

# Summary Report - Community Opinion Survey on Public Spaces in North Point

Insights and Design Recommendations  
21 Dec 2020

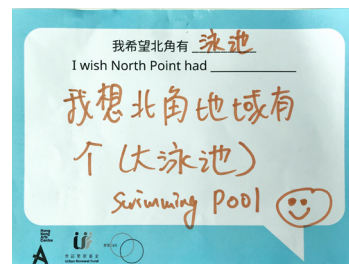
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# Research Insights

The insights and recommendations below are based on site observations, quantitative research and qualitative research conducted from March to November, 2020.

## 1. Desire for More and Better Public Facilities

There is a strong desire for more **public facilities** and open spaces in the area both from surveys and interviews. Survey respondents voiced out public space as the most preferred element to be incorporated in neighbourhood transformations, where as many interviewees expressed how North Point is too crowded, noisy, chaotic, with a lack of swimming pools and large lawns, many of which related to the density and lack of large open spaces in the area.



Story bubble respondent wishing for a big swimming pool in North Point.

## 2. Fragmented North Point

Less than half of our survey respondents (40%) feel connected to North Point, suggesting that community cohesions in the area are not defined by districts. The area is **urbanistically, socio-economically, culturally and demographically fragmented**. These fragmentations results in **multiple tensions and lifestyle contrasts** between different groups.

### Urban Fragmentation

Despite the proximity of the harbourfront development from Chun Yeung Street, almost half of our respondents (44%) go there less than once per month. Interviewees expressed the **waterfront development as detached** from the rest of North Point, some stating the waterfront is **too fancy** and detached from the everyday life of the public, and others are simply not aware of what is happening in the area.

Urbanistically, the current ground condition near Chun Yeung Street is dominated by cars, divided by major roads, flyovers and pedestrian traffic, making the **walk towards the waterfront both inconvenient and experientially unpleasant**, disincentivizing pedestrians from walking towards the waterfront. This is enhanced by socio-economic reasons: the Victoria Harbour development is known to be one of the most expensive pieces of real estate in Hong Kong. **While the Chun Yeung Street market is perceived to be a market for the general public, the harbourfront developments are perceived as areas built for the higher socio-economic class.**



### Cultural Fragmentation

North Point is composed of **multiple closed communities** that rarely interact with each other. As one of our interviewees pointed out, one rarely bridges across these communities. For example, despite many interviewees pointed out the active presence of Fujianese Clansmen Associations in the area, none of them were part of these associations. Some interviewees also pointed out that **many people in North Point only speak Fujianese but not Cantonese, and feel further alienated from them after the social movement.**



Top: Homeless people occupying the Tong Shui Road pedestrian bridge.  
Bottom: Victoria Harbour, one of the most expensive real estate in Hong Kong.

### Demographic Fragmentation

This fragmentation can also be observed in terms of **demographics**. The bridge across Tong Shui Road has long been occupied by **homeless population**; yet despite their prominent presence in the neighbourhood, only 2 out of 18 of our interviewees have talked to them, one of which is a social worker. Others **perceive the bridge to be dirty and dangerous and refrain from going there.**

## 3. Different Views and Needs for Different Crowds

The fragmentation of North Point is also reflected in the data that we have collected. In order to reach different residents of North Point, we have conducted surveys both online and on-site. Our online respondents are mostly consisted of youth of 18-35 year old, where as the on-site respondents are mostly 40+.

Comparing the results of the on-site and online surveys for North Point, we noticed that opinions from the two formats of survey diverge in certain important topics. Most notably, the online respondents puts **more emphasis on walking experience, market vibrancy, the importance of heritage, and neighbourhood planning**. The difference between physical and

online survey results seem to show that the on-site respondents, mostly consisting of elderly shopping at Chun Yeung Street, are **more pragmatic** than the younger online respondents.

#### 4. Chun Yeung Street Market as an Image of North Point

When we asked our interviewees which places best represent North Point, most of them named Chun Yeung Street as one the most representative spaces that represents the district, among Sunbeam Theatre, State Theatre and North Point Pier. The street market is frequently mentioned alongside qualities of **vibrancy, convenience, cultural uniqueness and urbanity**. The new constructions along the waterfront, on the other hand, is perceived to be “lifeless”; “all looking the same” and detached from the real North Point.

#### 5. Tension between Nostalgia of Old Urban Fabric and Contempt for Hygiene Issues in Chun Yeung Street

The Chun Yeung Street Market is **a part of the cultural memory and heritage of North Point that should be preserved**. However, our interviewees also often describe Chun Yeung Street in a negative light because of its hygiene issues. Almost all interviewees pointed out hygiene issues around the area as their main concern with North Point, describing the site as **chaotic and unclean**. For most survey respondents, Chun Yeung Street is not a place to rest in. The majority of our respondents (80%) stay in Chun Yeung Street for less than 1 hour per visit, and 77% have never used its public spaces, citing hygiene issues as their main dissatisfaction with them.

The hygiene issue could also be read in light of how the public sometimes prefer going to new developments in North Point, where their bias towards the new might not imply their preference towards the style of the new buildings, but that to them the new harbourfront constructions are cleaner, better planned and more organized than Chun Yeung Street, and therefore more appealing to be around.

This simultaneous pride towards the image of Chun Yeung Street and the despise of its chaotic reality presents **administrative complexities** that would be challenging to resolve.



Chun Yeung Street Market where shop owners occupy the street as extensions of their shops.

# Design Recommendations

## Design Suggestions: Open Space as Connector

By strategically siting open spaces in the area, the spatial interventions have the potential to address existing issues in the area.

### 1. Physical Connection Between Urban Fragments

The isolation of the waterfront from other parcels of land in North Point stems from social conditions, but it is also exacerbated by physical boundaries on the ground level, shaped by urban visions that prioritized cars. North Point could be **better integrated by redirecting traffic routes and making the ground more pedestrian friendly**. The design of open spaces can play a role in **directing pedestrian traffic towards the waterfront**.

### 2. Social Connector Between Different Communities

The open space could be programmed with facilities that are **attractive to different user groups**. This could be supported by **seating arrangements** that facilitate certain kinds of activities and interactions between individuals. The open space could also act as **setting for events** that gather people from different social groups.

### 3. Integrating Heritage of North Point with New Developments

The design of open spaces could become a vehicle to **address and respond to collective memories of North Point**. This could serve as a means through which new developments in the district could become more connected to the neighbourhood's heritage.

### 4. Cultivating Community Cohesion Through a Living Design

Despite spatial design certainly has a role to play in facilitating community cohesion and social meanings, these visions **could not be achieved by design alone**. The intentions of designers have to be **complemented by other ways to facilitate community development**, such as events, community organizations, government policies and management; their successes dependent on other factors such as community participation and political climate. It is important that the design is not only a product imposed on the community but **a living design that is a part of the community**. In this way, the space and its management could become a tool to empower communities that are not as privileged.

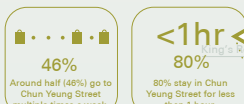
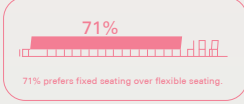
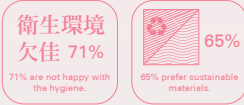
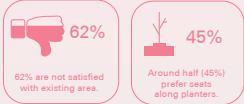
### 5. Challenge of Design Towards Negotiating Spatial Restrictions and Informal Practices

Some social issues, such as the hygiene issue around Chun Yeung Street **could be more effectively resolved by methods other than spatial design**. The issues are administrative and cultural; the hygiene issue, for instance, is tied to the culture of occupying public street in trading and the methods of delivery and logistics in a dense environment. As one of the interviewees pointed out, there is a strong presence of trading association at the Chun Yeung street market and an ecology around the collection of foam boxes. It would be **up to an entity, agency or governmental bodies to negotiate with different stakeholders** in the area to **clarify rules and responsibilities**, in order to address these issues without compromising the vibrancy of the street market.



# Community Opinion Survey on Public Spaces in North Point

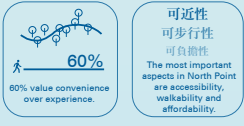
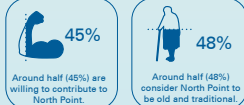
■ Issues Identified  
■ Chun Yeung Street Public Space  
■ Chun Yeung Street  
■ North Point



**良好衛生 安全 熱鬧**  
熱鬧街市 方便 私隱

**傳統文化 休憩空間**  
現代性 藝術文化

In general, people in North Point prefer the neighbourhood to have good hygiene, be safe, vibrant, with cultural heritage and abundant open spaces.



**Boxes occupying public space raised hygiene concerns**

**Homeless population on Tong Shui Road footbridge**

**Hygiene concerns due to market activity, pigeons and homeless population**

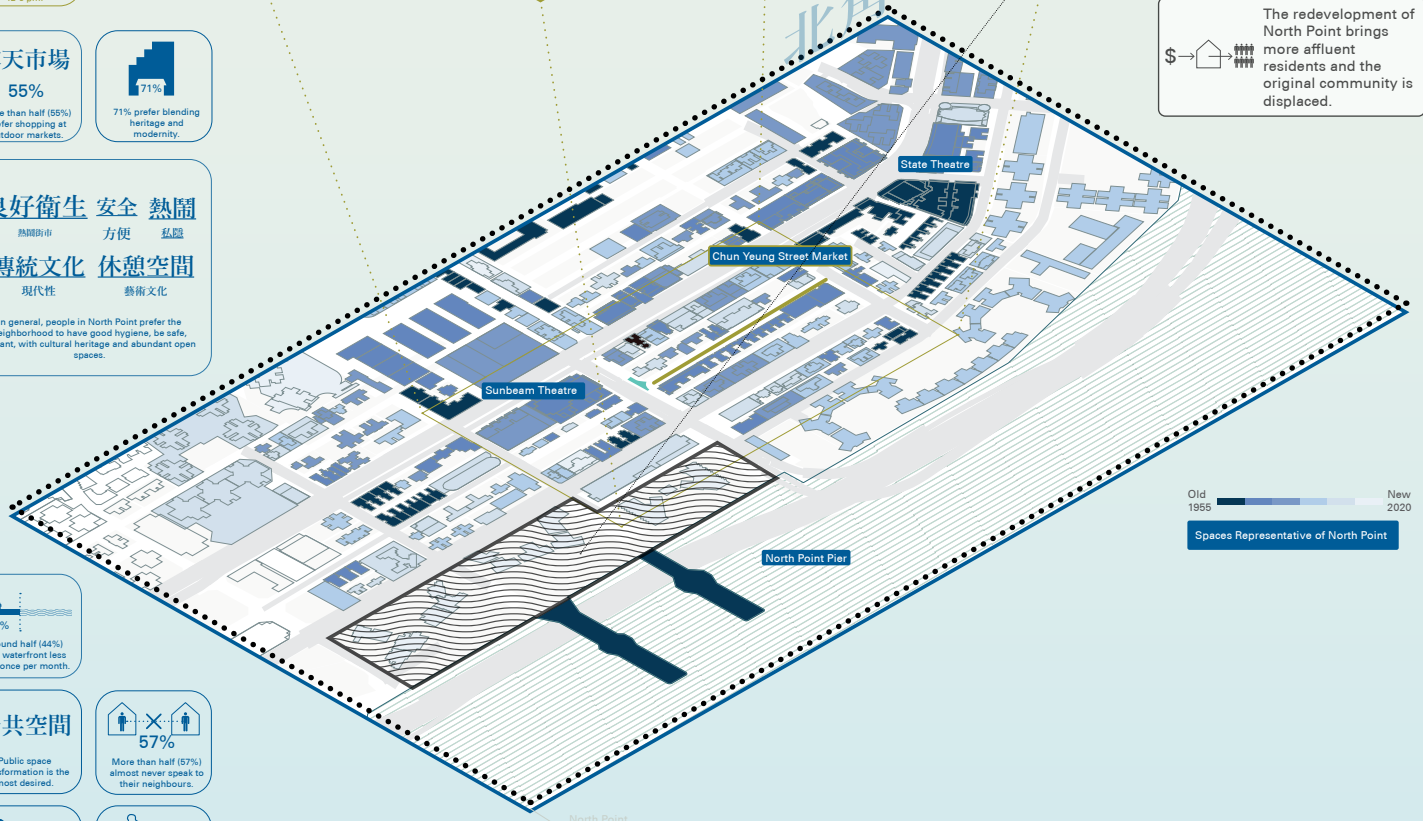
**Hygiene vs Vibrancy**  
Respondents want Chun Yeung Street to be vibrant but also clean.

**Lack of Open Spaces and Public Facilities in North Point.**

**Herbourfront is urbanistically and demographically isolated from rest of North Point.**

**The old and new generation have different preferences and views on the future of the neighbourhood.**

**The redevelopment of North Point brings more affluent residents and the original community is displaced.**



Old 1955 New 2020  
Spaces Representative of North Point

Drawn by NLE in December 2020  
Based on research by NLE and Hong Kong Arts Centre  
Building Age data based on BRVD system, Buildings Department HKSAR  
Map data copyright OpenStreetMap contributors and available from https://www.openstreetmap.org



# Sources

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Integrated Drawing:

Drawn by NIL based on research by NIL for Hong Kong Arts Centre

Building Age data based on BRAVO system, Buildings Department HKSAR

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