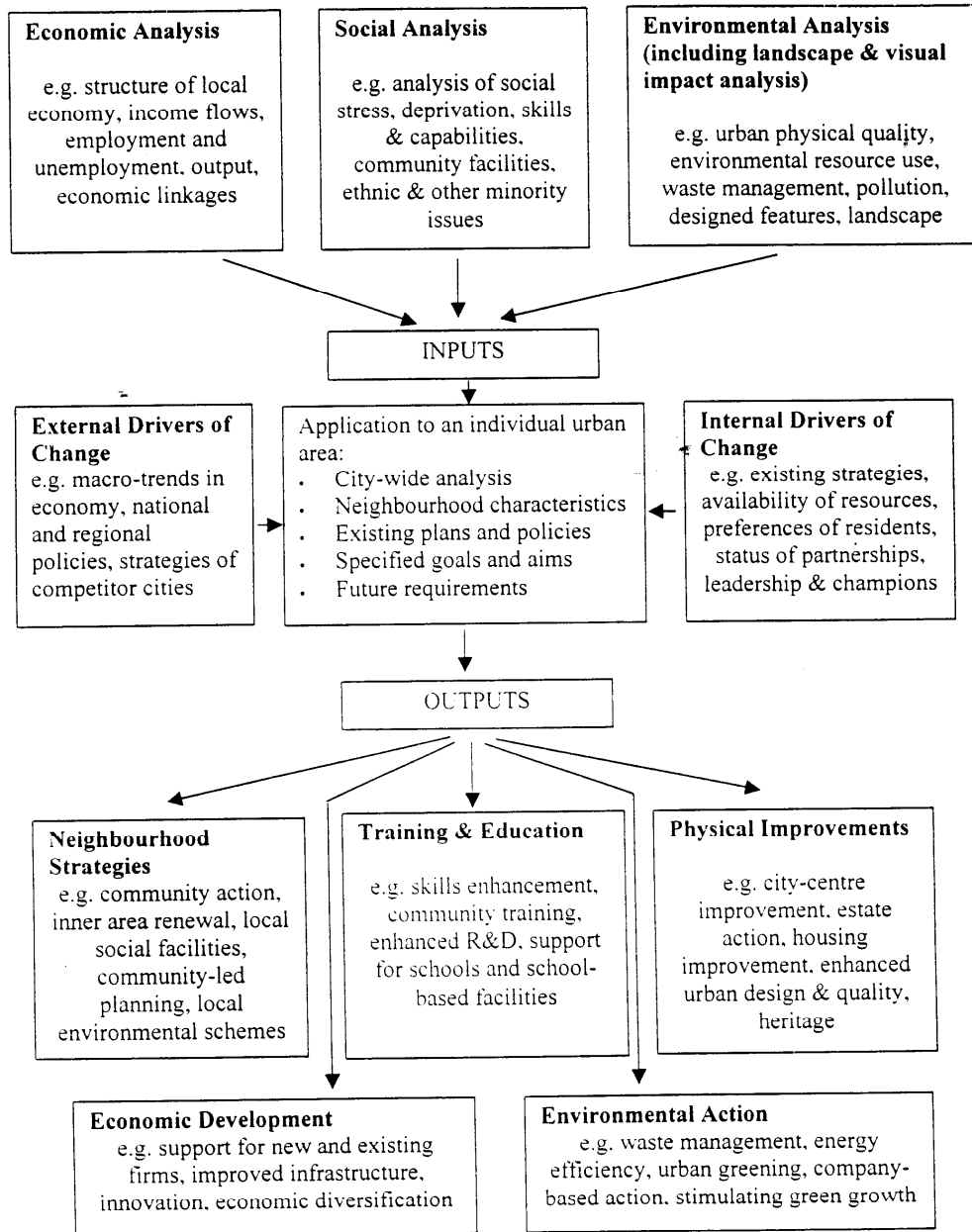
Nevertheless, a standard way of formulating an urban renewal (or urban regeneration which is a much better term to describe the challenging task of urban restructuring these days) strategy can be seen in the following diagram (Figure 3). One can see that the processes are rather standard if sustainable urban regeneration is pursued. As promised by the Chief Executive in his Policy Address, "within the Administration, all bureaux will in future be required to carry out 'sustainability impact assessments' of major new policy proposals", we trust that "sustainability impact assessments" will be undertaken before the urban renewal strategy is finalized. And thorough debates and discussion of the contents of the Strategy are of vital importance for mapping out an appropriate course of action to tackle our multi-faceted urban regeneration problems.

From *Urban Renewal Strategy-an Outline* (1999) prepared by the Planning, Environment and Lands Bureau, the main elements of the strategy include (pp.2-8):
- designing a more effective and environmentally friendly local transport and road network;
- providing more open space and community facilities;
- rehabilitating buildings in need of repair and preserving buildings of historical, cultural or architectural interest.

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2   In the Tsuen Wan case study, Ng and Tam (1999) found that the old Town Centre, which is in dire need of physical redevelopment, has a high concentration of elderly and youth, low-educated, low income and unemployed people.

Figure 3: The Urban Regeneration Process Leading to the Formulation of an Integrated Strategy

Economic Analysis	Social Analysis	Environmental Analysis (including landscape & visual impact analysis)
e.g. structure of local economy, income flows, employment and unemployment, output, economic linkages	e.g. analysis of social stress, deprivation, skills & capabilities, community facilities, ethnic & other minority issues	e.g. urban physical quality, environmental resource use, waste management, pollution, designed features, landscape

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INPUTS

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External Drivers of Change e.g. macro-trends in economy, national and regional policies, strategies of competitor cities	Application to an individual urban area: • City-wide analysis • Neighbourhood characteristics • Existing plans and policies • Specified goals and aims • Future requirements	Internal Drivers of Change e.g. existing strategies, availability of resources, preferences of residents, status of partnerships, leadership & champions

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OUTPUTS

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Neighbourhood Strategies e.g. community action, inner area renewal, local social facilities, community-led planning, local environmental schemes	Training & Education e.g. skills enhancement, community training, enhanced R&D, support for schools and school-based facilities	Physical Improvements e.g. city-centre improvement, estate action, housing improvement, enhanced urban design & quality, heritage

Economic Development e.g. support for new and existing firms, improved infrastructure, innovation, economic diversification	Environmental Action e.g. waste management, energy efficiency, urban greening, company-based action, stimulating green growth

Source: Adapted from Roberts, 1999.

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The three points are biased towards physical redevelopment or improvement. However, if the Government is serious about sustainable development and is knowledgeable of its ture meaning (as shown in Figure 3), physical improvement, no matter how important, should only be part of an integrated urban regeneration strategy. In general, sustainable urban regeneration should embody the following principles and measures.

We Need A Sustainable Urban Regeneration Strategy

Principle for a Sustainable Urban Regeneration PROCESS[3]

Participation: A sustainable urban renewal process should be participatory, making good use of local knowledge and taking into account the interests and perspectives of different stakeholders. Participation channels and information should be available and accessible to all. Participation should be more than consultation: it should be engagement in making choices and determining future development.

Means to realize this principle:
- All strands of the community should be included, encouraged and empowered to participate at all stages of the regeneration process;
- Comprehensive, balanced and accurate information should be provided to the public;
- Community initiatives and contacts between stakeholders should be encouraged and facilitated; and
- Full, accessible and easily understood monitoring should be undertaken.

Principles for Sustainable Urban Regeneration OUTCOME

Community: Sustainable urban renewal should respect community history, strengthen community identity, facilitate community building and fulfil the needs and expectations of the community.

Means to achieve this principle:
- Provide amenities and open space to facilitate community involvement;
- Understand the place-making dynamics of a community;
- Identify the historical and cultural elements of an area which give it a sense of place; and
- Respect these elements when introducing new development to produce space with unique characteristics.

Equity: Sustainable urban renewal should ensure equitable distribution of benefits and costs. It should consider the impacts on different social groups and ensure that adequate resources and services are available to mitigate the impacts on disadvantaged groups.

Means available include:
- Community fairness in access to affordable housing, education, health and welfare services, recreation, shopping;
- Tackling social exclusion by providing opportunity for a better life for people in poverty, without jobs, with low educational achievement, lacking access to public services, living in degraded environments; and
- Fair and reasonable compensation, adequate rehousing and sufficient social services.

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3   Modified from Tam, 1999. See also Roberts, 1999, and Roberts and Sykes, 1999.

Environment: *Sustainable urban renewal should improve the overall living and working environment in order to promote health, safety and enjoyment. It should safeguard resources and prevent environmental degradation.*

To achieve this we need to:
- Improve the physical environment;
- Conserve and/or recycle non-renewable resources;
- Adopt "green" building techniques;
- Rehabilitate buildings where feasible;
- Maintain buildings and structures in good repair;
- Build to last; and
- Maximise public transport accessibility.

Economy: *Sustainable urban development should improve the overall economic conditions, both for the old urban areas and the whole territory.*

To achieve this objective:
- Economic feasibility is more important than financial feasibility;
- Stimulate employment opportunities at local and city level;
- Re-use under-utilised and obsolete land; and
- Recycle obsolete buildings to other uses.

To summarize, we need a multi-dimensional urban regeneration strategy, which is people-centred and concerned about "place-making". There should be mechanisms for checks and balances (within and beyond the Government) in the formulation, evaluation, implementation and review of the <u>urban renewal strategy (URS)</u> to ensure that the strategy is dynamic, flexible, inclusive, and suits the needs of the restructuring context. To ensure that the regeneration process is sustainable, impact assessments should be required for redevelopment schemes. The following assessments should be carried out before the launching of the projects:
- Community Impact Assessment (Appendix I).
- Economic Impact Assessment.
- Environmental Impact Assessment.
- Landscape Impact and Visual Impact Assessment.
- Factors pertaining to the physical environment that should be considered in planning urban regeneration projects are listed in Appendix II.

In the longer run, to facilitate the building up of social capital and "social bridges" among various organizations and institutions in the process of people-centred place-making, we need infrastructure (soft and hard) to facilitate "a dialogue where people can affirm, interrogate, and construct knowledge they need in order to maintain their own places" (Schneekloth and Shipley, 1995, p.6). Community-building and planning have to be on the agenda if Hong Kong is serious about reinventing itself as a sustainable society. A first step might be to establish a community facilitation team, or teams, to help local residents make overt what is special about their neighbourhood, to identify problems and to determine what needs to be changed.

4.   The Urban Renewal Authority Bill: "Old Wine in a New Bottle"

This paper has argued that the Government's reluctance in putting resources into urban regeneration and its denial of the rightful participation of its citizens in determining the future of the urban spaces that they share and utilize daily are detrimental, in the long run, to sustainable development in Hong Kong. Our position is very simple: that the Government playing an enabling role for the private sector to redevelop our urban landscape is not enough. The Government needs to be more proactive in understanding the nature of our complicated urban regeneration problems and more imaginative in utilization Government resources, market solutions and non-market (community-based) means to solve the complex urban problems. Any denial of the multi-faceted nature of the urban issues that we face today or reluctance to investigate the impacts of different actions on the economic, social and environmental arenas will cost our future generations dearly. We have to understand and respect that the challenges we are facing provide us with tremendous learning opportunities, and moments for changes for the better. We can pretend that the problems are easy to deal with and apply standard simple solutions. However, we then have to prepare to bear the undesirable outcomes (e.g. marginalization of the underclasses, characterless places and loss of job opportunities in small businesses unique to Hong Kong in the past) for many generations to come.

The similarities between the URA Bill and the LDC Ordinance are alarming:

LDC Ordinance	URA Bill
Part I: Preliminary	
Part II: Establishment of the Land Development Corporation • Establishment of the Corporation • Purposes of the Corporation • Powers of the Corporation	Part II: Urban Renewal Authority • Establishment of Authority • Establishment of Board of Authority • Purposes of Authority • General power of Authority Part III: Public Accountability • Members to declare interests • Duty of public officers to state public interest • Answer to Legislative Council
Part III: Financial • Resources of the Corporation • Borrowing powers • Guarantee by the Government • Use of surplus funds • Corporation to act on commercial principles • Accounts, audit and annual report • Debt of the Corporation Part IV: Development of Land Development schemes Submissions of plans to Town Planning Board	Part IV: Financial Provisions • Resources of Authority • Borrowing powers • Power to lend money • Guarantee by Government • Use of surplus funds • Debt of Authority • Accounts, audit and annual report • Exemption from taxation Part V: Planning Procedures • Corporate plan • Business plan • Publication of project • Objections to projects to be implemented by way of development project • Development schemes • Development projects to accord with Town Planning Ordinance
Part V: Resumption of Land • Power of Secretary to recommend resumption • Power to enter and inspect	Part VI: Resumption and Disposal of Land • Power of Secretary to recommend resumption • Power to enter and inspect

LDC Ordinance	URA Bill
Part VI: Miscellaneous • Secretary may obtain information • Governor may give directions • By-laws • Consequential and other amendments	Part VII: Miscellaneous • Secretary may obtain information • Chief Executive may give directions • Authority may make bylaws Part VIII: Transitional Provisions • Repeal of Land Development Corporation Ordinance • Transfer of properties, assets, contracts, etc. • Consequential amendments

Will URA Overcome "The Obstacles"?

<u>Self-financing</u>

It seems that the only major difference between the LDC Ordinance and the URA Bill is the omission of the clause stipulating that LDC has to act on commercial principles (clause 10). This salient difference is outlined in paragraph 3 of the *Consultation Paper*, "the original assumption that urban renewal could be wholly self-financing in the long run may not be valid in future as a result of the scarcity of sites for profitable redevelopment and a less exuberant property market" (p.2). Hence, "a new approach to urban renewal is needed" and the new approach is the setting up of the URA. However, as we shall see in the following, this does not mean that the Government has resolved to put more resources into urban renewal. As stated in the *Consultation Paper,* "we [they(E001)the Government] are studying the extent to which the financial viability of projects would be enhanced if plot ratio controls could be relaxed for the project areas and if the GIC facilities within the project areas could be exempted from the calculation of the gross floor area. We are also exploring the logistics and implications of making loans to finance the Authority's projects, in addition to forgoing land premia for urban renewal sites and packaging redevelopment projects so that financially viable projects can cross-subsidize non-viable projects, with the result that the overall return would be commercially attractive to encourage private sector participation" (p.6).

Since all these proposals are "being studied", these measures are <u>not</u> mentioned in the *Bill.*
Nevertheless, a large portion of the provision in the *Bill* deals with financial matters: Part IV: Financial Provisions (clauses 10-17); Corporate plan (clause 18); Business plan (clause 19). Clauses 10-17 in Part IV stipulate how URA should handle its financial resources. This Part seems to be the most detailed section in the whole *Bill*. Moreover, both Corporate and Business plans require the approval of the Financial Secretary. One has the impression that instead of making sure our future regeneration efforts will be sustainable (in terms of process and outcome), the Government's primary concern remains the same: financial viability.

As argued above, the urban regeneration problem we are facing is more complicated than just the dilapidation of the physical structure. We need <u>an integrated policy framework</u> to tackle the multi-faceted problem. Financial viability or indeed more appropriate, economic sustainability, at best, should just be one of the concerns in tackling the issues.

<u>Problems with Land Assembly</u>

To cite "protracted negotiations with property owners" as the reason for prolonged land assembly process (The *Bill*, 1999, p.2) is over-stating this reason. As can be seen in the

Tsuen Wan Town Centre Redevelopment Project (Ng and Tam, 1999), the project had dragged on for almost a decade (because of the negotiations between HKHS and the Government over the financial viability of the project) before LDC took it up in 1997 and within one year, it had acquired over 80% of the property. LDC should be in a much better position to point out that the lack of coordination between different units of the bureaucracy, and its lack of mandate over these Government departments are the major reasons for delay.

In other words, <u>better coordination among various concerned Government departments</u> should also be emphasized.

<u>Rehousing Resources</u>

It is acknowledge that the lack of rehousing resources has forced the LDC to "persuade" affected tenants to take cash compensation (paid by the private sector partner) instead of rehousing. Proper rehousing policies and resources are very important if we do not want to equate urban renewal as the "removal of the poor population" from the old urban areas. However, except Clause 6, 2(g), there is no way for us to know if adequate rehousing resources will be available for URA to rehouse affected tenants.

Furthermore, for genuine sustainable urban renewal, we should not assume that residents in areas subject to development schemes and projects will be displaced. In situ rehousing should be available to the elderly who are attached to the local environment and for those businesses which characterize the area. If we do not <u>examine the needs of various groups</u> in the district (those who want to stay; those who need to stay; those who prefer to move away; etc.), we may create more problems than solving them at the end of the "redevelopment" and "removal" processes.

Physical Redevelopment Biased Objectives

Compared with what we have laid out for a sustainable urban regeneration, the objective of urban renewal as defined in the *Consultation Paper* is deceptively simple: "The goal is to plan more comprehensively and to improve the overall environment of the older built-up areas" (p.3). The purposes of Authority as stipulated in Clause 5 are:
a) The body...having the responsibility of improving the standard of housing and the built environment of Hong Kong by undertaking, encouraging, promoting and facilitating urban renewal;
b) Improve the standard of housing and the built environment of Hong Kong and the layout of built-up areas by replacing old and run-down areas with new development which is properly planned and, where appropriate, provided with adequate transport and other infrastructure and community facilities;
c) Achieve better utlization of land in the dilapidated areas of the built environment of Hong Kong and to make land available to meet various development needs;
d) Avoid the decay of the built environment of Hong Kong by promoting the maintenance and improvement of individual buildings as regards their structural instability, integrity and external finishes and fire safety as well as the improvement of the physical appearance and conditions of the built environment.

While the Government offers no definition of "urban renewal" in Clause 2 (Interpretation), it seems to equate "urban renewal" with "improving the housing and environment standards". As argued above, this understanding reveals a naivety of the Government in conceptualizing

the complex issues. The socio-economic dimensions of urban renewal are simply assumed away. This naivety is shown in objective (b). As can be seen in numerous examples of urban planning literature, "proper planning with appropriate facilities" can never be achieved by planners' inputs alone. Unless mechanisms exist to involve the communities, to give them space and power to share in making decisions about the future of the urban landscape, the space will seldom be "properly planned" in the end users' eyes. However, there seems to be an implicit belief throughout the document that planners know best what should be replacing the old urban fabric. Is it really so? Are Tseung Kwan O and Tin Shui Wai what we want to see in our future urban areas? If we are serious about people-centred redevelopment and place-making in renewing our urban fabric, we need to have more imaginative legislation and policies than the *Bill*.

While Part VI is devoted to "resumption and disposal of land", the mechanisms for achieving purposes (c) and (d) are not clearly spelt out. The whole *Bill* seems to have just focused on "redevelopment" rather than "maintenance and improvement of buildings". Is the URA going to undertake all building improvement works as seems to be implied in Clause 6(2) (I)? If not, then how will the URA "promote" the maintenance and improvement of individual buildings"? *"Preservation and conservation"* are not mentioned in the *Bill*, though the Chief Executive's Policy Address states that "the concept of preserving our heritage should be incorporated into all projects for redeveloping old urban areas" (para. 133).

Public Accountability?

Public accountability of URA should go beyond avoiding conflicts of interest. The *Bill* does not specify how the general public can monitor the work of the URA. Answering questions by the Legislative Council is not enough. As previously argued in the principle for a sustainable urban regeneration process, "full, accessible and easily understood monitoring should be undertaken".

Planning Procedures

The contents required in the Corporate and Business plans (Clauses 18-19) reflect once again that financial matters rank first in the Government's agenda. The merits of the projects are not discussed. As reflected in the titles of the plans, they are indeed financial statements. Here is an implicit trust and hence an unquestioning acceptance of the Urban Renewal Strategy. This again proves that the Urban Renewal Strategy needs to be carefully examined and debated before its finalization and a proper feedback and monitoring system needs to be in place to steer its subsequent implementation in a dynamic and flexible manner.

Clause 6(2)(q) stipulates that the Authority shall have power to and may "conduct any survey and census as it thinks fit for the purpose of drawing up any plans and for the purpose of ascertaining a rehousing commitment resulting from any project of the Authority". In Clause 22(c), it is specified that a development scheme shall contain "an assessment by the Authority as to the likely effect of the implementation of the development scheme including, ...who will be displaced...whether or not, insofar as suitable residential accommodation for such persons does not already exist, arrangement can be made...". As argued above, the formulation of a sustainable urban regeneration strategy requires careful economic, social and environmental analyses and a careful investigation of external and internal factors. Hence, the Authority should be required to undertake the sustainability assessment and publish it together with the publication of project as stipulated in Clause 20.

There are a number of problems with the provision in Clause 20. First of all, as specified in Clause 20(4), it seems that the Authority is given power to make policies on the "eligibility of any person to receive compensation, payments or other benefits including the provision of alternative residential accommodation" etc. As can be seen in previous experience, how these policies are conceived, formulated and implemented will affect the progress of the redevelopment projects. It is hoped that the Authority will formulate these policies with care and understanding of the plight of the socially excluded lower income group.

Only <u>one month</u> is provided for objection to the project. Is not this <u>too short</u>, especially when the Government seems quite determined not to let the public know about their redevelopment plan and renewal strategy? One month may not be enough for the residents to understand the contents of the projects, not to mention examining future plans and development. Also, no appeal mechanism is provided and it seems that the Secretary's decision will be final. All these procedures violate the prime principle of carrying out a sustainable urban regeneration process: <u>participation.</u>

5.   Concluding Remarks

Hong Kong is in a dire need of a sustainable urban regeneration strategy to tackle its multi-faceted, complicated and evolving socio-economic and environmental problems. This not only requires the input of resources from the Government, it also requires a genuine partnership of the private sector and the community. The "business as usual" mentality will not lead Hong Kong towards a sustainability path. The URA Bill is not fundamentally different from the LDC Ordinance and the Government seems to consider that by playing an enabling role, urban redevelopment problems and physical dilapidation will leave us in 20 years time. History will show us that this mentality is wrong.

Hong Kong needs to formulate a sustainable urban renewal strategy. Until we have such strategy, we cannot say for sure whether the URA Bill is the answer. Hong Kong needs an urban renewal policy which is truly people-centred and concerned about place-making. Redeveloping the physical fabric alone will not benefit the existing residents. To facilitate the implementation of such policies, sustainability impact assessments are essential.

As argued elsewhere (Ng and Tam, 1999), if the Government were ready to recognize that it has important roles to play in place-making, in ameliorating the social and environmental plight of the socially excluded, it would be more open minded about utilizing society's resources (social capital(E001)neighbourhood networks, collective wisdom and cooperation of different community based groups) to produce people-friendly and community-nurturing spaces with unique local characteristics. The Government would take the lead in respecting the history of the place and people's ways of utilizing space, which give life and vibrancy to the cityscape. The Government would place more emphasis on heritage conservation and the preservation of our historical roots.

If these become the prime concerns of the redevelopment agents, the marginalized people would not be neglected. Every single aspect and step of the redevelopment process would be carefully considered. If engaging the community is a common goal for all the stakeholders involved, people will be more caring and empathetic especially to those who would be directly affected by the uncertainties generated by the redevelopment process. To achieve such a common goal, people might be more willing to share information and feel more ready to cooperate. Given more information and channels for residents to participate and share

experience, they might be able to generate interesting solutions to various sorts of problems. These may include rehousing, management issues when residents start to move out of a particular district, and equity issues in the acquisition process.

The opposite of this picture would be protests and struggles by the marginalized to defend the very little space that they are required by the *Bill* to yield...

Appendix I: Community Impact Assessment[4]

All projects and policies go through stages: initial planning, implementation and construction, operation and maintenance; and abandonment or decommission. Social impacts will be different for each stage.

Identifying Community Impact Assessment Variables:

Population Characteristics
- Population change
- Ethnic distribution
- Relocated population
- Influx or outflow of temporary workers

Community and Institutional Structures
- Voluntary associations
- Interest group activity
- Size and structure of local government
- Historical experience with change
- Employment or income characteristics
- Local/regional/national linkages
- Industrial/commercial diversity
- Presence of planning and zoning activity

Political and Social Resources
- Distribution of power and authority
- Identification of stakeholders
- Interest and affected parties
- Leadership capability and characteristics

Individual and Family Changes
- Perceptions of risk, health and safety
- Displacement/relocation concerns
- Trust in political and social institutions
- Residential stability
- Level of acquaintance
- Attitudes toward policy/project
- Family and friendship networks
- Concerns about social well-being

Community Resources
- Change in community infrastructure
- Land use patterns
- Effects on cultural, historical and archaeological resources

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[4]   Extracted and summarized from Institute for Environmental Studies (1995), "Guidelines and principles for social impact assessment," *Environmental Impact Assessment Review*, 1995, 15, pp.11-43.

Appendix II: A Checklist on physical environment factors for area improvement/restructuring

Vitality and variety
- activity nodes
- street activities
- land uses
- texture (relationship of buildings and space)
- grain of street pattern
- visual quality
- relation of buildings to street

"Greening the city"
- colour
- shade
- softening
- air pollution absorption
- micro-climate
- aesthetics
- ambience

Traffic and transport
- public access to non-polluting transport
- connectivity of public transport modes and routes
- pedestrian accessibility
- pedestrian permeability
- pedestrian experience

Building - Appropriateness of fit:
   New Building
   - scale
   - layout
   - form
   - appearance
   - use
   - materials

- special individual quality (historic, architectural, or cultural merit)
- special group quality (contribution to streetscape, townscape)

Use
- Compatibility with area
- Compatibility with immediate adjacent uses
- Contribution to needs of area
- Contribution to character of area

Re-use potential
- rehabilitation
- conservation
- recycling to other uses

Form of new development
- Sympathetic to topography
- Compatible with the desired character of the area

Public space
- appropriateness of location
- opportunities for 'conferred life'
- quality
- connectivity
- appropriateness of purpose

Internal Living Space
- privacy-personal/family space i.e. not shared except by choice
- self-containment   (independent

Existing buildings

Physical condition

- safety
- appearance

bathroom and kitchen)

- adequate living area (floorspace)
- safety (building structure. electrical wiring; plumbing; drainage)

References

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