

Hong Kong 2030+: Towards a Planning Vision and Strategy Transcending 2030

Purpose

This paper briefs Members on the key findings and recommendations of the “Hong Kong 2030+: Towards a Planning Vision and Strategy Transcending 2030” (Hong Kong 2030+).

Background

2. The territorial development strategy provides a spatial planning framework to plan and guide land and infrastructure development, and the shaping of the built environment. Since the 1970s, we have reviewed the territorial development strategy around once every decade to embrace new needs and aspirations. The last review entitled “Hong Kong 2030: Planning Vision and Strategy” (HK2030) was promulgated in 2007 and set out the broad directions for land supply and town planning up to 2030. In an era of rapid social, economic and technological changes, Hong Kong as an international city in a globalised world is facing a number of challenges both externally and internally, including fierce global and regional competitions, changing drivers of economic growth, climate change, growing and ageing population¹, increasing but smaller domestic households², strong land demand for housing, economic activities and community facilities, a rapidly ageing building stock, demand for environmental protection, and rising aspiration for a better quality of life. For the sustainable development of Hong Kong, there is a need for the Government

¹ According to the Census and Statistics Department’s (C&SD) latest population projections published in September 2015, Hong Kong’s population is expected to reach its peak at 8.22 million by 2043 (an increase by 0.98 million from 2014). Proportion of population aged 65 or above is projected to increase from about 15% in 2014 to about 36% in 2064, while that of aged 85 or above is projected to increase from about 2.2% to about 10.1% during the same period.

² According to C&SD’s latest domestic household projections published in October 2015, Hong Kong’s domestic household is expected to reach its peak at 2.93 million by 2044 (an increase by 0.5 million from 2014), while the average household size is expected to decrease from 2.9 persons to 2.7 persons during the same period.

to adopt a visionary, pragmatic and action-oriented approach to tackle the planning issues critical to Hong Kong's future, and to formulate a robust territorial development strategy in the light of the latest planning circumstances and challenges ahead. Against this background and as announced in the 2015 Policy Address, the Planning Department (PlanD) commissioned the Hong Kong 2030+ study in January 2015 to provide an update to the HK2030.

Hong Kong 2030+

(a) Vision and Planning Goal

3. Building upon the foundation of Hong Kong 2030, Hong Kong 2030+ aims to examine the strategies and feasible options for the overall spatial planning, land and infrastructure development, and the shaping of the built and natural environment for Hong Kong beyond 2030. The positioning of Hong Kong as “Asia’s World City”³ and the overarching goal of sustainable development as enshrined in HK2030 remain as the vision and planning goal in Hong Kong 2030+. While major studies and indices on global and international competitiveness still show that Hong Kong is maintaining its status as one of the leading global cities, there are signs that Hong Kong’s development, capacity and quality of living have been gradually lagging behind in many aspects⁴. Besides, there is scope to further improve our liveability, better cater for the needs of different age groups in an ageing society, and enhance its edge as a compact high-density city⁵.

4. We need a stronger focus on strengthening our position as a liveable, competitive and sustainable Asia’s World City. To this end, three building blocks, namely **“Planning for a Liveable High-density City”**, **“Embracing New Economic Challenges and Opportunities”** and **“Creating Capacity for**

³ The positioning of Hong Kong as “Asia’s World City” was first spelt out by the Commission on Strategic Development in its report entitled “Bringing the Vision to Life – Hong Kong’s Long-term Development Needs and Goals” published in 2000.

⁴ Hong Kong ranked 1st in the World Competitiveness Yearbook 2016, 2nd in the Global Opportunities Index 2015, 5th in the Global Cities Index 2015 and 9th in the Global Competitiveness Report 2016-17, but 14th in the Global Innovation Index 2016, 19th in the Monocle’s Quality of Life Survey 2015, 43th in the EIU’s Global Liveability Ranking 2016 and 70th in Mercer Quality of Living Survey 2016.

⁵ A compact city provides convenience to its dwellers, reduces unnecessary travels, prevents urban sprawl, creates economies of scale, facilitates exchange of information and ideas, and contributes to vibrancy of the city. Compact city development is also considered sustainable at The United Nations Rio+20 Conference, and in studies such as the LSE Cities’ study on “Going Green: How Cities are Leading the Next Economy”. Hong Kong has decades of experience in compact city development and is highly successful in this respect.

Sustainable Growth”, and a **conceptual spatial framework** that translate these building blocks in spatial planning terms, are proposed under Hong Kong 2030+. An overview of the three building blocks and the conceptual spatial framework is set out as follows.

(b) Three Building Blocks

Building Block 1: Planning for a Liveable High-density City

5. Providing a quality living environment is challenging for a high-density city such as Hong Kong. In pursuit of a liveable compact high-density city and guided by sustainability principles⁶, Hong Kong 2030+ proposes to enhance the quality of the overall living environment and optimise the use of limited land and space through a two-pronged approach, i.e. optimising the new development areas and retrofitting the densely developed urban areas. From the land use and planning perspective, the following key strategic directions are proposed:

- (i) promote a compact, integrated, unique, diverse, vibrant and healthy city with an urban form and urban design concepts appropriate for Hong Kong;
- (ii) leverage our vast expanse and diversity of green and blue spaces⁷ to enhance biodiversity, public appreciation and enjoyment as well as urban ecology;
- (iii) reinvent the public space and enhance the public facilities in uplifting our liveability;
- (iv) rejuvenate the urban fabric amid a large stock of rapidly ageing buildings; and

⁶ These sustainability principles include responsive urban design concepts, green building development, green neighbourhoods, quality open spaces, enhanced walkability, smart travel choices, and green mobility options, which will help create a comfortable, healthier and low-carbon living environment, a better environment and a thriving local economy.

⁷ “Green assets” refers to the green spaces in Hong Kong such as country parks, open spaces and recreation spaces which are partly or completely vegetated and often used for nature conservation, recreational and/or amenity purposes. “Blue assets” refers to water bodies including harbour, rivers and streams, conservation-related water space (such as wetlands, marine parks and marine reserves), water sports centres, beaches, reservoirs and artificial lakes.

- (v) promote an inclusive and supportive society through planning sensitively for all, irrespective of age and ability.

Highlights of Building Block 1

6. In order to plan for the ageing society, Hong Kong 2030+ proposes adopting the concepts of “age-friendly” planning and design and facilitating “ageing in place”, which include promoting more diverse housing choices available for the elderly; facilitating the adoption of “universal design”⁸ in both public and private residential developments; and providing elderly services, particularly long-term care services, preferably on an estate basis complemented by district and community based services if deemed necessary and appropriate.

7. We also see the scope to reinvent public space and enhance public facilities with a view to uplifting Hong Kong’s liveability. To this end, Hong Kong 2030+ proposes to enhance the land and space provision for government, institution or community (G/IC) uses and open space, by adopting higher ratios of 3.5 m² and 2.5 m² per person for the strategic planning of G/IC and open space land requirements respectively⁹. This would help meet the public aspirations for more community facilities and open space, enhance living space in general, and provide scope to meet specific policy initiatives to improve provision of certain facilities¹⁰.

8. One aspect for the rejuvenation of urban fabric is urban regeneration, particularly the renewal or redevelopment of buildings and structures. The bulk of Hong Kong’s existing building stock was erected in the 1970s to 80s. As a rough estimate, the number of private housing units aged 70 years or above will increase by nearly 300 times from about 1,100 units at present to about 326,000 units by 2046. The redevelopment of residential buildings usually

⁸ “Universal design” refers to the design approach to universally accessible standard in which all products, environments and communications will allow for the widest spectrum of people in our communities regardless of diversity, age and ability.

⁹ For the older generation new towns such as Sha Tin, the provision of G/IC land uses (excluding those special uses/facilities which are considered as policy-driven), is estimated to be about 2.2 m² per person, while such provision for the newer generation new towns like Kwu Tung North New Development Area is higher at 3.5 m² per person. Separately, the current provision standard of open space under the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines is 2 m² per person.

¹⁰ Examples include more space for kindergartens to support the policy to provide free and quality kindergarten education; redevelopment of old/substandard schools into ones that provide an environment for “joyful” learning and teaching; setting up science, technology, engineer and mathematics (STEM) Education Centres for school students at strategic locations; providing functional spaces in the vicinity of universities/agglomeration of enterprises/school clusters; and more neighbourhood elderly care facilities.

takes a long lead time mainly due to the need for amalgamating the fragmented ownership, re-housing/decanting and compensation arrangements, as well as going through the necessary development procedures. Given the enormous magnitude of ageing building stock and the current modest scale of urban renewal, we have to step up urban regeneration efforts to rejuvenate the extensive old urban fabric to improve the living environment.

Building Block 2: Embracing New Economic Challenges and Opportunities

9. The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth in Hong Kong has been relatively modest in recent years, when our neighbouring cities are advancing quickly. While the four pillar industries continue to underpin the bulk of our economy and employment¹¹, there are emerging industries leveraging the global trends, and in which Hong Kong enjoys clear advantages over its regional counterparts¹². On the other hand, our geographical connection and economic integration with the Mainland and Asia are expected to be fortified with the completion of several major regional transport infrastructure in the coming few years, new initiatives under the Guangdong Free Trade Zones and “Belt and Road”, as well as the cooperation with member countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. To embrace future challenges and new opportunities, Hong Kong needs to move up the value chain and diversify our economic base. The building up of our land reserve would also help enhance the capacity for coping with the economic opportunities and challenges, providing diversified choices of premises for our industries and services, and creating quality jobs with a range of skills. The key strategic directions for this building block therefore include:

- (i) adequate land and space for growth - to plan for adequate land and space to address current shortfalls and meet future demand, and to create strategic economic nodes to enhance our economic capacity and resilience;
- (ii) a diversity of economic sectors with quality jobs with a range of skills - to adapt to the trend towards a knowledge-based economy, and to provide favourable condition to promote niche sectors and emerging

¹¹ The four pillar industries in Hong Kong are financial services, tourism, trading and logistics, and professional and other producer services. As at 2014, they contributed over half of Hong Kong's GDP and nearly half of Hong Kong's total employment.

¹² Examples include cultural and creative industries, innovation and technology industries, environmental industries, and testing and certification services.

industries while strengthening the pillar industries;

- (iii) innovation, technology and collaboration – to offer platform and conditions to promote innovation, technology and collaboration between economic sectors;
- (iv) sufficient and suitable human capital – to provide relevant education and training facilities and the right conditions to nurture/attract/retain valuable human resources and talents; and
- (v) adequate and timely provision of supporting infrastructure – to provide better rail, road and air connectivity and infrastructure support.

Highlights of Building Block 2

10. Among others, there is a need to plan more appropriate and affordable accommodations to cater for the small and medium enterprises (SMEs), especially the innovation start-ups and SMEs, as well as high-tech industries, in promoting “re-industrialisation” and Hong Kong’s migration from traditional labour-intensive industry to smart production. Besides, we need to be robust in responding to the fast-growing economic trends such as the development of financial technology, smart production and services, global supply chain, e-commerce, as well as energy-saving and green technologies. We may support business start-ups through facilitating the provision of lower cost government premises, as well as partnerships with private enterprises and non-governmental organisations. Moreover, to spur innovation and technology, we should endeavour to provide land and space with due respect to the tech-ecosystem and locational requirements, to promote entrepreneurship, business start-ups and incubation under a comprehensive approach, noting that this direction would also require close collaboration between the Government, relevant sectors/industries, academia and research institutions, etc.

Building Block 3: Creating Capacity for Sustainable Growth

11. Hong Kong needs to create more development capacity with supporting transport and other infrastructure, and at the same time to enhance and regenerate our environmental capacity for sustainable growth. This requires an enhanced strategic planning approach to spatial development, embracing

creation and regeneration of capacity in terms of more space for development, better living environment, transportation and other infrastructures, and the rich natural environment in a holistic manner. The enhanced approach aims not only to cater for the foreseeable land use demands, but also to proactively plan in advance for capacity to enhance the quality of our living environment, to cater for potential demands and unforeseen circumstances, as well as to respond to possible changes and challenges in a timely manner. The key strategic directions for the building block include:

- (i) create development capacity and optimise the use of land through a multi-pronged, robust and flexible approach by according a higher priority to reviewing and releasing degraded areas, as well as sites at the fringe of built-up areas that are deserted or have low conservation, buffer and public enjoyment value;
- (ii) optimise transport and other infrastructure capacity through the provision of new/improved infrastructure, wider use of public transport, demand management and better home-job distribution;
- (iii) improve the environment and create/enhance/regenerate environmental capacity through integrating biodiversity consideration into planning and decision making as well as environmental improvement; and
- (iv) adopt a smart, green and resilient (SGR) city strategy that permeates all aspects of land use, transport and infrastructure planning for building a future-proofing city, supported by a common spatial data infrastructure and information and communications technology infrastructure.

Highlights of Building Block 3

12. Land and space has been a major factor constraining the development of Hong Kong in various aspects including housing provision, economic activities, community facilities and leisure and recreation space. Past experience indicates that there is a long lead time from planning to realisation of land development. It would thus be prudent to plan well in advance for sufficient capacity with spare and to build in additional buffer and contingency in the overall land use planning under the proposed vision-driven capacity-creating to strategic planning approach.

13. Taking into account the anticipated demand and foreseen circumstances for housing, economic uses, G/IC uses, open space and transport facilities, the base case aggregate land requirement under Hong Kong 2030+ is estimated to be more than 4,800 hectares (ha)¹³. It is estimated that the existing, committed and planned developments, together with redevelopment of existing built-up areas, could only meet about 3,600 ha of the land requirement. Broadly speaking there is an anticipated land shortfall of at least 1,200 ha in the long run against the estimated land requirement. To plan in advance to cater for this outstanding land demand, two strategic growth areas (SGAs), as elaborated in paragraphs 19 and 20 below, are proposed.

14. The enhanced strategic planning approach of creating capacity would not only allow us to meet the estimated long-term land requirements, but also provide us the room or buffer to turn the visions of improving living space, enhancing living quality, averting demographic challenges, strengthening community services, and capturing economic opportunities into reality. With capacity and contingency properly and adequately planned ahead, we will have the flexibility and manoeuvrability to adjust the pace and quantum of land development projects to tie in with changing circumstances over a time span of decades. Similarly, the strategic planning of transportation and other infrastructures should be geared towards generating sufficient and timely capacity with contingency in support of the spatial distribution of development capacity. As environmental sustainability is key to planning for a compact and liveable high-density city, we should also pursue means to create, enhance and regenerate the environmental capacity that would enable more development capacity to be accommodated in a sustainable manner.

(c) Proposed Conceptual Spatial Framework

Guiding Principles

15. To translate the above three building blocks into spatial planning terms, a conceptual spatial framework is proposed under Hong Kong 2030+ (see **Plan 1**), with regard to the land supply and demand assessment, the spatial distribution of the existing, planned and committed developments, transport infrastructure, environmental conditions and the following guiding principles:

¹³ The land requirement has yet to factor in any contingency to cater for unforeseen circumstances, other policy initiatives that are unknown at this stage and any long term vision for enhancing liveability, etc.

- (i) conserve areas of high ecological and conservation value and pay due regard to environmentally sensitive areas, concentrate development along axes and nodes, and avoid urban sprawl;
- (ii) promote the agglomeration of economies, create the necessary critical mass, and facilitate the build-up of business ecosystems;
- (iii) enhance the spatial distribution of population and jobs through the creation of economic activities and employment nodes in new SGAs to create jobs for a range of skills, bring jobs closer to homes and improve the sustainability of communities; and
- (iv) enhance liveability through planning and urban design measures to retrofit congested old urban areas and create smart, green and resilient new development areas.

16. The proposed conceptual spatial framework focuses on future development with **one metropolitan business core, two SGAs and three development axes**, while conserving the natural assets and enhancing liveability. The proposed framework would prepare Hong Kong for sustainable growth with better living environment, while meeting the various social and economic development needs. It could also help redress the existing unbalanced spatial distribution of homes and jobs for the territory by creating more jobs in the New Territories. Based on the planned population and employment, the relative proportion of population and jobs in the Metro Area would be broadly reduced from about 59% to about 45% and from about 76% to about 62% respectively. The corresponding share in the New Territories would increase from about 41% to about 55% for population and from about 24% to about 38% for employment.

One Metropolitan Business Core

17. The Metropolitan Business Core covers the traditional Central Business District (CBD), Kowloon East (namely CBD2) and, subject to new strategic transport links to the main urban areas and other parts of the territory, CBD3 in the East Lantau Metropolis (ELM) as an extended urban core in the longer term. Being only about 4 km away from Hong Kong Island West, ELM could be efficiently connected to the existing CBD, reinforcing the existing business core

around Victoria Harbour and creating a new metro front in the territory.

18. Functionally, the three CBDs could complement one another. The traditional CBD could focus on highly value-added financial services and advanced producer services. CBD2 may provide options for businesses and enterprises at a new business area under transformation. The proposed CBD3 at ELM may offer modern, innovative and quality premises, creating a new financial and producer service hub strongly tied to the Hong Kong International Airport and Hong Kong's connector function in the region.

Two Strategic Growth Areas

(i) East Lantau Metropolis

(Population: about 400,000 to 700,000; Employment: about 200,000)

19. The basic concept of ELM is to create artificial islands by reclamations in the waters near Kau Yi Chau and the Hei Ling Chau Typhoon Shelter, and to make better use of the underutilised land in Mui Wo, with the aim of creating a smart, liveable and low-carbon development cluster with a CBD3. Spatially, this SGA tallies with the overall westward shift in centrality of the regional development pattern. It also provides a new platform to leverage the new and improved regional transport connections extending from the main urban area to the Pearl River Delta (PRD) east and west.

(ii) New Territories North

(Population: about 255,000 or 350,000; Employment: about 215,000)

20. Through comprehensive planning and more efficient use of the brownfield sites and abandoned agricultural land in the New Territories, developing the New Territories North (NTN) would provide land for building new communities and developing modern industries and industries preferring a boundary location, while improving the living environment of the existing area. A new town at Heung Yuen Wai/Ping Che/Ta Kwu Ling/Hung Lung Hang/Queen's Hill, together with two potential development areas at San Tin/Lok Ma Chau and Man Kam To have been identified.

Three Primary Axes

(i) Western Economic Corridor

21. With various strategic transport infrastructures in place¹⁴, the western part of the territory will become an international and regional gateway to Hong Kong. Coupled with strategic projects such as the North Commercial District on Airport Island, topside development at the Hong Kong Boundary Crossing Facilities (HKBCF) Island of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge (HZMB), business/commercial hub in the Tung Chung New Town Extension, commercial/modern logistics development in Hung Shui Kiu New Development Area and modern logistics development in Tuen Mun West, a Western Economic Corridor will emerge and is to be fortified by the proposed ELM. This Corridor is well placed to capture many future economic opportunities in the PRD. With the new employment opportunities, the large population in the Northwest New Territories (NWNT) could have more jobs closer to homes.

(ii) Eastern Knowledge and Technology Corridor

22. The Eastern Knowledge and Technology Corridor comprises six universities¹⁵, industrial and service support centres (such as InnoCentre and the Hong Kong Productivity Council), and high-technology and knowledge-based industries (such as data centres, research and development (R&D) institutes, science park, industrial estates) in Kowloon Tong, Tseung Kwan O, Sha Tin, Tai Po, Kwu Tung North and the Lok Ma Chau Loop. A site near the Liantang/Heung Yuen Wai Boundary Control Point (LT/HYW BCP) under construction will be explored for a new anchor use in the Corridor for possible science park/industrial estate development. The Ma Liu Shui development will also offer further potential for development of R&D, higher education, housing and/or other uses. This Corridor could be connected to the CBD2 in Kowloon East complementing the innovation and technology sectors, SMEs and a growing number of start-ups.

¹⁴ Including the Hong Kong International Airport and the Three-Runway System under construction, the Hong Kong Shenzhen Western Corridor, the River Trade Terminal, the HZMB and other elements of future strategic transport infrastructure (e.g. Tuen Mun-Chek Lap Kok Link).

¹⁵ Including the Chinese University of Hong Kong, City University of Hong Kong, Education University of Hong Kong, Baptist University, Hong Kong Polytechnic University and Hong Kong University of Science and Technology.

(iii) Northern Economic Belt

23. The Northern Economic Belt commands a strategic location with the presence of six existing boundary crossings¹⁶ and LT/HYW BCP under construction. It is also close to Shenzhen, which is strong in R&D and technological development. It will be suitable for warehousing, R&D, modern logistics and other support uses and emerging industries, thereby creating jobs for existing and future communities in the area. The proposed science park/industrial estate near the future LT/HYW BCP will be at the convergence of the Northern Economic Belt and the Eastern Knowledge and Technology Corridor, thereby inducing greater synergy between the two corridors.

Proposed Supporting Transport Network

24. The proposed supporting transport network for the conceptual spatial framework, in particular the two SGAs, i.e. ELM and NTN, is shown on **Plan 2**. Subject to further detailed study, railway would be the backbone transportation mode to internally connect the major components of ELM, while externally connecting to Hong Kong Island West, Kowloon West and North Lantau, and further with NWNT via the HKBCF Island of HZMB, thereby forming a new strategic railway corridor between NWNT and the Metro Area via Lantau and ELM. A new strategic highway corridor would also be required to connect ELM eastwards to Hong Kong Island West and northwards to the northeast Lantau/North Lantau Highway, which could then be further connected to NWNT. This strategic transport corridor would also provide alternative access to the airport and the NWNT.

25. The Northern Link, which is recommended under the Railway Development Strategy 2014, would serve the NTN development in the west. Depending on the scale of the NTN development and subject to further study, a new railway scheme would be required to support the NTN development in the east. For the highway network, if we adopt the development scenario with a lower population while having the employment maximised, NTN would not worsen the peak hour traffic demand in the Tai Lam Tunnel and on the Tolo

¹⁶ The six existing boundary crossings are Shenzhen Bay Port, Lok Ma Chau Station, Lok Ma Chau, Lo Wu, Man Kam To and Sha Tau Kok.

Highway in general. However, the ultimate phase of NTN development with more population would inevitably increase traffic loading of these two strategic highways. Hence, the north-south road linkage would need to be improved under this scenario.

Institutional Setup for Taking Forward Hong Kong 2030+

26. The strategic directions proposed under Hong Kong 2030+ and the associated key actions cover a wide array of policy areas. To ensure that the proposals of Hong Kong 2030+ could be carried forward to timely actions, we propose to set up a high-level steering structure within the Government as the institutional setup for co-ordinating, prioritising and monitoring relevant initiatives among bureaus and departments based on the overall strategic framework of Hong Kong 2030+.

Public Engagement

27. A six-month public engagement (PE) for Hong Kong 2030+ was launched on 27 October 2016 until end-April 2017 to canvass public views on the updated territorial development strategy. A folder containing various PE materials (including three PE booklets on the main content of the study and the preliminary concepts of the two SGAs; the PE pamphlet and the view collection form) is enclosed as **Annex** for Members' reference.

28. During the PE, we will reach out to different sectors of the community through multiple channels including public forums, topical discussions, briefings, knowledge-sharing sessions, guided visits/workshops, thematic, roving exhibitions, website, etc. to enhance public understanding of Hong Kong 2030+ and facilitate focused and informed deliberation on the key strategic directions and the conceptual spatial framework proposed under Hong Kong 2030+.

Next Steps

29. Taking into account the public views collected during the six-month PE, preferred spatial development option(s) will be formulated for further technical assessments under the on-going Transport and Land Use Assessment and

Strategic Environmental Assessment, as well as the Sustainability Assessment to be commissioned, to broadly evaluate the social, economic and financial impacts thereof. The updated territorial development strategy will be finalised having regard to the technical assessment findings and public views. It is expected that the entire study on Hong Kong 2030+ would be completed in 2018.

Advice Sought

30. Members are invited to note and offer views on the key findings and recommendations of Hong Kong 2030+.

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