

STAY & BUILD

PROJECTS

Breaking Ground for Community Sports & Wellness Hubs

Engagement in sport plays a significant role in promoting mental and physical health and building inclusive, vibrant communities. In Hong Kong, Government-run facilities are high-quality but sparse and often crowded, and many residents spend more time commuting than playing sports.

International studies find that Hong Kong children are less fit than their Western counterparts, and local studies show that the underprivileged, elderly, new immigrants, unemployed and single parents are particularly vulnerable to inadequate physical activity and sports participation. The HKSAR Government has repeatedly stated its support for increasing access to sports in the community. Sports development has also received increased support due to Hong Kong's recent success in the Olympics.

Vacant land and under-used buildings throughout Hong Kong, and public and private sector funds can be leveraged to increase access to sports facilities and programmes. New community-based sports facilities can bring people together regardless of age, gender, ethnicity or economic background, provide employment opportunities, promote healthy active lifestyles and build more cohesive communities.

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Launching a Platform for Open & Constructive Dialogue

Dialogue has often been used to help societies take the next step after social strife: most recently seen in France's *grand débat*, pursued after the *gilets jaunes* movement. When brought together, dialogue amongst ordinary citizens have led to broadly acceptable solutions to both controversial social issues and to complex technical questions about reform.

Hong Kong needs spaces where people can come together, discuss important issues of their choice, and develop a positive path for the city's future. Without these "safe spaces", people are dissuaded from speaking openly, honestly and publicly about the city, its problems and possible solutions.

A network of territory-wide forums organised around the mission of producing constructive solutions to address a range of social issues from education and urban planning, to the ageing population and opportunities for young people, will create an abundance of ideas through this new approach to public engagement and contribute to policy making. It will also build a culture of dialogue across Hong Kong, and help citizens to become more optimistic and resilient in the face of a changing and uncertain future.



Co-designing Public Open Space for Enhanced Liveability

Research has shown that public open space (POS) plays an important role in fostering community wellbeing by encouraging people to exercise and facilitating social interaction, thereby also improving mental and physical health.

Currently, the provision and management of POS is fragmented and lacks coordination. 59% are managed by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD), 38% are managed by the Housing Authority (HA), and 3% by private developments. There is also little public information about the availability and amenities of POS.

Reinventing public space and enhancing public facilities is a key proposal in Hong Kong's 2030+ strategy for planning a liveable, high-density city. Creating new POS targeting dense, low-income areas with low POS per capita should be the focus. The upgrade of existing POS to improve their accessibility, design and use should also be considered.

The collective power of the public can be harnessed in the design of new and existing POS. Several studies have found that embedding community engagement and placemaking as a core component throughout a space's life, from design to governance, increases community attachment and usage of that public space. Yi Pei Square in Tsuen Wan is a good example of a space co-designed for improved usability by neighbouring residents.

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Expanding Caregiving for Dignified Ageing in Place

Hong Kong is ageing rapidly; projections by the Census and Statistics Department predict that the elderly population will double to 2.44 million between 2018 and 2038.

“Ageing in Place” refers to empowering elderly to live in their homes or familiar community as long as possible, without the need to move to elderly care homes or other institutions. For elderly to be able to age in place, age-friendly adjustments within homes are essential. Besides the benefit of improving elderly health and wellbeing and allowing them to live with dignity in the comfort of their own homes, age-friendly homes can also reduce the burden on Hong Kong's already overwhelmed healthcare system.

There is also an opportunity for support to be given to family caregivers. Both employees and employers face challenges from the point of view of lost income and lost employment opportunities for the employee, and lost productivity for the employer. This can be provided in the form of employment support schemes and targeted social services.



Prioritising Local Food Production for Health & Sustainability

Hong Kong imports 90% of its food, with the Mainland providing most of the city's fresh food. Only 1.8% of fresh vegetables consumed in Hong Kong are produced locally. This leaves Hong Kong's food system vulnerable to shocks and price volatility.

Studies have shown that access to nature including urban farms can aid mental health. Locally grown food is also more nutritious and sustainable due to the short supply chains, and their safety can be more readily ensured.

Currently 70% of agricultural land in Hong Kong is privately owned and much of the land is left fallow due to lack of incentives for development. There is a potential for Hong Kong to encourage landowners to lease their land to those who want to farm and convert existing buildings into urban farms. Demand can be driven by mandating a percentage of vegetables in wet markets and supermarkets to be sourced locally. Doing so will also open up new occupations in food production, food businesses, and food-related startups.

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