



## Town Planning

**Purpose of Town Planning:** Town Planning aims at providing a quality living environment, facilitating economic development, and promoting the health, safety, convenience and general welfare of the community by guiding and controlling development and the use of land. Following the principle of sustainable development, town planning seeks to bring about an organized, efficient and desirable place for the community to live and work in. As land suitable for development in Hong Kong is scarce, there is a need to strike a balance in utilizing the limited land resource to meet the competing demands for housing, commerce, industry, transport, recreation, nature conservation, heritage preservation and other community needs.

**Planning Organisations:** The Planning and Lands Branch of the Development Bureau is in charge of the policy portfolios of planning, land use, buildings and urban renewal in Hong Kong. Taking directives from the Development Bureau, the Planning Department (PlanD) is responsible for formulating, monitoring and reviewing land use at the territorial level. PlanD also prepares district/local plans, area improvement plans, the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines as well as undertakes actions against unauthorized land uses.

The principal body responsible for statutory planning in Hong Kong is the Town Planning Board (TPB). It is formed under the Town Planning Ordinance (TPO) and served by the PlanD. Comprising predominantly non-official members, the TPB oversees the preparation of draft statutory plans, considers representations to such draft plans and considers applications for planning permission and amendments to plans. There are two standing committees under the TPB, namely, the Metro Planning Committee and the Rural and New Town Planning Committee. Under the TPO, the TPB may also appoint a committee among its members to consider representations to draft statutory plans.

**Planning System:** Hong Kong's planning system comprises development strategies at the territorial level and various types of Statutory and Departmental Plans at the district/local level. Guiding the preparation of these plans is the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines, relevant development related policy and principles and community views.

**Territorial Development Strategy:** The strategy aims at providing a broad planning framework to guide future development and the provision of strategic infrastructure in Hong Kong. It also serves as a basis for the preparation of district plans. The findings of *Hong Kong 2030: Planning Vision and Strategy (the HK2030 Study)*, a study to formulate the planning framework for Hong Kong up to 2030, were promulgated in October 2007. The HK2030 Study has adopted sustainable development as its

over-arching goal. The recommended strategy, focusing on the three broad directions of providing a quality living environment, enhancing economic competitiveness and strengthening links with the Mainland, aims to help Hong Kong achieve its vision as "Asia's world city".

With increasing economic integration and social interaction between Hong Kong and the Mainland, cross-boundary surveys are commissioned regularly to collect statistical information on various aspects of cross-boundary activities, e.g. travel pattern and behaviour, Hong Kong residents' experience of and aspirations for taking up residence in the Mainland. The findings of these surveys provide valuable input for the planning of cross-boundary infrastructure and the formulation of development strategies. The planning study titled *Coordinated Development of the Greater Pearl River Delta Townships*, jointly commissioned by Hong Kong, Guangdong and Macao to formulate a regional development framework, was completed and its findings were promulgated in October 2009.

**Statutory Plans:** Two types of statutory plans are prepared and published by the TPB under the provisions of the TPO. In 2005, the TPO was amended to streamline the plan-making process and planning approval procedures, enhance the openness and transparency of the planning system and strengthen planning enforcement control in the rural New Territories.

The first type is Outline Zoning Plan (OZP) which shows the land use zones, development parameters and major road systems of an individual planning area. Areas covered by OZPs are in general zoned for uses such as residential, commercial, industrial, green belt, open space, government/institution/community uses or other specified purposes. Attached to each OZP is a Schedule of Notes showing the uses which are always permitted (Column 1 uses) in a particular zone and other uses for which prior permission from the TPB must be sought (Column 2 uses).

The second type is Development Permission Area (DPA) Plan. DPA Plans are prepared to provide interim planning control, and development guidance for rural areas in the New Territories until more detailed OZPs are prepared. DPA Plans indicate broad land use zones and are also accompanied by Schedules of Notes showing Column 1 and 2 uses. DPA Plans are effective for a period of 3 years and will be replaced by OZPs.

Information on statutory plans, related guidelines and procedures as well as the agenda and decisions of the open meetings of the TPB and its Committees can be accessed online from the TPB website at <http://www.info.gov.hk/tpb/> and the Statutory Planning Portal at <http://www.ozp.tpb.gov.hk/>. The public may also observe those open meetings in the Public Viewing Room located in North Point Government Offices, 333 Java Road, North Point, Hong Kong.

**Departmental Plans:** Outline Development Plans and Layout Plans are administrative plans prepared within the framework of the statutory plans. With a much larger scale, these departmental plans show more detailed level planning parameters e.g. site boundaries, location of access points and footbridges, specific types of government or community uses to facilitate the coordination of public works, land sales and land reservation for specific uses.

Views from the public are essential considerations for the formulation of development strategies and preparation of plans. Public engagement in the form of public forums, workshops, exhibitions, etc. has become a very important component of the planning process.

**Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines:** It is a reference manual setting out the criteria for determining the scale, location and site requirements of various land uses and facilities. It is used in the preparation of town plans and planning briefs and is a tool that helps to regulate development.

**Urban Renewal and Regeneration:** The Urban Renewal Authority (URA) is a statutory body established in 2001 to speed up the renewal of old urban areas and to execute the Urban Renewal Strategy formulated by the Government. PlanD co-ordinates with the URA under the statutory provisions in the planning of urban renewal and regeneration projects for the improvement of the old urban areas.

The Government has launched a review of the Urban Renewal Strategy in 2008 in three stages – envisioning, public engagement and consensus building, and is scheduled for completion in 2010. The Strategy will provide a broad policy guidance for urban renewal in Hong Kong.

**New Town and New Development Areas:** Large-scale new town development in the New Territories began in the early 1970s. PlanD's District Planning Offices have worked closely with the Civil Engineering and Development Department's Development Offices to prepare plans and oversee the development of these new towns. At present, nine new towns, namely, Tsuen Wan, Sha Tin, Tuen Mun, Tai Po, Yuen Long, Fanling/Sheung Shui, Tseung Kwan O, Tin Shui Wai and North Lantau are in various stages of development and will accommodate about four million people upon full development. However, large-scale new towns will not be pursued in the foreseeable future. Instead, medium-scale new development areas such as Kai Tak and new development areas in the New Territories will be developed.

**Planning Enforcement:** The Town Planning Ordinance provides the Planning Authority with enforcement power against unauthorized developments (UDs) within the DPAs or the replacement OZPs. Within these areas, all developments are unauthorized unless the development is either in existence before the gazettal of the DPA Plans, permitted under the Plan or covered by valid planning permissions.

PlanD's Central Enforcement and Prosecution Section is responsible for undertaking enforcement and prosecution actions against the UD. They investigate complaints and referrals from the public or other Government departments, and carry out regular patrols to identify possible UD. Once a UD is confirmed, statutory enforcement and prosecution actions will be taken as appropriate.

**Topical Studies:** PlanD also carries out a wide range of topical studies. In the light of a slower population growth projected for the next 30 years, greater planning efforts are now focused on improving the quality of the living environment and local area improvements, particularly for the older urban cores and the harbourfront.

For local areas, the *Pedestrian Plans for Causeway Bay, Tai Po Market and Kwun Tong, Area Improvement Plan for Tsim Sha Tsui* and the *Area Improvement Plan for Shopping Areas of Mongkok* have been completed. Two studies on enhancing the rural township of *Lau Fau Shan* and *Sha Tau Kok* and surrounding areas are in progress. Other ongoing studies include a feasibility study on *Urban Climatic Map and Standards for Wind Environment*, and *Air Ventilation Assessment studies for specific areas* and sites.

The harbour planning framework formulated under the *Harbour Plan Study* is now being reviewed to take into account the changing public aspirations of the harbourfront. The review is conducted in close association with the Harbour-front Enhancement Committee, an advisory committee representing a wide range of interests in the community. The harbour planning principles and guidelines have been completed and promulgated. For the waterfront areas, the *Kai Tak Planning Review* has been completed. and *The Urban Design Study for the New Central Harbourfront* is near completion and the *Hong Kong Island East Harbourfront Study* is ongoing.

In order to formulate a planning framework to guide the future use of the large area to be released from the Frontier Closed Area, PlanD commenced a planning study titled *Land Use Planning for the Closed Area* to examine the development and conservation potentials of the area. The study is scheduled for completion in 2010. With a view to formulating a planning framework for the Kwu Tung North, Fanling North and Ping Che/Ta Kwu Ling NDAs to address the long term housing and employment needs in Hong Kong, the *North East New Territories New Development Areas Planning and Engineering Study* was launched in June 2008.

*The Planning and Engineering Study on Development of Lok Ma Chau Loop*, a joint effort of Hong Kong and Shenzhen, commenced in June 2009. The main objective of the Study is to formulate a comprehensive plan for development and implementation of the developments and infrastructure in the Loop as well as the area in its vicinity for the mutual benefits of both Hong Kong and Shenzhen.

*The Planning Study on Liantang/Heung Yuen Wai Cross-boundary Control Point and its Associated Connecting Road in Hong Kong* which aims to examine the planning, land, traffic, environmental and engineering issues of the new crossing and its associated connecting road has been completed. Implementation of the new crossing has commenced and is expected to complete in 2018.

**Planning Information:** There is a Hong Kong Planning and Infrastructure Exhibition Gallery located at G/F, Murray Road Multi-storey Car Park Building showcasing Hong Kong's planning proposals and major infrastructure projects. For more information on town planning, please visit PlanD's website at <http://www.pland.gov.hk/> or visit the two Planning Enquiry Counters located at:

- 17/F, North Point Government Offices, 333 Java Road, North Point, Hong Kong
  - 14/F, Sha Tin Government Offices, 1 Sheung Wo Che Road, Sha Tin, New Territories
- For enquiries, please call 2231 5000, fax to 2877 0389 or e-mail to [enquire@pland.gov.hk](mailto:enquire@pland.gov.hk).