

COUNCIL FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Paper 14/03

Hong Kong 2030: Planning Vision and Strategy Stage 3 of Public Consultation

Purpose

This paper seeks Members' views on the key assumptions used in generating scenarios and development options under Planning Department's "Hong Kong 2030: Planning Vision and Strategy" (HK2030) Study. Further details are contained in the attached Consultation Booklet and in the working papers and information notes posted on the HK2030 website (<http://www.info.gov.hk/hk2030>).

Background

2. Members were briefed on the aims of the HK2030 study and the consultation process at the Council meeting on 15 September (Paper 11/03). At that time, Planning Department were working on developing options for Stage 3 of the consultation process. This process formally began on 25 November.

Major Findings from Previous Stages of Public Consultation

3. In the previous two rounds of consultation, the public generally expressed support for the long-term perspective and adherence to sustainable development principles. Many people have urged that more attention be paid to the quality of the living environment, especially with regard to urban design and harbour-front improvements. The need to strengthen socio-economic ties with the Mainland and to monitor growing trends in cross-boundary flows have also been repeatedly articulated.

Broad Directions for Development

4. To achieve our long-term planning objectives under the overarching goal of sustainable development, and in the light of public comments under Stages 1 and 2 of the consultation process, we consider that the long-term planning strategy should focus on three broad directions –

- (a) **providing a quality living environment** through better urban design, better protection of our natural and cultural heritage and the provision of facilities to enrich our cultural life and enhance our opportunities for recreation, using our land resources in a more sustainable manner;
- (b) **enhancing our economic competitiveness** by planning for future needs well in advance and providing adequate land in a timely manner for major uses, such as: high-quality offices; general business uses; airport; port and logistics facilities; tourism; and higher education; and
- (c) **strengthening our links with the Mainland** by providing additional cross-boundary transport infrastructure (including the proposed Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge) and examining the long-term use of the boundary areas (including the Lok Ma Chau Loop).

Key Assumptions

5. Based on the broad directions, vision, targets and past trends, we have drawn up key assumptions related to a number of factors, as described in the following paragraphs.

6. We have assumed that Hong Kong, as we strive to strengthen our position as Asia's world city, will attract more workers and investors from all over the world, which would make a key contribution to our population growth. However, unlike the rapid expansion in the past of roughly a million a decade, population growth will slow down. Our population, which will include an increasing portion of highly "mobile" people, could still reach some 9.2 million by 2030. In view of low birth rates locally, we expect that there will be a prominent "ageing trend", and that by 2030, over 20% of our population will be aged 65 or above. This may have a significant impact on the size of our workforce, although it is likely that in the future Hong Kong will need a workforce underscored by quality rather than quantity. Furthermore, in an increasingly affluent and "ageing" society, a higher emphasis would be placed on the quality of the living environment.

7. In terms of economic growth, globalisation and enhanced links with the Mainland will push Hong Kong and the rest of the Pearl River Delta into becoming a highly interactive regional economy. In this context, Hong Kong's key service industries, namely finance and business, tourism, logistics and professional and producer services, will continue to develop rapidly to serve the region as well as the nation. As a maturing economy, we would expect that the rate of economic growth would stabilise at about 2 to 3% per annum, providing some four million jobs by 2030. As for land requirements, we have assumed that an additional 3.1 million square metres of premier-grade office space and 5.5 million square metres of general business accommodation (including secondary offices and warehouses) would be required. We have also assumed that future needs for special industrial uses could be met by provision within the existing establishments, e.g. the Science Park, the Cyberport and industrial estates.

Planning Choices

8. Given the likely slower rate of population growth, we consider that the development areas planned for in the last TDS Review and subsequent sub-regional planning studies will be adequate to meet our housing needs for many years to come. With less development pressure, we have the scope to devote more attention to improving the quality of our living environment and conserving our resources, including the natural environment, our cultural heritage and the Victoria Harbour. Reclamation within the harbour will be reduced to a minimum and more of our countryside and ecologically significant areas could be protected from development.

9. Our planning choices are therefore focused on the issues of priority and timing, as well as the pace of development (which has a direct impact on the level of the overall development intensity of an area). We are now asking the community and stakeholders questions like –

- Should we continue to optimise the existing development areas by proceeding with more urban redevelopment and “infill” development, or should we develop New Development Areas (NDAs) in the New Territories earlier?
- Should we allow rapid intensification in the Metro Area,

or should we slow down development to arrest the intensification process through rezoning and reduction of plot ratios?

- Should we allow continuous natural growth of the Central Business District and Metro employment nodes, or decentralise some jobs to Kowloon, or the New Territories?

Possible Spatial Development Patterns

10. For the purpose of conducting initial comparisons and impact assessments, we have organised the broad planning concepts into two spatial patterns, namely, the “Consolidation Pattern” and the “Decentralisation Pattern”. The Consolidation Pattern focuses on the development of the existing urban areas first before extending the development to the New Territories; while the Decentralisation Pattern emphasises the development of additional NDAs at the initial stage.

11. There are common elements in both patterns, such as the development of new tourism and cultural facilities, cross-boundary transportation networks and environmental and strategic infrastructure.

12. A broad-brush evaluation has been conducted to provide a comparison of the two patterns in terms of their environmental, traffic, financial, economic, land use and social implications. An initial sustainability appraisal has also been undertaken. While some issues have been highlighted, there is at this stage insufficient information to ascertain the impact of the development patterns with respect to all relevant sustainable development indicators. A detailed sustainability assessment will be carried out under Stage 4 of HK2030, when we will consider the preferred development options, taking into account comments received during this public consultation exercise.

Alternative (“What-if”) Scenarios

13. Alternative scenarios, which we call the “What If” Scenarios, will be prepared and assessed under Stage 4 of the study to cater for uncertainties and to allow us to respond quickly to changes, thereby enhancing the robustness of our development strategy. Initially, we

consider that different rates of population and economic growth will form the major variables in compiling the “What If” Scenarios. Members are welcome to suggest others.

Public Consultation

14. The Stage 3 Public Consultation was officially launched on 25 November 2003 and is expected to last for about four months. Briefings with stakeholder groups and exhibitions at a number of public venues have begun. Public forums will be conducted on 13 and 20 December 2003, with smaller focus meetings on specific topics to be held in the ensuing months. To facilitate informed discussion of key topics, working papers setting out more detailed analyses and information are available on our website. As in the past, outreach programmes in schools will continue.

Attachment

HK2030 Study Stage 3 Public Consultation Booklet

Planning Department
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