

Translation

Kowloon City District Urban Renewal Forum

For discussion on
28 February 2012

Paper No.: DURF KC/03/2012

Preparation of the Preliminary Urban Renewal Proposals for Kowloon City and Programme for Relevant Studies

Purpose

This paper seeks Members' views on the approach in preparing the Preliminary Urban Renewal Proposals for Kowloon City (the Kowloon City PURP), and reports on the progress of the preparation work for the PURP and the schedule for commencement of the related studies.

Background

2. The major task of the Kowloon City District Urban Renewal Forum ("DURF"), upon its establishment, is to advise the Government on the Urban Renewal Plan within the Kowloon City area, including advice on redevelopment and rehabilitation areas, plus preservation and revitalisation initiatives contributing to a quality city environment. As such, at its meeting held in August last year, DURF decided to commence the Study on Urban Renewal Plan for Kowloon City ("the Planning Study") and the related Social Impact Assessment ("SIA"), and to conduct broad-based public engagement activities throughout the process, so as to formulate the Urban Renewal Plan for the Kowloon City District from a holistic and integrated perspective.

3. To facilitate the commencement of the forthcoming studies and public engagement activities, the Secretariat is now preparing the Kowloon City PURP, which will be submitted to DURF for consideration upon completion. The PURP will form the basis for conducting the Stage 1 Public Engagement activities, the Planning Study and the SIA.

Preparation of the Preliminary Urban Renewal Proposals for Kowloon City

Vision

4. The vision of the Kowloon City PURP is: through urban renewal, to continue injecting vibrancy for the Kowloon City District which has rich historic and cultural resources, and to release land for integration with surrounding developments for provision of sites for uses such as housing, leisure and community facilities, thus creating a quality living environment for residents within and outside the district.

Approach

5. Since DURF will advise the Government on the Urban Renewal Plan for Kowloon City which includes the proposed redevelopment and rehabilitation areas, and preservation and revitalisation initiatives, the Secretariat, in preparing the PURP, will make recommendations after examining the private developments in the District, including industrial buildings but excluding public housing of the Housing Authority. During the process, the Secretariat will delineate different areas after consolidating the local views collected from the District Aspirations Study on Urban Renewal for Kowloon City (“DAS”) in 2010, the result and relevant comments from Members in the site visits, in accordance with the criteria of the building age and building conditions within the Kowloon City District (based on the results of the Building Conditions Survey completed by the Urban Renewal Authority (“URA”) in 2010). Other considerations include the living conditions of the residents (such as environmental hygiene, air/noise pollution), the opportunity for the proximity to mass transportation systems (such as the MTR station), the local character, historical and cultural background of the District, etc.

Urban Renewal Areas

6. According to the approach for preparing the PURP as mentioned in paragraph 5 above, the Secretariat proposes that the following different areas for the PURP be delineated:

- (a) **Redevelopment Priority Areas:** It is proposed to include the sub-areas where the majority of buildings are either dilapidated or markedly dilapidated and are generally aged 50 years old or above in these Areas. Besides, for some buildings which do not fully meet the above building conditions and age criteria, but the occupants in those buildings are facing serious environmental hygiene and air/noise pollution problems, considerations would also be given to including these buildings and areas in the Redevelopment Priority Areas on a case-by-case basis. We will also capitalise on the redevelopment opportunity by undertaking urban restructuring through the use of existing and proposed mass transportation systems, leisure and community facilities within the Area or its vicinity, so as to release potential housing sites and to improve local leisure and community facilities. Regarding redevelopment within these Areas, it can be led by the URA and/or private developers regardless of whether it is comprehensive or relatively piecemeal in nature. There may be many such buildings within the Areas and it may take a long time to redevelop all of them. In case of public safety concerns, owners should carry out rehabilitation works without delay;

- (b) **Rehabilitation and Revitalisation Priority Areas:** Notwithstanding that some areas comply with the redevelopment

criteria mentioned in paragraph 6(a) above, it is proposed to include those areas with local characteristics and revitalisation potentials in the Rehabilitation and Revitalisation Priority Areas for bringing new vibrancy to the District. Nevertheless, we will not preclude individual private redevelopment projects. Regarding rehabilitation, the owners can be encouraged to make use of various building maintenance schemes implemented by the Government, such as the Building Management and Maintenance Scheme, to improve their building conditions. As for revitalisation, the Government can designate pedestrian precincts, improve existing pedestrian facilities, provide greenery and beautify the street; and erect street markings and signages at unique buildings and tourist attractions. In addition, some areas with buildings of a lower priority for redevelopment with respect to the building conditions and building age, but given that there are environmental and other problems such as land use incompatibility, it is proposed to include these areas in the Area for Rehabilitation and Revitalisation so as to mitigate the concerned impacts by carrying out rehabilitation and revitalisation (such as greening and beautification) work;

- (c) **Mixed Redevelopment/Rehabilitation Areas:** There are sub-areas in which some buildings are in need of redevelopment while some are newly-built, resulting in a condition with the intermix of new and old buildings. It is proposed to incorporate these sub-areas into the Mixed Redevelopment/Rehabilitation Areas so that redevelopment and rehabilitation works can be carried out at suitable locations;

- (d) **Revitalising Business Areas:** Most industrial buildings within the Kowloon City District have been used for non-industrial purposes and have been designated as “Business” zones under the statutory plans. All these industrial buildings were built in or after 1970s and they are still in fair conditions. However, it should be noted that a considerable number of shops on the ground floor of these industrial buildings are being used for selling luxury goods, including gold, jewellery and watches, and become popular shopping spot for tourists. Although the Government has implemented measures to promote the revitalisation of old industrial buildings by encouraging redevelopment and wholesale conversion of vacant or under-utilised industrial buildings, the poor appearance of some industrial buildings and the overall environment is considered incompatible with the tourism and retail industries. To cater for the development of tourism and retail industries, it is proposed to incorporate the concerned industrial buildings into the Revitalising Business Areas, and promote beautification and revitalisation works for the streets, provide facilities such as pedestrian crossings and lay-bys, and encourage owners to beautify the building facades so as to attract visitors;
- (e) **Revitalising heritage and setting up heritage trail:** With revitalisation initiative centering at the Cattle Depot, a heritage trail can be designated linking up the historic buildings, heritage and monuments in the vicinity, such as Kowloon Walled City Park, Sung Wong Toi Garden and Lung Tsun Stone Bridge in Kai Tak Development Area. Signages which introduce the relevant history and background information can be erected at key locations. The

heritage trail can be connected to the waterfront promenade in the district so as to enhance its attractiveness; and

- (f) **Revitalising the waterfront and piers:** There are waterfront areas in the Kowloon City District. However, the existing waterfront extending from Kai Tak Development across To Kwa Wan, Hung Hom to Tsim Sha Tsui East is blocked by uses such as open-air car park and sewerage treatment plant, etc. As such, it is proposed to link up these sections which the current access to the waterfront promenade has been obstructed in the District, and carry out beautification and revitalisation works for waterfront open space and promenade (including both operating and vacant piers), with a view to promoting tourism industry and local economy. The relevant recommendations can be worked out with the Harbourfront Commission.

7. The Secretariat will take into account Members' comments, revise the approach in preparing the PURP and submit to the DURF as soon as possible. The proposals endorsed by Members will form the basis for public engagement, allowing the public to comment on different urban renewal areas. This will enable the Planning Study Consultants, with the interactive assistance from the SIA Consultants, to formulate the Urban Renewal Plan for Kowloon City.

Programme for Relevant Studies in Preparation of the Urban Renewal Plan for Kowloon City

8. On 12 January 2012, the Board of Urban Renewal Fund Limited ("URFL") considered the funding application of the studies submitted by the Secretariat. Upon the URFL's request, the Secretariat has submitted further information in support of

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the funding application in mid February for URFL's consideration. Upon obtaining the funding approval, the Secretariat will carry out the tendering exercise and commission consultants to commence various studies as soon as possible. The studies are expected to commence in the second quarter of this year. Regarding the major work programme for various main tasks of the studies, it will be subject to the discussion with the appointed Consultants and endorsement by Members.

Views Sought

9. Members are invited to raise comments on the vision, approach and proposed areas for the preparation of the Preliminary Urban Renewal Proposals and note the schedule for the commencement of various studies. The Secretariat will take follow up action in accordance with the result of Members' discussion.

Secretariat

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