

Press Release
For Immediate Release
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HKIS's Seven Suggestions on 2020 Policy Address

The Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, Mrs Carrie Lam, will release the 2020 Policy Address in October. The Hong Kong Institute of Surveyors (the "HKIS") had been concerned about the development of building, housing and land policy in Hong Kong, and has made seven major recommendations. The current pandemic situation reflects the urgency of improving the conditions of land and housing shortages, as well as building safety issues. The HKIS hopes that the Government will take into account the views of different stakeholders and include appropriate measures in its Policy Address, in order to promote the future development of Hong Kong.

1. Land Supply

(1) Review of the Premium Assessment Mechanism

The HKIS suggests the Government reviews the Premium Assessment Mechanism to "activate" private developments and redevelopments via lease modifications/land exchanges. These suggestions include (1) making reference to transacted prices in the market, (2) reviewing the membership composition of the Valuation Conference and allowing representations made by applicants, (3) strengthening manpower for premium assessment within the Lands Department, including additional resources for assessing construction costs and providing advice on geotechnical issues, and (4) adopting a "Standard Land Price" System.

(2) Promoting Re-industrialisation by Increasing Land Supply

With the development of re-industrialisation, a strong demand for land is noted among modern industrial spaces, data centres, and logistics spaces. The HKIS supports the "Industrial Revitalisation 2.0" policy which includes redevelopment of industrial buildings to provide necessary spaces for modern industrial use as soon as possible to develop Hong Kong's modern industry.

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2. Buildings

(3) Review of Non-naturally Ventilated Bathroom/toilet Design

The COVID-19 pandemic has alerted the public to the issue of repairs, maintenance, and alterations to the home drainage system. The health risks of units with non-naturally ventilated domestic bathroom/toilet design are also relatively high. In the past, the Government has relaxed building regulations to allow bathrooms in residential units to be designed without windows to facilitate design flexibility. However, this approach has neglected the problems of long-term maintenance and management. Particularly in so-called “nano flats”, germs and viruses can spread easily to the living area or bedroom from the bathroom/toilet. Although there are mandatory requirements for provision of mechanical ventilation to such bathroom/toilet without windows installed, there is no effective means to monitor or manage its functioning. The HKIS recommends that the Government reviews the design of non-naturally ventilated bathroom/toilet design as soon as possible to remove possible risks to public health.

(4) Remove Restriction on Above Ground Car Park Design

The Government changed its long established policy on gross floor area (“GFA”) concession to car parks and loading/unloading areas in a building in 2010, only permitting a 50% GFA concession to parking spaces provided in a building on ground floor or above. This policy has led to the development of underground parking lots by many developers, which require higher construction costs and substantially lengthened construction times. Underground car parks also require extensive mechanical ventilation, as well as regular maintenance and cleansing to maintain safety and hygiene, thus incurring high maintenance costs and complicating the construction process. As the Government should be aware of the negative impact of underground construction on the environment, the HKIS suggests that the Government reviews the GFA concession policy of car parks in order to develop healthier, more economical, and sustainable car parks.



3. Housing

(5) Increasing Public Rental Housing Supply – Redeveloping Aged Estates and Building Higher Tower Blocks

According to the latest figures released by the Housing Department, there will be a total supply of some 101,300 public housing units (public rental and subsidised sale flats) in the coming five financial years from 2020/21 to 2024/25. This figure only accounts for two-thirds of the public housing supply target set out in the *Long-term Housing Strategy Report* in 2018 – an insufficient supply. Also, the average wait time for first allocations has lengthened to 5.4 years. The HKIS suggests that the Government speeds up the redevelopment of public housing estates completed during the 1950s and 1960s as soon as possible to increase the housing supply. The HKIS also supports building higher tower blocks (>40 floors) to meet the huge demand for housing.

(6) Formulating Elderly-friendly Housing Design Standard

As the problem of Hong Kong's ageing population intensifies, the Government should promptly formulate policies with the goal of "Ageing-in-Place". The HKIS suggests that the Government establishes domestic building design standard of elderly-friendly housing, with reference to current disabled design code . By designing suitable homes for the elderly and providing appropriate supportive services, elderly persons can "age in place" and delay their demand for nursing homes. The HKIS had previously compiled an "Advice on Elderly Housing Policy", providing relevant professional advice, and looks forward to further discussions with related organisations.

(7) Expanding Spatial Data Infrastructure for Smart City Development

The HKIS is glad to know that \$300 million was earmarked to develop the Common Spatial Data Infrastructure (CSDI) for public use by the end of 2022, laying the foundation for building a smart city. The HKIS welcomes the Government's continuous support for establishing the CSDI to consolidate, exchange and share more spatial data for organisations in both public and private sectors to use. The HKIS urges the Government to provide support to open up Government data in all Government departments, in addition to the Development Bureau's family of



departments, in the CSDI to facilitate policy planning and formulation across departments, and for the public to utilise and apply the geospatial data for supporting the smart city development.

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Photo caption: (From left to right) Sr Vincent HO, JP, Past President and Chairman of Building Policy Panel, the HKIS; Sr LAU Chun-kong, JP, Past President and Chairman of Land Policy Panel, the HKIS; and Sr Francis LAM, Chairman of Housing Policy Panel, the HKIS.

To download photo: <https://bit.ly/3i8dWUB>



About the Hong Kong Institute of Surveyors

Established in 1984, The Hong Kong Institute of Surveyors (HKIS) is the only surveying professional body incorporated by ordinance in Hong Kong. As of 31 July 2020, the number of members reached 10649, of which 7147 were corporate members, 73 were associate members and 3429 were probationers and students. HKIS work includes setting standards for professional services and performance, establishing codes of ethics, determining requirements for admission as professional surveyors, and encouraging members to upgrade skills through continuing professional development.

HKIS has an important consultative role in government policy making and on issues affecting the profession. We have advised the government on issues such as unauthorized building works, building safety campaign, problems of property management, town planning and development strategies, construction quality and housing problems. We are working on amendments to standard forms of building contract and have issued guidance notes on floor area measurement methods.

For more details, please visit HKIS website : <http://www.hkis.org.hk>

Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/hkisofficial>

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