

12-Apr-2022

By email (info@tonytsewaichuen.com)

Dear Mr. Tony Tse Wai Chuen, BBS, JP,

Notes to Mr. Tony Tse following open seminar on the URA Yau Mong Study

I'm sorry I didn't get the chance to speak about the Yau Mong study tonight. There are many opinions raised but I agree with your final statement that there is a need to do a comprehensive study of this old area. Like the final speaker says, this is one of the densest places in the world, yet it is very old and delapidated. There needs to be a plan to show how urban redevelopment is done via large scale planning.

It is correct that URA should embark on this strategy for urban renewal rather than its current practice of simply doing disparate blocks in different places. The biggest benefit from landscape planning point of view, is district-scale planning has the benefit of recreating **large open spaces** in key areas within Yau Mong. From Kowloon Park to King's Park to Nam Cheong Park to Tai Hang Tung recreation ground (which is small in comparison) – they are all outside of Yau Mong. Within Yau Mong there is no such park! Yet Yau Mong really needs it because of the high density and the large number of people living there. This is the reason for me to support this study.

However my support of the study extends only to that, to the need to carry out such a study and making proposals about whole-scale redevelopment strategy. I am very disappointed that the study delivers no content except the hotly debated increase in GFA.

I am deeply disappointed on the lack of an urban landscape planning strategy. The extent of open space 'proposal' is simply re-drawing existing tiny, scattered, green blocks. The Street Consolidation Area idea hints at the possibility to deliver the missing large open spaces, but comparing diagrams 4.7 and 4.11, it is clear there is no consideration of a real and workable open space strategy. Worse, looking at final sections of the report where their proposal (of increase GFA) manifests into physical planning, diagram 4.17 shows a whole scale set of frighteningly taller buildings of the same density as ones already there. I see no evidence of large open spaces, and, if the elevation shows true intent, the end result of re-developed Yau Mong is really just a set of much taller buildings of the same density and quantity, placed in close proximities to each other the same way it is now. That is a frightening prospect that no professional city builders should support.

The report itself has too many flaws to make it a successful model to be adopted, or to be used as a model to carry on similar studies elsewhere. Please use your position as our APSL LegCo representative to ask URA to go back to the drawing board. They need to rethink the objectives, the principles, the strategies, the outcome, the timetable – these very key elements to show us their report has convincing merit to be taken further, both implementing the proposal in Yau Mong, and making similar studies elsewhere like Shamshuipo and Tsuen Wan.

By the way, from a citizen point of view and as someone who cares about its community, I don't support rehousing residents in Yau Mong to far away places outside the area. We need to respect

aging in place. We also need to preserve the existing streetscape characteristic and the only way to do so, is to keep people where they are.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several loops and a horizontal line, likely representing the name Iris Hoi.

Iris Hoi

President

The Hong Kong Institute of Landscape Architects