

# URS Review and the New URS



After an extensive public engagement process that lasted two years, the new Urban Renewal Strategy (URS) was promulgated on 24 February 2011 to replace the old version dating back to almost 10 years or May 2001. The new URS is a government strategy to be implemented by the URA as well as relevant government departments and other stakeholders to tackle the problem of urban decay.

## Supporting and Facilitating

The URA has been proactive in supporting the Government and facilitating the review process through:

- Establishing a dedicated **Board Sub-committee** that was supported by a special task force from URA management, so as to provide input to the review process.
- Conducting a comprehensive **building condition survey** involving the inspection of more than 3,000 buildings in old urban areas. The survey findings will be updated for the URA's planning process in the years ahead.
- Facilitating and funding a **“District Aspiration Study”** (DAS), which was driven by seven District Councils to seek views of the local community. The DAS focused on the vision, aspirations, challenges and needs of the districts in terms of urban renewal. The study's findings contributed to the URS review process, and have become useful reference for URA's longer-term planning for its urban renewal projects at the district level.



Inspection of a building's condition.



Urban Regeneration - DAS Forum for District Councils.

## New Focus and New Initiatives

The new URS clearly defines **Redevelopment** and **Rehabilitation** as the URA's core businesses, and the URA has been given a broader mandate to engage in, and respond to, schemes to help people in need. The URA was able to, within months, announce fresh initiatives in support of the new URS.

We recognize that where the owners cannot act together, our duty should be to continue to undertake projects ourselves. In some cases, owners may decide to ask the URA to step in. Two new redevelopment models are therefore developed.

### *Demand-led Development*

Under the new URS, URA may, at its discretion, respond to demand-led applications from building owners for URA to redevelop their buildings by first seeking the approval of the Financial Secretary to implement such projects and, subject to receiving this, applying the same planning, acquisition, compensation and rehousing policies as URA uses for its own initiated redevelopment projects.

### *Facilitating Services*

Under the new URS, URA may also, at its discretion, provide assistance to owners to facilitate assembly by the owners of their titles for joint sale by themselves for redevelopment, but URA will not be involved in acquisition, compensation or rehousing of any of those affected by such projects.

### *“Flat-for-Flat”*

The URA is taking major steps to improve the options for those affected domestic owner-occupiers. In future, we will be able to offer a ‘flat-for-flat’ compensation as an alternate option to cash. These new homes may be in the lower floors of the redevelopment itself. But they may also be in Kai Tak, where the URA will take over a 1.1 hectare site in 2012. This site should provide about 1,000 units of saleable areas between 400 and 600 square feet each.



Press conference on “demand-led” model.



Initial design concept for Kai Tak “flat-for-flat” site.



## Expanding Rehabilitation

The URA will continue to assist owners in slowing down the dilapidation process, through a package of repair and maintenance programmes. In April 2011, we launched a one-stop service that helps owners repair their buildings through a comprehensive rehabilitation scheme called Integrated Building Maintenance Assistance Scheme (IBMAS). This service will be further boosted when a one-stop resource centre starts operations in early 2012. The URA also announced in June 2011 its plan to expand rehabilitation work five fold, aimed at benefiting 80,000 households, in the coming five years.

## Contributing to Urban Renewal Trust Fund

The URA also committed to contribute \$500 million to set up the Urban Renewal Trust Fund. The Fund will be managed by independent directors appointed by the Government and will provide financial resources to fund the operation of social services teams and the community's urban renewal initiatives.

## Working with DURF

The new URS calls for a district-based and participatory approach. Community involvement is clearly the intention. A new advisory platform, District Urban Renewal Forum (DURF) is established to seek residents' aspirations on urban renewal. The first DURF has been established in Kowloon City and a senior URA representative has been appointed to the DURF to provide support and advice.

The URA is committed to working with stakeholders to eradicate the pressing problem of urban blight and to help improve the lives of some of the most unfortunate members of our society.

24 February 2011	The new URS is promulgated
21 March 2011	Announce details of the 'flat-for-flat' pilot scheme
1 April 2011	Launch the Integrated Building Maintenance Assistance Scheme
18 April 2011	Announce implementation framework for URA's 'facilitator' role in redevelopment
31 May 2011	Announce the implementation framework for a 'demand-led' redevelopment model
26 July 2011	Applications open for demand-led projects and facilitating services