



香港城市設計學會
Hong Kong Institute of Urban Design

Reference Number: PAC/24/009

17 December 2024

By email: policyaddress@cepu.gov.hk

Policy Address Team,
Chief Executive's Policy Unit,
26/F, West Wing, Central Government Offices,
2 Tim Mei Avenue, Tamar, Hong Kong

Dear Sir,

Re: Policy Address 2024 – HKIUD’s comments for Consideration by the Chief Executive

On behalf of the Hong Kong Institute of Urban Design, we would like to submit, on the attached file for your consideration our comments on the 2024 Policy Address.

We are also pleased to meet relevant officers to further explain the contents therein if necessary.

Should further information be required, please kindly contact me or Ms. Cherry Lau, our Senior Administrative Officer at 2235 9057. Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anthony Cheung', is written over a horizontal line.

(Anthony CHEUNG)

Chairman, Public Affairs Committee
Hong Kong Institute of Urban Design

Hong Kong Institute of Urban Design Limited

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1. **Good Urban Design** is essential for **Trawling for** and **Retaining Talents**

In response to **PA item no. 105**,

CE mentioned the importance of **trawling for talents** for the continuous prosperity of Hong Kong. It is essential for Hong Kong to establish strategies both for attracting and retaining talents.

In Decoding Global Talent 2024: Dream Destinations and Mobility Trends¹ prepared by Boston Consulting Group, it surveyed that, beside “Quality of job opportunities” (no. 1 answer with 65% of votes), “Quality of life and climate” ranks second with 54% of votes which ranks ahead of “Income, tax, and cost of living” with 48% of votes and far ahead of “Innovation and digitization” which garners only 15% of votes.

To attain the ultimate objective of trawling of and retaining talents, Hong Kong shall put much emphasis on its living environment. Many cities, inclusive of our neighbour, Shenzhen, and our usual foes, Singapore and Sydney, are all competing with us fiercely for new talents and retaining talents. They have all adopted an urban design approach in planning and building our cityscape. Qianhai, Marina Bay, Darling Harbour and Barangaroo have all now possess world class urban spaces and these spaces are one of the fundamentals in their abilities to retain talents and in giving their cities hope and joy.

How -

a) Empowerment of Commissioner(s) for Urban Design Projects

The state of the public realm is appalling, in part because no single body is addressing this in a comprehensive way. Our notorious policy silos, with planning, housing and transportation policies and implementation spreading across 3 policy bureaux, preclude proper objectives being established. We were somewhat encouraged by the establishment of the “**Commissioner**” policy under previous regime. CE shall consider to further empowering these commissioners, having them supervised directly by the Financial Secretary or the Deputy Financial Secretary and enabling them to over-ride policies or decisions of individual bureaux and/or departments.

b) Urban Design Think Tank

The Centre for Liveable Cities in Singapore <https://www.clc.gov.sg/> (CLC Singapore), is tasked to support the Singapore government to plan ahead from a scientific approach. We suggest that the **Chief Executive Policy Unit** shall spearhead a separate team, an **Urban Design Think Tank**, similar to CLC Singapore, dedicated to urban design policy research and implementation approaches. This think tank shall have dialogues and direct centrally coordinated urban design policies for adoption by the bureaux and departments of concerns. This new think tank shall also leverage the knowledge and experience of practitioners via various **professional institutes** of concerns and the research power of **urban design programs of the various universities in Hong Kong**.

2. **Enhance the**

To complement the government's **Asia's World City & Mega**

¹ <https://web-assets.bcg.com/1b/8e/71e0d6f4405f876e7ff2c3d0689b/bcg-decoding-global-talent-2024-r2.pdf>

Harbourfront to
Complement the policies
of **Mega Event Economy**
and **Hong Kong Tourism**
Industry 2.0

In response to **PA item**
no. 57 & 130

Event Economy Policy, the functions of the entire harbourfront (i.e. don't stall at Hunghom, Wanchai North, WKCD and KTSP only) shall be reviewed and the roles of the Harbourfront Commissions (HfC) shall be comprehensively upgraded. The first 20 years of HfC was a success; much of the Victoria Harbourfront are reconnected and returned to the public and HfC along with the Harbour Office have been able to conduct a number of events for the citizens' enjoyment. However, much of these events are temporal in nature. To complement the city's desire to retain its Asia's World City status and enhance our mega event economy, both hardware and software strategies of the Harbourfront shall be revisited and reconsidered thoroughly.

With the **revamping of PHO** in sight, it is perhaps time to review the hardware and in conjunction with the prospective activities that are previously not possible due to the stringent provisions within PHO. With the aim of complementing the Asia's World City and mega event economy objectives, more RDE and even cultural facilities shall be considered. Opening of the harbourfront for use by retail offerings in the adjacent private developments shall be considered.

Some of the recently implemented facilities such as the container restaurants along the watersports precinct and the newly installed vending machine kiosks are not really compatible to Hong Kong Asia's World City status and not comparable those facilities of our competitors. International examples, such as Singapore's Clarke Quay and Sydney's Darling Harbour, Barangaroo, Opera House promenade, Shanghai's West Bund - demonstrate that the integration of dining and commercial facilities significantly enhances the appeal of the area while fostering economic development and community vitality. By effectively optimizing public spaces and enhancing transportation connectivity, these developments create improved living and consumer experiences for both residents and visitors.

In this connection, the government shall also review and empower the Harbourfront Commission and the Harbour Office to centrally lead the review and implementation efforts such as to ensure a urban design approach can be adopted and a faster implementation process.

3. **Early Establishment of Planning and Design Guidelines** to facilitate early land disposal for **the San Tin Technopole & Mixing of Tertiary Education with High-tech Industries**

In response to **PA item**
no. 110. And 138.

We welcome the TPB's acceptance of our proposal to include a requirement of the setting up of a Planning & Design Guidelines prior to land disposal of San Tin Technopole.

As mentioned in item 1 above, good urban design is essential in attracting and retaining talents. We shall move away from vehicle-road based planning; pedestrianisation, cycling and urban greening networks should be the leading mechanisms to structure the technopole.

Instead of separating living and working areas, and selling mono-functional mega-plots, the plan should include high-density, dynamic and mixed urban environment that attract global talents, who expect a stimulating and high-quality urban living environment.

Adopting established planning theories, the Northern Metropolis should adopt a 'Regional Innovation System' approach, using creative urban planning approaches to create networks of enterprises, research and higher education institutions.

The 'quadruple helix model' has shown how the government can

act as coordinator of the innovation environment, promoting synergies between private sector research and innovation in collaboration with Hong Kong's world-leading universities and civil society. Learning from examples such as Canary Wharf London, 22@Barcelona, Aalto University Ecosystem and the High Tech Campus Eindhoven, the Northern Metropolis should enable close physical proximity between industry, education and high-quality living environment, and adopt a flexible, mixed-use planning approach.

To attract the world's most talented workers and business leaders, Hong Kong needs to offer world-leading new town environments which combine innovative urban design with integrated ecological and people-centric planning concepts.

4. Integrative Urban Design Approach for Planning the Future of Hong Kong

In terms of urban design there are many overlaps and cross-related issues. We cannot exclude problems with sub-divided units, sustainable blueprints, cultural initiatives and tourism initiatives. However, we can re-state and emphasise the central urban design issues at stake where a lack of a properly coordinated approach to bettering the city has been well off-course for many years for a number of reasons and the government shall consider the following:-

- Removal of policy silos that has been hindering a cohesive overall urban design and planning for Hong Kong;
- Reviewing if we shall overly rely on income from land-sales;
- Establishing an urban area pedestrian connectivity frameworks;
- Putting decisive efforts on distinctive place making;
- Putting emphasis on urban redevelopment rather than an equal emphasis on regeneration and revitalisation;
- Instigating a comprehensive harbourfront upgrading strategies with thoughtful initiatives on waterfront sites that are technically available, rather than satisfying with featureless open spaces, promenades and cycle tracks;
- Rethinking whether we shall keep relying on temporal mega-event tourism, food festivals etc.
- Reenacting efforts to curb vehicles growth rather than allowing spiralling increase in numbers of vehicles, building wider and longer roads, increasing carparking ratio;
- Putting efforts in sustainable planning and well coordinating with what is happening across the boundary.

Our city is highly efficient in terms of transit development which shall be matching with complementary transit-oriented-developments. Preservation of country parks and protected coastal areas is positive but we shall explore visitor potential that enhances a smart tourism agenda.