

Yau Tsim Mong District Council
Overview of the work of the Planning Department and
the planning for Yau Tsim Mong District

1. Purpose

This paper briefs Members on the work of the Planning Department and the direction of planning work for the Yau Tsim Mong District, and seeks Members' views on the planning and development of the district.

2. Work of the Planning Department

Under the ambit of the Development Bureau, the Planning Department is responsible for formulating planning and development strategies at the territorial level and preparing various types of statutory and administrative plans at the district level to guide the proper use and development of land. The Department also reviews and regulates the land-use to maintain Hong Kong's status as a leading international city and make Hong Kong a better place to live and work.

3. Territorial Planning and District Planning

3.1 The work of the Planning Department is divided into two levels: territorial and sub-regional planning and district planning:

- (a) Territorial and sub-regional planning mainly concerns the matters relating to strategic planning, which include the study and review of the overall planning for the territory to formulate the long-term general planning direction and strategies, such as the location of business centre, port facilities and new development areas. At the level of strategic planning, the integration of land use and transport network planning has always been of vital importance. For example, land use and transport network planning are intergrated in the Hong Kong 2030: Planning Vision and Strategy and the Metroplan Study. Both the Transport Department and the Highway Department have also drawn reference to our proposed long-term land use planning in conducting the Third Comprehensive Transport Study and the Railway Development Strategy 2000 respectively to ascertain whether new infrastructural facilities need to be provided.
- (b) At the level of sub-regional planning, a number of district studies are involved, examples of which include the Planning Study on the Harbour and its Waterfront Areas, area improvement studies for the older urban cores such as the recently completed Area Improvement Plan for Tsim Sha Tsui and the Area Improvement Plan for the Shopping Areas of Mongkok that is still underway. The Department will also review the various planning standards and criteria to provide guidelines for the preperation of town plans and consideration of development proposals.

(c) District planning relates to the planning work for individual districts and enforcement of planning controls in the rural New Territories. The major work includes under the land use framework of the strategic planning level, preparation of and/or amendments to town plans for various districts to improve the environment and achieve a balanced development and for compliance with the planning standards.

3.2 The Planning Department, an executive arm of the Town Planning Board (TPB), is responsible for preparing plans and making proposals to provide guidance for, and exercise control over, land development and the use of land in Hong Kong.

4. Public Participation

4.1 Planning is for the people. The Planning Department has always encouraged public participation in the planning process and has adhered to the principle of openness and transparency in the work procedures. Basing on the principle of sustainable development, we strive to meet the public aspirations in the planning process.

4.2 The public may participate in the planning process through various means, such as expressing their opinions during the process of planning studies, making representations to TPB upon the exhibition of new or amended outline zoning plans (OZPs) and providing comments on planning applications during public consultation. The local community is also consulted in the preparation of OZPs.

4.3 The Department has worked closely with the district council. Our representatives attend the meetings of the district council and its committees and working groups regularly to advise on the matters of district planning and listen to the views of the district councillors and the general public. We also give advice on planning matters for individual districts.

5. Major Planning Work for Yau Tsim Mong District

5.1 Review of the Outline Zoning Plans of Yau Tsim Mong District

(a) In addition to the landuse planning in Yau Tsim Mong District, the Planning Department would impose various development restrictions for individual land use zones regarding the plot ratio, gross floor area and building height etc.

(b) The Planning Department will review the outline zoning plans by order of priority. Reference will be made to the infrastructural capacity, the Harbour Planning Principles and Guidelines, the Urban Design Guidelines set out in Chapter 11 of the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines as well as the private property development rights in order to strike a balance. There will be little

incentive for redevelopment of older districts by the private sector if the development density is set too low, hence diminishing the opportunity for redevelopment.

- (c) The Planning Department seeks to improve the environment of the district through various means:
 - (i) in planning a new development area, it is necessary to consider the layout of buildings and the potential environmental impacts on the surrounding areas;
 - (ii) in 2006, the Housing, Planning and Lands Bureau and the Environment, Transport and Works Bureau jointly issued a technical circular on air ventilation assessment which requires the proponents of government projects (including government departments, bureaux and various organisations) to conduct air ventilation assessments for the purpose of assessing the impacts of projects on the wind environment along the walkways. The air ventilation assessment can indirectly help improve the design and spatial distribution for pedestrian comfort at the street level; and
 - (iii) prior to the inclusion of government lands in the list of sites available for sale upon application (commonly known as the application list), appropriate assessments will be conducted according to the stipulations of the above technical circular. The Ex-Government Supplies Depot on Oil Street, North Point and sites located at Yeung Uk Road, Tsuen Wan are good examples of what we have done in this aspect.

5.2 Area Improvement Plan

The Yau Tsim Mong District has a long history and the environment of part of the old district needs to be improved. We hope that through the area improvement proposals for the old district such as the recently completed "Area Improvement Study Proposal for Tsim Sha Tsui" and the "Area Improvement Plan for the Shopping Areas of Mong Kok" which is still underway, the pedestrian flow and the streetscape of the area can be enhanced, the opportunities for greening can be optimized and the vibrancy of the area can be maintained.

5.3 Waterfront Planning and Tourism Development

- (a) Given that Southwest Kowloon and Tsim Sha Tsui are part of the Victoria Harbour, the Harbour Planning Principles will also be taken into consideration in the waterfront planning for the district. As far as practicable, suitable waterfront sites will be reserved as waterfront promenades incorporated with greening measures.

- (b) As part of the Metroplan Review, the Planning Study on the Harbour and its Waterfront Areas (the Study) was completed in 2003. The main objectives of the Study are to formulate a Harbour and Waterfront Plan to guide the use of waterfront areas and to make recommendations on major tourism development components and opportunities for the Study Area:
- (i) One of the recommendations of the Study is to develop tourism nodes at the outlying areas of the Inner Harbour Core, such as Yau Ma Tei Public Cargo Working Area (PWCA)/ Typhoon Shelter, in order to provide capacity for additional tourism attractions and to accommodate facilities. However, such recommendation is only conceptual in nature and is a long-term objective. There is also a need to resolve the issue of relocating the PWCA/typhoon shelter.
 - (ii) Being part of the Victoria Harbour, the PWCA/typhoon shelter still performs economic functions. As there are genuine difficulties in identifying a new site in the western part of the Harbour and in the course of consultation for the Study, the industry is divided over the issue of relocation, it is difficult to relocate the facilities in the short to medium term. Considering that the PWCA cannot be relocated immediately, the Study has not included the related conceptual proposal in the Action Area Plans.
 - (iii) We, together with Marine Department and concerned departments, will closely monitor the demand for the PWCA and other marine facilities at this part of the waterfront. When there is no longer a need for the PWCA or the issue of relocation can be resolved, appropriate amendments will be made to the outline zoning plan with reference to the recommendations of the Study.
- (c) Tsim Sha Tsui Promenade Beautification Project (the Project) is a good example of waterfront planning. The Project enhances the quality of waterfront sites and provides recreational outlets for tourists and local residents. The Avenue of Stars has become one of the “must-see” attractions for visitors to Hong Kong since it was opened. To optimise the use of waterfront sites, the existing Star Ferry Pier Public Transport Interchange (PTI) will be relocated in phases to the new PTI adjacent to Wing On Plaza in Tsim Sha Tsui East (TSTE). The vacated site of the Star Ferry PTI will be developed into an open piazza that will serve as a focal point for both tourists and local residents. The enhancement of footbridges in TSTE, under planning, will open up the originally cluttered waterfront and add vitality to the area.
- (d) A site with a total area of 40 hectares has been reserved in Southwest Kowloon for the West Kowloon Cultural District

(WKCD) to promote the development of arts, culture and entertainments in Hong Kong. With regard to the detailed land uses in the WKCD, the Home Affairs Bureau will further consult the public in due course.

5.4 Changes in land-uses for future transport infrastructure projects

- (a) The Central Kowloon Route (CKR) in the pipeline is a 4.7 km long trunk road between the West Kowloon Reclamation and the future Kai Tak development to relieve traffic congestion on the existing east-west roads within Central Kowloon. The works involve construction of access roads at the western end of CKR to link with Yaumatei Yau Ma Tei interchange of the West Kowloon Highway, reprovisioning of Government and Institution facilities affected by the CKR project and construction of administration and ventilation buildings. The land uses and layout of the land at the exit may be subject to changes to tie in with the design of CKR.
- (b) The proposed Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link (ERL) is an express link connecting Hong Kong, Shenzhen and Guangzhou. In order to facilitate passengers to interchange between rail and MTR lines, the terminal of the Hong Kong section will be located somewhere between the Kowloon station of MTR and West Kowloon Terminus of Kowloon Southern Link. The planned land uses may be subject to changes to tie in with the project.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 The Yau Tsim Mong district is already well-developed and the future development will focus on improving the living standard of citizens.
- 6.2 Town planning is an on-going process. We shall balance the needs for development according to the principle of sustainable development and make reference to the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines in the provision of public facilities so as to achieve a balanced development among different districts.
- 6.3 As always, we will continue to maintain close contact with the district council in reviewing the land-uses, development patterns and building heights within the district to ensure that the land-use planning will meet the needs of the community.
- 6.4 Members are welcomed to express their views on the direction of our work and the development plans for the district set out above.