

Steering Committee on Review of the Urban Renewal Strategy

Notes of the third meeting

Date: 21 October 2008 (Tuesday)

Time: 2:30 p.m.

Venue: Room 822, Central Government Offices (West Wing)

Present

Mrs Carrie LAM	Secretary for Development (Chairperson)
Mr Andrew CHAN	
Professor Stephen CHEUNG	
Mr HO Hei-wah	
Mr KWAN Chuk-fai	
Professor David LUNG	
Mr Vincent NG	
Professor Nora TAM	
Dr Peter WONG	
Ms Ada WONG	
Mr Laurie LO	Principal Assistant Secretary for Development (Planning & Lands) (Secretary)

In Attendance

Mr Raymond YOUNG	Permanent Secretary for Development (Planning & Lands)
Mr Tommy YUEN	Deputy Secretary for Development (Planning & Lands)
Mr Raymond CHEUNG	Political Assistant to Secretary for Development
Miss Amy CHAN	Administrative Assistant to Secretary for Development
Mrs Ava NG	Director of Planning
Miss Annie TAM	Director of Lands
Mr AU Choi-kai	Director of Buildings
Mr Quinn LAW	Managing Director, Urban Renewal Authority
Ms Iris TAM	Executive Director, Urban Renewal Authority

Miss Ada CHAN	Assistant Secretary for Development (Urban Renewal)
Miss Jane KWAN	Assistant Secretary for Development (Urban Renewal)
Dr LAW Chi-kwong	Policy study consultant (Research Team, University of Hong Kong)
Dr Ernest CHUI	Policy study consultant (Research Team, University of Hong Kong)
Ms Lisa HO	Policy study consultant (Research Team, University of Hong Kong)
Mrs Sandra MAK	Public engagement consultant (Managing Director, A-World Consulting Ltd.)
Mr Andrew CHEUNG	Public engagement consultant (Senior Customer Manager, A-World Consulting Ltd.)

Absent with apologies

Mr David C LEE

Action

Item 1: Confirmation of minutes of the previous meeting

The meeting confirmed the minutes of the previous meeting held on 21 August 2008.

Item 2: Progress report on policy study (SC Paper No. 7/2008)

2. The policy study consultant gave a presentation on the latest progress of the policy study, including literature review and study visits. The policy study would cover various aspects of urban renewal, including land policy, planning policy, roles of different parties (e.g. government, stakeholders and the general public), financing arrangements and legal backing. In the course of arranging for and conducting study visits, the consultant would also identify overseas speakers for the urban renewal seminar to be organized by URA in mid-December 2008.

Action

3. The Chairperson invited Members to comment on the progress of the policy study.
4. As preservation of social network was frequently raised during focus group discussions, a Member suggested the policy study consultant to pay attention to this aspect and to arrange more meetings with affected groups during its overseas study visits. Policy study consultant
5. Some Members suggested the policy study consultant to look into arrangements of transfer of development rights in other places, e.g. Dihua Street (迪化街) in Taipei. Policy study consultant
6. A Member suggested the policy study consultant to study overseas arrangements regarding social impact assessments for urban renewal projects. He would pass to the Secretary a document provided by a focus group participant regarding overseas principles and guidelines for conducting social impact assessments. Policy study consultant
7. The Chairperson asked the Secretary to work with the policy study consultant to draw on overseas experience and produce discussion papers on major urban renewal issues for future meetings. Secretary & policy study consultant

Item 3: Progress report on public engagement **(SC Paper No. 8/2008)**

8. The public engagement consultant gave a presentation on the latest progress of public engagement, including focus group discussions, Announcement of Public Interest (API), website revamp, partnering organizations, radio programme, etc. Members noted that the website revamp and the API were scheduled to be completed and launched in mid-November 2008.

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9. Year 2008 was the 20th anniversary of urban renewal in Hong Kong. URA would organize roving exhibitions on urban renewal from early November to December 2008, publish a commemorative brochure at the end of 2008 and organize an international seminar in mid-December 2008. These activities would complement the public engagement programmes organized by the consultant.

10. The Chairperson invited Members to comment on the progress of public engagement.

Publicity Plan

11. A Member suggested the public engagement consultant to prepare a master publicity plan to ensure that various media and publicity programmes organized by the consultant and URA were well coordinated.

Public
engagement
consultant

Focus Group Discussion Sessions

12. Some Members had the following observations on the focus group discussion sessions.

- (a) As the focus group discussion sessions were so far carried out in an orderly manner, it would not be necessary to limit the number of representatives from each organization.
- (b) While the focus group discussion sessions were designed for participation by invitation so that the discussions would be more focussed, walk-in participants should also be allowed in line with the open-minded approach adopted for this review.
- (c) Some organizations might not have views on individual issues raised during the focus group sessions and some representatives indicated that their remarks did not represent the views of their

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organizations. To tap the views of the organizations, the public engagement consultant should consider meeting the relevant organizations, through either attending their meetings or arranging special meetings for individual professional organizations or statutory bodies.

- (d) There were not enough discussions of macro matters, such as people’s vision for their districts or coordination of urban renewal efforts across districts. As the discussions of urban renewal matters tended to focus on individual projects, it would be necessary for the facilitators of focus group sessions to instigate discussions from a more holistic point of view.

13. The Chairperson thanked Members for attending the focus group discussion sessions and providing a lot of useful feedback on the relevant arrangements. She stressed that the URS Review would be carried out in the most open manner with no pre-determined agenda. She asked the public engagement consultant to adjust the arrangements of the focus group sessions taking into account Members’ feedback.

Public
engagement
consultant

14. Members reminded the public engagement consultant to prepare accurate summaries of the issues raised during focus group sessions.

Public
engagement
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eForum

15. Noting that submissions to the eForum were vetted for offensive language or images before posting, some Members sought clarifications on the criteria for screening. A Member had received a complaint about a missing submission. The Secretary assured Members that the submissions would not be vetted based on their stance or points of view. He would follow up on the missing

Secretary

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submission referred by the Member. (Post-meeting note: The Secretary had checked with the public engagement consultant and the relevant IT contractor but could not find the missing submission. This might be due to some teething troubles as the submission was made on the first day of the launch of the eForum. He had reported the findings to the Member and asked the Member to invite the person to make a new submission.)

16. Some Members considered that the eForum should allow instantaneous responses to facilitate more lively discussions. Noting that the same practice was adopted by all government websites inviting the public's views on-line and that there would only be a few hours' delay in the upload of messages received, the Chairperson suggested to continue with the present arrangement of basic screening before posting of messages received.

Partnering Organizations

17. The meeting noted that the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (Hong Kong) and the Hong Kong Institute of Planners had set up ad hoc committees for the URS Review. The Chairperson would write to the relevant professional institutes (e.g. Hong Kong Institute of Architects) to encourage them to participate actively in the URS Review through organizing activities, becoming partnering organizations, setting up dedicated committees, etc.

Secretary

18. The Chairperson noted that the Commissioner of Heritage's Office (CHO) would approach schools regarding heritage programmes and asked the public engagement consultant to coordinate with CHO on approaching schools regarding the URS Review. The Secretary would liaise with CHO and the public engagement consultant on this.

Secretary &
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Item 4: Idea Shops for URS Review

(SC Paper No. 9/2008)

19. The Chairperson thanked Ms Ada WONG for preparing the discussion paper for this agenda item and invited Members to comment on the proposal to set up idea shops for the URS Review.

20. Some Members supported the proposal to set up idea shops for the URS Review, considering that this would be an innovative way to engage the public in the URS Review.

21. Some Members were uncertain about the cost-effectiveness of the proposed idea shops. Some Members believed that schools and other organizations interested in urban renewal would be interested in visiting the proposed idea shops. A Member noted that an exhibition organised by an NGO in Sham Shui Po was visited by some 7 000 people within one and a half months. A Member also pointed out that the Wanchai Livelihood Museum in the Blue House attracted a lot of attention in the community.

22. On the operator of the proposed idea shops, some Members suggested that the proposed idea shops be operated by a local NGO so that the public, in particular the local community, would feel more comfortable to visit the shops. Some Members suggested inviting the public engagement consultant to operate the proposed idea shops for the sake of better coordination with other public engagement programmes for the URS Review. The public engagement consultant could partner with interested organizations to organize activities in the proposed idea shops, e.g. partnering with schools and youth organizations to organize activities for students and young people. Interested organizations could also apply to use the proposed idea shops for

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organizing activities related to the URS Review. They should be required to submit a report after the activities.

23. Members considered that a lot of efforts would be required to sustain the community's interest in the proposed idea shops. It might not be necessary to operate the proposed idea shops for a period of 18 months as proposed in the discussion paper. To enrich the content of the proposed idea shops, the proposed idea shops should be made use to organize activities on different topics relating to urban decay as well as other topics like building maintenance, e.g. the upcoming Mandatory Building Inspection Scheme. Members noted it was important that the proposed idea shops should not be confused as local offices of URA.

24. The meeting agreed that the proposed idea shops should open at least five days a week and must be open during weekends. The operator should aim to organize activities during weekends. The opening hours should be convenient to the public, say from noon to 2000 hours, and could be extended where necessary.

25. URA agreed to provide resources for the establishment and operation of the proposed idea shops. Some existing shop spaces owned by URA in Tai Yuen Street in Wan Chai could be readily converted into an idea shop.

26. In the light of Members' views, the Chairperson suggested that the first idea shop would be set up in the readily available shop spaces of URA in Tai Yuen Street in Wan Chai. It should aim at operation by end 2008. The public engagement consultant would be the operator and should adopt an inclusive approach in identifying partnering organizations to organize activities in the idea shop. The partnering organizations should not be limited to NGOs in Wan Chai. Interested organizations should also be allowed to apply to use the idea shop for organizing URS

URA &
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Review-related public engagement activities. The organizations would be subject to some obligations, e.g. compliance with safety requirements and preparation of reports after the activities. URA should provide necessary resources for the establishment and operation of the idea shop. URA and the public engagement consultant should work out the detailed arrangements of the idea shop as soon as possible.

Item 5: Any Other Business

27. The Chairperson said that the Legislative Council Panel on Development would discuss whether to set up a subcommittee on the URS Review. A Member requested the Secretary to inform Members of the meeting schedule of the subcommittee if it was set up.

Secretary

28. The meeting ended at 4:30 p.m.

**Secretariat, Steering Committee on Review of the URS
October 2008**