

**Press Release**  
**For Immediate Release**  
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## **HKIS's Nine Suggestions on 2021 Policy Address**

The Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, Mrs Carrie Lam, will release 2021 Policy Address in October. The Hong Kong Institute of Surveyors (the "HKIS") had always been concerned about the development of building, housing and land policy in Hong Kong, and has made nine major recommendations. The HKIS hopes the Government will take into account the views of different stakeholders and include appropriate measures in its Policy Address to promote the future development of Hong Kong.

### **1. Land Supply**

#### **(1) Apply "Land Premium Standard Rates" Mechanism to Agricultural Land**

The HKIS is pleased to see that the Government has launched the pilot scheme for charging land premiums at standard rates to speed up the redevelopment of industrial buildings. The HKIS proposes to expand the standard rates mechanism for lease modification/ land exchange to agricultural land as it is a major source of residential units/ floor space supply from private sector. Similar standard rates scheme would assist in expediting the releasing of development potential in the New Territories and increasing land and housing supply.

#### **(2) Review on Technical Considerations of Developments and Processes**

With the shortage of land and housing, the HKIS urges the Government to review and improve the concerned policy and approval process:

##### **(a) Streamline the Town Planning Approval Process**

Currently, the comments and requirements from the Town Planning Board and related government departments for similar cases might be inconsistent. Applicants may therefore find it difficult to comply with such requirements, causing a delay in their approval process. The HKIS suggests the Government review the approval

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process of the outline zoning plans and planning applications. This includes setting out clear requirements on the process, such as information required in the application forms by the Town Planning Board Secretariat, unifying the application criteria of public and private projects, and using the same technical assessment standard for planning applications submitted by private owners/ organisations and government departments to expedite the approval process to foster land development.

**(b) Use “Infrastructure-led” Approach for Land Supply**

Presently the infrastructure construction works in many New Development Areas (NDAs) are yet to be commenced. Developments will be delayed as a result of slow progress of provisions of infrastructures. The HKIS proposes that the Government expedite the design and provisions of infrastructures in NDAs and also developed areas, and use an “Infrastructure-led” approach for land supply to expedite the planned residential units/ floor space supply.

Furthermore, various technical impact assessment requirements (including traffic, drainage, sewerage, noise) have been incorporated into most of the new tender sites in recent years. Excessive impact assessment reports would require a lengthy approval process, with developers having to conduct related assessments outside their sites. Apart from being impractical, it would also lead to a delay of construction. An effective district-based environmental impact assessment led by the Government, and using the “Infrastructure-led” development approach could minimise such assessment requirements and speed up the development process.

**(c) Review on Carparking Requirements**

The HKIS urges the Government to review the carparking requirements for new development and redevelopment projects. Standard carparking requirement is a huge obstacle for private redevelopments, especially for small sites. Construction of basement carparks requires huge construction, maintenance and operational costs, not to mention the increased development time and the significant impact on the environment.



Furthermore, there is already a coordinated means of control on building heights and site coverage in the Outline Zoning Plans, Land Leases and Buildings Department's Sustainable Building Design Guidelines (PNAP APP – 152) which makes the requirement for basement carparks unnecessary. The HKIS suggests the Government remove the restrictions on location of the carparks ancillary to buildings and with due consideration to the practical difficulties in providing the required number of carparking spaces, such as site area and topographical restrictions. It should allow flexibility of building design and promote a healthier, more economical and sustainable built environment.

**(d) Review on Requirement on New Tender Sites**

Provision of Government accommodation in many new land sales has been seen to be too aggressive. The HKIS recommends the Government review and explore if there should be a cap for each tender site for such provision so as to simplify private development projects' design and approval processes and fulfil the needs for housing and office spaces as early as possible.

**2. Housing Policy**

**(3) Redevelop Old Public Housing Estates and Build Taller Public Housing**

Presently, the average waiting time for public housing applicants is 5.8 years. For the financial year 2020/21 to 2024/25, there will be an increase in the supply of 101,300 public housing units (on average 20,000 units per year, including public rental and subsidised sales units). The figures are far below the targeted average of 30,000 units per year under the long-term housing strategy set in 2018. The HKIS urges the Government to redevelop those old public housing estates completed in the 1950s and 1960s and to build higher public housing blocks with 50 domestic floors, which will mean a 25% increase in flat supply to meet the huge housing demand. The HKIS acknowledges the need to build a refuge floor for each block with 50 domestic floors but it could be coupled with a sky garden which will also increase the amenity area in public housing estates.



#### **(4) Build More Transitional Housing Units**

The HKIS appreciates various NGOs' great efforts in commissioning many transitional housing projects with the Government funding of HK\$2 billion last year. The HKIS opines the Government should continue to give full support (both in terms of financial funding and land allocations) to transitional housing projects managed via public or private partnership, to provide more transitional housing units to replace those unauthorised sub-divided units.

#### **(5) Formulate Elderly-friendly Building Design Standard**

With Hong Kong's intensified ageing-population problem, the Government needs to promptly formulate policies with the goal of "Ageing in Place". The HKIS suggests that the Government establishes design guidelines for elderly-friendly housing, with reference to current design manual for barrier free access. The HKIS has previously compiled an "Advice on Elderly Housing Policy", providing relevant professional advice, and looks forward to further discussions with related organisations.

### **3. Building Policy**

#### **(6) Improve Built Environment**

##### **(a) Formulate Minimum Living Space**

Nano flats are tiny with limited living spaces that are unfit for kids and aged occupants. Problems often arise from sanitary conditions, building usage and long-term repair works, and the situation is undesirable. The HKIS urges the Government to set a minimum habitable area for future housing development to provide a livable environment and to encourage "Ageing in Place".

##### **(b) Formulate Interim Design and Conversion Requirements for Sub-divided Units (SDUs)**

The HKIS is glad to see that the Government implement tenancy control on Sub-divided Units (SDUs). Yet, the Government should take effective measures to ban those unauthorised SDUs which pose serious and imminent safety and health hazard that could not be resolved by the implementation of tenancy control. The HKIS believes that the enforcement should proceed in an orderly manner and that



the Government should formulate an interim design and conversion requirements for SDUs. It should also implement a validation scheme to encourage relevant stakeholders to carry out improvement works for retaining their sub-standard SDUs for a commensurate period.

#### **(7) Draw Up Comprehensive Designs and Construction Guidelines for Modular Integrated Construction (MiC)**

The HKIS appreciates the Government's initiatives in promoting and encouraging the construction industry to apply the Modular Integrated Construction (MiC) method in the past few years. In order to adopt MiC effectively, the Government should draw up comprehensive design and construction guidelines with necessary legislation backup to help remove the hardships and obstacles encountered by the professionals and contractors.

Moreover, almost all current MiC unit manufacturing and assembly plants are located outside Hong Kong. The HKIS recommends the Government support the setting up of MiC unit manufacturing and assembly plants locally, which could minimise costs and delay due to long-haul transportation and simplify the burden of building professionals in supervising the MiC unit production. The local plants could provide employment and training opportunities for local professionals and technical personnel, which is essential in further enhancing the skills and competitiveness of the Hong Kong construction industry.

#### **(8) Overall Revamp of the Outdated Buildings Ordinance and Allied Regulations**

As time progresses, the extant Buildings Ordinance and the Allied Regulations must be updated to meet the societal needs and technological advancement at present times. The Covid-19 pandemic has also alerted us to the urgency of undertaking a holistic review of the hygiene and healthiness of buildings. Moreover, the ageing building situation has caused more problems arising from unauthorised building works, dangerous buildings, building maintenance and repair, and disputes due to water seepage. The HKIS urges the Government to set out a road map in amending the extant Buildings Ordinance and allied regulations, to review



and enhance the building control mechanism.

#### **4. Others**

##### **(9) Promote Digitisation of the Construction Industry**

###### **(a) Expand the Application of Building Information Modeling (BIM)**

The HKIS looks forward to the Government advocating a wider adoption of the BIM technology, from design, construction, project cost control to facility management, and establishing a centralised BIM data repository to facilitate the management and exchange of open BIM data. To speed up the use of BIM and its drive for the Hong Kong Smart City Blueprint, the Government should set up a task force and establish related standards for its application in high-rise buildings and infrastructures in Hong Kong. The HKIS also suggests the Government deploy more resources in facilitating the training of relevant practitioners.

###### **(b) Open up Common Spatial Data Infrastructure (CSDI)**

The HKIS is delighted to see the Government gradually opening up the Common Spatial Data Infrastructure (CSDI) and 3D digital map for public usage. The HKIS hopes the Government will continue to collect more geospatial data from all Government Departments and private sectors for the CSDI to facilitate policy planning and formulation across bureaux/ departments, and for the public to utilise the data. These will accelerate the smart city development of Hong Kong.

###### **(c) Implement Electronic Submissions Across The Board**

The HKIS highly appreciates the Buildings Department's effort in setting up an electronic submission system to facilitate the handling of statutory submissions. The HKIS recommends the Government to direct all departments involved in handling building-related matters, such as planning and land applications to advance from paper-based to electronic submission mode and to digitalise related application processes.

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Photo 1: (From left to right) Sr LAU Chun-kong, JP, HKIS Past President and Chairman of HKIS Land Policy Panel; Sr Edwin TANG, HKIS President; Sr Vincent HO, MH, JP, HKIS Past President and Chairman of HKIS Building Policy Panel; and Sr Francis LAM, Chairman of HKIS Housing Policy Panel proposed nine suggestions on 2021 Policy Address.



Photo 2: Sr Edwin TANG, HKIS President





Photo 3: Sr LAU Chun-kong, JP, HKIS Past President and Chairman of HKIS Land Policy Panel



Photo 4: Sr Vincent HO, MH, JP, HKIS Past President and Chairman of HKIS Building Policy Panel







Photo 5: Sr Francis LAM, Chairman of HKIS Housing Policy Panel



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### **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 10 Sep 2021, the number of members reached 10683, of which 7367 were corporate members, 70 were associate members and 3246 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.

The Institute has an important consultative role in government policy making and on issues affecting the profession. We have advised the government on issues such as building safety and unauthorized building works, problems of property management, town planning and development strategies, construction quality and housing problems. We have also issued guidance notes on floor area measurement, real estates valuation and land boundary survey, etc. We have an established presence in the international arenas, have overseas connections, and have entered into reciprocal agreements with professional surveying and valuation institutes in the United Kingdom, Australia and Singapore recognizing the counterpart's member's qualifications. In addition, HKIS is a member of various leading international surveying organisations.

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