

**Urban Renewal Strategy Review  
Consensus Building Stage  
Professional Groups Consultation Meeting (2)  
Discussion Summary**

Date: 10 June 2010 (Thursday)  
Time: 6:00 to 8:00 pm  
Place: Urban Renewal Exploration Centre (Room 601, Low Block, Grand Millennium Plaza, 181 Queen's Road Central, Hong Kong)  
No. of Attendees : 11 persons (excluding members of the Steering Committee on Review the Urban Renewal Strategy , and the representatives from the Development Bureau, Urban Renewal Authority and Government departments)

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The host, Mrs Sandra MAK WONG Siu-chun, briefed the attendees on the background and progress of the Urban Renewal Strategy Review. The Steering Committee on Review of the Urban Renewal Strategy (SC), after analyzing and discussing the views collected during the “Public Engagement” stage, making reference to the results of a series of (a total of 7) topical studies, and considering the unique circumstances of Hong Kong, had put forward ten preliminary proposals for the future of urban renewal. A briefing on these preliminary proposals was delivered by the Development Bureau’s representative. The preliminary proposals were recorded in the Public Views and Future Direction Paper for the Consensus Building Stage of the Urban Renewal Strategy Review (hereinafter referred to as the “Future Direction Paper”), and released on 10 May 2010. After these briefings, the host invited participants to express their views which were responded to by the SC members.

**Public Discussion**

**1. District-based, Bottom-up approach (District Urban Renewal Forum), Social Impact Assessment and Social Service Teams**

**1.1 District Urban Renewal Forum (DURF)**

Some participants took the view that the current proposed DURF was heading towards the right direction, however its actual operation was more important than its form. Hence, the view was that the elements of a “bottom-up” and a “top-down” approach were equally important and that both had to be included. Moreover, one/some of the participants worried that if in future there was a difference in views between the districts, then the holistic planning approach might be undermined.

One attendee pointed out that the current proposed method of forming the DURF did not include representatives of owners or residents which was a cause for concern that the work

of the DURF would not be accepted by the affected persons. Some participants hoped that the authority would increase the number of contacts with the owners' corporations in the old districts and consult the chairpersons, vice chairpersons and members of the corporations to obtain their views. The view was expressed that many residents in the old districts hoped that the progress of redevelopment could be expedited.

There were views that the public should be allowed to check information about the redevelopment projects through the DURF, such as the processes and results of surveys conducted on buildings.

*The Development Bureau explained that the proposed DURF would provide views on urban renewal for the entire region instead of just expressing views for individual buildings or flat units.*

## **1.2 Social Service Teams (SSTs)**

One participant was mindful of the situation that SSTs felt that they were playing contradictory roles, and suggested that SSTs should be provided with a code of practice and training so that they would have a clear understanding of their role.

## **2. Compensation and Rehousing**

### **2.1 “Flat for Flat” and “Shop for Shop”**

There was a view that it was very difficult to judge if the proposed “flat for flat” compensation scheme was reasonable or not. Regarding the “shop for shop” option, one attendee considered that price was the only reason that the “shop for shop” scheme could not be implemented. If the affected shop owners were willing to make up for the difference in price between the new shops and the old shops, the “shop for shop” scheme should be a feasible one. Moreover, one the participant, taking Wedding Card Street as an example, pointed out that most of those affected were shop tenants and it would not be feasible if only the ownership of one new shop was offered in exchange for the ownership of the original old shop. If the URA wanted to preserve the community activities and culture it should consider how to assist in re-establishing the original shops. There was a view however that the focus of the “shop for shop” scheme was on community preservation and that emphasis should not be placed only on the amount of compensation offered to the shop owners.

*The Development Bureau clarified that the purpose of the proposed “flat for flat” option was to provide the affected owner-occupiers with one more choice and not to raise the compensation. Moreover, an SC member stated in response to the issue of “shop for shop” that as redevelopment must meet the requirements of the existing land planning and the relevant ordinances, the number and areas of the ground level shops that could be offered under the projects might be vastly different from those of the original old buildings. In addition, there might not even be any ground floor shops built under the new projects, thus it might not be feasible to look for similar shops under the redevelopment projects for the purpose of implementing the “shop for shop” option. Furthermore, another SC member*

*explained that quite a few affected shop owners hoped that after they had moved out they could immediately resume business in the vicinity to maintain the customer network. Hence, the biggest issue was the amount of their compensation and not that of returning to their original location to do business.*

### **3. The scope of urban renewal, URA's roles in redevelopment, and financial arrangements**

#### **3.1 URA's role in redevelopment**

A participant indicated that apart from playing the roles of an “implementer” and a “facilitator”, the URA should even consider playing more the role of a just “arbitrator” to showcase to the public that the URA would be a fair player..

Some participants pointed out that rehabilitation and revitalization were included in the existing 4Rs, however, currently these two items of work were taken up by more than one organization, and the public might find it confusing. There was nothing in the “Future Direction Paper” to explain clearly how this division of labour would be applied to these items of work in future. There was a suggestion that the SC and the Government could clearly explain in this review how various organizations should divide the work of rehabilitation and revitalization amongst themselves.

#### **4. Others**

There was a view that urban renewal should include planning of the harbourfront areas.

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