

**Harbour Front Enhancement Committee (HEC)  
Task Group on Urban Design Study  
for the New Central Harbourfront (TGUDS)**

**Report on the Findings of the Stage 2 Public Engagement of the Study**

**Purpose**

1. This Paper briefs Members on the findings of the Stage 2 Public Engagement for the Urban Design Study for the New Central Harbourfront (the Study).

**Background**

2. The Stage 2 Public Engagement for the Study took place from 11 April to end-July 2008. Public views and suggestions were collected through various public engagement activities including public exhibitions, roving exhibitions, focus group workshop (FGW), community engagement forum (CEF), comment cards, interview questionnaires, telephone polls, and briefings to relevant public and advisory bodies. The public was also invited to send in their views in writing or other format.

3. The focus of the Stage 2 Public Engagement was to collect public views and suggestions on, inter alia, the proposed urban design vision and refined urban design framework for the new Central harbourfront as well as the design concepts for the key sites, including the design concepts for re-assembling Queen's Pier and reconstructing the old Star Ferry Clock Tower.

**Highlights of the Stage 2 Public Engagement**

4. A Consultation Digest detailing the design proposals was distributed to the public through various channels, and the webpage on the Study also helped

disseminate information and collect public views. A wide range of public engagement activities as highlighted below were organized.

### ***Public Exhibitions and Roving Exhibitions***

5. To facilitate the public to have a better understanding and visual appreciation of the design proposals, two public exhibitions were held at the Hong Kong Heritage Discovery Centre and the Queensway Government Offices from 12 April to 25 May 2008 and from 27 May to 10 July 2009 respectively. There were a total of about 13,700 visitors.

6. Seven roving exhibitions, visited by a total of about 11,340 visitors, were held in various parts of Hong Kong to supplement the public exhibitions, as follows:

- (a) HSBC Main Building, Central (15 to 19 April 2008);
- (b) IFC One, Central (20 to 25 April 2008);
- (c) Exhibition Hall, City Hall Low Block, Central (6 to 14 May 2008);
- (d) Exhibition Gallery, Hong Kong Cultural Centre, Tsim Sha Tsui (2 to 6 June 2008);
- (e) Sheung Tak Shopping Centre, Tseung Kwan O (11 to 15 June 2008);
- (f) Sha Tin Town Hall, Shatin (17 to 22 June 2008); and
- (g) Lok Fu Shopping Centre, Wang Tau Hom (4 to 10 July 2008).

### ***FGW and CEF***

7. A FGW and a CEF, organized by CityU Professional Services Ltd and chaired by the Chairman of the HEC Task Group on the Study, were held on 26 April and 24 May 2008 respectively. There were group discussions on the study proposals and the views had been recorded and analyzed as part of the public opinion collection exercise. The FGW was attended by a total of 49 participants from relevant professional groups and academic institutions, while the CEF (targeted for the general public) was attended by a total of 142 participants<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> The number of participants did not include the Chairman, group leaders, representatives from government bureaux/departments and the consultants who attended the events to facilitate discussion and clarify relevant issues.

### ***Comment Cards, Face-to-face Interviews and Telephone Polls***

8. The Public Policy Research Institute of the Hong Kong Polytechnic University (PPRI) was commissioned to collect public opinions for the Stage 2 Public Engagement through the use of comment cards, face-to-face interviews, and telephone polls. A total of 1,872 comment cards were collected, 365 valid face-to-face interviews completed at the public exhibition venues, and 2,471 successful telephone interviews conducted. Quantitative data analyses were performed on the responses to the close-ended questions in the comment cards, face-to-face interviews and the telephone polls, whereas qualitative data analyses were also performed on the written comments included in the comment cards and the face-to-face interviews.

### ***Public Submissions***

9. A total of 64 submissions were received from various organizations and individuals. The submissions are included in the qualitative data analysis. A list of these submissions and their gist are at **Annex A**.

### ***Briefings to Relevant Public and Advisory Bodies***

10. Briefings were provided to all 18 District Councils (DCs), relevant public and advisory bodies, and interested professional groups and organizations. A list of the briefings conducted and a summary of the major views and suggestions based on the available minutes of meetings are at **Annex B**.

### ***Guided Tours***

11. To take forward the suggestion of this Task Group, invitations have been sent to all secondary schools for visits to the public exhibitions. Guided tours were provided to 7 schools and 2 interested organizations. A schedule of the visits is at **Annex C**.

### **Overall Findings**

12. PPRI has triangulated the findings of both quantitative and qualitative findings from different sources to outline the main contours of public opinions

obtained during the Stage 2 Public Engagement:

- (a) quantitative data derived from the responses to close-ended questions of the comment cards, face-to-face interviews, and telephone polls;
- (b) quantitative data recorded in the FGW and CEF; and
- (c) qualitative data transcribed and coded into a total of 10,203 text units (i.e. a sentence or a group of sentences expressing a particular view) as derived from the written comments provided in comment cards, face-to-face interviews, FGW and CEF, public submissions, and records of briefings to the relevant public and advisory bodies.

13. Overall speaking, the results from the responses to the close-ended questions of the comment cards, face-to-face interviews and telephone polls generally corroborated with each other for most of the issues. The number of positive comments, in terms of the number of text units, on the various themes also supported the results from the quantitative data in most of the issues. The summary of findings is set out below.

### Overall Design Vision

14. There was an overwhelming support for the overall design vision of creating a vibrant, green and accessible new Central harbourfront. Based on the quantitative findings, the respondents/participants of the following agreed or strongly agreed to the overall design vision:

Comment cards	84%
Face-to-face interviews	90%
Telephone polls	81%
FGW	100%
CEF	90%

15. About 58% of the relevant views recorded in the qualitative analysis, in terms of the number of text units, were considered positive. The major views were that the overall design vision of creating a vibrant, green and accessible new Central harbourfront was generally supported and the reduced development intensity proposed in the refined urban design framework was generally appreciated. On the other hand, some members of the public considered that the design vision lacked a distinctive identity and mix of uses. The major suggestions

relating to the overall design vision were that the proposals should be people-oriented and be able to cater for all including both locals and tourists; and that there was further scope for improvements to better achieve the design vision, especially in terms of enhancing vibrancy, creating a harmonious building design, and projecting a distinctive identity of the Central harbourfront.

### Sustainable and Balanced Approach

16. There was general support for adopting a sustainable and balanced approach in designing the new Central harbourfront. The quantitative data show that the majority of the respondents/participants agreed or strongly agreed to the sustainable and balanced approach:

Comment cards	79%
Face-to-face interviews	85%
Telephone polls	74%
FGW	100%
CEF	81%

17. About 59% of the relevant views recorded in the qualitative analysis were considered positive. The public were generally in agreement with the sustainable and balanced approach in designing the new Central harbourfront, and some considered that the design was multi-functional and fit well with the surrounding environment. It is worth mentioning that the DCs consulted generally considered that the proposals should cater for the development of the Central Business District (CBD) while giving consideration to lowering development intensity, promoting greening, and providing abundant quality open space and facilities for the public. On the other hand, some members of the public considered it more appropriate to concentrate commercial development in the CBD while others preferred more open space and recreational facilities. The major suggestions relating to this aspect were that there was a need to review the potential office development sites within the close proximity of the CBD in conjunction with the Study, and that due consideration should be given to balancing heritage conservation, economic needs and other public aspirations.

## The Refined Urban Design Framework

18. The following data present the percentages of the respondents/participants who agreed or strongly agreed that the refined urban design framework has satisfied the following sustainable design principles:

Sustainable design principles	Comment cards	Face-to-face interviews	FGW	CEF
(i) Diverse uses and activities	63%	77%	80%	59%
(ii) Respecting natural setting	73%	72%	73%	60%
(iii) Respecting existing urban fabric	60%	64%	58%	43% <sup>2</sup>
(iv) Promoting harbourfront enhancement	74%	85%	81%	81%
(v) Respecting cultural heritage	56%	55%	44% <sup>3</sup>	36% <sup>4</sup>
(vi) Ease of pedestrian access to harbourfront	71%	78%	44% <sup>5</sup>	52%
(vii) Promoting Greening and Environmentally Friendly Building Design	77%	79%	47% <sup>6</sup>	58%

<sup>2</sup> For the CEF, about 29% of the participants disagreed or strongly disagreed, and about 28% adopted a neutral stance in respect of the principle on “respecting existing urban fabric”.

<sup>3</sup> For the FGW, about 12% of the participants disagreed or strongly disagreed, and about 43% adopted a neutral stance in respect of the principle on “respecting cultural heritage”.

<sup>4</sup> For the CEF, about 31% of the participants disagreed or strongly disagreed, and about 33% adopted a neutral stance in respect of the principle on “respecting cultural heritage”.

<sup>5</sup> For the FGW, about 24% of the participants disagreed or strongly disagreed, and about 31% adopted a neutral stance in respect of the principle on “ease of pedestrian access to harbourfront”.

<sup>6</sup> For the FGW, about 47% of the participants disagreed or strongly disagreed, and about 7% adopted a neutral stance in respect of the principle on “promoting greening and environmentally friendly building design”.

19. The data sets show that the majority agreed that the refined urban design framework has generally satisfied the sustainable design principles. Nevertheless, there was no clear agreement in the FGW that the refined urban design framework has satisfied the principle of “promoting greening and environmentally friendly building design”, and the participants opined that there should be adequate mechanism to ensure the achievement of the design concepts, greening and

environmentally-friendly building design at the implementation stage. There was a relatively lower level of agreement that the principle of “respecting cultural heritage” has been satisfied.

20. The majority of the respondents/participants agreed or strongly agreed that the refined urban design framework has met the public aspirations for a vibrant, green and accessible new Central harbourfront:

Comment cards	54%
Face-to-face interviews	57%
FGW	81%
CEF	51%

21. About 34% of the relevant views recorded in the qualitative analysis were considered positive, 25% negative, and 41% with other suggestions (such as further scope of improvement in terms of enhancing vibrancy and the need for place-making).

### Design Concepts for Key Sites

#### Sites 1 and 2

*(CDA Site adjoining Central Piers No. 4 to 6 and Commercial Site north of IFC II)*

22. The proposed design concepts for Sites 1 and 2 were generally supported, particularly as shown in the quantitative findings of the comment cards and face-to-face interviews. However, about half of the participants in the FGW disliked both Concept A (Hotel & Office) and Concept B (Office & Office). For those who had chosen between Concepts A and B, there was a clear preference for Concept A as compared to Concept B:

	Like both concepts	Prefer Concept A	Prefer Concept B	No preference	Dislike both concepts
Comment cards	9%	54%	13%	6%	14%
Face-to-face interviews	4%	59%	9%	11%	16%

	Like both concepts	Prefer Concept A	Prefer Concept B	No preference	Dislike both concepts
Telephone polls	6%	31%	10%	29%	20%
FGW	14%	31%	2%	0%	53%
CEF	2%	37%	10%	18%	33%

23. About 84% of the relevant positive views recorded in the qualitative analysis were related to Concept A, while about 16% were related to Concept B. The supportive views were that commercial development at the sites was needed, the development intensity was acceptable, and the design was attractive. The negative views were related to the hotel and office buildings at the sites, in particular Site 1, for blocking views, obstructing air flow and pedestrian circulation, or not giving recognition to the adjacent iconic building, i.e. IFC II. Major suggestions included, inter alia, reviewing the building design and disposition of the proposed development; setting back the development at Site 1 from the shore; reviewing the need for commercial development at the sites; redistributing the gross floor area of the sites elsewhere; reviewing the need for the proposed at-grade bus terminus at Site 2; improving the accessibility and connectivity of the sites to the adjacent areas such as providing wider landscaped decks connecting IFC, the piers and the hinterland; providing more green space; integrating all Central Piers to achieve better design; and stipulating design restrictions in the lease to guide future development. In addition, alternative proposals such as replacing office/hotel development with multi-level café bars and terraces abutting IFC and a ‘Waterfront Esplanade’ with a series of elevated walkways and connectors; using the land for green spaces and public spaces; developing low-rise service apartment in front of IFC; developing the area as ‘Convenience for Commuters’ recognizing that this area is Hong Kong’s largest inter-modal transport interchange; and developing flea market in the area, etc., have been put forward.

### Site 3

*(CDA site north of Statue Square)*

24. The proposed design concepts for Site 3 were generally supported. There was more support for Concept B (Larger Landscaped Deck) as compared to Concept A (Reduced Landscaped Deck), though the preference was not clear in the face-to-face interviews and FGW:



	Like both concepts	Prefer Concept A	Prefer Concept B	No preference	Dislike both concepts
Comment cards	8%	22%	57%	4%	5%
Face-to-face interviews	2%	42%	42%	11%	3%
FGW	0%	49% <sup>9</sup>	49%	3%	0%
CEF	4%	33%	53%	6%	5%

<sup>9</sup> For the FGW, about 49% of the participants (i.e. 19 participants) preferred Concept A. Among them, 12 showed a clear preference for Concept A while 7 qualified that they preferred Concept A subject to further improvement to the at-grade pedestrian connection.

25. About 52% of the relevant positive views recorded in the qualitative analysis were related to Concept B, while about 48% were related to Concept A. The proposed reduction in building density, the breaking up of the site into smaller footprints, the provision of multi-level links for pedestrian choice, the provision of landscaped decks and open spaces, and the provision of retail facilities at the site were generally supported. The negative views were generally related to the design of the landscaped deck and the lack of street-level activities. Major suggestions included, inter alia, simplifying the configuration of the landscaped decks; improving the building disposition to ensure visual permeability from inland to the waterfront as well as at street level; improving at-grade pedestrian connections; incorporating different types of pedestrian linkages (e.g. providing all-weather travellers connecting Central Pier No. 7 with the site and Central MTR Station as well as underground passageways); providing more shaded areas and artistic elements; and ensuring public access to the landscaped decks and rooftops. In addition, alternative proposals such as a ‘Statue Square Esplanade’ area with low-rise buildings; a ‘Green Break’ with a park environment; an office hub; and a ‘Central Sports Ground’, etc have been put forward.

Site 4

*(Site north of City Hall)*

26. The design concepts had received general support. Most responses in the comment cards, face-to-face interviews, and CEF were in favour of Concept A (More Separate Blocks with Star Ferry Clock Tower) as compared to Concept B

(Fewer Separate Blocks without Star Ferry Clock Tower). On the other hand, Concept B was preferred in the FGW.

	Like both concepts	Prefer Concept A	Prefer Concept B	No preference	Dislike both concepts
Comment cards	7%	43%	33%	7%	6%
Face-to-face interviews	1%	53%	31%	9%	6%
FGW	26%	13%	38%	3%	21%
CEF	1%	32%	15%	33%	20%

27. About 65% of the relevant positive views recorded in the qualitative analysis were related to Concept A, and 35% were related to Concept B. The small and separate blocks with open vista in the design concepts were generally supported. The negative views were mainly related to whether the proposed building would match with City Hall and whether the small blocks would likely attract tenants. Major suggestions included, inter alia, preserving the visual corridor between City Hall and the waterfront; avoiding reconstructing the Clock Tower as an isolated structure; providing viewing platforms; providing a large esplanade for street performance and temporary exhibitions; and ensuring the provision of a critical mass for the waterfront-related commercial uses so as to make the place vibrant and attractive. In addition, alternative proposals such as developing the site as an ‘Inner Harbour’ area with Queen’s Pier and the old Star Ferry Clock Tower reinstated at their respective original locations; a ‘Waterfront Lan Kwai Fong’; a ‘New Central Praya’ characterized by 19<sup>th</sup> century buildings of 1 to 3 storeys for waterfront-related commercial and leisure uses (together with Site 6); developing Sites 4, 7 and 8 as a ‘Must Go Leisure Destination’ with a wide variety of facilities; and developing a group of small-scale and low-rise buildings in random settings amidst open parkland, etc have been put forward.

#### Sites 5 and 6

*(Site north of CITIC Tower and near the HKCEC Extension)*

28. For Sites 5 and 6, the majority of the respondents/participants liked the design concepts for the sites:

*Site 5*

Comment cards	66%
Face-to-face interviews	73%
FGW	82%
CEF	76%

*Site 6*

Comment cards	79%
Face-to-face interviews	66%
FGW	86%
CEF	73%

29. For Sites 5 and 6, about 54% and 57% of the relevant views recorded respectively in the qualitative analysis were positive. The proposed arts and cultural facilities at the sites were generally supported. There were concerns on the possible duplication of such facilities with those in West Kowloon, and the need for further improvement to the accessibility and vibrancy of the area (e.g. provision of retail bridges or wider landscaped walkways, and provision of areas for street performance). Some considered that the proposed design was too bulky and not suitable for arts and cultural related uses. Major suggestions included, inter alia, the provision of commercial elements (e.g. hotel and flea market) to balance with the arts and cultural development; the provision of open courtyards for displaying sculptures; the provision of water-based activities such as Maritime Museum or water-based hydro theatre; and integrating the design of the sites with the surrounding roads, open spaces and the waterfront. Major alternative proposals that have been put forward included hotel complex with service apartments, commercial and retail uses with restaurants and outdoor dining facilities at Site 5; developing a 'Marine Basin' with a pedestrian causeway, 'Marine Walk' and a floating hotel as well as an 'Arts and Culture Corner' around Site 6; developing the area for 'Fringe Arts and Culture Campus' with a focus on arts and culture education and development; developing the sites for APA extension or Arts Centre II; developing the area as a Civic Centre for NGOs; developing a 'New Fenwick Pier Thematic Tourist Area' with exhibition gallery, bars, restaurants, and tourist shopping areas; developing the site together with Site 4 as 'The New Central Praya'; and accommodating the Court of Final Appeal and the Department of Justice at Site 5, etc.

Site 7

*(Waterfront Promenade)*

30. The proposed design concepts were generally supported. The majority of the responses in the comment cards, face-to-face interviews, and telephone polls were in favour of Concept B (Urban Green), while more participants in the FGW and CEF were in favour of Concept A (Urban Park).

	Like both concepts	Prefer Concept A	Prefer Concept B	No preference	Dislike both concepts
Comment cards	15%	26%	47%	5%	3%
Face-to-face interviews	4%	28%	60%	4%	4%
Telephone polls	16%	21%	45%	14%	2%
FGW	21%	31%	5%	33%	10%
CEF	8%	47%	31%	3%	12%

31. The majority (i.e. about 69%) of the relevant positive views in the qualitative analysis were related to Concept B, while about 31% were related to Concept A. There were positive views on the design concepts, which were considered to be commendable and having their own special characters. The negative views were mainly relating to the design and themes of the proposed promenade. Major suggestions and proposals included, inter alia, enhancing the vibrancy of the promenade by adding more nodal attractions; incorporating the design merits in both Concepts A and B; enhancing pedestrian connectivity; providing cycling tracks or other forms of environmentally friendly transport; providing tramline, jogging trails and better land-sea interface; ensuring clear implementation mechanisms and good management; providing the PLA berth offshore or ensuring an integrated design of the PLA berth with the waterfront promenade and turning it into an attraction; extending the waterfront promenade; integrating the design of the future Central Government Complex (CGC) with the waterfront promenade; and developing the area with Sites 4 and 8 as a 'Must Go Leisure Destination' with a beach or wetland, etc.

Re-assembling Queen's Pier and Site 8

32. The proposed design concepts were generally supported. The majority of the responses in the comment cards, face-to-face interviews, and CEF were in favour of Concept A (Queen's Pier by the Harbour). There was also clear support from the DCs for Concept A in that 16 out of the 18 DCs consulted have passed motions in support of, inter alia, re-assembling Queen's Pier at the harbourfront for public use. For the FGW, while more responses were in favour of Concept B (Queen's Pier at Original Location), the views were diverse among those who liked both concepts, liked Concept A and had no preference. For the telephone polls, there was quite an even distribution among those who preferred Concept A, those who preferred Concept B, and those with no preference. The findings are as follows:

	Like both concepts	Prefer Concept A	Prefer Concept B	No preference	Dislike both concepts
Comment cards	7%	49%	27%	5%	7%
Face-to-face interviews	1%	58%	26%	7%	9%
Telephone polls	10%	27%	27%	27%	6%
FGW	20%	16%	39%	16%	8%
CEF	1%	55%	25%	13%	6%

33. About 61% of the relevant positive views recorded in the qualitative analysis were related to Concept A, while about 39% were related to Concept B. There were positive views on each of the proposed design concepts: Concept A could revive the pier function of Queen's Pier and the design looked symmetrical, while Concept B could respect the historical significance of Queen's Pier and its spatial relationship with Edinburgh Place and City Hall. On the other hand, there were concerns about the time and resources implications for re-assembling the pier. Major suggestions included, inter alia, strengthening the memorial elements at the original site of Queen's Pier if the in-situ re-assembling concept was not pursued; re-assembling the pier at other locations; placing Queen's Pier at its original location after completion of the underground work for North Island Line/Airport Express Overrun Tunnel and adjustment to the alignment of Road P2; and

re-assembling Queen’s Pier in-situ and using it as a shaded resting and gathering place and possible bus stop or taxi drop-off.

Reconstructing Old Star Ferry Clock Tower

34. There was a general support for the proposed design concepts. However, there was no obvious convergence of views on their preference. More responses in the comment cards and CEF liked Concept A (Clock Tower at Site 4), while more responses in the face-to-face interviews, telephone polls, and FGW liked Concept B (Clock Tower close to Original Location). The relevant positive views in the qualitative analysis were quite evenly distributed between Concepts A and B. The findings are summarized as follows:

	Like both concepts	Prefer Concept A	Prefer Concept B	No preference	Dislike both concepts
Comment cards	6%	49%	22%	8%	11%
Face-to-face interviews	1%	29%	42%	15%	13%
Telephone polls	7%	23%	39%	23%	4%
FGW	0%	13%	56%	26%	5%
CEF	4%	42%	16%	10%	27%

35. About 48% of the relevant positive views recorded in the qualitative analysis were related to Concept A, while 52% were related to Concept B. The design concept for turning the old Star Ferry Clock Tower as a focal point and maintaining an axial relationship with City Hall and the re-assembled Queen’s Pier was generally supported. There were however other views that there was no need to reconstruct the Clock Tower and that the design did not match with the surrounding environment. Major suggestions included, inter alia, avoiding reconstructing the old Star Ferry Clock Tower in isolation; building an exhibition hall or a piazza around the reconstructed Clock Tower; and reconstructing the Clock Tower away from Central.

## Other Issues

36. Other issues that were raised in many of the comments received included environmental concerns and provision of eco-friendly facilities, concerns on roads and pedestrian access, a broad landscape design for a tree-lined boulevard along Road P2, provision of more multi-purpose facilities, the public engagement process for the Study, harbour reclamation, proposals for cycling tracks or other environmentally friendly transport modes, and management of the harbourfront development.

## **Way Forward**

37. Taking into consideration the findings of the Stage 2 Public Engagement for the Study and the public views and suggestions received, the main study consultant, Aedas Limited, is in the process of preparing design responses. The consultant will report at the next Task Group meeting.

## **Advice Sought**

38. Members are invited to note and consider the findings of the Stage 2 Public Engagement.

**Public Policy Research Institute  
Planning Department  
December 2008**