

## Hysan Development Celebrates More than a Century of Placemaking with “100 Years of Making: From Space to Place’ Lee Gardens Community Dialogue”

*1.4 Million “Happy Hours” Recorded in the Lee Gardens Area as of October 2024*



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**Hong Kong, 3 December 2024** – Celebrating more than 100 years of curating the physical and social dimensions of the Lee Gardens Area, Hysan Development Company Limited (“Hysan Development” or ‘Hysan’) organised the event themed “**100 Years of Making: From Space to Place’ Lee Gardens Community Dialogue**” (“Community Dialogue”), with the support of the Lee Gardens Association. Set in the just-unveiled Atrium of Hysan Place, a space designed for community gathering, the Community Dialogue brought together **attendees from all walks of life**, including built environment industry leaders, academics and key Area space users including business partners and non-governmental organisations. During the Community Dialogue, Hysan Development announced for the first time that **1.4 million “Happy Hours”** were recorded in the Area as of October 2024, a testament to the community’s active engagement with the Area’s diverse offerings.

**Mr. Ricky Lui, Executive Director and Chief Operating Officer of Hysan Development Company Limited**, highlighted Hysan’s community-centric approach to placemaking. “Placemaking is about more than just bricks and mortar; it’s about fostering connections amongst people – both individually and collectively. A good community requires not only top-notch architectural environments and facilities, but also creating a vibrant and welcoming atmosphere. This belief steers our collaboration with stakeholders in the Lee Gardens Area, as we continue to transform this historically rich place that holds memories across generations into a people-centric

community. Looking forward, we will continue to develop Lee Gardens into a multicultural hub capitalising on our Community Business Model. Synergising hardware investment with software, we hope to offer visitors with diverse selections and create an urban oasis of happiness.”

### **A Century of Placemaking Connecting the Past and the Future**

The Community Dialogue was moderated by **Mr. Bryant Lu, JP, Vice Chairman of Ronald Lu & Partners**, featured two engaging sessions that brought together space users, space designers and community stakeholders. Ronald Lu & Partners played a key role in the masterplanning of the Lee Gardens Rejuvenation Project and serves as the architect for the Caroline Hill Road project.

The first session, “**Souls and Stories that Build Community Bonds**” explored how diverse activities and spaces in the Area have fostered meaningful community connections, from creating positive business impacts to enhancing social inclusivity.

- **Urban Farm at Hysan Place: Ms. Rachel So, Program Manager of the Sustainable Ecological Ethical Development Foundation**, highlighted the importance of reconnecting urbanites with nature. “Coming from a farming family, I understand how meaningful it is to create these hands-on farming opportunities in an urban setting. Through the Urban Farm at Hysan Place, city dwellers experience the joy and challenges of growing food, while the monthly Farmers’ Market creates a unique meeting point where local farmers and the neighbourhood connect, turning regular market days into community bonding.”
- **#URBAN PARK at Hysan Place: Mr. Brian Siswojo, Founder & President of the All Hong Kong Skateboards Association**, reflected on how the skatepark has become a cultural hub. “The #URBAN PARK at Hysan Place wasn’t just the first retail skatepark in Hong Kong. It has become a gathering spot where our skateboarding community can grow and connect. Through events like Go Skateboarding Day and Lee Gardens Skateboard Fest, we have seen how skateboarding brings people together, from experienced riders mentoring newcomers to families discovering the sport together. These spaces and events have helped transform skateboarding from a street activity into an accessible urban sport that bridges different generations.”
- **Urban Sketching and Community Narratives: Ms. Vanessa Leung, a member of Urban Sketchers Hong Kong**, shared her perspective as both an artist and architect. “Urban sketching has taught me to slow down and truly observe and appreciate the environment and the community around me. Causeway Bay and Wan Chai, where I spend much of my spare time, are neighbourhoods that beautifully blend old and new—modern high-rises alongside historic walk-ups, sleek shops next to traditional stores. Over the years, I have documented the transformations of these areas through my sketches. The rich diversity of architecture and vibrant community activities continue to inspire me, offering endless perspectives to explore and capture.”

The second session, “**Placemakers in Action**” brought together the “Space Designers” of the Lee Gardens Area. While responding to the group of “Space Users” in the first Community Dialogue, they shared their insights into how to facilitate the evolution from “space” to “place” in the urban development process.

- Building on these community perspectives, **Ms. Winnie Wong, General Manager, Projects of Hysan Development Company Limited**, explained how the area’s spaces were designed to go beyond function and instead serve as platforms for connection. “As we plan our enhancement works, we are listening to our community’s evolving needs, from the new

generation's desire for authentic experiences to growing awareness of sustainability. These upgrades stand to create more versatile spaces in response to changing lifestyles while strengthening our commitment to environmental stewardship."

- **Mr. Chapman Lam, Managing Director of SYSTRA MVA**, emphasised the area's unique charm. "Its narrow streets, despite occasional congestion, provide a pleasant environment for walking and driving, while the mix of traditional and modern shops, along with ongoing streetscape improvements, enhances its appeal. With the upcoming streetscape and pedestrian-friendly enhancements under the Lee Gardens Rejuvenation Project, we can look forward to a more walkable and welcoming neighbourhood that will attract both residents and visitors alike."
- **Prof. Melody Yiu, Research Assistant Professor, School of Architecture of The Chinese University of Hong Kong**, reflected on the changing dynamics of cultural spaces. She stated, "Monumental architecture, such as museums, theatres and cultural centres, are often what we would commonly associate with culture. The then Lee Theatre is a case in point. However, many forms and scales of cultural places have emerged in the past decade, and cultural happenings are no longer confined to a particular type of architecture. The idea of site-specific and participatory art interests a growing sense of community, translating into the changing understanding of dedicated spaces for culture into community places where diverse culture thrives."

#### **1.4 Million Hours of Community Joy in Lee Gardens Area**

One of the highlights of the Community Dialogue was Hysan Development's announcement of **1.4 million "Happy Hours"** and **480,000 public participations** recorded in Lee Gardens Area (as of late October 2024). Happy Hour metrics are derived from actual time spent by visitors engaging with Lee Gardens Area's vibrant surroundings and experiences, from community art performances and wellness activities to festive celebrations and sports events like skateboarding and rugby-themed activities, thereby capturing genuine community participation within the precinct.

The **"100 Years of Making: From Space to Place' Lee Gardens Community Dialogue"** captured the paradigms for successful placemaking through the voices of those who shape and experience these spaces daily. As Lee Gardens Area enters its next century, the Community Dialogue has set the foundation for its continued evolution as a vibrant destination where diverse community members thrive together.

**Photo Captions**



**Photo 1**– Mr. Ricky Lui, Executive Director and Chief Operating Officer of Hysan Development Company Limited, highlighted Hysan’s community-centric approach to placemaking.



**Photo 2** – Mr. Ricky Lui, Executive Director and Chief Operating Officer of Hysan Development Company Limited (left), and Ms. Fanny Cheung, District Officer (Wan Chai) (right) together officially opened the community dialogue event.



**Photo 3** – Participants in Community Dialogue 1 – “Souls and Stories that Build Community Bonds” included Mr. Wayne Lau, Founder of Leather Healer (first left), Ms. Lillian Luk, Marketing Manager of El Grande Holdings Ltd (second left), Mr. Brian Siswojo, Founder & President of All Hong Kong Skateboards Association (third left), Ms. Vanessa Leung, Member of Urban Sketchers Hong Kong (second right), and Ms. Rachel So, Program Manager of Sustainable Ecological Ethical Development Foundation (first right). The session was moderated by Mr. Bryant Lu, JP, Vice Chairman of Ronald Lu & Partners (third right).



**Photo 4** – (From left to right) Participants in Community Dialogue 2 – “Placemakers in Action” included Prof. Melody Yiu, Research Assistant Professor, School of Architecture of The Chinese University of Hong Kong (first left), Mr. Chapman Lam, Managing Director of SYSTRA MVA (second left), Ms. Winnie Wong, General Manager, Projects of Hysan Development (third left), Mr. Wilfred Au, Executive Director, Commercial of Urban Renewal Authority (second right), and Mr. Lawrence Wong, Partner of Foster + Partners (first right). The session was moderated by Mr. Bryant Lu, JP, Vice Chairman of Ronald Lu & Partners (third right).



**Photo 5** – During the Community Dialogue, Hysan Development announced for the first time that 1.4 million “Happy Hours” were recorded in the Area as of October 2024, a testament to the community’s active engagement with the Area’s diverse offerings.

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