

Future Cities Symposium 2025 Successfully Held in Hong Kong and Dubai

The **Future Cities Symposium 2025** concluded successfully after four days of high-level discussions, presentations, and cross-regional exchange held from **14-15 November in Hong Kong** and **17 November in Dubai**. Funded by the **Prosit Philosophiae Foundation** and jointly organised by **HKU's Joint Lab on Future Cities (JLFC)**, the **Royal College of Art's Future Cities Lab**, and **Dubai Chambers**, the symposium brought together an international community of policymakers, academic leaders, industry practitioners, and investors. With **over 300 participants**, **more than 40 international speakers**, and **over 30 exhibitors**, the event reinforced the role of digital transformation, spatial intelligence, and interdisciplinary collaboration in shaping future cities across Asia, the GBA, China, the GCC region, the UK, and Europe.

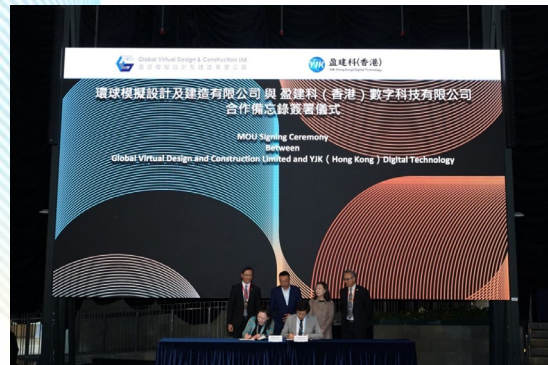


Opening Ceremony Held in Hong Kong Marking the Launch of the Symposium

The Hong Kong programme opened at CyberArena, Cyberport, beginning with Welcome Remarks by *Dr Rosana Wong, MH*, Founder of the Prosit Philosophiae Foundation, who highlighted the significance of long-term investment in research-driven, human-centred innovation. This was followed by a Welcome Speech by *Mr Simon Chan, BBS, JP*, Chairman of Cyberport, who underscored Hong Kong's role as a global hub for smart-city technologies and

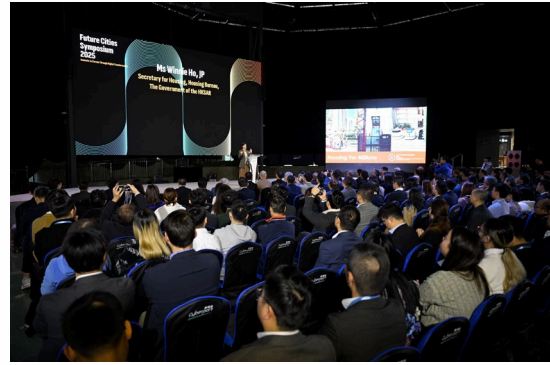
digital innovation. The Guest of Honour, *Ms Winnie Ho, JP*, Secretary for Housing of the HKSAR Government, delivered the Opening Speech, acknowledging the symposium's contribution to advancing sustainable urban development, cross-sector innovation, and talent cultivation.

A Ribbon-cutting Ceremony was held, marking the formal opening of the symposium, followed by an MoU signing that established new partnerships in urban innovation research.



Hong Kong Sessions Highlight Global Advances in Mobility, AI, Sustainability, and Emerging Technology

The Hong Kong sessions brought together senior government officials, global academic leaders, industry experts, and emerging innovators to examine the technological, social, and environmental forces shaping future cities. Through a series of keynote speeches, thematic discussions, and cross-sector exchanges, the programme highlighted Hong Kong's growing role as a testbed for advanced mobility systems, AI-enabled urban intelligence, sustainable infrastructure, and new-space development. The seven sessions reflected the breadth and complexity of contemporary urban challenges while showcasing the opportunities created by interdisciplinary research, digital transformation, and regional collaboration.



Session 1: Sustainable Transport Infrastructure and the Low-Altitude Economy

Keynote speeches were delivered by *Mr Liu Chun San, JP* (Under Secretary for Transport and Logistics, HKSAR Government) and *Prof Adrian Lahoud* (Dean of School of Architecture, Royal College of Art). They articulated Hong Kong's roadmap for smart and sustainable mobility, emphasising transit efficiency, active transport promotion, autonomous-vehicle policy pilots, and early regulatory exploration of the low-altitude economy. Both speakers highlighted the strategic need for cross-boundary collaboration, research capacity building and intelligent infrastructure deployment.

The panel discussion was moderated by *Mr Gary Yeung, MH* (President, Smart City Consortium), featuring *Mr Michael Law* (Thinkpower2 Technology Limited), *Mr Desmond Ho* (Alpha AI), *Dr Stella Zhu* (ASTRI), and *Mr Ben Ng* (Urban.Systems Company Limited). Speakers discussed practical applications of AI-assisted inspection, slope monitoring, digital engineering and drone-enabled operations. They examined how automation, data integration and policy innovation can collectively enhance the safety, efficiency and sustainability of Hong Kong's transport and mobility infrastructure.

Session 2: Digital Transformation and Computational Intelligence

Keynote presentations were delivered by *Ir Dr Ted Suen* (CEO, ASTRI), *Dr Sina Sareh* (Academic Lead of RCA Robotics Laboratory), and *Prof Hayden So* (Director of School of Innovation, HKU). They outlined how AI, robotics, reconfigurable computing and digitalised public services are

reshaping industry practices and educational models, enabling more adaptive, cognitive and human-centric cities.

The panel discussion, moderated by *Prof Hayden So*, brought together *Prof Wilson Lu* (HKU), *Dr Jack Cheng* (HKUST), *Mr Benny Liu* (Global Virtual Design and Construction), and *Mr Will Tsang* (Yau Lee Hotel Limited). Panelists examined advances in BIM, construction robotics, digital twins, standardised information environments, and lifecycle digital delivery. Discussions highlighted the importance of interoperability, industry training, and responsible deployment of automation to accelerate Hong Kong's digital-construction transformation.

Session 3: Spatial Data, AI, and Data-Driven Urban Intelligence

Keynote speeches by *Prof Thomas Ng* (Head of Department of Architecture and Civil Engineering, CityU) and *Dr Sam Jacoby* (Research Lead of School of Architecture, RCA) outlined how geospatial infrastructures, AI-based analytics and comprehensive digitalisation frameworks are reshaping planning, environmental modelling, infrastructure management and city operations. Both speakers emphasised the centrality of integrated, interoperable data systems to future urban development.

The panel discussion, moderated by *Dr Winnie Tang, MH, JP* (Founder and Chairman, Esri China (HK)), featured *Sr YC Chan* (Development Bureau, HKSAR Government), *Dr Eric Schuldenfrei* (HKU), *Prof CK Shum* (Ohio State University). Panelists discussed CSDI development, data governance, cross-department data integration, spatial analytics for land and housing policy, digital twins for infrastructure, and emerging challenges around data standards and public-sector digital readiness.

Session 4: Infrastructure Sustainability and Carbon Neutralization

Keynote speeches were delivered by *Prof Becky P.Y. Loo* (Professor at the Department of Geography, Co-director of Joint Lab on Future Cities, HKU) and *Prof Paul Chamberlain* (Chair of Helen Hamlyn Centre for Design, RCA). They addressed decarbonization pathways, mobility transition, wellbeing-oriented design, and long-term resilience strategies. Both emphasised interdisciplinary frameworks that align environmental, social and spatial dimensions of sustainable development.

The panel discussion, moderated by *Dr Ying Liu* (JLFC), included *Mr Ricky Leung* (ASTRI), *Ms Grace Kwok* (Greater Bay Area Carbon Neutrality Association), and *Ir Antonio Chan* (REC Engineering Company Limited). Discussions centred on whole-life carbon assessment, green infrastructure adaptation, low-carbon design, and emerging tools for monitoring cities' climate-transition progress.

Session 5: The Space Economy

Keynote speeches by *Prof Gregg Li* (Adjunct Professor at the Laboratory for Space Research, Convenor of the International Council of OASA) and *Prof Quentin Parker* (Professor of Faculty of Science, HKU and Director at the Laboratory for Space Research) introduced opportunities

in satellite analytics, distributed R&D ecosystems, space education, and new-space entrepreneurship. Speakers highlighted how space technologies increasingly connect to urban innovation, from remote sensing to environmental monitoring and logistics optimisation.

The panel, moderated by *Mr Perry Lam* (Executive Chair of OASA), featured *Mr Bryant Lu, JP* (Founder and Chairman of BEHAVE), *Ms Clara Lo* (OASA), and *Mr Ron Chiong* (Perpetual Space Ventures). The discussion explored cross-border partnerships, investment trends, talent pipelines and the integration of space-technology applications into future-city development strategies.

Session 6: Innovative Strategies for Sustainable Urban Development

Keynote speeches were delivered by *Prof Ling Kar-kan*, SBS (Interim Vice President of PolyU; Chairman of the Hong Kong Housing Society) and *Mr Amin Taha* (Royal College of Art). The session discussed long-term strategic planning for the Northern Metropolis, with emphasis on GBA connectivity, climate resilience, land use, and intergenerational balance. Speakers also contributed perspectives on design-led approaches to community wellbeing and sustainable district development.

The panel discussion, moderated by *Dr Calvin Luk* (PolyU), featured *Mr Donald Choi* (URA), *Mr Franco Cheung* (Hong Kong Housing Society), and *Mr C K Lau* (Colliers). Panelists examined innovation ecosystems, district-scale planning tools, public engagement mechanisms, and governance alignment for metropolitan development across Hong Kong and the GBA.

Session 7: Tokenization and Green Finance

Keynote speeches were delivered by *Dr Herbert Lee* (President, Xtreme Business Enterprises) and *Mr David Piesse* (Chair of Ambassadors, International Insurance Society). They discussed blockchain-enabled financial instruments, tokenised assets, ESG-aligned investment frameworks, and the potential of decentralised finance to scale sustainable urban development.

The panel discussion, moderated by *Dr Hoson Lam* (Chief Data Scientist at CAIA Tech Limited), included *Mr Angus Wong* (Corporate Banking), *Mr Paul Pong* (Pegasus Fund Managers Limited), *Mr Leo Chiu* (Investment Committee), and *Mr Patrick Yuen* (Marvel Digital Group Limited). Panelists examined digital-finance regulation, carbon-credit mechanisms, verification technologies, and opportunities for Hong Kong to mobilise capital toward green infrastructure and future-city innovation.

Throughout the Hong Kong programme, Startup Presentations provided a platform for early-stage innovations in AI mobility analytics, digital construction automation, and spatial computing. The day concluded with Symposium Connect, a networking reception designed to facilitate industry-academia partnerships.



Dubai Sessions Extend the Dialogue to the Middle East's Rapidly Developing Innovation Landscape

The Dubai sessions, held at Palace Downtown, reflected the region's growing role in global innovation and future-city experimentation. *Dr Rosana Wong, MH* opened the day with remarks on cross-regional collaboration, followed by a scholarship signing ceremony, signalling expanded opportunities for academic exchange and talent development between Hong Kong and the GCC region.



Session 1: Resilient Urban Planning and Operations

This session examined how future cities can strengthen resilience across planning, design, and operations. Speakers included *Dr Adrian Lahoud* (Royal College of Art), *Prof Becky P.Y. Loo* (HKU; Joint Lab on Future Cities), *Dr Fabio Duarte* (Principal Research Scientist, MIT Senseable City Lab and Centre for Real Estate), *Mr David Fung* (Managing Director of A.C.I.D., Hong Kong), and *Ir Antonio Chan* (Deputy Managing Director of REC Engineer Co. Ltd).

Across their contributions, the session highlighted the increasing importance of integrated workflows, data-supported decision-making, and interdisciplinary approaches in managing complex urban systems.

Session 2: Exploring New Frontiers in Spatial Data and Smart Mobility

Session 2 brought together experts working at the intersection of spatial data, sensing technologies, and mobility innovation. *Prof Paul Chamberlain* and *Dr Sam Jacoby* (Royal College of Art), *Prof C.K. Shum* (The Ohio State University), *Mr Phil Mann* (Yuneec Holdings Ltd), and *Mr Benny Liu* (Global Virtual Design and Construction) discussed emerging capabilities in Earth observation, advanced positioning, and digitally enabled mobility.

Their perspectives underscored how spatial data infrastructures and smart-mobility technologies are opening new possibilities for more adaptive, efficient, and data-informed transport systems.

Session 3: Responsible AI: Real-World Applications

Focusing on the role of AI in design, robotics, and digital innovation, this session featured *Dr Sina Sareh* (RCA Robotics Laboratory), *Dr Rosana Wong, MH*, and *Dr Yaroslav Kologryvov* (Co-Founder of CBDO of PLATMA).

Speakers introduced examples of emerging AI and robotics applications, prompting reflections on how responsible development, accessibility of digital tools, and the integration of human-centred principles can shape the future use of AI in creative and urban environments.

Session 4: New Indicators for Future Cities

Session 4 turned to the measurement and assessment of future-city performance. Contributions from *Mr Amin Taha* (RCA), *Prof Hayden So* (HKU), *Prof Gregg Li* (Laboratory for Space Research; OASA), and *Mr Ron Chiong* (Perpetual Space Ventures) highlighted evolving frameworks used to evaluate liveability, innovation ecosystems, resilience, and readiness for technological transformation.

The session drew attention to the role of comparative metrics and structured indicator systems in guiding policymakers, designers, and investors.

Session 5: Unlocking Sustainable Investment Opportunities

The final Dubai session addressed the financial and investment landscape surrounding future-city development. Speakers included *Prof Becky P.Y. Loo*, *Prof Hayden So*, *Prof Paul Chamberlain*, *Dr Adrian Lahoud*, *Prof Sam Jacoby*, and *Dr Rosana Wong*.

They explored how sustainability-aligned investment strategies, green finance, design thinking, and cross-regional collaboration can support the scaling of innovation-driven and climate-responsive urban initiatives.

International organizations and industry associations participated actively throughout the Dubai programme, exploring new partnership models between Hong Kong, Dubai, the Greater Bay Area, and broader global networks. Exhibitions and networking engagements enabled deeper interaction with the region's technology and innovation communities, identifying opportunities for follow-up collaboration and joint development.

Building a Global Network for Data-Driven, Sustainable, and Future-Ready Cities

Across Hong Kong and Dubai programmes, the Future Cities Symposium 2025 demonstrated the increasing urgency and promise of digital transformation in shaping urban futures. By bringing together experts across mobility, AI, spatial data, sustainability, construction technology, and the space economy, the symposium highlighted the value of interdisciplinary and cross-regional collaboration.

As Hong Kong, the GBA, the GCC, the UK, and Europe continue to strengthen innovation corridors, the symposium established a foundation for ongoing partnerships and scalable real-world solutions. Organisers and participants affirmed their commitment to continuing this dialogue, advancing data-driven, human-centred, and sustainable approaches to building the cities of tomorrow.

Keynote Speakers of the Symposium





