

SDEV speaks to media on quarterly land sale programme for January to March 2020

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Secretary for Development, Mr Michael Wong, at the question-and-answer session of the media session today (December 31) on the quarterly land sale programme for January to March 2020:

Reporter: With the economy going down and the social unrest in Hong Kong, how confident are you that the developers will still be willing to invest in these lands? Do you think that they will become more conservative when it comes to bidding? Also, regarding the Kai Tak land, there was a developer abandoning the land in Kai Tak before, so why are you still rolling out this new piece of land in Kai Tak?

Secretary for Development: On your two questions, maybe the first question first. Things are still moving forward. We just successfully tendered a site on top of the Express Rail Link station in West Kowloon. If you look at Kai Tak, we actually also succeeded in selling a site by tender, the site near the (Kai Tak) Sports Park. Also, if you look at the residential market, the residential sites, even in Kai Tak, still go out quite successfully. So, we remain confident that, if you look forward, commercial and residential sites in Hong Kong will still be taken up, provided they are at the right price. And then, of course it depends on a lot of factors when it comes to the exact price of a particular site.

Your question about the site at Kai Tak. Its location is an advantage. If you look at the map, it is right next to the Sung Wong Toi Station of the future Shatin to Central Link. Geographically, it is actually better than the site that I referred to earlier, the site near the Sports Park. So, there are good reasons that the site should successfully go out. Another reason that we would like to sell the site is that we have included in this site a requirement of construction of welfare facilities for the elderly and young people. You know that such facilities these days are hard to come by. So, if there is a way through which we could speed up the supply of these facilities, we would love to do that.

Reporter: For the question that with the economy going down and with the social unrest going on in Hong Kong, do you think the developers will become more conservative when it comes to bidding?

Secretary for Development: I think it is hard for me to put myself in the shoes of developers. So, I will just refer you to some of the tendering exercises that we just did after June this year. As I said, the site on top of the Express Rail Link station in West Kowloon has still gone out, albeit at a price that was lower than that estimated about 12, 18 months ago. But

the market is the market. So market fluctuation is something that we all have to accept.

(Please also refer to the Chinese portion of the transcript.)