

## News Clipping

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### URBAN PLANNING

# Kai Tak ready for take-off once again

Government says it will embrace walkability, sustainability, smart city and promoting healthy lifestyle as part of regeneration

Jimmy Chow

**H**ong Kong is still struggling with the concept of urban planning and designs. The urban architecture of the city is haphazardly designed, and is exacerbated by unfriendly architecture. Take the streets around the central business district, which are designed for vehicles but ignore the comfort and safety of pedestrians, creating a sense of isolation.

However, the mindset among city planners is changing with the regeneration of Kowloon East, as city planners and architects place more emphasis on "hub ecology" to promote community interaction and integration. Sustainability measures and smart technology are becoming part of the planning.

The government has adopted an integrated approach to the transformation of Kowloon East into what we call the CBD2 [central business district 2] to sustain Hong Kong's economic development," according to Secretary for Development Paul Chan Mo-po, who was addressing an audience at the 2016 annual conference last month, hosted by the Hong Kong Institute of Surveyors (HKIS).

Chan said Kai Tak was instrumental to the holistic development of Kowloon East from the perspective of urban planning and sustainable development. Apart from the objective of meeting land supply target, he said the planning would focus on connectivity, branding, design and diversity. "In doing so, we would take a people-centric approach to make Kowloon East walkable and easily accessible with a pedestrian-friendly environment."

In June, the Emerging Kowloon East Office, the liaison office in the Development Bureau, overseeing the initial planning of CBD2, unveiled the Conceptual Master Plan 4.0 for Kai Tak, focusing on walkability, sustainability, smart city and promoting healthy lifestyle.

In the plan, the concept of walkability is advocated through proposed improvements on connectivity and pedestrian environment, such as encouraging property owners to build elevated walkways to link buildings, improving connectivity between the Ngau Tau Kok MTR station and Kwun Tong waterfront, and a proposal to build a new footbridge near Kowloon Bay MTR station.

The Kwun Tong waterfront promenade will integrate with art and creative spaces beneath the flyover along Hoi Bun Road and the nearby landscaped pedestrian network. It will eventually be extended to the future Tsui Ping River.

The government will carry out a pilot study to assess the feasibility of turning Kowloon East into a smart city, including using technology to enhance pedestrian and vehicular accessibility, better manage facilities, and disseminate real-time information, such as traffic and parking availability.

Organisations are invited to express their interest in the development of the Tourism Node at Kai Tak. Occupying a 5.93-hectare site, the Tourism Node is a key component of the Kai Tak project, which includes a plan to develop the former runway tip and its adjoining areas into a tourism, entertainment and leisure hub, the Development Bureau said.

When it comes to the making of smart city and community spaces, there is something Hong Kong can learn from Singapore.

The Kai Tak area is instrumental to the holistic development of Kowloon East, says Paul Chan Mo-po. Photo: David Wong



The city state is installing sensors and cameras to monitor and track anything that moves, from pedestrians to registered vehicles.

The Singapore government believes the Big Street Data generated could be used to indicate which roads are congested or where the nearest available parking lots are, and could also be leveraged to help tackle social problems, such as street crimes or rescuing accident victims.

Meanwhile, the Singapore Land Authority (SLA) is working on the first phase of its national 3D mapping project with the use of Geographic Information System technology to visualise the entire island in a simulated 3D world, according to Dr Victor Khoo, a deputy director at the SLA, who shared some of the 3D models with the HKIS conference audience.

While the full potential of a national 3D map has yet to be explored, Khoo said that it would be



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extremely useful for urban, infrastructure and architectural planning in the initial application stage.

On the upcoming development of the Kai Tak Multipurpose Sports Complex, Teoh Hai Pin, director of DP Architects Singapore, the architect behind the Singapore Sports Hub, suggested the integration of sports, leisure, entertainment and lifestyle through the creation of a hub ecosystem, synergising sporting, community, retail and leisure spaces within one site.

Like Singapore, land in Hong Kong for large-scale sports complexes is limited. Therefore, the Kai Tak sports complex has to be compact in design and serve multiple purposes that allow world-class sporting events, and also recreational and community activities, he said.

"Hongkongers tend to work long hours. They like hanging out and dining out as a way to socialise. I think Hong Kong definitely needs more community spaces," Teoh said. "In my opinion, the design of the [Kai Tak] sports complex should focus predominantly on the public realm."



Teoh Hai Pin, director of DP Architects Singapore, favours a multiuse sports complex.