



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

Hong Kong Institute of Urban Design Public Affairs Committee's Recommendations to the 2018 Policy Address

1. In anticipating what scenarios Hong Kong's built environment and cityscape would unfold into in the coming years, we see both immense challenges and opportunities ahead. HKIUD wishes to take a moment to express our concerns and to make a few recommendations whilst the CE's Office is currently working on the new Policy Address.

2. We wish first of all to recall and compliment some of the aspects raised in Mrs. Carrie Lam's CE election manifesto in 2017 such as in advocating the importance of a New Style of Governance, and a few of the visions more related to urban design, including public participation for a "liveable city"; Building a Caring and Inclusive Society; More Sharing of Information; Innovation and Technology; Improving the efficiency in providing services for the elderly, as well as the implementation of a Smart City to make Hong Kong more liveable, etc. HKIUD undoubtedly shares these visions but would wish all the more to see how measures are taken to their implementation.

3. Currently Government appears to be still seeing matters related to urban design as "issues" rather than opportunities. We were given to understand that institutions have been set up to "address" "urban design issues" including: heritage conservation, the harbourfront, sustainable buildings, urban renewal and public open spaces. However, many of these are scattered under different policy silos and not a lot had been achieved compared to the pace of degradation of the urban environment. We consider that more could and should have been done. Efforts and expertise often duplicated and spatial and temporal scales of projects restricted, probably because some important underlying issues were not sufficiently tackled. We would only name a few here. For example: land ownership problems where private property is involved, the lack of due institutional mechanisms for compensation and land exchanges saw heritage conservation efforts fall through. Pedestrianisation and Walkability endeavours have given way to vehicular traffic dominated transport policies. Innovative public space and pedestrianisation designs were frustrated by rigid departmental guidelines, etc. A further example is found in the priority given to the building of colossal and intrusive pedestrian bridges instead of more human-scaled pedestrian schemes and reduction of vehicular traffic. Improving Walkability is not just an exercise of bringing people from point A to point B. The quality of the pedestrian environment, interaction of pedestrians with the adjoining building fronts and human behavior should all be counted.

4. Nevertheless, we do note and concur with the Administration that we should not underestimate the importance of even small scale urban design efforts. We would therefore continue to support urban design projects initiated by Government and implemented by itself and those involving the public. However, we would caution that Urban Design must not be seen as just something nice to have yet dispensable under an engineering led study or design. Urban Design in fact has a key role to play in the whole city building process. Urban Design actually cuts across and also handshakes with urban planning, architecture,

Hong Kong Institute of Urban Design Limited

香港金鐘金鐘道89號力寶中心第二座22樓2207-9室 Suite 2207-9, 22/F, Tower Two Lippo Centre, 89 Queensway, Admiralty, Hong Kong
Tel: (852) 2530 8135 Fax: (852) 2530 8100 Web: www.hkiud.org Email: inq@hkiud.org



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

landscaping, civil and traffic engineering, community building and applications of information technology, etc.

5. We understand that a number of policies related to urban design are placed under the roof of the Development Bureau, but that is perhaps only one step forward in the vast organisation structure of the whole Government. As can be seen in the examples above, Transport Department who advocates the building of the bridges are under Transport and Housing Bureau, the building and management of public open spaces involved the LCSD under the Home Affairs Bureau, much more than the portfolio of the Development Bureau. We earnestly wish that Urban Design should be mainstreamed in all Government's policies. To make it a mainstream, the various policy bureaux should be given to see the opportunities and worth of good urban design in the modern city.

6. The other problem in changing the current mind-set in the Government organisation as we see it, is the lack of the knowledge and relevant expertise. It is hoped that in the coming year Government would actively consider the creation of an "Urban Designer" grade in the Civil Service. The study of Urban Design provides an overview and mastery of many disciplines involved in city building, from its conceptualisation stage through public engagement processes to project implementation and the transformation and regeneration of the city fabric.

7. Qualified Urban Designers should be employed in key departments and policy bureaux to formulate urban design guidelines, oversee that studies and projects would include urban design considerations, and co-ordinate multi-disciplinary teams in project implementation. Before such grade in the Civil Service is created, at least when consultancy is required to undertake studies and projects, it should be made a practice to include a requirement for urban designer inputs. In the meanwhile, HKIUD will continue to work together with our universities to monitor and accredit the teaching of urban design in order to enhance the standards of the practice and to increase the available pool of urban design expertise locally.

8. We note that in the development of Kowloon East, Government has established multi-disciplinary offices of EKEO under the Development Bureau and a Kai Tak Office under CEDD. With our members' many years of experience in the very effective process of development of new towns in the NT, we recommend that more multi-disciplinary teams should be formed in the coming years.

ENDS

**Public Affairs Committee of
Hong Kong Institute of Urban Design
3 October 2017**

Hong Kong Institute of Urban Design Limited

香港金鐘金鐘道89號力寶中心第二座22樓2207-9室 Suite 2207-9, 22/F, Tower Two Lippo Centre, 89 Queensway, Admiralty, Hong Kong
Tel: (852) 2530 8135 Fax: (852) 2530 8100 Web: www.hkiud.org Email: inq@hkiud.org