

Introduction to URA

Establishment

The Urban Renewal Authority (URA) was established under the Urban Renewal Authority Ordinance (URAO) in May 2001 to replace the Land Development Corporation as the statutory body to undertake, encourage, promote and facilitate the regeneration of the older urban areas of Hong Kong.

Purposes

The main purposes of the URA, as listed in Section 5 of the URAO, are to -

- improve the standard of housing and the built environment of Hong Kong and the layout of built-up areas by replacing old and dilapidated areas with new development which is properly planned and, where appropriate, provided with adequate transport and other infrastructure and community facilities;
- achieve better utilization of land in the dilapidated areas of the built environment of Hong Kong and to make land available to meet various development needs;
- prevent the decay of the built environment of Hong Kong by promoting the maintenance and improvement of individual buildings as regards their structural stability, integrity of external finishes and fire safety as well as the improvement of the physical appearance and conditions of that built environment; and
- preserve buildings, sites and structures of historical, cultural or architectural interest.

Vision and Mission and 4Rs

Vision -

To create quality and vibrant urban living in Hong Kong - a better home in a world-class city.

Mission -

To realize our Vision, we act on our priorities with ingenuity and sensitivity, join forces with our partners and nurture our people.

Our priorities are –

- To accelerate redevelopment by replacing old buildings with new to provide a better living environment and neighbourhood;
- To enable and encourage the rehabilitation of dilapidated buildings to prevent urban decay;
- To preserve by maintaining and restoring buildings of historical and architectural value, and to sustain local characteristics; and
- To revitalize through enhancing and strengthening the socio-economic and environmental fabric for the benefit of our urban communities.

4Rs Strategy -

In renewing urban areas, we implement our four priorities in a coordinated and mutually reinforcing manner through our holistic 4Rs Strategy, comprising –

- building Redevelopment;
- building pReservation/Restoration;
- building Rehabilitation; and
- street and open space Revitalisation/Rejuvenation,

in order to provide the maximum benefit to the urban communities of Hong Kong, which we serve.

Urban Renewal Strategy and Work of URA

Section 20 of the URAO requires the Secretary for Development to consult the public in preparing an Urban Renewal Strategy (URS).

The URA is required to follow the guidelines in the current URS each year, when preparing our five-year Corporate Plan for urban renewal under Section 21 and our annual Business Plan under Section 22 for submission to the Financial Secretary for approval for implementation.

The current URS was issued in November 2001 by the then Secretary for Planning and Lands. Since then, the URA has been carrying out its work in accordance with its obligation to continue implementation of 10 ongoing projects inherited from URA's predecessor, the Land Development Corporation and the priorities set out in the 2001 URS, which required the URA to give priority to implementation of 25 new redevelopment only announced but not commenced by the Land Development Corporation. All of these 25 projects had been commenced by March 2008. In addition, the Government gave the URA a list of 200 further projects for redevelopment. These obligations have defined the URA's redevelopment portfolio and priorities to date.

The 2001 URS is now being reviewed by the Secretary in consultation with the public over a two-year period which began in mid-2008 and will continue into 2010. As a major stakeholder, URA is proactively supporting the Secretary in the Development Bureau's conduct of

this Review. Until such time as any new URS is issued, the URA will continue to be required to follow the 2001 URS in carrying out its work.

Finances

The resources of the URA are defined in Section 10 (1) of the URAO and include both the \$10 billion appropriated by the Legislative Council and paid to the URA and all other money received by the URA.

One of the 2001 URS's objectives is for the urban renewal programme to become self-financing in the long run and URA must have due regard for this. In addition, URA is required by Section 10 (4) of the URAO to exercise due care and diligence in handling its finances.

URA's borrowing and lending powers are set out in Sections 11 and 12, while Section 14 governs the use, including the investment, of any surplus funds.

Section 15 (1) states that the URA is indebted to the Government for all of the \$10 billion received under Section 10 (1) (a) and all expenditure incurred by the Government for the URA's benefit.

Sections 16 and 17 require URA to keep proper accounts, while Section 18 requires URA to, each year, prepare and submit both an annual report on its work together with its audited accounts to the Financial Secretary who, in turn, is required to arrange for them to be tabled in the Legislative Council.

URA's Environmental Commitments

We aim at creating an environmentally-sustainable, high quality and vibrant urban environment providing better homes in Hong Kong through our 4Rs strategy.

We are committed to the following:

- To meet all relevant regulatory and legislative requirements.
- To reduce consumption of resources (materials, fuel and energy) by efficiency, reuse, recovery or recycling where feasible and consequently reduce waste.
- To adopt technologies and use raw materials which minimize pollution, energy use and waste where applicable.

- To plan, design and implement projects in such a way as to minimize the adverse environmental effects of new developments in construction, operation and demolition.
- To provide and promote environmental education and training.
- To work with our partners (affected communities, tenants, owners, Government, development and financial institutions, professionals and academics) to find acceptable solutions which minimize our impact on the environment and prevent pollution.
- To communicate our environmental objectives, efforts and achievements to the public.
- To adopt "green" purchasing where appropriate and expect high environmental standards from suppliers, joint venture partners and contractors who work with or for us.