

**青少年對香港都市規劃發展的期望**  
**A Study on Young People's Vision on**  
**Hong Kong's Planning and Development Strategy**

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On Hong Kong's Planning and Development Strategy**

**SUMMARY REPORT**

**1. Introduction**

The SAR government is currently undertaking a two-year public consultation on a development strategy for Hong Kong. Entitled “Hong Kong 2030: Planning Vision and Strategy” (hereafter “Hong Kong 2030”), the consultation paper aims to create a framework of reference for Hong Kong’s physical development over the next 30 years, and to act as a roadmap for determining future plans for Hong Kong’s land use, transport provisions and environment.

Territorial development has a wide coverage from the provision of schools, distribution of housing and cultural facilities, connection of transportation networks within Hong Kong and to the Mainland, as well as the laying down of fiber optics. The planning affects people’s lives, their employment, and their need for recreation and cultural activities.

If young people can voice their opinions via public consultation, town plans can be formulated with their needs taken into consideration. Besides, as different views and arguments are put up, the public will also know about the price to pay for development. This contributes to a mutual understanding within society to achieve a common goal.

“HK 2030” is a massive and important project for planning development. The results may have a highly significant impact on HK’s strategy for territorial development. It is therefore crucial to motivate the public, in particular the younger generation, to voice their concerns through public consultation.

As the study covers a broad range of issues, the focus will be on 3 major areas: (1) The opinions of young people regarding the priority of issues to be considered while planning to make Hong Kong an ideal city in which to live. (2) To ascertain values held by young people in relation to “environmental protection” and “economic development”. (3) The willingness of young people to participate in territorial planning.

“HK 2030” is a multi-discipline project, covering the disciplines of architecture, engineering, law, politics, transportation, geography, economics, sociology computer technology and statistics.

To clarify aspects of this project for the purpose of gathering relevant information, researchers interviewed experts from various disciplines to formulate an outline for the study, and to design a questionnaire for a territory-wide youth poll.

Researchers also sought advice from experts in the field, on the extent to which young people are able to participate in a major planning project that is complicated and technical. The aim was to gather ideas of ways to encourage the participation of young people in the planning of territorial development. The interviews were conducted in July and August 2001. Twenty experts and scholars were successfully interviewed.

A territory-wide youth poll was conducted between 27 and 30 August 2001. Five hundred and thirty-one youths aged between 15 and 27 were randomly selected and interviewed via telephone; the success rate being 56%.

Group interview sessions were conducted between 7 and 11 August 2001. The session’s aims were to determine the willingness of young people to state their views on: the future of Hong Kong, the future of society, the economy and the environment. Specific questions about their knowledge of the environment and understanding of historical matters were included in the Group interview sessions.

The respondents were aged between 15 and 27 with a range of education levels from F.3 to University and comprised students and young people in the work force. Thirty-seven respondents (17 males and 20 females) took part in four interview sessions.

## 2. Discussion

- (1.) **Many respondents were prepared to take root in Hong Kong. They thought that if Hong Kong was to become an ideal city for living, improvement in the environment should come first. On the other hand, respondents showed significant concern for “high unemployment rate” and “the gap between rich and poor”.**

Results from the territory-wide youth poll revealed that more than 70% of the respondents wanted to have children. Over half of them said that they had no intention to relocate. Most respondents found Hong Kong the most ideal city to live in. The findings reflect that respondents were prepared to take root in Hong Kong. It implies that the territorial development strategy should take into consideration young people's expectations.

The poll also showed that the young people interviewed had their expectations toward the future of Hong Kong: most respondents concern the environment. They criticized Hong Kong's environment and the air-pollution problem. It shows that if Hong Kong wants to become an ideal city for living, the government needs to improve the environment.

Results showed that 58% of the respondents believed that a “clean environment” was the first criteria for an ideal city; 43% thought that “clean air” was important for a living environment. Most respondents (71%) found environmental pollution a major weakness of Hong Kong. On the other hand, 70% of the interviewed believed that if Hong Kong is to improve its living environment, the focus should be on air pollution.

And, for a steady development in territorial planning, HK needs to strike a balance among economy, society and environment. Apart from environment, many young people interviewed showed much concern toward certain economic and social problems: If HK was to become an ideal place to live in, more than half of the respondents said “high unemployment rate” was a drawback. The findings show that all three areas carry weight, and it is important to reach a mutual agreement.

- (2.) The respondents cared for both economic growth and environmental protection. It shows that the idea of sustainable development in both the economy and the environment was taking root in their mind. On the other hand, most respondents were prepared to regulate their daily life for the sake of protecting our environment.**

The study also aims to find out young people's value in "environmental protection" and "economic development". Respondents were given scenarios and required to make a choice.

As a value, most of them (87%) agreed "human being and all living things have equal rights to survive"; whereas 82% agreed that to maintain growth in the economy was a prior concern for territorial planning." The findings show that the respondents care both the environment and the economy.

When put in a scenario and asked to make a choice, respondents in general showed more concern for protecting the environment. In the 4 scenarios given they were asked to choose between "environmental protection" and "economic development." Results showed that in 3 of the scenarios, more respondents choose to protect the environment – 81% prefers maintaining the harbour to building houses on reclaimed land; 79% prefers "protecting the birds" to "developing the district"; 60% prefers "building railways to ease air pollution," to having a wider selection of transportation."

The study also revealed that in order to create an ideal living environment, the respondents in general were willing to support environmental protection. 93% indicated that they were willing to spend time on categorizing rubbish; 86% said that were willing to bring their own bags for shopping; 76% said they were ready to pay more on transportation for vehicles consuming environmental friendly gas; 71% was willing to walk for the sake of less traffic in the streets.

To sum up, it is clear that the ideas of "environment" and "economy" were taking root in the young people interviewed. Besides, most respondents were prepared to regulate their daily life for greater responsibility in caring the environment. The findings imply that if government want to formulate policy on environmental protection, they are likely to have the support from young people.

- (3.) Respondents differed in their opinions on maintaining traditional constructions. Experts' criticisms were leveled at the lack of available opportunities to be familiar with historical relics and sites and to know more of the history of the Mainland and Hong Kong. They warned that the sense of heritage should be the very foundation for the pondering of Hong Kong's future development.**

The youth poll showed that respondents differed in their attitudes toward maintaining historical relics and sites. Pros and cons for protecting relics from redevelopment of old districts were both 46%.

Many respondents in the in-depth group interviews also indicated their reservation in maintaining historical relics and sites. They explained that as Hong Kong's land supply was limited, and to maintain traditions could hinder land development, they thought that instead of looking back, people should look forward into the future.

The experts interviewed pointed out that many young people were ignorant of our country's history. They said that knowing the country's history helped laying a foundation for future development. Some experts said that relics and culture were twins of the same entity, and culture should not be something limited to museums. They suggested that our young people should be given more chances to encounter traditions and culture. Young people should learn from history of their own strength and weakness, and be able to plan for the future.

One major direction of "Hong Kong 2030" is to "make Hong Kong a major city of China", and as some young people in Hong Kong were apathetic toward Hong Kong and had little sense of Chinese cultural heritage, the situation can be alarming.

- (4.) Although most of the respondents had not heard of the consultation on "Hong Kong 2030", they showed their concern toward the future development of Hong Kong, and were interested in joining the discussion. However, they also worried that the topic was a profound one and could be difficult for them to participate. Experts pointed out that consultation made easy could encourage participation.**

90% of the respondents had not heard of "Hong Kong 2030" consultation paper; however 85% said they cared about Hong Kong's future development. 62% showed interest in related discussions. Yet almost 70% admitted that city planning could be a difficult topic for public participation.

Territorial planning covers diversified areas from employment to culture. And if young people can have greater participation, their needs can be better attended to, and mutual understanding in society can also be achieved. It is therefore worth notice that our respondents find the topic too difficult for their participation.

Experts said that consultation made easy could encourage greater participation from the public. To make young people ready to discuss topic like “Hong Kong 2030”, the government could turn an abstract document into a substantial proposal for public consultation; or it could build a model to help understand some abstract concepts. The Dutch provided a very good model of consultation on public issues such as building transport infrastructure, by asking basic questions of How, What and where, for example. Only the technical work on construction went to the experts.

Other experts suggested that the discussion on the price to pay for such project should be a major issue for the society to discuss and reach a mutual understanding. Cost-effectiveness was basic to almost every development project, and it was predictable that there would be a lot of contradictions in determining land use. As people differed in their values, discussion before decision is necessary

- (5.) Experts interviewed in general agreed that teachers, youth workers and town planners should join hands in enhancing young people’s understanding of city planning. Sending professionals to visit schools and hold workshops, arranging more visits to environmental protection regions and historical sites, were examples of effective ways to encourage youth participation in town planning.**

Results of the study showed that over 80% of the respondents believed that, sending professionals to hold workshops in schools could effectively enhance young people’s interest to participate in town planning. In fact students welcome such arrangements.

Experts interviewed urged teachers, youth workers and town planners to help to increase the depth of young minds in preparing them to participate. They pointed out that different channels should be arranged to let young people see more of our historical relics, protected environments and cultural heritage. They believed that as young people knew more about our history and culture, got more in touch with them, it would become a good foundation for their later participation in territorial planning.

## Recommendations

- (1.) The government consults the public on the territorial planning “Hong Kong 2030”. We find such consultation important and necessary. The act not only encourages participation from young people, but also enhances their involvement in future planning for Hong Kong and a sense of belonging.**
- (2.) The findings of the study show that young people have certain desire toward the territorial development of Hong Kong. They care about Hong Kong’s future development and are interested in the discussion. But most of them have not heard of the consultation on “Hong Kong 2030”. They fear that the topic is a profound one, making it difficult for them to participate. We suggest that the government can make use of some easy and lively approaches to introduce such consultation. By doing so they can have a wider collection of opinions from the younger generation, taking the chance to achieve mutual understanding in the society.**
- (3.) The study reveals that respondents demand an improvement in the environment. At the same time, they are willing to change their way of life for a better living environment. It implies that the government’s environmental work will receive certain support from the young ones. The government can consider taking more actions to fulfill their expectation of a well-protected environment.**
- (4.) Experts point out that the ground for meditating HK’s future development lies in our knowing of our own history. And as “making HK a major China city” a direction of the future plan, we should work together to enable our young ones to see and feel more of our tradition and culture, through different activities in and out of schools.**
- (5.) Both Respondents and experts agree that we should deepen young people’s understanding of territorial development and city planning. We should encourage youth workers to provide more channels, and in more levels, for our youth to encounter with relics, nature, and our culture. This can trigger their interest in pondering territorial planning issues, and to accumulate knowledge in related area, thus paving the way to long-term participation in planning for Hong Kong’s future.**