

LCQ9: Redevelopment projects of Urban Renewal Authority

Following is a question by the Hon Chan Han-pan and a written reply by the Secretary for Development, Ms Bernadette Linn, in the Legislative Council today (February 21):

Question:

The Urban Renewal Authority (URA) plans to introduce the concept of "vertical city" development and the "arrangement of floating planning parameters" in the Kwun Tong Town Centre redevelopment project. Regarding URA's redevelopment projects, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether it knows the current number of URA's proposed redevelopment projects that have adopted the concept of "vertical city" development, as well as the estimated (i) increase in the plot ratios and floor areas of such projects (set out in a table) and (ii) economic benefits that may be brought to the districts concerned after adopting the concept;

(2) as it has been reported that the domestic plot ratio of the old district of Tsuen Wan is only five, whether it knows if the URA will consider adopting the "arrangement of floating planning parameters" in the redevelopment projects in the old district of Tsuen Wan; if it will, of the details and timetable; if not, the reasons for that;

(3) whether it knows if the URA has plans to improve the ancillary facilities (including transport and healthcare facilities) in the old district of Tsuen Wan through the redevelopment projects in that district, so as to cope with the growth in the population and logistics flow of the district; if it has, of the details and timetable; if not, the reasons for that; and

(4) whether it knows the current number of URA's proposed redevelopment projects that have adopted the "arrangement of floating planning parameters", as well as the increase in the proportion of URA's redevelopment projects that have received tenders and the increase in tender success rate after adopting the arrangement (set out in a table); whether there are cases in which the developers of URA's redevelopment projects allocate development floor space for different planning uses under such arrangement?

Reply:

President,

"Floating planning parameters" refers to the flexibility in allocating floor space for different permitted uses in a development, subject to no change in total developable floor space and, often, compliance with the maximum total floor area as allowed for individual permitted use. The

development concept of "vertical city" refers to accommodating a range of mixed and compatible uses, including residential, commercial, office and community facilities, in a high-density vertical building. Having consulted the Urban Renewal Authority (URA), my reply to the various parts of the question is as follows:

(1) and (4) The Kwun Tong Town Centre Development Areas 4 and 5 Project, which was originally planned for a comprehensive commercial development, including office, hotel and shopping arcade, is the first redevelopment project by the URA adopting the "floating planning parameters" mechanism. It provides the successful bidder with greater flexibility in allocating floor space for the above permitted commercial uses, subject to no change in total developable floor space.

Following the unsuccessful tender of the Project early last year, the URA has reviewed the development mode of the Project. Considering the sizable site area and strategic location of the Project, which is in close proximity to the Kwun Tong MTR Station and a large-scale public transport interchange, the URA considers it possible to increase the building height of the project so as to enhance development capacity, and has pioneered the adoption of the "vertical city" planning concept. The URA has proposed to adopt a mixed-use development mode by adding residential use, thus allowing a mixed use of residential, commercial, office and hotel in the development, and increase the provision of public facilities. The proposed amendment scheme retains the "floating planning parameters" mechanism, which would provide the future successful bidder with greater flexibility in allocating both domestic and non-domestic floor space for different uses within the stipulated maximum levels, so as to maximise the redevelopment potential of the land, and to enhance the resilience to cope with the changing market.

According to the latest proposed amendment scheme, the maximum total gross floor area (GFA) of the Project is proposed to be increased from 201 220 square metres to 251 100 sq m (i.e. increased by about 25 per cent as compared with the original scheme). The total plot ratio of the Project is equivalent to about 12. A comparison of the major development parameters between the scheme put to tender last year and the proposed amendment scheme is as follows:

	Proposed amendment scheme	Original scheme	Difference
Total GFA (sq m)	251 100	201 220	+49 880 (+about 25%)
Commercial (sq m)	Max. 153 700	192 619	-38 919 (-about 20%)
Residential (sq m)	Max. 110 100	—	+110 100

Government, Institution or Community (GIC) facilities (sq m)	17 200 (Note)	8 601	+8 599 (+100%)
No. of flats	1 750	0	+1 750
At-grade public open space (sq m)	Not less than 7 200	About 7 200	–
Above-ground outdoor communal space (sq m)	Not less than 4 000	3 230	+770 (+about 24%)

The proposed amendment scheme increases the variety in land use mix. The floor areas for both domestic and non-domestic use, being capped at their respective maximum levels, can be interchanged flexibly which would bring design flexibility to the future development. It is believed that such arrangement can enhance the attractiveness of the Project and expedite the redevelopment. The Project will also provide more planning gains to the community, including more GIC facilities and public open space.

The Project is so far the only project of the URA which adopts the "floating planning parameters" and "vertical city" concept. As the amendment scheme is still subject to the completion of statutory town planning process before the Project is re-tendered at suitable juncture, it is unknown at this stage whether the future developer will adjust the floor space for different permitted uses.

(2) and (3) In considering the local context and infrastructure capacity, the domestic plot ratio in the Tsuen Wan old area has been generally maintained at not more than five. In order to better utilise the land resources and promote urban renewal, the URA has commissioned the Tsuen Wan District Study (Tsuen Wan Study). The URA has just completed the Stage 1 "Baseline Review" at the end of 2023, and the Stage 2 "Identification of Urban Restructuring Key Issues, Constraints and Opportunities" has since been commenced. The URA is currently examining the latest infrastructure condition to assess the feasibility of increasing the development capacity of the area, as well as the associated impact on infrastructure and support facilities. The findings, together with other key planning issues including planning vision, population density, traffic planning, and the provision of public facilities (including medical and social welfare facilities, and communal space) etc, and views gauged in local consultations, will be holistically reviewed and considered in Stage 3 "Planning and Urban Design Framework" and the "Master Urban Renewal Plans" in formulating optimal planning parameters and development modes for the long-term development of Tsuen Wan. In this regard, the URA will consider the applicability of "floating planning parameters" in individual land parcels under the Tsuen Wan Study.

Note: Exempted from GFA calculation.