

Path of Democracy

2021 Policy Address Proposal

Preface

Team Hong Kong, China's triumph in the Tokyo Olympic Games this year brought joy and excitement to the city, rekindling one's hope in the future of the city amidst tense socio-political climate in the past two years. Hong Kong athletes' outstanding performance once again reminds us of the spirit of Hong Kong, diligence, determination and the courage to imagine and dream would bring Hong Kong on to the international stage. Path of Democracy firmly believes that more than ever, our government should seize the opportunity to map out a new vision in governance where the government begins to look far, learn from the past and proactively explore future possibilities. Nonetheless, fellow Hong Kong citizens should also put their trust in the power of change, act on the opportunities so as to better our society.

Liji (《禮記》) read, '*the society is common to all*' (天下為公), stating the essence of policymaking which should orient towards the well-being of its people. Egalitarianism is a shared value among all Hong Kong citizens, Path of Democracy therefore takes the realization of an 'egalitarian society' as the basis of the new narrative of governance in Hong Kong. The Hong Kong we imagine is one in which all citizens enjoy equal opportunities in every aspect of their lives, including equality in housing, medical, education and opportunity.

The name of global metropolis is hard-earned, it is built from the hard-work and determination of generations of Hong Kongers. The future of Hong Kong would only thrive if we could pass on this spirit and maintain this unity through participation in the governance of Hong Kong. Only through collaboration could we reposition ourselves through the competition and cooperation that we would have with mainland China and other foreign countries. To narrate a new Hong Kong story, a story that belongs to all of us, we must work together to release the energy of the city and open doors for ourselves in the process. Path of Democracy believes that Hong Kong shall continue to be a charismatic global metropolis as it has always been.

I Public Consultation & Governance

The future of Hong Kong: a collaborative work

The public consultation system is key to good governance. Unfortunately, however, the existing structure continuously fails to attend to the public's interest, where the process is often criticized as overly complicated and putting people off from participating in policy-making, leading to misalignment between policy results and the needs and expectations of the public. We thus imagine a united Hong Kong society, in which the government and the civil society communicate and collaborate through an opened and effective communicative platform. Such platform would facilitate stronger understanding of policies from the society and encourage deep participation in the formulation of policies, while adopting and promoting evidence-based policy research to 'ground' the policies as well as to improve the quality of governance.

Establish 'Future Centre/s' to enhance governance capacity

- In reference to its widespread success in Europe, Path of Democracy proposes the setup of 'Future Centre/s' in Hong Kong to facilitate and encourage effective communication among businesses, universities, professional bodies, civil organizations, citizens and other stakeholders. Through participating in policy discussions, stakeholders would be empowered to develop concise, efficacious and widely recognized policy directions and details as well as to strengthen trust between the government and themselves.
- The government could commission universities and thinktanks to operate 'Future Centre/s' in the capacity of semi-independent entities, the 'Future Centre/s' should direct their efforts in subject areas such as, political system and governance, sustainable development, social welfare, and youth development. Universities or thinktanks-run 'Future Centre/s' could station experienced mediators or retired civil servants who are familiar with government operations to guide the discussions and to assist different parties to reach consensus. This is so that the function of 'Future Centre/s' in facilitating wide and deep participation in policy formulation can be maximized.
- The government should ensure the constant participation of Administrative Officers at the D3 to D4 levels in the discussions taking place at 'Future Centre/s'. These officials should solicit stakeholders' opinions in an open manner and formulate feasible mid-term and long-term solutions *with* the stakeholders in deliberative settings, so that public's concerns are adequately addressed. The 'Future Centre/s' also makes an ideal environment for Civil Service Academy to deliver practical trainings, a place where Administrative Officers could apply their knowledge in communicating policies and negotiating with stakeholders in real-life scenarios

- Government should support 'Future Centre/s' to bear the role of resource coordinators, whilst establishing partnerships with other research institutes to proactively review, improve and innovate the process of policy formulation and implementation under the framework of behavioural science and design thinking.

Evidence-based policy innovation

- To restore the secondment system and to assign senior government officials to think tanks or NGOs for one to two years. Grounded in different communities, NGOs and thinktanks are often much more sensitive to (root) causes of social problems, together with their research capacity, the secondment of senior government officials could renew one's appreciation of social issues from a more grounded point of view.
- To allocate regional administrative funds to support pilot schemes promoting participatory budgeting. Participatory budgeting empowers citizens to vote for livelihood-improvement projects, the poll results would then be reviewed by a committee composed of professionals and local representatives and would be put into effect accordingly. This is one of the most direct ways for laymen to see the benefits of participatory policy development where resources are allocated according to the needs of the community.
- The government should emphasize the value of scientific decision-making and fully utilize thinktanks for their capacity to conduct consultative research. When tendering or funding research projects, the government could consider assessing the bidder's ability to advocate policies, so as to increase the research capacity of thinktanks as well as the impact of their research.

II National Security

Imagine Hong Kong with restored political stability

We should never take for granted the prosperity, stability and economic growth Hong Kong has been enjoying through the years, as they are fruits of the hard work of generations of Hong Kongers. Hong Kong started out with 'good governance without democracy', where, despite a democratic system that was not any better than the one in place today, the government could largely fulfil the expectations of the public. In the past two years, however, Hong Kong entered the dark phase of 'lack of democracy and good governance' as the city moved further away from materializing universal suffrage while governance efficiency spiralled down. Though peace only recently returned under the 'National Security Law' and the 'Improving Electoral System' Bill, the government should nevertheless seize the opportunity to redirect the focus and to seize this opportunity to focus on governance, regard citizens' happiness as part of national security, and build a national security concept in line with Hong Kong's actual situations. The best ways to safeguard national security are letting people live and work in peace, maintaining Hong Kong's long-term stability, trusting and supporting the people, and increasing people's sense of belongings with the SAR and PRC.

Rebuild reform capabilities, maintain national security with governance capabilities and people's support

- To construct a new governance discourse to tell a "New Hong Kong Story", which will be acceptable to both Hong Kong people and the Central Government. The content should include: 1. Goals/dreams, role positioning, economic and social development models; 2. Being able to have a sustainable development of One Country Two Systems and a conducive system to governance; 3. Strengthen positive publicity capabilities; 4. Formulation of governance models which are recognized by all parties and national security policies.
- To establish a "One Country, Two Systems" committee which should be broadly represented and assist the government in dealing with issues related to "One Country, Two Systems". A semi-official high-level think tank should be set up, which will focus on Hong Kong's foreign-related relations and is responsible for promoting and coordinating foreign-related works. The government should promote, assist and encourage regular exchanges between local think tanks and foreign institutions, which can mobilize all sectors of society to strengthen Hong Kong's role in the Asia-Pacific region and international networks.
- To set up a full-time spokesperson for the Chief Executive's Office and hold daily briefings to explain the government's news highlights of the day with local and foreign media. After the implementation of the "Hong Kong National Security Law", many international organizations based in Hong Kong are watching the changes. We need to explain and respond to the questions and enquiries of the public and

the international business community about the "Hong Kong National Security Law".

- To restore the ability of the government to gauge public opinions. The government should consider resetting institutions and systems that have played an important role in governance, such as the heart war room, political consultants, and part-time consultants of the Central Policy Unit. It can allow the government to interact appropriately with the rapidly changing society.

Understand national conditions to enhance national identity

- To re-evaluate the effectiveness of past student exchange activities for strengthening quality and depth. We suggest having our students to stay with mainland families in winter and summer vacations. They can have in-depth contact with the life in mainland. Students can get to know each other and complete project together.
- To encourage local or multinational companies, who have business in mainland to provide internship to Hong Kong university students. It can be a summer internship program of about ten weeks. Each intern will be guided by a tutor to ensure that the internship process is fruitful. The living expenses and salaries are suggested to be subsidized by the government.
- To introduce professional development courses for teachers. Hong Kong teachers can be trained in mainland for 2-3 weeks. It can allow them to have a full spectrum understanding of contemporary national development, which can assist them to inspire students on thinking about Hong Kong's role in national development.

III Economic Transition

Imagine Hong Kong reliving the economic miracle with innovative technologies

China and OECD countries have used innovation and technology to drive rapid economic development. It can also bring more opportunities in competition equally for all. The "14th Five-Year Plan" supports Hong Kong to establish four traditional Centres and four new Centres and hubs. The government needs a long-term vision to match the national plan. We should formulate and implement related economic growth strategy. The strategy, which focus on innovation and technology, will need more investment on scientific research. New value will be generated by the creativity of talents. The government needs to drive the flow of funds from old to new industries. We should encourage controllable risks and tolerate failure. The goal of Hong Kong is to become an international innovation and technology centre in China. Hong Kong can become the world's leading innovation and manufacturing centre together with other cities in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area.

New development thinking to realize economic structural reform

- The innovative technology-driven new economic development model is based on the following four aspects: 1. To actively explore scientific and technological talents to become entrepreneurs and provide them with sufficient resources and development opportunities; 2. To build a mature and effective innovation ecosystem through benevolence use of economic resources; 3. To encourage universities to provide training to students on technological enterprise knowledge. This knowledge can enhance their understanding of entrepreneurship, business networks and skills; 4. To assist start-ups to explore investment opportunities.
- The Innovation and Technology Bureau will play a key role in driving the innovation and technology as below:
 - To develop an innovation ecosystem, including R&D of innovative technology, business, education and related social support.
 - To provide financial and administrative support for basic research and applied research, which can facilitate commercialization of innovation and technology research results.
 - To assist the traditional manufacturing industries to enhance their competitiveness. We can promote cooperation between the European Enterprise Network (EEN) and Hong Kong companies in the Greater Bay Area, which can enhance technology transfer. It can assist to develop into a technology-intensive industry.
 - To work closely with the governments of Guangdong Province and Shenzhen to jointly build an innovation and technology centre in the Greater Bay Area.
- With reference to Singapore's experience, we should establish the "Economic Development Committee". The Chief Executive and non-official members of the

Executive Council should serve as members of this committee. The committee is responsible for formulating economic development strategies, strengthening policy coordination, and managing funds for innovation and technology projects. The committee should have permanent executive departments and researchers to coordinate with relevant government departments or agencies, such as the Productivity Council, Science Park, Cyberport, Trade Development Council, Invest HK and Research Grants Committee, etc.

Break through the bottleneck of traditional fields with innovation and technology

- To relocate the Kwai Chung Container Terminal and plan a new port with modern infrastructure and automation equipment, which can link the logistics and transportation network of Hong Kong and neighbouring ports strategically and enhance the international competitiveness of Hong Kong logistic hub.
- To formulate a blueprint for the development of legal technology to promote the digitalization and application of technology in the judiciary and legal services. We should introduce to law firms and corporate legal departments to adopt legal technology and relevant precaution measures. We should list out governmental policy supports in short-, medium-, and long-term, which can convince legal sector to invest more resources in technological areas.
- To establish a "Legal Technology Fund" under the constant Epidemic Prevention and Anti-epidemic. The Fund should be increased to assist law firms in upgrading the legal technology system regularly. The scope of funding should be more detailed to ensure that law firms can have innovative and productive legal technology products, such as document management systems, knowledge management systems, cloud customer relationship software, etc., rather than simple electronic products such as tablets or TVs.
- To sponsor law firms to hire college students or graduates, who are familiar with programming, artificial intelligence, blockchain, data science, etc., through internships or full-time employment to lure them working in legal technology. In the process, these technologists can provide law firms solutions for simplifying work procedures with technology. On the other hand, they can also take this opportunity to deepen their understanding of legal work and build contacts. They can rely on these experiences to set up start-ups which engaged in legal technology in the future.
- It is recommended to cooperate with colleges and universities to add scientific and technological elements in bachelor law degree programmes, such as business analysis, computer science, information systems, etc., to cultivate a group of legal talents familiar with the operation of science and technology. Hence, they can apply legal technology sophisticatedly in the future. At present, some colleges and universities have provided elective courses in legal science and technology. It is recommended that these courses should be included in the scope of compulsory courses in the future.

Link the government with technological innovation and social innovation

- The Innovation and Technology Bureau should commit to establishing an innovation system in line with Hong Kong's positioning. They should combine innovative ideas, international networks and investment vitality with the development of the Greater Bay Area and the global market. The experience of DJI and SenseTime shows that the best way to help the SAR's innovation and technology industry is to research and expand the market, especially the Greater Bay Area and the national market:
 - To establish a market research and development centre.
 - To establish a smart development centre in the Greater Bay Area to attract young people to participate in smart training.
 - To establish a smart data centre to expand the smart market.
 - To expedite the mutual recognition and enforcement mechanism of intellectual property rights.
 - To strengthen education, training and investment supporting facilities to promote technological entrepreneurship.
 - To establish a closer cooperative relationship with the European Union to achieve the goals of the "14th Five-Year Plan" and build Hong Kong into an international science and technology innovation centre.
 - To establish a closer cooperative relationship with the European Union to promote local adoption of "Industry 4.0" system standards, which can increase the productivity of Hong Kong companies in the Greater Bay Area.
 - Through the Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau, to promote cooperation with the Ministry of Science and Technology, the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology and the National Development and Reform Commission to promote the development of local innovation and technology.
 - To set up a "Future Centre " in the Science Park and cooperate with local leaders of relevant sectors through the cross-field innovation policy platform of the Science Park to support the development of various innovative communities, such as software and artificial intelligence, biomedicine, data science, and green technology, material science, microchip design and integration.
- To increase investment in basic research and, with the assistance of Hong Kong Science Park and Cyberport, to provide local universities with funding to commercialize research results. We should actively cooperate with universities to provide valuation training to investors on investment and technology start-ups. We can provide entrepreneurial guidance to start-ups through a network of business incubation centres and acceleration centres.

- The government should fill the funding gap, explore investment opportunities and provide collaborative funding to private investors. For example, to provide HK\$50,000 to the initial "proof of concept" and HK\$500,000 to the initial "seed funding". A certain amount of funding should be provided to "Pre-Series A" stage.
- The Innovation and Technology Bureau is well-positioned to coordinate the government's internal policies on innovation and technology, and social innovation. The proposed "future Centre " can be extended to cover more topics in the future, such as population aging, retirement protection and elderly services; sports, culture and entertainment; reindustrialization in order to create greater social and economic value.

IV Land and Housing

Imagine Hong Kong bidding farewell to 'subdivided housing'

Housing is a necessity for all people to have a peaceful living and contentment. Rights to Housing is also a basic human right. Stable and comfortable housing helps to establish human dignity. However, speculation in the property market over the past decade coupled with shortage of supply cause housing prices surging that exceeds the affordability of ordinary citizens. Our apartments become smaller and smaller. The quality of life of our people continues to decline due to the limited living space. With increasing grievances within society, housing problems become a deep-seated contradiction in society. It is the vision of all people to have an affordable home. It is the government's responsibility to provide affordable apartments to the people. Therefore, we hope that the government can face up to the housing problem, break through its inherent thinking, and regain her control in housing policies, including upholding people's right to live, speeding up land development, releasing land resources, and improving the quality of housing for citizens.

Protecting people's rights to housing

- To establish a minimum per capita living area to set standards for the right to housing. We should require all new buildings to meet the standards. In order to protect the living space of Hong Kong people, the trend of the declining size of private housing should be reversed.
- To separate investment-driven demand and housing needs-driven demand. The Housing Authority needs to review the severity of the marketization of public housing and implement effective regulatory measures to prevent public housing as a public asset from being abused by capitalism.
- To review the methodology of the "Home Ownership Index" in the current government economic report, which is calculated based on a 45-square-meter unit (approximately 480 square feet), a mortgage of 70% and a monthly payment with a payment period of 20 years, as opposed to the index derived from the median income of all households in Hong Kong (excluding public housing). This methodology is no longer in line with the reality. The government should utilize more accurate and timely data to address the issues of home ownership and housing.
- The subdivided housing rent control bill should be legislated and become effective within a short period of time to prevent owners from using other means to increase rents in disguise. A good intention which originally aims to help grassroot level may harm them instead due to bureaucracy.

Government led to increase land supply

- The disparity between the rich and the poor has been widened due to the enormous inflow of global funds which invested in the Hong Kong real estate

market. The government needs to shift the housing policy from "private-oriented and public-assisted" to "public-oriented and private-assisted."

- To review the methodology of the total housing supply target in our current "Long Term Housing Strategy" report. The figure has been unreasonably decreasing since 2014. The bureau should propose a more timely statistical method to reflect the actual housing demand in Hong Kong.
- Development Bureau should lead and actively recommend three departments, namely Buildings Department, Planning Department and Lands Department to conduct a comprehensive review on the procedures for all planning and development of land. At present, the three departments only adopt the calculation on exemption floor area to be determined by the Buildings Department. In fact, there is still a lot of room to minimise procedures. Bureaucracy on land policy should be combatted by supervision and recommendation by the policy bureau.

Comprehensive review on the current housing policy to release land resources

- To review the application and approval procedures on transitional housing on a regular basis to avoid lengthy and unfair bureaucracy of individual government departments and charities.
- To review the old housing policies of small houses, squatter houses and civil servants co-operative building society in a timely manner to release more precious land resources.

V A Just Society

Imagine a restructured societal system for Hong Kong: Fair and open

Nowadays, our society emphasizes social justice. However, problems such as the widening gap between the rich and the poor, the lack of upward mobility among young people indicate the ineffectiveness of the social resource allocation system in Hong Kong. The general public cannot enjoy the fruits of economic growth and prosperity. The deep-seated contradictions in society are so severe which the people cannot regain hope and establish a long-term vision. In the face of various social injustices, the Hong Kong government needs to change her strategy and strive to improve the social system. The government should make good use of existing capital, network, and infrastructure to make meaningful long-term investments in housing, medical care, education, environmental protection, social integration, etc., so as to protect the basic needs of the general public and increase the opportunities for everyone to move upward in the society and improve the living standards of people. We look forward to reshaping a fair and open social system and competitive environment, so as to upholding social justice and creating diversity and abundant development opportunities. Then we can lead Hong Kong to become a sustainable city.

Caring for youth development and ignite the hope of society

- Members of advisory organizations and statutory bodies should take initiative to meet with young people on a regular basis. They should listen to the voices of young people and provide them with opportunities to participate in politics, which can increase mutual trust and shorten the distance between youth and the government.
- With reference to the Peace Corps in US, graduates of government-sponsored college can spend a year serving in less-privileged communities and voluntary organizations in Hong Kong or mainland before entering the workplace. It can cultivate the development of good character of young people through community service.
- Establish a youth impact assessment mechanism. When we formulate all policies, it is necessary to review the impact on youth and list the results of the assessment in the policy document.
- To expand the coverage of the “Belt and Road Scholarship” and encourage local college students to go to ASEAN and other countries along the route for exchanges and internships, so as to nurture more young people with a good understanding of the international arena.
- To improve the social image of vocational training and attract young people to engage in technical work to take up vacancies in the job market. The government should closely review the long-term development of human resource with the business community to eliminate the mismatch between the skilled talent and job opportunities.

Improve the lives of the elderly

- To review the use of "Community Care Service Vouchers for the Elderly". We can make reference to the use of medical voucher to consider de-limiting and deduct the service capacity in the form of reimbursement. It can make the community voucher easier to use and freeing up the service capacity of institutions.
- To accelerate the promotion of primary medical services such as "community health centres" and "district health centre" which should be expanded to the 18 districts in Hong Kong. Such expansion can strengthen the one-stop primary medical services in Hong Kong, assist in the long-term implementation of the "home-based elderly" policy and ensure the effective use of medical resources.
- Our social welfare agencies should set up a community service network for rural elders through a pilot plan, so that they can receive more comprehensive care support.
- Through the "Future Centre " or other relevant committees, we should explore the service needs of junior elderly people as soon as possible to encourage more organizations to provide early service plans and launch customized services for them.
- With reference to the experience of e-health system, we can carry out electronic archives works in 41 elderly district centres in Hong Kong, which can strengthen communication between medical institutions, elderly district centres and neighbourhood centres for the elderly, and between different services of the same organization, in order to promote cross-services management. We can also promote all-in services management mode.

Promote social harmony and create a caring society

- To strengthen the coordinating role of the District Welfare Commissioner and encourage cooperation among academics, business, social welfare institutions, social enterprises and regional organizations in the district, especially the cooperation between youth services and elderly services, and attending Then the issue of inter-generational inclusiveness together.
- To increase the participation and representation of non-Chinese speaking people within the government structure, such as the civil service team, district administrative structure and advisory committees, to match their population proportions and demonstrate the diversity of Hong Kong society.
- To cultivate students to become international citizens and learn about the religions and cultures in different countries. The countries along the "Belt and Road" can be a starting point. We should develop value education as a base to deepen the universal values of tolerance and respect in the civilized society.

Planning for the future and sustainable development

- To establish a "Social Happiness Index" to allow government departments or subsidized organizations to review Hong Kong's social development in terms of

food, clothing, housing, transportation, life, old age, sickness and death from a macro perspective, so that the government can formulate policies for the purpose of improving the happiness of citizens in life.

- To accelerate the implementation of municipal solid waste policies and garbage classification policies, such as the "Municipal Solid Waste Levy" and "Plastic Container Producer Responsibility System" programs and use the revenue from garbage levy and plastic tax to subsidize the recycling industry.
- At present, there are no less than 600 special vehicles to transfer people in need to and from medical institutions and institutions/residences. Organizations that provide such services include the Hospital Authority, the Hong Kong Society for Rehabilitation and major social welfare Institutions, etc. Since these vehicles are purchased through government funding (as Hong Kong will promote electric vehicles as mass transportation vehicles) it is recommended that the Innovation and Technology Bureau shall use the existing network to promote a pilot project of electrification of patient transport vehicles to be used by hospitals or the Hospital Authority. It can also reduce the environmental impact of government-sponsored vehicles and promote the development of related industries (including electric vehicle research and development, in-vehicle equipment update, electric vehicle maintenance industry development, etc.).

Path of Democracy

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Our Mission

Path of Democracy (PoD) is a mission- and action-driven think tank that strives to create maximum room for democratic development under the principles of “One Country Two Systems”, “Hong Kong People Ruling Hong Kong”, and a high degree of autonomy.

We believe that communication with mutual trust, conducted with a moderate attitude, is essential for the development of democracy. To this end, we have established Path of Democracy as a platform to:

- Consolidate the majority of supporters of the democratic camp in the society;
- Promote a moderate political approach in a proactive manner, and to carve out new political horizon in the society;
- Formulate agenda and construct systematic political discourse;
- Establish new ideological dimensions in the politics, society, economics and culture of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region together with different stakeholders through research, dialogue and engagement.
- Conduct various activities and schemes, including establishing the Hong Kong Academy of Politics and Public Policy, to cultivate a new generation of political leaders and public policy makers.

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