

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SINGAPORE

GEK2005 INTRODUCTION TO URBAN PLANNING

(Semester II: AY2012-13)

Time Allowed: 2 Hours

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**INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES**

1. This examination paper contains **THREE** questions and comprises **TWO** printed pages.
2. Answer **ALL** questions.
3. The marks for each question are shown in brackets and add up to 100.
4. Candidates may assume any additional facts they consider necessary to assist their answers, provided that these assumptions are not inconsistent with the information given in the questions and are stated in the answers
5. This is an OPEN BOOK examination.
6. The examiner for this module is Mr Ng Siau Yong.

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**Answer ALL questions****Question 1 (50 marks)**

In an article entitled “*HK finds room for 7.2 million people*” published in The Sunday Times on 17 February 2013, Li Xueying wrote that despite the limited developable land area in Hong Kong, the territory is able to house a large population. She concluded that there were some lessons that we could learn:

*“One...with intelligent design, buildings can go far higher. In Hong Kong, the height of residential buildings – despite a hilly terrain and the risk of typhoons – is around 50 storeys. Residential buildings in Singapore hover at half the height...Two, commutes to jobs and services need to be easy, if not short. The ideal is for jobs to be located near where people live. If not, comprehensive transport links, door to door, are paramount. Third, and most controversially, humans are adaptable. Last year, CapitaLand’s former chief executive Liew Mun Leong called the shoebox flats smaller than 500 sq ft “almost inhumane”. A new Urban Redevelopment Authority rule later curtailed the building of such units in suburbs. Most Hong Kong families wouldn’t have a problem with them. This is not to say that small homes are the way for Singapore to go, or that they are even necessary if planning is done well enough. But as the Hong Kong experience shows, there is no “sacred” benchmark.”*

Recently, our government announced that Singapore’s population is projected to be 6.5 to 6.9 million by 2030. In the context of planning land use for a larger projected population in Singapore, discuss Li’s conclusion in relation to the physical, environmental and social implications that may arise in our country and society. Apart from Li’s suggestions, discuss other urban planning options and alternatives that could address the physical and environmental needs of a larger population in Singapore.

**Question 2 (30 marks)**

Recently, a nursing home has been planned to be built next to a Yew Tee condominium (The Straits Times, 6 February 2013). In a dialogue attended by about 100 condominium residents with the local Member of Parliament (MP) and officials from the Ministry of Health and the Land Transport Authority, some residents expressed concerns on the noise pollution during the construction, the lack of public transport options in that area, and the possible impact on their property prices as a result of the nursing home plan. The local MP said that the consultation process had helped both government agencies and the residents to better understand each other’s position. The newspaper reported that there had been similar rows in other parts of Singapore when nursing homes were proposed.

Your classmate Judy asserted that the Yew Tee case is a good evidence justifying the Pluralist Argument for planning, which postulates that there is a multitude of interests in the planning process and calls for some form of advocacy of minority interests so that there can be a balance in the interplay of powers. In this regard, public participation in urban planning is a necessary component in the planning process in Singapore, in today’s context.

Discuss Judy’s assertion with appropriate examples to support your discussion.

**Question 3 (20 marks)**

Our development control system is a necessary evil in the urban planning process. While the system strictly regulates physical developments in Singapore, it ensures uniformity and orderliness in our urban environment. This is important to bring about a good quality of life for Singapore residents.

Argue for **OR** against the statement above with appropriate examples.

**END OF PAPER**