

People First  
District-based  
Public Participatory Approach

Urban  
Renewal



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## Mission

The Urban Renewal Authority (URA) is tasked to adopt “Redevelopment” and “Rehabilitation” as its core businesses. Through urban renewal initiatives, we aim at creating high quality and vibrant urban living in Hong Kong.



Mr Tsui (Kwun Tong Town Centre project) enjoys his new cosy home at Tseung Kwan O.



Wong's family (Ma Tau Wai Road/Chun Tin Street project) settles in a public housing estate in Tai Kok Tsui.



Mrs Hung and her family (Lai Chi Kok Road / Kweilin Street and Yee Kuk Street project) reside in the URA's re-housing block at Bedford Tower.



## Objectives

Many residents of dilapidated buildings in run-down districts long for the opportunity to improve their living environment and to escape from their substandard housing in which they feel trapped. The priority objective of the URA is to help them make their dream come true.

The frontline staff of URA provides residents and shop operators affected by URA projects with caring services and practical assistance when they are in need of help.



URA staff members, Connie Cheung, Stella Cheng and Dora Lam receive The Ombudsman's Awards (public officer) for their distinguished and caring services for residents in 2006, 2008 and 2010 respectively.



Mr Cheung lives in a bed-sized caged home at Fuk Tsun Street.

**Unbearable plight:** Today, there are approximately 110,000 households living in poor and squalid environment. Many live in tiny cocklofts in kitchens while a typical flat of less than 47 square metres could be home to a dozen households living in small cubicles and partitioned rooms sharing only one kitchen and one bathroom. Without windows for air ventilation and air conditioning, the daytime temperature in their accommodations in summer time could reach as high as 37 degrees centigrade or more. And you could imagine the kind of plight they have to endure.

Improving the quality of living for the less fortunate people makes a dire need of urban renewal.



The tiny bed space in Wan Chai is home for Madam Leung and her son.



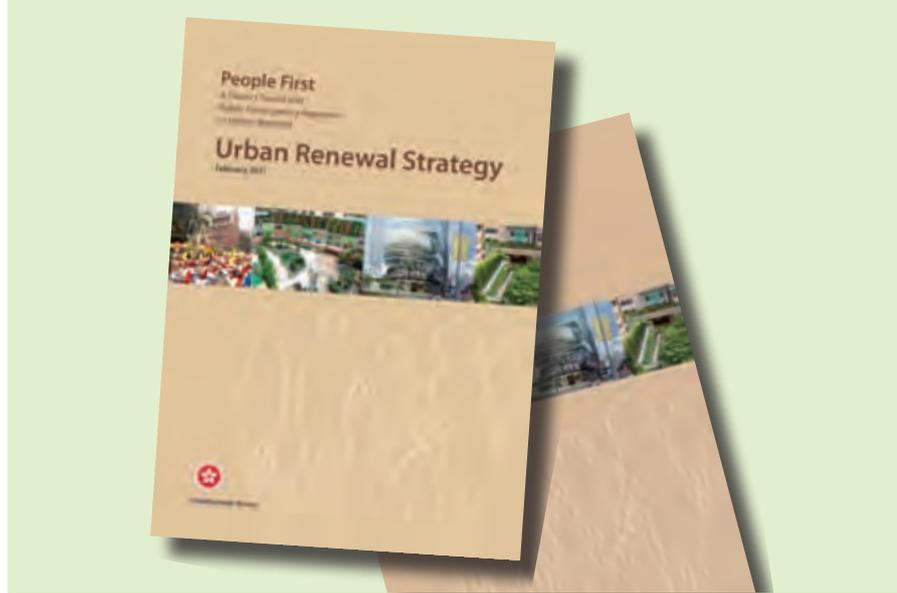
## For the People

There are some 4,000 buildings of over 50 years old in Hong Kong and around half of them are in poor or deteriorating condition. Many of these buildings are lack of proper maintenance. And even basic facilities. Obsolete building design together with the lack of elevators in some buildings can no longer keep up with the modern and quality living standard nowadays.



- In May 2001, the URA was established under the Urban Renewal Authority Ordinance (URAO) to replace the Land Development Corporation as the statutory body to undertake, encourage, promote and facilitate the urban renewal of Hong Kong.
- In June 2002, the Legislative Council's Finance Committee approved that the Government injected HK\$10 billion to URA in five tranches over a five-year period from 2002/2003. As one of the initiatives, the URA is supported by the Government through waiver of land premia for redevelopment sites.
- According to the URAO, the URA shall exercise due care and diligence in handling its finances and to be self-financing in long run.

# People First, a District- based and Public Participatory Approach



Following an extensive two-year public engagement process, the Government announced the new Urban Renewal Strategy (URS) in February 2011, which spelt out a “people first, district-based and public participatory” approach for urban renewal.

The URA is tasked to adopt “Redevelopment” and “Rehabilitation” as its core businesses. The URA also preserves, restores and revitalises buildings, sites and structures of historical, cultural or architectural interest, if such preservation forms part of its urban renewal projects.

A new advisory platform, District Urban Renewal Forum (DURF), is set up by the Government to identify the vision and needs of urban renewal at the district level. DURF advises the Government on district-based urban renewal initiatives, including regeneration and redevelopment areas, preservation targets and implementation models. The URA will make reference to the recommendations of DURF and taking into account other factors as well.

The Urban Renewal Trust Fund with HK\$500 million endowment from the URA is set up to fund activities and studies to be conducted by DURF and the operation of social services teams. Applications from non-government organisations and other stakeholders for urban renewal related activities will also be considered.



Kwun Tong Town Centre Project, the URA's largest redevelopment project, features the most extensive greening with some 30% of the site area incorporated with greening facilities. The new town centre will also create a new focus for community life.





Cherry Street project (Florient Rise) in Tai Kok Tsui is awarded the Hong Kong Building Environmental Assessment Method (HK-Beam) Platinum Rating.

# Redevelopment

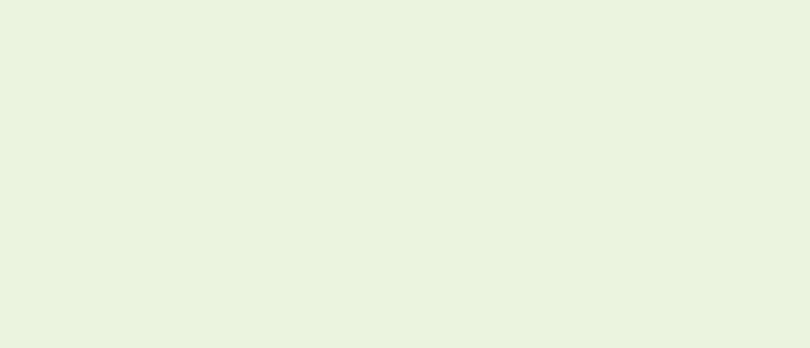
Through redevelopment, the URA aims to improve residents' living condition and to replace clusters of dilapidated buildings with modern living standard. The URA seeks to incorporate environmental features to fostering a quality and sustainable living for the people of Hong Kong.

We try to include the following environmental provisions in the design and construction of our projects:

- Energy efficiency
- Water conservation
- Environmentally friendly building materials
- Facilities for collection of recyclable wastes
- Reduction of construction waste and environmental nuisance
- Extensive and well-planned greening

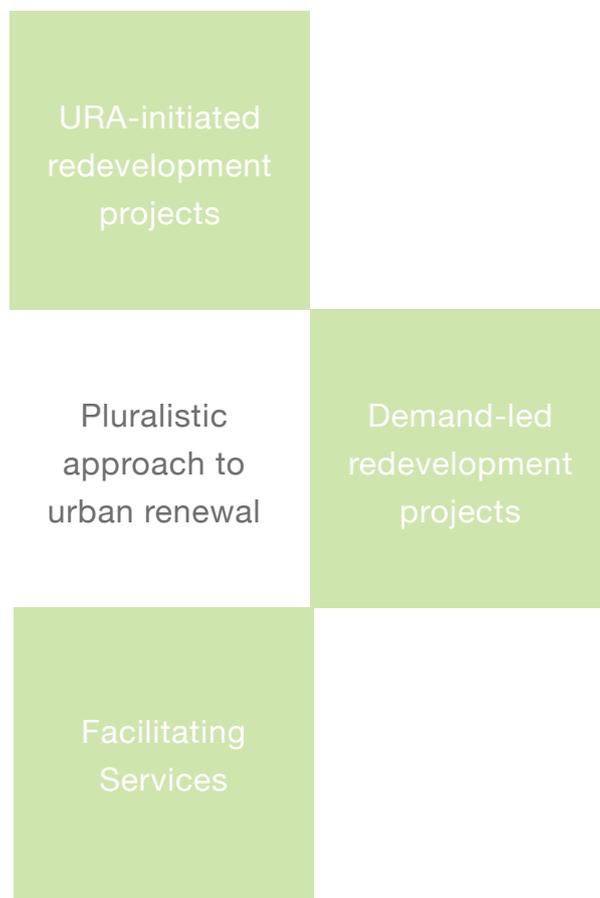
A number of URA projects have achieved the Hong Kong Building Environmental Assessment Method (HK-Beam) Platinum Rating.

The Lee Tung Street project is the first URA project incorporating environmental provisions in a comprehensive way. Application of the green features on the project can reduce its carbon dioxide emissions by about 23%. This reduction in the project's carbon footprint is equivalent to about 170,000 trees.



**Social Mission:** The URA has implemented over 50 redevelopment projects, providing some 38,000 square metres of public open space and about 74,000 square metres of Government, Institution and Community facilities. Commercial space is reserved in some projects for social enterprises. URA also licenses out vacated shops in some project sites to charitable and non-government organisations at nominal fees for social and educational purposes. Improving the quality of living for the less fortunate people makes a dire need of urban renewal.

# Diverse Forms for Redevelopment



To tackle the problem of urban decay more effectively, redevelopment takes more diverse forms with the “demand-led” model and URA as a facilitator, in addition to URA-initiated projects.

The “demand-led” model is intended to let building owners decide collectively if they want URA to redevelop their properties. The URA may respond to requests from owners to initiate redevelopment of their lots/buildings. The URA considers the applications based on a number of criteria such as the building conditions, living environment, benefits to the community and feasibility. If the URA accepts the application, it will commence the redevelopment process in accordance with the URAO.

As a “facilitator”, the URA provides facilitating services to owners in amalgamating their property interests for joint sale in the market.

**Flat-for-Flat Pilot Scheme:** The Flat-for-Flat (FFF) option is offered as an alternative to cash compensation under the new URS promulgated by the Government on 24 February 2011. It is only applicable to domestic owner-occupiers who are affected by URA projects commenced after 24 February 2011.

Under the FFF pilot scheme, domestic owner-occupiers could have a choice of “in-situ” flats in the new development site or flats in Kai Tak development site. Domestic owner-occupiers who opt for FFF must first accept the cash compensation calculated on a seven-year-old flat formula in the first round of acquisition offered by the URA. FFF is not intended to enhance the level of compensation.





# Rehabilitation

Building rehabilitation is an important segment of urban renewal, slowing down the pace of urban decay. It offers speedy improvement to the living conditions of people in-situ and retains the community network.

The URA's motto is "We help owners to help themselves". Since 2004, the URA has provided assistance to owners so as to encourage them undertake proper maintenance of buildings, making their homes safer and better places to live in. The URA's materials incentive and loan schemes have assisted owners of about 40,000 units in over 520 buildings, to undertake building rehabilitation work.







## One-stop Service

A comprehensive Integrated Building Maintenance Assistance Scheme (IBMAS) was launched on 1 April 2011 to encompass four major areas of assistance: subsidy for formation of Owners' Incorporation, subsidy and interest-free loan for works in common area and home renovation interest-free loan.

The URA provides one-stop and user-friendly service for owners in need of assistance. These include setting up a hotline service and resource centres, and providing advice on colour scheme designs and technical assistance.

The URA also supports the Government in enhancing building safety by implementing the Operation Building Bright. The URA will provide assistance to owners on the Mandatory Building Inspection and Mandatory Window Inspection Schemes when the relevant legislation comes into effect.





Central Oasis revitalisation project

**Revitalisation Projects:** Revitalisation synergises all urban renewal efforts in the old districts. The URA is revitalising the former Central Market building to turn it into a new Central Oasis for public enjoyment.

Other projects include the Pak Tsz Lane revitalisation project which highlights its connection with the 1911 Chinese Revolution, and the Mallory Street “Art Community” for the art and creative industries.

The URA also carries out street beautification works in the vicinity of its redevelopment and rehabilitation projects to enhance the district’s environment.



Pak Tsz Lane revitalisation project



Mallory Street “Art Community” revitalisation project



“Sports Retail City” in the Sai Yee Street project



Promotional activities for Graham Street



Lee Tung Street project’s “Wedding City”



Preservation of shophouses on Johnston Road

# Heritage Preservation and Revitalisation

The URA preserves heritage buildings if such preservation forms part of its urban renewal projects. Its objective is to restore heritage buildings for public enjoyment. After years of planning and renovation work, a cluster of four shophouses and a pre-war building that form part of the Johnston Road redevelopment project in Wan Chai have been converted into specialty restaurants.

The URA has preserved a number of historical buildings in its many redevelopment projects and also has plans to preserve two clusters each of 10 pre-war verandah type shophouses on Shanghai Street and Prince Edward Road West. In the Wan Chai Road / Tai Yuen Street project, the core elements of the market building are preserved in-situ.

**Enhance local characteristics:** The URA makes its best effort to preserve the local characteristics within or in the vicinity of its redevelopment projects. Examples are the century-old street market outside the Peel Street / Graham Street project, “Wedding City” in the Lee Tung Street project and “Sports Retail City” in the Sai Yee Street project.



Shanghai Street preservation project



Prince Edward Road West preservation project



Core element preservation for Wan Chai Market building



# Working with the Community

Community participation and support are essential to urban renewal. As such, the URA has embraced public aspirations through extensive community engagement. The URA organises activities such as briefings, resident meetings, workshops, focus groups, opinion surveys, public forums, roadshows, and set up neighbourhood centres, resource centres, hotlines and Urban Renewal Exploration Centre to enhance communication with the public and gauge their views. Through these efforts, urban renewal projects are planned and designed in the best interest and aspirations of the community.



# Commitments

Under the new URS, the URA will continue to embrace new challenges in tackling urban decay. These include:

- Improving the living condition of those people residing in dilapidated buildings;
- Improving cityscape of old districts and engineering economic growth;
- Providing “no-frills” flats to the mass market;
- Preserving heritage buildings within its project sites;
- Pursuing environmentally sustainable development; and
- Achieving greater community involvement, ensuring value for money from the resources which the Government entrusts to the URA.

Urban renewal is a driving force for the sustainable development of Hong Kong.

The URA will continue to work closely with all stakeholders to tap the full potential of urban renewal with a view to creating a quality urban living environment in Hong Kong and making it a better home to live in.



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