



## **Views from the Professional Green Building Council for the 2021 Policy Address**

The Professional Green Building Council (PGBC) is a non-profit organisation comprising representatives from The Hong Kong Institute of Architects (HKIA), The Hong Kong Institution of Engineers (HKIE), The Hong Kong Institute of Landscape Architects (HKILA), The Hong Kong Institute of Planners (HKIP) and The Hong Kong Institute of Surveyors (HKIS). The goal of PGBC is to promote a better sustainable built environment through professional involvement.

To accomplish our commitment to the society, PGBC would like to put forth our views on the forthcoming Policy Address to the Administration for consideration.

### **Sustainable and Resilient City**

There are increased human and economic impacts around the world caused by climate changes and sea-level rise, which pose particular concern to Hong Kong as a coastal city with most of its population and economic activities along the coast. The extent of impact by natural disasters is related to the planning and design of the urban environment. With the ambitious infrastructural development plans in place for Hong Kong, adequate resources should be allocated to the strategic response to climate change both at policy level and at planning and design level. Holistic and integrated planning that takes into consideration multiple attributes (such as the community, hydrology, ecosystem, and food-security that are subject to threat under climate change) contributes to the city's resilience. It also aligns with the nation-wide emphasis on Ecological Civilization as covered in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party.

Outdoor recreation and urban landscape contribute to the city's attractiveness and its people's well-being, especially under pandemic. Many open spaces in town are undeveloped and left either as idle or temporary car parking space, even more in need of upgrading to align with the public's aspirations such as their playfulness, inclusiveness, ecological functions, and pet-friendliness. In light of the vision under Hong Kong 2030+, adequate resources should be allocated to open space development or enhancement especially the district and local open spaces that are serving their respective neighbourhoods. Holistic planning and development of open space and urban landscape should also be extended to spaces other than urban parks, such as riverside landscape, streetscape, which are also important attributes towards the city's competitiveness.

### **Liveable and Smart City**

The concept of Smart City has been promoted by the Administration, but the progress of transformation is rather sluggish. We urge the Administration to make more active efforts to speed up the transformation process of Smart City in more comprehensive manner or to set out a timeline to achieve such policy objective under the Policy Address.

Noting that decarbonisation is the most crucial approach to slow down the drastic climate changes, PGBC urges the Administration to make more active effort to expedite Smart City policy initiatives to promote the adoption of IOT applications to assist in monitoring the comfort and energy performance for reducing our city's carbon footprint at various development stages, from planning, design, construction to operational phase. Such policy initiatives should also be applied to existing buildings, street furniture, sitting-out-area (open spaces), even public transportation facilities. Adequate incentive by means of one-off subsidized funding or exemption of rates / land rent should be considered. It would be more meaningful if such type of decarbonisation policy could be fully encouraged on a community-based approach.

As far as green building environment is concerned, we urge the Administration to explore other policy initiatives to encourage more new buildings/redevelopments, particularly in our urban areas, to provide bonus design features, such as good urban design and landscape features that bring variety to the urban landscape and create outdoor community places for the public to improve the living quality of our city in general.

Measures for encouraging or mandating automated parking system in new development should also be explored to help free up car parking land usage on pedestrian street level for other better purposes, and reduce environment unfriendly basement construction.

### **Review of the Current Mechanism of Promoting Quality Built Environment**

We see environmental conscious design as a basic ingredient in building design to address the subjects of gender equality, universal accessibility, health and safety, etc. The fundamental concept of linking Gross Floor Area (GFA) concession with green building performance is in doubt. No GFA linked mechanism is adopted in other international cities (except Singapore and one US city Arlington). In fact, green building design is promoted by tax rebate or through mandatory requirement in most part of the World. PGBC hopes that the Government would seriously consider the direction of delinking GFA concession from green building performance, and promoting BEAM Plus or green target through other direct mechanism, instead of making the current system more and more complicated.

Linking the BEAM Plus with GFA concession, and further with the Occupation Permit in recent proposal by the Buildings Department, will create complication to the industry and cause serious financial liability to the developers and contractors. This is practically difficult for the professional sector in particular for the residential building type, as the first-hand sales ordinance requires all designs to be frozen more than a year before completion. The entire chain including assessors, suppliers, contractors and consultants will face serious liability if the target certified ranking dropped in the Occupation Permit stage. We are particularly concerned on the potential setback of the interest of developers and Non-governmental Organisations to adopt the BEAM Plus / GFA Concession System due to the potential time implication for the project completion.

## Environmental Education for Young Generations

Young generations are our future. While environmental education is gaining popularity in primary and secondary schools, the Government should consider strengthening the curriculum for STEM and increase the portion for environmental education. We recommend to commence environmental education in primary education.

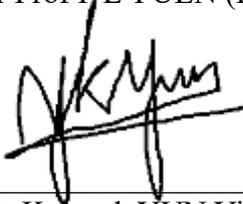
It is noticed that a new BEAM-Plus Assessment Tool for Schools is under preparation by BEAM Society Limited with funding from the Hong Kong Jockey Club. The Government should consider providing resources to schools to encourage them to participate in this scheme, so that students and teachers can become essential stakeholders in contributing towards sustainability development.



Mr CHAN Cho Sing Joel (PGBC Chairman) (HKIA)



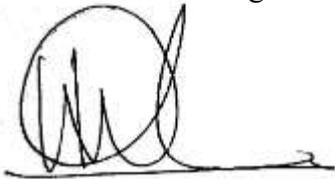
Ir Prof P.L YUEN (PGBC Vice Chairman) (HKIE)



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16 September 2021