Purpose of Town Planning: Town Planning aims at shaping a quality living and working 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. Based on the principle of sustainable development, town planning seeks to bring about an organised, efficient and desirable place for the community to live and work in. Given the limited land resources in Hong Kong, there is a need to strike a balance in land utilisation 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 and district/local level. It also carries out topical planning seeking to bring about an organised, efficient and desirable place for the community to live and work in. Given the limited land resources in Hong Kong, there is a need to strike a balance in land utilisation to meet the competing demands for housing, commerce, industry, transport, recreation, nature conservation, heritage preservation and other community needs.

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 last review, “Hong Kong 2030: Planning Vision and Strategy” (“Hong Kong 2030”), was promulgated in 2007. The Government is currently updating “Hong Kong 2030” under “Hong Kong 2030+: Towards a Planning Vision and Strategy Transcending 2030” (“Hong Kong 2030+”), which provides a spatial planning framework to guide the future planning, land and infrastructure development and the shaping of the built and natural environment of Hong Kong beyond 2030. Building upon the foundations of “Hong Kong 2030”, the Government is adopting a people-centric, proactive, pragmatic and action-oriented approach to draw up a robust development strategy to enhance Hong Kong to become a liveable, competitive and sustainable 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. The survey findings provide valuable input for the planning of cross-boundary infrastructure and formulation of development strategies.

Statutory Plans: Two types of statutory plans are prepared and published by the TPB under the provisions of the TPO. In 2004, the TPO was amended to streamline the planning-making process and planning approval procedures, enhance the openness and transparency of the planning system as well as strengthen planning enforcement in the rural New Territories. The amended TPO took effect in 2005.

The first type is Outline Zoning Plan (OZP) which shows the land use zones, development restrictions 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 or community uses, or other specified uses. 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 three years and will be replaced by OZPs.

Information on statutory plans, planning applications, related guidelines and procedures as well as the agenda, meeting papers and decisions of the open meetings of the TPB and its Committees can be accessed online from the TPB website at http://www.tpb.gov.hk/ and the Statutory Planning Portal 2 at http://www.ozp.tpb.gov.hk/. The public may also observe those open meetings in the Public Viewing Room located at 1/F, North Point Government Offices, 333 Java Road, North Point, Hong Kong.

Departmental Plans: Outline Development Plans (ODP) 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.

In February 2011, the Government promulgated the new Urban Renewal Strategy (URS) which adopts a “people first, district-based, public participatory” approach. It provides a Government strategy for urban renewal in Hong Kong.

The first pilot District Urban Renewal Forum (DURF) was established in the Kowloon City District in June 2011 for a term of three years. The Kowloon City DURF formulated the Urban Renewal Plan (URP) for Kowloon City which was submitted to the Government for consideration in January 2014. The URP would be implemented with regard to the actual local situation and serves as a reference for the public and other organisations which might participate in the implementation of the URP.

On the basis of the URP, the URA had adopted a holistic and district-based approach in rejuvenating the Bailey Street / Ngan Hon Street / Wing Kwong Street / Hung Fook Street / Kai Ming Street Area which had been identified as one of the Proposed Redevelopment Priority Area in the URP and commenced five development projects and one development scheme within the area from 2016 to 2018. The URA also commenced a development scheme at Kai Tak Road / Sa Po Road in February 2019. Besides, the project on the Development of the Kowloon City Themed Walking Trail which is funded by the Urban Renewal Fund aims to connect and consolidate the existing and planned historic and cultural facilities within Kowloon City, commenced in January 2018 for a period of six years.

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, there are nine new towns, namely Tsuen Wan, Sha Tin, Tuen Mun, Tai Po, Yuen Long, Fanling/Shuen Shui, Tseung Kwan O, Tin Shui Wai and Tung Chung. New Development Areas (NDAs) in Kwu Tung North/Fanling North, Tung Chung East and West, Hung Shui Kiu and Yuen Long South are in various stages of development and will constitute a new wave of smart and liveable new town development.

Planning Enforcement: The TPO provides the Planning Authority with enforcement power against unauthorised developments (UDs) in areas covered by the DPA Plans or the replacement OZPs. Within these areas, all developments are unauthorised unless the development is either in existence before the gazettal of the DPA Plan, permitted under the relevant statutory plan or covered by valid planning permission.

PlanD’s Central Enforcement and Prosecution Section is responsible for undertaking enforcement and prosecution actions against UDs. The Section investigates public complaints and referrals from other Government departments, and carries out regular patrols to identify possible UDs. 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. The Urban Design Study for the Wan Chai North and North Point Harbourfront Areas is scheduled for completion in 2019. The study aims to work out a sustainable urban design framework and formulate the harbourfront enhancement proposals to guide the future developments and enhancements of the Wan Chai North and North Point harbourfront areas. The Study on Existing Profile and Operations of Brownfield Sites in the New Territories aims to facilitate the Government to formulate policies and measures for tackling brownfield sites in a more holistic manner. The study includes a comprehensive examination of the overall distribution and uses of brownfield sites in the New Territories through site inspection, questionnaire survey, and stakeholder interviews. The study is scheduled for completion in 2019.

There are also a number of on-going or recently completed studies mainly aiming at examining the development potential of particular locations such as Yuen Long South, Ex-Lamma Quarry Area, Lam Tei Quarry and Tseung Kwan O Area 137.

The Development of a Common Spatial Data Infrastructure (CSDI) - Built Environment Application Platform (BEAP) Feasibility Study commenced in March 2018. The study aims to examine the feasibility of developing a CSDI-BEAP, and is tasked to formulate an overall development framework and recommend potential built environment applications with test case to demonstrate the feasibility of implementing applications for relevant Government departments. The study is scheduled for completion in 2019.

Planning Information: The City Gallery, located at 3 Edinburgh Place, Central, Hong Kong, showcases unique achievements and visions for Hong Kong’s planning and infrastructure projects. City Gallery also plays an active role as a platform for exchanging professional ideas and education purpose. For more information on town planning and the City Gallery, please visit the PlanD and City Gallery’s website at http://www.pland.gov.hk and http://www.citygallery.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.