

(Translation)

Kowloon City District Urban Renewal Forum

For discussion on
10 October 2012

Paper No.: DURF KC/11/2012

Report on Progress of Planning Study on Urban Renewal Plan for Kowloon City

Purpose

This paper serves to report to Members on the work progress of the Planning Study and brief Members on the key issues identified by the Planning Study Consultant in the study process and the preliminary responses.

Work Progress

2. Since the endorsement of the Inception Report and Working Paper 1: Baseline Update of the Planning Study by Members on 23 July 2012, the Stage 1 Public Engagement (PE) activities and Social Impact Assessment (SIA) have commenced. The Planning Study Consultant on the one hand assisted the PE Consultant in preparing PE activities, including providing advice on questions of focus group discussions and providing information for use in the guided tours, as well as attending the PE activities to listen to public views direct. On the other hand, review of the Preliminary Urban Renewal Proposals (PURPs) was conducted and key issues were identified and summarised according to the public views received from the PE activities and the SIA.

Key Issues

3. Through site visits and making reference to comments collected from the series of PE activities, the key issues can be identified and summarised as below:

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(a) Need for Urban Renewal

The buildings in the Redevelopment Priority Area of the PURPs (namely “5 Streets” and “13 Streets”, Kowloon City Road/Lok Shan Road area, and Eight “Wan” Streets/Ngan Hon Street/Sung On Street area, To Kwa Wan) are generally old and in poor conditions. Subdivided units and rooftop tenement flats are also found in some of the buildings, which would endanger the overall building structure and safety. Some of these buildings were rehabilitated through the “Operation Building Bright” Programme, however there are some views that it was not effective in improving the building conditions, and redevelopment is required to improve the living environment in these sub-areas. There are also views to include other areas (such as old buildings in Shek Tong Street area) in the Redevelopment Priority Area.

The building conditions of Mixed Redevelopment and Rehabilitation Area in the PURPs (namely Ngan Hon Street/Sheung Heung Road/Kwei Chow Street/Yuk Yat Street area in To Kwa Wan; and Bailey Street/Chun Tin Street/Sung On Street area and Whampoa Street/Bulkeley Street/Wuhu Street area in Hung Hom) are varied. Some of these buildings were also rehabilitated through the “Operation Building Bright” Programme, however problems still appeared within a short period of time after the rehabilitation, and the rehabilitation works only focus on the common areas of the buildings. It therefore cannot improve the living environment of residents. As such, there are views suggesting to improve the living environment in these areas through redevelopment or a more comprehensive rehabilitation programme.

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As for the varied building conditions of Rehabilitation and Revitalization Priority Area in the PURPs (namely Nga Tsin Wai Road area in Lung Tong and Winslow Street/Gillies Avenue South area in Hung Hom), there are views that the environment of the areas should be improved through redevelopment instead of rehabilitation. On the other hand, there are views that the Nga Tsin Wan Road area has unique local character and potential for rehabilitation, and new vitality can be injected and the environment of the area can be gradually improved through rehabilitation, revitalization and environmental improvement works. As such, further investigation on how to preserve the local character throughout the urban renewal process is required.

(b) Incompatible Land Uses

Kowloon City as an old district with a long development history in Hong Kong, incompatible land uses are unavoidably found in the vicinity of residential uses. In the absence of appropriate buffer between incompatible uses, nuisances, such as congested traffic condition, poor air quality, noise, poor public hygiene and psychological impacts generated from the operation of vehicle repairing activities, industrial activities, funeral and related activities emerge. Besides, the under-managed private streets and trunk road such as the East Kowloon Corridor, arouse concerns on public hygiene, air quality and noise impacts. The urban renewal process could provide opportunities for addressing the interface issues between the incompatible uses, to mitigate the nuisances or resolve the issues in the long run.

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(c) Connectivity and Accessibility of the District

Kowloon City currently relies on road-based transport and is considered less accessible as compared with other districts. Insufficient parking spaces in some areas, such as Nga Tsin Wai Road area in Lung Tong and Hok Yuen Street area in Hung Hom, cause traffic congestion in the area. The pedestrian connection and walking environment within the district is also considered unsatisfactory. The external connection of the district is currently constrained by the north-south oriented road network setup and the separation of the district with Central Kowloon by Ho Man Tin area. Also, with Kai Tak Development Area located at the northeast of To Kwa Wan/Ma Tau Wai area, convenient road and pedestrian connection can bring development opportunities into the district. Therefore, strengthening the external/internal connectivity and accessibility of the district should be addressed in the urban renewal process.

(d) Community Needs

There is a higher proportion of elderly population and ethnic minority groups within the district as compared with the entire Territory. These groups are found more vulnerable when there are changes in their living environment and community, and they rely much on their social network to adapt to changes. Thus, due consideration should be given to maintaining their social network and meeting their needs for community facilities as well as supporting services during the urban renewal process in order to minimize the resultant social impacts on these groups.

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(e) Public Space Quality

In this long established and densely populated district, green and open spaces are unevenly distributed in the district and there is not much greening along the streets. There is also a lack of sense of orientation in the pedestrian network, such as the Nga Tsin Wai Road area where many pedestrian connections are bisected by vehicular roads in the district. Therefore, improvements on the quality of the green and open spaces should be investigated during the urban renewal process.

(f) Utilization of Existing Resources

Considering the rich historical and cultural resources and the waterfront environment, the district has great potential for tourism development to attract local or overseas visitors. The future urban renewal process should make best use of these existing resources and take the advantage of new railway as well as the opportunities arising from the Kai Tak Development Area to strengthen the local character and appeal of the district.

Considerations in Addressing the Issues

4. Upon the completion of the Stage 1 PE activities, the Planning Study Consultant is now preparing the Draft Urban Renewal Plan for the district. Besides taking into account the perspectives and concerns of the public, the Consultant, when formulating the Plan, will also take note of various considerations and approaches so as to ensure the effectiveness of the Plan. These include technical feasibility, adoption of multi-faceted approaches, utilization of new development opportunities, and provision of incentives for private renewal initiatives. With the above-mentioned

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considerations and approaches, it is anticipated that the proposed Plan can address the identified key issues under the context of urban renewal framework, which will benefit the locals.

5. The Plan will address the issues in 3 approaches, namely Resolving, Mitigation and Enhancing. With the long term objective in resolving the identified issues, various mitigation measures are proposed to improve the existing condition in short or medium term, and as situation permits, to enhance the environment.

6. During the formulation of the Draft Urban Renewal Plan, including quick-win proposals, medium-term and long-term proposals and Action Area Plan, the Planning Study Consultant will take the following considerations into account:

- Complexity of the issue
- Size of the area involved
- Technical feasibility
- Complexity of detailed design
- Requirement on policy
- Numbers of involved implementation departments or entities
- Involvement of private initiatives or other organisations
- Interface and interaction with other projects
- Public support

Way Forward

7. With Members' comments, the Planning Study Consultant will continue the preparation of the Draft Urban Renewal Plan, including meetings with relevant Government departments and organisations for discussion on the technical feasibility of the proposals. The first draft of the Draft Urban Renewal Plan shall be ready for Planning Study Working Group and Steering Group discussion afterwards.

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Advice Sought

8. Members are requested to note the progress of the Planning Study and to comment on the preliminary content of the Working Paper 2: Key Issues.

Planning Study on Urban Renewal Plan for Kowloon City

Planning Study Consultant

October 2012