

Reshaping Urban Spaces: Exploring the Role of Temporary Public Open Spaces in Alleviating Land Pressure in Hong Kong

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Abstract

As urban land scarcity intensifies, Temporary Public Open Spaces (TPOS) offer flexible solutions to meet growing spatial and social demands. This study explores the role of TPOS in addressing the societal impacts of land scarcity in high-density cities, focusing on Hong Kong. Using a qualitative approach, it comprises a literature review, interviews, and comparative analysis of three case studies. The research identifies key characteristics and practices of TPOS, emphasising how different models vary in their social contributions. Findings provide practical insights into optimising TPOS design, governance, and integration into urban planning. The study contributes to a deeper understanding of how TPOS can support inclusive, adaptive public space strategies in dense urban contexts.

Keywords: Public Open Spaces; Temporary Urbanism; Urban Planning

1 Introduction

As urban areas continue to expand and populations increase, the availability of land becomes a scarce resource (Hee & Doi, 2003; Tang & Wong, 2008). This has significantly changed how urban spaces are designed and utilised (McIntyre, 2009). Temporary uses for public spaces have gained recognition as an essential strategy for revitalising cities and have been widely incorporated into urban policies to address the limited space issue (Fernandez & Mozas, 2021; Andres & Kraftl, 2021). Temporary Public Open Spaces (TPOS) have emerged as a flexible alternative to manage the growing demands on urban areas with limited available land (Bragaglia & Caruso, 2021).

Hong Kong, as a high-density city, exemplifies the growing challenges of providing public open spaces. Initially, the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines (HKPSG) set a target of 2 square metres of open space per person (DevB, 2015). However, as public demand for quality open spaces has risen, the Hong Kong 2030+ initiative proposed increasing this target to 3.5 square metres per person (DevB, 2021). Despite this aim, a report by Civic Exchange in 2017 shows that the actual provision averages only 2.7 to 2.8 square metres per person.

To alleviate the pressures of urban density, the Planning Department of Hong Kong issued the **Reimagining Public Spaces in Hong Kong – Feasibility Study** (DevB, 2023), which reviews public open space policies in other high-density cities worldwide and summarises emerging global trends in open space planning. The study emphasises the importance of developing innovative, flexible public open spaces, specifically highlighting adaptive strategies like tactical urbanism and time-sharing of space as quick-win solutions to optimise existing spaces. For instance, the study suggests embracing tactical urbanism to create transient open spaces and repurposing underutilised or obsolete spaces. This reflects the Hong Kong government's encouragement of innovative approaches to public open space usage and its commitment to fostering community identity through public participation and flexible spatial solutions (DevB, 2023).

In response to rising public demand and scarce land resources, Hong Kong primarily manages buildable land through permanent grants to the private sector or government allocations for long-term development. Yet before these developments commence, the government often designates specific land parcels for temporary recreational use, maximising available land while addressing supply constraints (Lu, 2023). According to GovHK data (2017), approximately 748 temporary land allocations, covering around 76 hectares, have been established for temporary open spaces.

Despite government efforts to designate temporary public spaces, there are ongoing concerns regarding the quality and sustainability of these spaces (GovHK, 2017). These issues highlight the need for further research into

their design, management, and potential contributions to urban life. This study aims to explore how TPOS can help mitigate land scarcity in high-density cities like Hong Kong.

The research begins with an in-depth theoretical exploration, analysing the definition and main types of temporary use within the framework of temporary urbanism and its role in alleviating land pressure. These insights are integrated with the current state of TPOS in Hong Kong, examining existing policies and measures to summarise the characteristics of TPOS in the unique context of Hong Kong.

Additionally, the study conducts an analysis of three representative cases of temporary public space use in Hong Kong to uncover valuable insights into how these practices inform the design and governance of TPOS. Ultimately, this research aims to refine the theoretical framework of TPOS, offering structured recommendations for their planning and management within Hong Kong's unique urban landscape, and providing guidance for future public open space planning in high-density cities. Specifically, this study focuses on three main research questions:

1. What are the key characteristics and practices of temporary uses of public open spaces in high-density urban areas like Hong Kong?
2. How do different types of TPOS perform in addressing the social impacts of land scarcity in high-density cities?
3. How can insights from temporary uses of public open spaces inform the development of TPOS in Hong Kong?

2 Literature Review

2.1 Temporary Use of Public Open Space under Temporary Urbanism

To address the growing demand for urban public open spaces, the need for cost-effective, rapid, and tailored solutions to repurpose vacant areas has become increasingly urgent, leading to the emergence of the concept of temporary use strategies (Colomb, 2012; Haydn & Temel, 2006; Oswalt et al., 2013). By providing a flexible alternative to traditional development, temporary use offsets the rigidity of long-term formal plans and offers opportunities to experiment with informal, improvisational, and spontaneous innovations (Galdini, 2020), demonstrating significant benefits for social life. As a result, it has become an emerging trend and innovative strategy for reimagining urban spaces, increasingly integrated into urban policies and considered a key feature of urban planning (Andres & Kraftl, 2021; Bragaglia & Rossignolo, 2021; Dubeaux & Cunningham Sabot, 2018).

Temporary use refers to unconventional and informal spatial activities occurring within limited timeframes, differing from the typical urban development cycle (Oswalt et al., 2013; De Smet, 2013). It represents an adaptive, flexible form of urbanisation that aligns spaces with evolving demands and fosters stakeholder consensus (Bishop & Williams, 2012; Bembenek, 2008). As a development-oriented practice, temporary use explores spatial potential while reflecting a gradual integration of grassroots activities into institutional frameworks (Lehtovuori & Ruoppila, 2012; Hou, 2020).

2.1.1 Typologies and Characteristics of Temporary Use

Temporary use, a key practice in temporary urbanism, is defined by temporality and flexibility. While its short-term nature is often seen as a limitation, scholars argue it unlocks unique opportunities unattainable through long-term processes (Madanipour, 2018; Haydn & Temel, 2006). Particularly in high-density cities, temporary use empowers low-cost, low-risk experimentation, providing insights for public open space planning and management.

Andres and Zhang (2020) classify temporary urbanism into bottom-up, top-down, and hybrid modes. Bottom-up approaches, driven by communities, address immediate social needs, enhancing participation and offering ideas for activating TPOS. Top-down strategies, led by governments or institutions, align with broader urban development goals such as cultural industry promotion (Colomb, 2017), providing structured solutions for TPOS requiring rapid deployment and resource optimisation. Hybrid models encourage collaboration among stakeholders, bridging community-driven and institution-led initiatives to mitigate tensions and improve

planning efficiency (Lehtovuori & Ruoppila, 2012). This typological framework highlights temporary use's temporality, flexibility, and collaborative potential, offering a foundation for systematic TPOS policy design.

2.1.2 Alleviating Land Pressure through Temporary Use

Temporary use plays a pivotal role in high-density cities as a cost-effective and flexible spatial strategy, alleviating land pressures through short-term interventions. Its low-cost, low-risk, and time-sensitive nature effectively addresses spatial and temporal gaps in traditional urban planning (Galdini, 2020). By preventing land degradation or unauthorised occupation, temporary use offers transitional solutions for vacant sites awaiting permanent development (Bishop & Williams, 2012; Németh & Langhorst, 2014).

Socially, temporary use fosters inclusivity and enhances the urban quality of life. By responding swiftly to community needs, it strengthens social cohesion, fosters consensus, and reduces barriers for non-profit organisations and grassroots participation (Andres & Kraftl, 2021; Tardiveau & Mallo, 2014). It also encourages citizens to reimagine urban spaces dynamically, inspiring adaptive and innovative uses (Madanipour, 2018).

Economically, temporary use revitalises underutilised land, reducing uncertainties in long-term planning through experimental approaches. This strategy increases land value and attractiveness by allowing iterative feedback for development processes (Ferrerri, 2015; Mulgan et al., 2007). Flexible management also optimises land for short-term gains while offering insights for future investments (Florida, 2002).

From a governance perspective, temporary use provides an experimental platform for validating urban policies and strategies. It enables resource optimisation and attracts investors through short-term pilot projects, thus bridging the gap between temporary and long-term urban developments (Stevens & Ambler, 2010; Bragaglia & Rossignolo, 2021).

2.2 Temporary Public Open Spaces in Hong Kong

Hong Kong exhibits highly concentrated urban characteristics, including density, complexity, and verticality (Shelton et al., 2011). However, this level of intensity is often driven by economic motives, with a focus on maximising profits (Tieben, 2016). Under a system of public land ownership, the Hong Kong government's land lease system has constrained the development of public open spaces (Tang & Wong, 2008). For a long time, the government has generated revenue through the transfer of land use rights, making land allocation a significant source of income (Legislative Council Secretariat (LEGCO), 2016). Within this model, dominated by "revenue generation through land management," land-use planning is often regarded as a solution-oriented tool to resolve land disputes among interest groups and local bureaucracies (Bristow, 1984). Public open spaces are seen as additional costs for the government to provide and maintain, which has negatively affected their planning and design (Tang & Wong, 2008).

Over the past few decades, the traditional planning role of public open spaces has gradually diminished, with responsibilities increasingly shifted to the private sector. This has led to the privatisation of public open space functions (Cuthbert & McKinnell, 2001). In the 1980s, the government introduced the "Private Development Public Open Space" (POSPD) policy, encouraging the private sector to provide open spaces for public use within or around their buildings in exchange for higher building density allowances in certain high-density areas. This was intended to compensate for the shortage of public open spaces through private sector participation (GovHK, 2012). However, this incentive mechanism further prioritised economic benefits over community needs, failing to truly address the public's demands (Yu, 2018).

Hong Kong's public open space planning policies are inadequate, and the shortage of facilities has raised social concerns (Siu & Huang, 2015). The availability of public open spaces in many areas falls far below the standard of 2 square metres per person set by the Planning Department (Gilges, 1998; Zhang, 2015). Compared to other Asian metropolises, Hong Kong ranks among the lowest in this regard (Lai, 2017). The government has gradually recognised the important recreational role of public open spaces in high-density urban environments. It has

established HKPSG to provide a fair basis for reserving land for recreational facilities and open spaces, guiding their planning and design (GovHK, 2015). Most public open spaces in Hong Kong are managed by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD). Due to limited funding, they often adopt generic approaches to the planning and design of various spaces, prioritising low maintenance costs, which fail to meet residents' comfort needs (Lai, 2017). Under the guidelines of the Hong Kong Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance, the usage of these spaces is also strictly regulated, limiting the potential for development in the use of public open spaces (Carlow, 2013).

Against this backdrop, TPOS have emerged as an important tool to address land pressures. TPOS in Hong Kong refers to recreational land temporarily allocated by the government before permanent development takes place. Their uses are diverse, including green spaces, playgrounds, and rest gardens (GovHK, 2021). In Hong Kong, developable land is typically allocated through the private sector for permanent projects or managed by government departments (GovHK, 2017). However, this land management approach sometimes results in transitional land being temporarily left idle. This may occur due to issues such as planning, demand, insufficient funding, or land ownership, causing the originally planned permanent development projects to be delayed. To make more effective use of these temporarily vacant land resources, the government tends to allocate them for temporary or short-term uses to ensure the maximisation of land value (Lu, 2023).

According to data from the Development Bureau in 2017, the Lands Department allocated 748 temporary sites, covering a total area of approximately 760,000 square metres, for use as TPOS. Recreational land is often prioritised for temporary use because it aligns with the planning principles of the Outline Zoning Plan (OZP) and is considered a "permitted use" in almost all zoning categories. These spaces not only serve as transitional arrangements during urban land redevelopment but also alleviate the shortage of public open spaces to some extent (GovHK, 2017). When designating temporary recreational land in a particular area, the government considers multiple factors, including the size and timeline of developable land, the surrounding environment, and residents' needs (GovHK, 2017).

The "temporary" nature of TPOS leads to ambiguities in their functions, designs, and user perceptions. In some cases, the lifespan of temporary spaces is comparable to that of permanent open spaces (Lu, 2023). The planning and management of TPOS in Hong Kong have attracted increasing attention, as their usage periods often exceed their intended temporary status. Long-term use has raised concerns about maintenance quality and whether these spaces can adequately meet community needs and expectations (GovHK, 2017).

3 Research Methods

Based on the discussion above, this study examines three specific cases of temporary public space use in Hong Kong: Central Harbourfront Event Space, Sham Shui Po Underbridge Night Market, and Hong Kong Cultural Centre Piazza. These locations were chosen for their diversity in spatial functions, governance models, and user engagement, representing different approaches to temporary public open space utilisation in high-density urban settings.

The case study will rely on existing literature and secondary data analysis, including government documents, official reports, media releases, and news articles. Additionally, 15 brief semi-structured interviews will be conducted with various stakeholders—five for each site—involving venue managers, event organisers, event staff, security personnel, and regular space users (Figure 1). Thematic analysis will be employed to explore stakeholders' perspectives on the following areas: a) their relationship with the space, b) their views on the temporary use activities and participation processes, and c) their suggestions for improving the facilities and management of temporary activities (Tsiolis, 2017).

By integrating secondary sources with first-hand insights from stakeholders, this study aims to gain a

comprehensive understanding of the opportunities and challenges associated with the temporary use of public open spaces in Hong Kong.

Location	Interviewee Type	Number
Central Harbourfront Event Space	Event Staff	2
	Security Personnel	1
	Users	2
Hong Kong Cultural Centre Pizza	Event Staff	2
	Users	3
Sham Shui Po Night Market	Event Organizer	1
	Vendors	2
Total	Users	1
		15

Figure 1. The categorization of interviews, own processing

4 Case Study

4.1 Central Harbourfront Event Space

The Central Harbourfront Event Space is a prominent open space located in the Central waterfront area of Hong Kong, widely recognised for hosting temporary public events and activities (Figure 2). It was designated as part of the government's commitment to urban revitalisation and public engagement along Victoria Harbour. As a strategic element of the "Harbourfront City Vision," the site was allocated within the reclamation area of Central Harbourfront to serve as a flexible space for community activities and public interactions (DevB, 2021). Officially established in 2014 under the guidance of the Development Bureau, the site was entrusted to Central Venue Management Limited (CVM) for operational management, becoming one of Hong Kong's most iconic public open spaces for temporary events.



Figure 2. Map of the Central Harbourfront Event Space, CVM 2024

Figure 3. Map of rentable sections, CVM 2024

4.1.1 Operating Model and Stakeholder Relations

The Central Harbourfront Event Space operates under a public-private collaboration model. The Development Bureau serves as the primary government authority, overseeing overall planning and formulating usage policies to ensure the space aligns with public interests and urban development objectives (CVM, 2024). Concurrently, the Hong Kong government has established the Harbourfront Commission as a non-statutory advisory body to

regularly assess and monitor the space's management, ensuring openness and multifunctionality (LEDGO, 2024).

On the private sector side, the operational responsibilities are undertaken by Central Venue Management Limited (CVM), which handles day-to-day operations, event planning, and site maintenance. The event space is divided into four designated areas (Figure 3), catering to public events of various scales. Event organisers can obtain venue rental permits by submitting applications to CVM. CVM operates in accordance with an agreement signed with the Development Bureau and complies with recommendations and public service objectives set by the Harbourfront Commission. It is required to submit regular operational reports to the government (CVM, 2023), ensuring that events held at the venue meet community cultural and economic needs while supporting charitable activities (DevB, 2024).

In this operational framework, government institutions like the Development Bureau and the Harbourfront Commission play policy coordination and advisory roles, while the private company CVM, as the primary operator, collaborates with community groups, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and commercial entities (Figure 4).

The Central Harbourfront Event Space operates with a structured and efficient management system. During events, security personnel explained that they do not directly interact with venue managers, as arrangements are pre-coordinated by event organisers. *"The process was relatively smooth without major communication issues."* (Interview, Security Personnel) This indicates that the operational workflow, including venue rental and security coordination, relies on a relatively well-established management system. Clear allocation of resources and responsibilities between the venue managers, event organisers, and security teams facilitates smooth event execution.

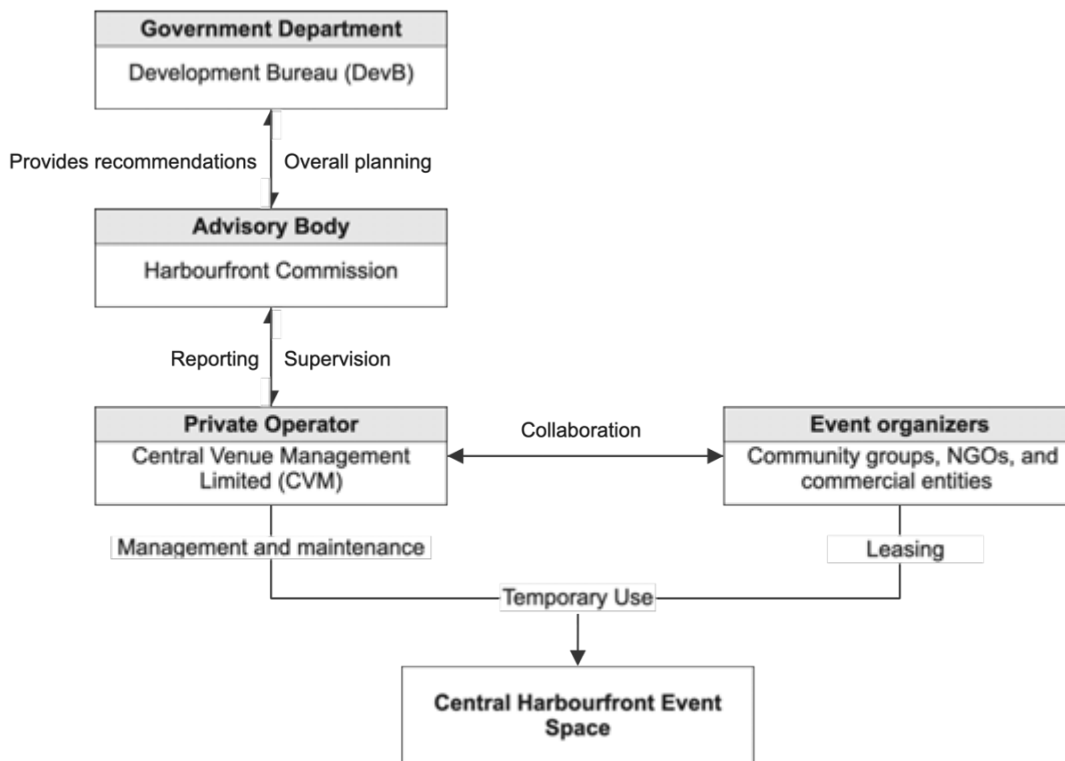


Figure 4. Flowchart of the operating model and stakeholder relationships, own processing

However, the space's operational flexibility reveals gaps in infrastructure that could hinder user experience during adverse conditions. A staff member responsible for maintaining order and ticketing during a temporary event further noted, *"Since the entire area is an open outdoor space, rainy days can be quite troublesome. We can only work in plastic raincoats, which adds challenges to maintaining order. I hope the venue managers can provide temporary rain shelters, such as tents."* (Interview, Event Staff) While the space's open nature offers flexibility, it also lacks infrastructure to address unforeseen weather conditions.

The space's temporary policies have also been praised for promoting vibrancy and inclusivity, enabling diverse public engagement (Figure 5). A regular visitor who comes almost daily shared, *"The government policies provide considerable freedom. As long as you don't interfere with others, they don't overly restrict spontaneous activities."* (Interview, Users) This user mentioned witnessing numerous temporary events, which he believes have enriched the space's functionality and attracted more public engagement.



Figure 5. Temporary activities at the Central Harbourfront Event Space, CVM 2024

The Central Harbourfront Event Space has a structured management model with clear delineation of roles and efficient processes from venue rental to event management. However, gaps in spatial planning remain, particularly the lack of adaptive facilities for weather contingencies.

4.2 Hong Kong Cultural Centre Piazza

The Hong Kong Cultural Centre Piazza is located in Tsim Sha Tsui and serves as one of the key venues for cultural and artistic activities in Hong Kong. Originally established alongside the Hong Kong Cultural Centre to provide an open public space for leisure and cultural engagement, the piazza's use has diversified over time due to the growing demand for multifunctional public spaces. Recognising its potential, the government divided it into four sections to host different types of temporary activities to enhance its utility and public engagement (Figure 6). According to the Leisure and Cultural Services Department, the piazza has become a prominent venue supporting diverse cultural, artistic, and community events (LCSD, 2024).



Figure 6. Map of the Hong Kong Cultural Centre Piazza, LCSD 2024

4.2.1 Operating Model and Stakeholder Relations

The Hong Kong Cultural Centre Piazza is managed entirely by LCSD, whose responsibilities include venue rental approvals, daily maintenance, and event management. The use of the piazza primarily involves event organisers, such as community groups, charitable organisations, and private enterprises, who directly apply to LCSD for venue rental. Organisers must submit detailed proposals ensuring compliance with government regulations. LCSD provides a streamlined application process to facilitate efficient approval (LCSD, 2024).

Additionally, LCSD actively organises temporary events in collaboration with charitable associations and community organisations, launching creative markets to provide platforms for young artisans and offering performance spaces for people with disabilities, exemplifying the piazza's inclusivity and diversity as a public space (LCSD, 2024). One organiser noted, *"The open layout and multifunctional design of the piazza greatly facilitate events, particularly as its cultural atmosphere attracts a significant number of participants."* (Interview, Event Organiser) This collaborative model ensures the piazza's cultural vibrancy while allowing LCSD to balance commercialisation with public service needs (Figure 7).



Figure 7. Temporary activities at the Hong Kong Cultural Centre Piazza, LCSD 2024

Temporary activities in the piazza were generally well received by users. Residents living near the piazza stated, *"This space has become part of my daily running route, and the temporary activities held here haven't interfered with my routine. If there were free events, I would make a special trip to participate."* One resident also suggested adding drinking fountains to better serve outdoor exercise enthusiasts (Interview, Users).

While the government's top-down vision emphasises cultural promotion and multi-functionality, feedback from both event organisers and individual users reveals additional layers of consideration. Event organisers highlight the importance of flexible layouts for large-scale cultural events, whereas individual users stress the need for practical amenities like drinking fountains to support everyday activities. Therefore, although the temporary pattern of public open space use in the piazza is well-positioned to meet broad cultural and community goals, challenges remain in aligning the space's offerings with the practical needs of its diverse user base.

4.3 Sham Shui Po Underbridge Night Market

The Sham Shui Po Night Market, located under the Tung Chau Street Flyover, is a three-day temporary market held before the Chinese New Year, representing a grassroots initiative to revitalise underutilised urban spaces in Hong Kong. Emerging naturally in the early 2010s, the night market was initiated by community organisations and street vendors. It is the first Chinese New Year night market in recent years to be driven by grassroots organisations and granted legal operating status, symbolising a new direction in grassroots action and the utilisation of urban public spaces. Without proactive government planning, the night market evolved through collective action and self-organisation, exemplifying a bottom-up approach to temporary public space usage. This process not only heightened public awareness of temporary spaces but also became a significant attempt to reutilise public spaces in land-scarce Hong Kong.

4.3.1 Operating Model and Stakeholder Relations

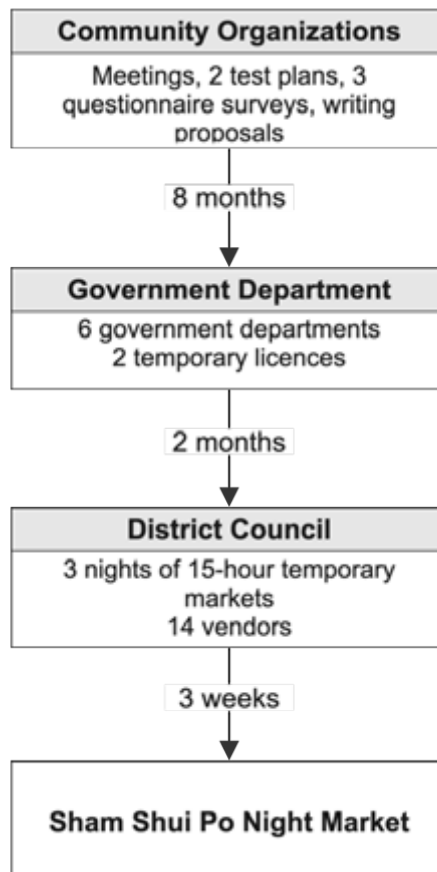


Figure 8. Flowchart of the operating model, own processing

The operation of the night market involves multiple stakeholders, including government departments, community organisations, and street vendors. The preparation of the night market is typically led by community organisations, which conduct user surveys and draft detailed proposals to assess market demand and feasibility. Following this, vendors need to apply for relevant permits and licences from various government departments, including the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD), the Lands Department, and the Environmental Protection Department, which are responsible for examining food safety, land use, and environmental management, respectively (FEHD, 2024). Finally, the legalisation of the night market also requires submission to the district council for discussion and approval (Figure 8). During the operation of the night market, the government does not participate in direct management. Community organisations play a central role, not only coordinating the government's approval process but also overseeing the practical operations of the night market, such as site planning, stall allocation, and communication with vendors.

Although the government has long advocated for transforming underutilised public spaces into marketplaces, including district-led initiatives to establish legal open-air bazaars and night markets, the process remains challenging for vendors (LEGCO, 2015). One organiser stated, "The process for legal operation is complex and lengthy. We had to communicate repeatedly with multiple departments to obtain approval" (Interview, Organiser). Some vendors who considered organising a legal night market ultimately gave up due to the cumbersome application process. *"I once thought about organising a temporary market, but the application process was too complicated, so I abandoned the idea,"* one vendor shared (Interview, Vendors). Another vendor added, *"The government has not provided any policies or assistance to support bottom-up approaches. We are left to navigate in the dark on our own"* (Interview, Vendors).

Compared to Hong Kong's highly commercialised urban spaces, many people appreciate the atmosphere here (Figure 9). During the Chinese New Year holidays, when most shops are closed, such a temporary night market provides convenience for residents. A regular visitor to the night market remarked, *"This is a unique space where you can truly experience Hong Kong's local culture."* (Interview, User)



Figure 9. Sham Shui Po Underbridge Night Market during Chinese New Year, Initium Media 2017

The operating model of the Sham Shui Po Night Market illustrates how bottom-up space utilisation can intersect with the government's top-down regulatory framework. While the legalisation of the night market faces institutional obstacles, the coordination by community organisations and active participation of vendors have made this space a significant example of temporary public open space in Hong Kong. However, despite the government's stated intentions to promote legal night markets, procedural barriers continue to impede progress. The disconnect between the government's top-down regulatory approach and the grassroots needs of vendors underscores ongoing challenges. Without streamlined policies and improved infrastructure support, the long-term sustainability of such initiatives remains uncertain.

5 Discussion

Under the theoretical framework of temporary urbanism, the study of TPOS in Hong Kong reveals a policy-driven and systematic approach to temporary land use. Managed and allocated by the Lands Department, Hong Kong's TPOS aligns with the top-down governance model characteristic of temporary urbanism (Colomb, 2017). This reflects an institutionalised response to land scarcity in high-density urban environments, demonstrating how temporary use can be formalised as part of urban policy to address immediate spatial needs while awaiting long-term development.

The three cases examined in this study represent distinct approaches to the temporary use of public open spaces in Hong Kong. Each case highlights unique operational models that respond to urban land scarcity in specific ways while grappling with contextual challenges.

The Central Harbourfront Event Space operates under a public-private partnership model, managed by a private company under the guidance of the Development Bureau. Transformed from reclaimed land into one of Hong Kong's most prominent public open spaces, its flexible usage enhances urban attractiveness and economic value (Florida, 2002). The structured operational model supports large-scale cultural and recreational events, showcasing efficient event coordination and resource allocation. However, reliance on temporary infrastructure reveals limitations—such as inadequate shelter for inclement weather—restricting its usability for everyday activities.

The Hong Kong Cultural Centre Piazza, fully managed by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD), exemplifies a centralised governance model. It integrates temporary activities into cultural infrastructure, offering free venues to disabled individuals and emerging artists, thereby improving urban quality of life and social inclusivity (Andres et al., 2021). The streamlined application process facilitates a range of events, balancing cultural promotion with public service objectives. While organisers value the flexible layout for cultural events, users often highlight practical concerns—such as the need for drinking fountains—demonstrating the ongoing challenge of aligning multifunctional policy ambitions with daily user needs.

In contrast, the Sham Shui Po Night Market represents a grassroots, bottom-up initiative, led by community organisations and vendors. It offers a low-cost platform that enriches dense urban environments and strengthens community cohesion (Németh & Langhorst, 2014). By repurposing underutilised spaces, the night market provides community-centric responses to peak demand periods such as the Lunar New Year, highlighting civic adaptability and collective agency (Tardiveau & Mallo, 2014). Public feedback underscores the value of participation in reshaping urban space; however, long-term sustainability is constrained by fragmented oversight and complex licensing procedures. The lack of institutional support underscores the challenges grassroots TPOS face within Hong Kong's regulatory framework.

Collectively, these cases illustrate the potential of TPOS in responding to urban land scarcity, while underscoring the need for more adaptable infrastructure, simplified regulatory frameworks, and collaborative governance models to maximise their sustainability and inclusivity. Limitations in Central Harbourfront and Cultural Centre Piazza demonstrate the importance of balancing flexibility with practical functionality. Meanwhile, the Night Market reveals a pressing need for institutional mechanisms that better support community-led initiatives. Across all cases, a disconnect between top-down planning visions and ground-level user feedback highlights the necessity of incorporating diverse stakeholder voices into the design and governance of TPOS.

6 Conclusion

This study investigates the role of TPOS in addressing land scarcity in high-density urban environments such as Hong Kong. Through a combination of theoretical research under the framework of temporary urbanism and case studies of three distinct sites, the research identifies how varying governance models and operational approaches influence the performance and challenges of TPOS. The findings highlight a mismatch between the government's planning aspirations and the practical needs of users, pointing to both opportunities and

obstacles in the effective implementation of TPOS strategies.

The study demonstrates that Hong Kong's TPOS policies reflect a structured attempt to incorporate temporary spaces into urban planning. This involves balancing the adaptability required for temporary use with the rigidity of formalised governance systems. By examining the city's approach, key insights emerge: the importance of stakeholder collaboration, the necessity of flexible and inclusive infrastructure, and the value of simplified administrative mechanisms. Acknowledging gaps in public engagement and service provision, this research suggests that the TPOS framework would benefit from enhanced responsiveness to community-driven initiatives that harmonise policy intent with on-the-ground application. Such improvements could improve alignment between centralised planning and the evolving needs of diverse urban users, fostering more sustainable and impactful space management.

The research holds practical implications for refining the TPOS system in Hong Kong, providing insights into how temporary land use can be optimised to address urban pressures. It underscores the potential of TPOS to bridge short-term spatial demands and long-term urban development goals, and calls for a more adaptive, inclusive approach to public space management in high-density cities.

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