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時光荏苒,我出任市區重建局主席已三年。在這段頗短的日子裡,市區更新的概念,卻在香港社會起 了重大變化。

市建局的願景

市區老化是現代城市之患,將其有效解決是每個社會的當務之急。雖然市區更新的必要性毋容置疑, 惟應當如何進行卻莫衷一是。其實,市區更新須包含甚麼元素,社會上意見紛紜。作為本港主要的市 區更新機構,市建局究竟抱持或應該抱持何等願景呢?

願景從何而來,對不同人而言,見解並不一致。有説必先有願景,才可落實工作。也有人認為,必須 經過一連串工作後,才得出願景。無論如何,兩者的共通點,是願景一經確定,便不再改變。市建局 的情況卻有點不同,我們願景的獨特之處,在於不停演進,它會因應社區的需要和訴求,以及不斷轉 變的社會、經濟及政治環境而蜕變。

市建局面對的挑戰,在很多方面亦是香港面臨的挑戰。我們的市區更新計劃與民生息息相關,在進行 工作期間,常有機會感受社會基層對種種民生問題的反應。在香港,各社區緊密連繫,地區市民面對 的問題往往有可能演化為全香港也需要面對的問題。

同為香港帶來美好轉變

社區聯繫已成為香港所有大型項目,以及重大政策檢討不可或缺的一環。幸運地,市建局在這方面的 工作,一直得到持份者的廣泛支持。

在進行社區聯繫工作時,我們明白到市區更新工作不可零碎地推行,從而引發出「總綱構想」的市區 更新模式。實質上,本局的計劃目標並非個別項目,而是整個地區。我們會考慮每個地區的歷史、地 區特色及居民訴求,再發掘每區的潛質。透過這個過程,地方人士可以就舊區發展表達意見。至今, 我們已在灣仔及上環採用這個形式,亦收集到很多有建設的意見,可以協助進一步規劃。

每當說到社區聯繫工作,便不得不提及觀塘市中心項目。無論是地盤面積及居民數目,這亦是市建局

主席報告Chairman's Statement

Three years had passed since my first Chairman's statement. In this relatively short time, the concept of urban renewal as it has so far been understood in our city, has undergone a sea change.

URA's Vision

Urban dilapidation is a scourge of every modern city, and the need to address it is a major concern of any society. Whilst the necessity for urban renewal is never disputed, how it should be implemented is open to different views. Indeed, there is no lack of opinions on what it should entail, especially when it could mean different things to different people. This also raises the question as to what URA's vision for urban renewal is or should be, with the Authority being the primary urban renewal agency in Hong Kong.

It is often said that vision comes before everything. There are also times when it is believed to come "after the event". No matter which take is favoured, the common ground appears to be that these visions are somewhat fixed. In this aspect, URA sets itself apart in that its vision is an evolving one - one that responds to the needs and aspirations of the community against the ever-changing social, economic and political environment.

In many ways, the challenges URA faces are also Hong Kong's challenges. With its urban renewal programme closely associated with the livelihood of so many people, the Authority is positioned at the forefront of public opinions and community aspirations. Indeed, it is often the case that URA is amongst the first to encounter changes in public sentiments that originate at the local level but which eventually take on territory-wide significance.

Together Making a Difference

Community engagement has become a matter of course for all major projects, and important policy reviews in Hong Kong. URA has been fortunate that the integration of this important element in our work has gained extensive support from our stakeholders.

In our efforts to engage the community, we recognise that urban renewal could not be done on a piecemeal basis. This led to the conception of the Master Thinking approach. Essentially, this focuses on whole districts instead of individual projects, exploring their potentials with due regard given to their history, distinct characteristics and local aspirations. Through this process, local communities have their say on how best their old districts could be regenerated. This approach has so far been adopted in Wanchai, and Sheung Wan, and many constructive views have been obtained to facilitate further planning.

Any talk of community engagement would not be complete without mentioning our Kwun Tong Town Centre project. It is by far the largest redevelopment project ever undertaken by URA, both in terms of size and residents involved. In the search for a scheme which will upgrade and update the town centre to a 21st century urban hub that can adequately serve a local population of about 600,000 people, an extensive series of public consultation has been held over a year. Through such efforts of collaboration between the Authority and the community, a scheme has evolved, and has received wide support. This marks a new beginning for URA as well as urban renewal in Hong Kong as a whole. By adopting a similar approach in other major projects, it is hoped that the same level of support could be gained.

Consistent with URA's new approach to projects is its openness and determination to be innovative in addressing community aspirations. Socially desirable features such as open space, greening, high standard community facilities, and