



Building Consensus on Sustainable Planning

Designing Hong Kong Harbour District

Building Consensus on Sustainable Planning Principles for the Harbour District

**Paper No. 6
Summary Report**

June 2004

FIGURES

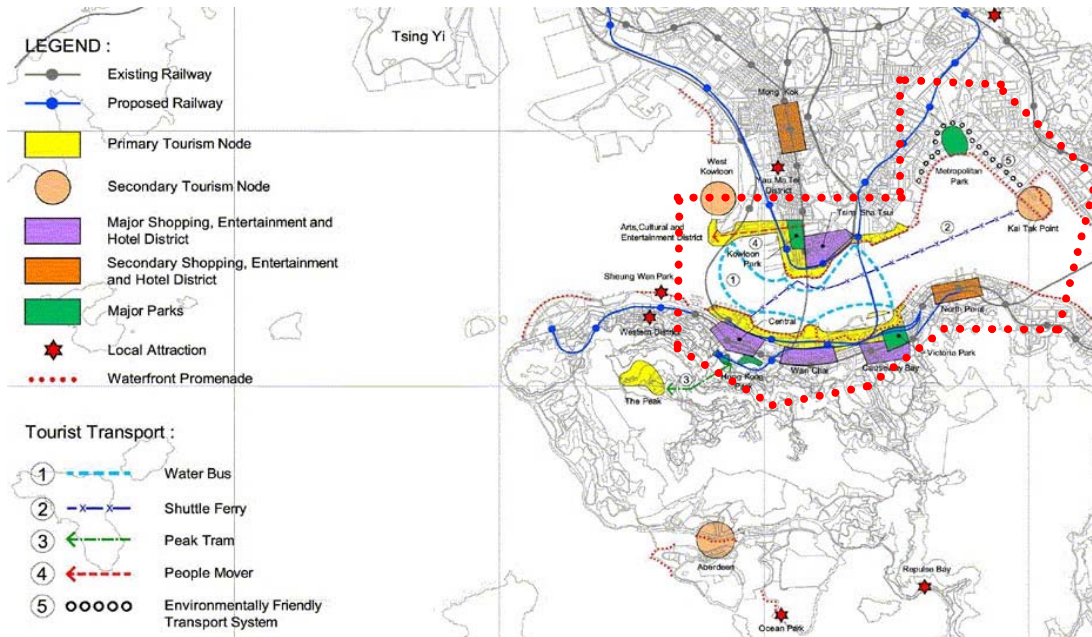


Figure 1. Tourism Action Plan by the Planning Department [paragraph 1.3]

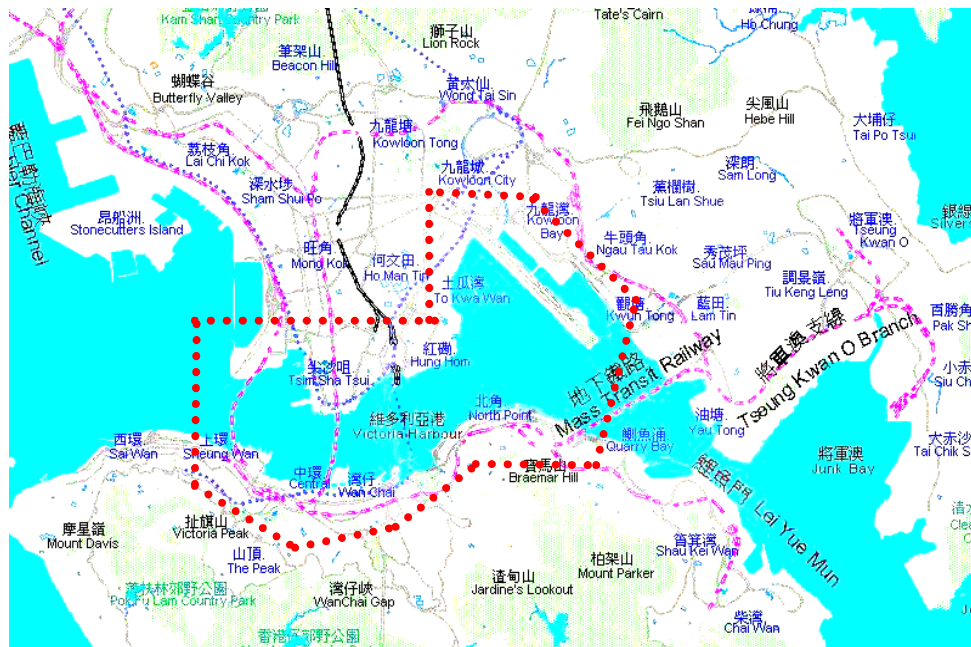


Figure 2. Map of the Harbour District (within dotted lines) [paragraph 1.4]

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FOREWORD

Last year a small group of long-term residents and native Hong Kong people asked themselves over lunch what the best strategy was to achieve a world-class Harbour. None of us had any commercial or professional interest in Harbour planning, but we felt strongly that enhancing the Harbour was key to Hong Kong's future development. We immediately realised that the issue was not the Harbour alone – as long as the water quality was improving - but the land surrounding the Harbour, hence the term 'Harbour District'.

What sparked the conversation was the announcement of Sir Norman Foster's winning design for West Kowloon Cultural District. Although the plan appeared to address many relevant issues including a shortage of arts, culture and performance venues, privatisation of venue ownership and management, an attractive and open foreshore without roads, and dramatic architecture, it was also clear that going from 'zero' to 'the world's largest' was a potentially risky proposition for a small part of the foreshore.

Along with the emerging public controversy over West Kowloon, the dispute over the Central and Wanchai reclamations began to attract considerable attention as it was fought through the courts and in the media. It became apparent that to move forward in creating a world-class harbour would require a 'creative initiative' to build community-wide consensus on the right way forward for the Harbour District as a whole.

In November 2003, we arranged funding from independent sources, and asked GML Consulting to conduct in-depth interviews with key opinion leaders and shapers from government, business and civil society groups. In February 2004, we decided to expand the research with a public debate and organised meetings, workshops and conferences in cooperation with the Business Environment Council and the Chambers of Commerce. We also distributed a survey to solicit further community input. The findings of this multi-faceted consensus building project are collated in a series of reports, which can be found on www.harbourdistrict.com.hk. This Summary Report gives an overview of the main findings.

A striking aspect of the debate was the discrepancy between 'professional' and 'personal' opinions. With Government and its many Departments as key players as well as the sole employer of many professionals who are involved inside and outside Government, there was initially a great hesitation to participate and speak freely about why Hong Kong's foreshore areas are in such a deplorable state. However, once participants began to trust the process they, in many cases, spoke with considerable insight and passion – clearly many people care deeply about the future of the Harbour District!

One of the unnerving discoveries during the research was to find that a continuous promenade around the Harbour was already decided upon when the

Government stipulated a promenade around the Regent Hotel development in 1972. In 2004, this and many other excellent ideas for enhancing Hong Kong Harbour District have yet to find their way into a consistent strategy and sustainable planning process.

Recognising widespread community aspirations for an attractive and accessible Harbour, the Government is now responding with new initiatives such as the Harbour-front Enhancement Committee. To move forward, though, there appear to be underlying fundamental issues that need to be addressed. The Designing the Hong Kong Harbour District (DHKHD) consensus building process has indicated that in many cases Hong Kong's land-use and transport planning mechanisms appear to lack the necessary integration, which is resulting in a systemic bias towards land use and reclamation for road building. Combined with a design and procurement process geared at 'highest engineering standards at the lowest cost', the predicament of Hong Kong's foreshore becomes painfully clear. We urge transport-related Bureau and Departments to see the quality of Hong Kong's foreshore 'as their issue' and actively engage in the debate on how they can contribute to a world-class Harbour District. At this point, be assured that the organisers of 'Designing Hong Kong Harbour District' have no specific 'anti-road' agenda. In fact, I personally am involved in the automobile business.

A well-promoted, visual and integrated master planning process with early participation by the community for the future Harbour District is needed. Specifically the placement of the new Central Government Offices, the Convention and Exhibition Centre extension, hotels, offices, arts and culture facilities, parks and amenities, and how these plans interact with transport policy and infrastructure, is critical for improvement of the foreshore of Hong Kong's Harbour District.

The necessary institutional arrangements include a potential 'Chief Planner', a 'Harbour Foreshore Authority', a review of the Town Planning Ordinance, and a review of the current consultation procedures which are extensive, but fail to instill the level of community participation and involvement required to ensure that land-use and transport planning decisions are mature and contribute to a vibrant, accessible and affordable foreshore within a well designed Harbour District.

During the DHKHD process, particularly in the conference, we gained much insight into the possible management of the foreshore and facilities. The Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority is a good reference model and further research is required in what would work for Hong Kong. Debates regarding Harbour Fest, West Kowloon, the current state of cultural venues and facilities, the prohibition on cooked food at the Avenue of Stars, the prohibition on fishing at many areas, and the absence of public boat clubs or moorings, point towards the need for a review of rules and procedures for licencing activities in public areas, arts and culture financing policies, the way we manage venues, etc. This requires the future engagement of Home Affairs, the Leisure and Cultural Services Department and other Departments in the planning for a world-class Harbour.

We believe the reports are a reasonable and fair reflection of the opinions expressed by DHKHD participants, and they have been validated by an Independent Panel. Although by their nature, the findings include criticism of Government policy and processes, the overriding tone of the initiative has been constructive and supportive. Individual Government officers we spoke with, formally and informally, are all in favour of a great Harbour District. It is very much the process of decision-making, which is failing, and this is frustrating for those inside as well as outside the Government. ‘Exasperation’ was the term used by many.

The reports give a consensus view of principles, which require further work to convert into practical solutions. We trust that the findings will help focus resources on addressing these issues and improve the planning for the Harbour District and Hong Kong as a whole.

We thank all the stakeholders from the Government, businesses, and the wider community who helped make the *Designing Hong Kong Harbour District* possible. We are specifically grateful for the time contributed by the organisers, researchers, independent panel members, advisors, supporters, sponsors, endorsers, participants, and media over the past 6 months. We hope that readers of this summary and the supporting reports will find them useful and that the coming years bring a renewed spirit of cooperation to the enhancement of Hong Kong’s Harbour District.

Paul Zimmerman
Chief Coordinator
Designing Hong Kong Harbour District

1. DESIGNING HONG KONG HARBOUR DISTRICT

- 1.1 The *Designing the Hong Kong Harbour District* (DHKHD) initiative was set up in December 2003 as a consensus building exercise to help achieve a world-class Harbour District for Hong Kong. Over a 6-month period the initiative has engaged a great number of key stakeholders, including from Government, business and civic sectors, in a constructive and formative dialogue. The initiative has been jointly organised by The Experience Group, The Business Environment Council (BEC) and GML Consulting (GML), and is supported by over twenty major organisations and prominent opinion leaders in the Hong Kong community.
- 1.2 Victoria Harbour and its adjoining districts, labelled by the initiative as the Harbour District, is the core of Hong Kong and includes the majority of the key assets defining Hong Kong's image and lifestyle: the Harbour, the major financial and commercial buildings, the Government and public offices, key heritage sites and the main culture, art, sports, entertainment, accommodation and food & beverage (F&B) venues. The Harbour and the immediate adjuncts form the heart of the Pearl River Delta where visiting tourists spend much of their time and money, and where residents undertake many of their retail, leisure, arts, entertainment and sports activities.
- 1.3 The 'Harbour District' as such does not exist under the current administration, planning schemes or outlining zoning plan system. There is no integrated OZP specially prepared for the Harbour area and it is not covered by Government's Plan for Victoria Harbour which covers a smaller area. The definition of the **Harbour District** for this study is taken as **the districts surrounding Victoria Harbour from Yau Ma Tei Typhoon Shelter to Kwun Tong, and from Quarry Bay to Sheung Wan**. This area includes the majority of the key assets defining Hong Kong's image and lifestyle as illustrated in the Tourism Action Plan by the Planning Department in 2002 (Figure 1 of page i). The foreshore, the land, public facilities and transport infrastructure immediately connected with the Harbour, and specifically all those controlled by Government, are the concern of this initiative.
- 1.4 The Government has established the Harbour-front Enhancement Committee to consider the Harbour-front (foreshore) of Victoria Harbour, protected under the Protection of the Harbour Ordinance. The boundaries of this extend over a greater area, namely from Siu Chau Wan Point and Ah Kung Ngam Point in the east to the western points of Hong Kong and Tsing Yi (and straight north to the mainland). Although the terms of reference have since been expanded to include the 'adjacent areas' and related transport infrastructure, the Harbour District definition reflects the need to include the surroundings districts in their entirety in the planning (Figure 2 of page i).

1.5 Based on our research, we have identified several general issues:

- Majority of the foreshore is dominated by transport infrastructure including surface and elevated roads and no new land will be added;
- Roads are visual and physical barriers separating the lively districts and the Harbour, which are both at ground level, and the limited number of elevated or subway crossings are difficult for elderly and invalid persons.
- There is a lack of public amenities and facilities along the foreshore as much of the space is occupied by fenced-off temporary uses, utility facilities like sewage works, refuse transfer stations, car parks and transport infrastructure;
- There is no vibrancy because the facilities for entertainment, retail, F&B, hospitality, accommodation, arts, culture, sports, in addition to open spaces such as parks and promenades, are missing;
- Access to the Harbour itself is limited as there are no public boating facilities for mooring, berthing or storage, and marine activities like fishing are rarely allowed or encouraged;
- The views of the Harbour and the stunning city panorama are obstructed by tall buildings and elevated roads.

1.6 These and other issues are addressed and recommendations are included in the form of 'principles'. These 'principles' are an invitation for further comment and debate and are aimed to contribute to building consensus on a way forward for the future of the Harbour District. By engaging in this process proactively, the Government has been part of a process which will enable the development of a framework for a sustainable and vibrant foreshore that that will more closely reflect community aspirations.

2. THE PROCESS AND PURPOSE OF THE INITIATIVE

2.1 *Designing the Hong Kong Harbour District* was a 6-month consensus building process which involved around 300 stakeholders through:

- Desktop research
- Interviews
- Meetings
- Workshop
- Opinion survey
- Conference

2.2 The purpose of the initiative was to:

- Highlight the key issues affecting the harbour district;
- Identify and build consensus on ways to address these issues; and
- Present the findings for the Government's consideration.

2.3 The initiative resulted in:

- Bringing together over 400 different parties from Government, the private sector and community organisations through round table discussions and meetings to discuss and build consensus on a number of controversial issues on the Harbour (including reclamation);
- Stimulating the debate and clarifying the vision for Hong Kong's Harbour District and what has to be done to make the Harbour truly world-class;
- Engaging the Government at different levels and different Departments in a dialogue with various members of the community in a short time frame completely outside the normal Government process and procedures; and
- Canvassing the public for their views on the Harbour District's current situation and possible future.

Desktop Research

2.4 A series of Government reports, newspaper articles, academic journals, research papers and other documents were reviewed. A list of materials is provided in **Paper 5**.

Interviews

- 2.5 Over 90 organizations from different business sectors, the NGO sector and government were contacted for this study, out of which we carried out 45 in-depth interviews. The results of our interviews and additional research are reported in **Paper 1**.

Meetings

- 2.6 In addition, a series of meetings were held with Public and Media at different venues on February 18, March 5, March 16 and April 15 with a total of 300 participants. Details are recorded in **Paper 5**.

Workshop

- 2.7 On 27 March 2004, a workshop was conducted with stakeholders to develop themes on designing the Harbour District. Proceedings of the workshop and related papers are provided in **Papers 2 and 1** respectively.

Opinion Survey

- 2.8 Between April and May 2004, we conducted a public opinion survey to canvas the views of the public on key issues affecting the Harbour District. The results of some 250 responses to the survey are recorded in **Paper 3**.

EnviroSeries Conference

- 2.9 At the EnviroSeries Conference organised by the BEC on 3 May 2004, local and international experts provided their views on designing Hong Kong Harbour to more than 200 participants at the Island Shangri-La Hotel. The key issues arising from the conference are reported and discussed in **Paper 4**.

Validation

- 2.10 An independent panel reviewed the process and analyses, and found the findings a fair representation of the views expressed. The panel included:
- Prof. Peter Hills – Director of Centre of Urban Planning and Environmental Management, The University of Hong Kong
 - Prof. Kin Che Lam – Chairman of Department of Geography and Resource Management, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, and
 - Ms Terri Mottershead – Director of Professional Development, MindTheme Consulting

Reporting

2.11 The findings are collected in several reports and can be found on the web at http://www.harbourdistrict.com.hk/hkhd_new/sub_new/pp.html

- **Paper 1.** Preliminary Briefing for Stakeholders;
- **Paper 2.** Proceedings of 27 March Workshop;
- **Paper 3.** Public Opinion Survey;
- **Paper 4.** Key Issues;
- **Paper 5.** Research and Meeting References;
- **Paper 6a.** Draft Summary Report and Feedback Received; and
- **Paper 6.** Summary Report (this document).

3. ASPIRATIONS FOR THE HONG KONG HARBOUR DISTRICT

- 3.1 Victoria Harbour has been a working harbour and reclamation has played an important role in accommodating marine-oriented facilities, warehousing, piers, and other supporting facilities, as well for providing for Hong Kong's growing business and government needs. With marine services moving out to the Outer Harbour, many of previous marine facilities have been converted into office, residential and commercial property.
- 3.2 To accommodate the increase in transport needs, land was reclaimed to provide space for roads in front of these facilities. Further reclamation originally planned in the 1980s for new residential and commercial uses has now been halted and is controlled by the Protection of the Harbour Ordinance (PHO)¹. The Government is currently pursuing reclamation in selected areas of the Harbour District only.
- 3.3 As a result of the constantly changing waterfront and the above developments, a large proportion of the foreshore of the Harbour District is now dominated by surface or elevated roads.
- 3.4 As early as 1972, there were plans for a continuous promenade along the harbour, and a start was made with the promenade around the Regent Hotel. Planning studies² undertaken by the Government in more recent years have emphasized the importance of enhancing the value of the Harbour using the waterfront and surrounding areas as focal points for leisure, entertainment, and recreational activities.
- 3.5 Public aspirations, particularly those more openly expressed in the last two years, have led to a number of community initiatives on the future of the Harbour District, including Citizen Envisioning @ Harbour activities and Harbour protection demonstrations, expressing public concerns over the development of the Harbour and the waterfront areas.
- 3.6 From a legal perspective, there have been high-profile court cases regarding the Wan Chai Phase II Reclamation and the Central Reclamation Phase III, the legality of which were challenged by the Society for the Protection of the Harbour. The Court of Final Appeal (CFA), in its judgment of 9 January 2004,

¹ According to a Government communication to GML on 17 June 2004, "as a result of the evolving social and economic structure of Hong Kong and the changing public aspiration to protect and preserve the Victoria Harbour, some proposed further reclamation [was] not pursued or will be subject to review. The Government has repeatedly announced that apart from Central Reclamation Phase III and the proposed reclamation schemes at Wan Chai North and Southeast Kowloon, there will be no further reclamation inside the Harbour limits."

² Planning Study on the Harbour and its Waterfront Areas (February 2003), Metroplan Review (March 2003), Hong Kong 2030 (ongoing) and Urban Design Guidelines for Hong Kong (November 2002) – see Paper 1, Appendix B for further information.

provided a final interpretation of the presumption against reclamation under the PHO. The judicial review on Central Reclamation Phase III has been ruled on, while Government's plans for reclamation in Wan Chai and Southeast Kowloon are currently under review and must ensure compliance with the CFA's "overriding public need test" before proceeding. Stakeholders have called for the review of the efficiency and effectiveness of the judicial process as a means of managing land use and planning decisions.

- 3.7 In addition, there is uncertainty surrounding the future design of the West Kowloon Cultural District, which is a significant part of the new harbour front. Further, various projects are under consideration or in progress along the Harbour front.
- 3.8 The Government has enjoyed a relatively 'free' hand in developing the Harbour foreshore in the past and used reclamation to create more land for development and at the same time build infrastructure to deal with the needs of a growing population in line with its territorial development strategy. However, the level and nature of the public sentiment currently being expressed presents a challenge for the Government to come up with a new process and new proposals to ensure the development of the Harbour and the surrounding districts are sustainable and will fulfill Hong Kong's aspirations for the future.

In our stakeholder interviews, almost all stakeholders believe that the Harbour is critical to the future of Hong Kong.

Most stakeholders agreed that:

- *The Harbour is the foremost symbol of Hong Kong and is a unique and irreplaceable asset.*
- *It contains important historic, economic, social and cultural value.*
- *The Harbour belongs to the people of Hong Kong and forms a focal point, which helps to define people's identity.*
- *It is a gathering place and part of Hong Kong's collective memory.*
- *It is an important economic resource for tourism.*

Source: **Paper 1** (Appendix G)

- 3.9 With the Protection of the Harbour Ordinance in place and water quality improving, the emphasis has shifted from the Harbour to the foreshore, i.e., the land immediately connected with the Harbour. Views expressed by

stakeholders include the need for access to the Harbour, population density control, creation and distribution of areas of special activities adjacent to the Harbour, the creation and management of support facilities to support these uses in the future and control of building heights adjacent to the Harbour.

3.10 The foreshore of Victoria Harbour is critical to Hong Kong's global brand image and is an invaluable asset in building this capacity. The survey carried out between April and May 2004 (see **Paper 3**) shows that, for Hong Kong's Harbour District to be world-class, the following attributes are needed:

Vibrancy

- Appealing harbour views
- Marine tourism and leisure activities
- Historic significance
- Impressive architecture and building design around the harbour
- Environmental quality
- A "living" harbour (birds, fishing, sailing, etc.)

Activities

- Wide choice of arts and culture
- Green areas/landscaping
- Wide range of wining and dining
- Plentiful open air spaces
- Facilities for leisure and entertainment

Access

- Ease of pedestrian access and mobility
- Wide range of public transport links

3.11 In order to achieve all of the above, it is necessary to acknowledge the limited availability of land and the need to prioritise competing uses. The foreshore is underdeveloped and used primarily as a vehicular transport thoroughfare. The surface roads and flyovers extending along much of the waterfront put constraints on the development of the foreshore and greatly limit pedestrian access to the Harbour.

3.12 With reclamation less likely to be a material option for increasing the available land, great care and coordinated effort is required to re-engineer our transport infrastructure as well as to re-align our land-use within the Harbour District.

3.13 To reflect the Town Planning Board's vision to make the Harbour "attractive, vibrant, accessible and symbolic of Hong Kong – a harbour for the people and a harbour of life" stakeholders have called for a focus on the "soft"

issues needed to enliven the waterfront including the way we zone the land and license activities.

3.14 Further results from GML's opinion survey in **Paper 3** showed the following:

Top five topics voted as 'important' for the foreshore of the harbour district

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-------|
| • Appealing harbour views | 88.7% |
| • Pedestrian access and mobility | 86.6% |
| • Environmental quality | 85.8% |
| • Plentiful open spaces | 85.8% |
| • Green areas/landscaping | 83.7% |

(% represents percentage of those surveyed who voted "important or higher")

3.15 Selected comments from stakeholders³ include:

- *The Harbour District should be developed and improved for the people of Hong Kong, not only for tourists.*
- *Existing promenades and waterfront areas are sterile, concrete, with little diversity and variety of activities.*
- *Better public access is critical for improving quality of life.*
- *Waterfront dining, shopping, sitting-out areas, entertainment should be multiuse-based and be for daytime and nighttime use.*
- *Outdoor art, theatre and other activities can create vibrant and lively ambience.*
- *More open space for relaxation and recreation is needed.*

³ See Paper 1, Appendix G

4. KEY ISSUES AND PRINCIPLES

Land Use and Urban Design

4.1 Based on the data collected during the research (see **Paper 4**, Ch. 3) the following land use and urban design principles are proposed:

Land-use and Urban Design Principles

- To achieve a world-class Harbour District, the limited land available around the Harbour must be optimised to provide foremost a vibrant, active and accessible foreshore catering for both residents and tourists
- As there is unlikely to be further extensive reclamation in the future, a coordinated effort and integrated plan for the Harbour District as a whole must ensure a well-balanced and sustainable distribution of land for utilities, property development, transport infrastructure and public open space and amenities throughout the Harbour District
- The public wants a foreshore which balances functionality with an active Harbour and a vibrant experience, including convenient pedestrian mobility, ample open space, visual access, entertainment, arts, culture, sports, retail, hospitality, accommodation, food and beverage facilities
- A determined effort is needed to implement the many existing well-developed Harbour planning, urban design and landscaping principles and enhance the Harbour as a natural and key asset for Hong Kong - including, among others, a continuous promenade (already proposed in 1972), stepped building heights, visual access (both from and towards the Harbour), open public spaces, accessibility and vibrancy
- The outline of the Harbour-front should incorporate an interesting and undulating edge profile and public boating facilities including moorings, berthing and storage, as well as piers and fishing berths to ensure that the Harbour itself is accessible for the use and enjoyment by the members of the public.

4.2 Despite efforts by different Government Departments to efficiently deliver public services and upgrade the quality of life, there have been past difficulties in bringing about enhancement of the foreshore. Stakeholders believe that urban planning for the Harbour District seems too often geared to reconciling the objectives and needs of various Government Departments who are responsible for delivering facilities for utilities, drainage systems, pumping stations and transport.

4.3 The extensive urban design principles for enhancement of the Harbour environment for the community have been in existence for some time. However Government's planning procedures which attempt to integrate

every minute requirement and constraint of every Department almost inevitably leads to a bland and utilitarian or over-functional planning solution, with little or no mechanisms to ensure that the implementation will achieve the people friendly urban design objectives set out above.

- 4.4 A large proportion of the current land use in Harbour District is therefore for utility purposes (refuse transfer points, cooling water pumps, outfalls, offices, car parks, transport, etc.), which are incompatible with harbour front enjoyment. Access to the Harbour front is constrained by the road network and often prohibited by fencing. A recent communication from Civil Engineering Department states that there are 35 public piers and landings along the Harbour waterfront, however despite these possible access points the widely expressed views of stakeholders and the public are that quality access to the harbour is limited.
- 4.5 Where the waterfront is accessible (Quarry Bay Park, Shau Kei Wan, Hung Hom, Tsimshatsui promenade, HKCEC, and Queen's Pier), there are only limited stretches of promenades, and hardly any F&B outlets, entertainment, or arts & culture activities.
- 4.6 With no new land to be added, clear choices will need to be made on land-use between utility purposes, property development, surface roads/flyovers and public open space.
- 4.7 In turn, this requires management of the hinterland and the reduction or elimination of land uses which generate the need and demand for such facilities and transport infrastructure, including limiting redevelopment in Tsimshatsui, and eliminating new traffic generating land-use in Tamar (Central Government offices) and Wanchai (Convention and Exhibition Centre Extension). As referenced in GML's survey, 62% of those surveyed indicated that locating Government offices next to the Harbour was "unimportant" compared to other priorities.
- 4.8 There are growing calls to pursue re-designing, re-engineering and enhancing existing areas and facilities over developing new ones. This requires less space and less reclamation, but does incur costs and results in more 'hassle'. New open spaces, improved pedestrian links and additional entertainment, retail, F&B, , accommodation, arts, culture, sports facilities can help balance functionality and a vibrant experience in the foreshore.
- 4.9 Open corridors with visual access to the Harbour and the spectacular views of the surrounding city are needed from as many points as possible. Where possible, structures can be removed to open up views from main roads.
- 4.10 With the exception of one private yacht club and Queen's Pier, there is limited convenient access to the water itself for water sports or other activities. Public marinas, boat clubs, shelters, moorings, launches, and

boat storage facilities are required east of the Star Ferry piers along a 'long' harbour front on both sides of the Harbour, to allow the public to get onto the water for leisure activities.

4.11 More recently, the principles for Harbour design were articulated as part of the Harbour Plan Study by the Planning Department and the Hong Kong Tourism Board (May 2001) as:

- Give tourism/recreation uses which can benefit from waterfront access priority in the Inner Harbour Core, while balancing the needs of other marine uses;
- Group tourist attractions in clusters;
- Consolidate tourism clusters in and close to the Inner Harbour Core carefully designed and integrated within a landscape framework;
- Locate secondary tourism nodes and recreation uses around the Outer Harbour, provide good connection to the Inner Harbour Core;
- Improve pedestrian accessibility to the waterfront from public transport nodes;
- Provide greater continuity of waterfront promenades and other transport facilities to link tourism clusters;
- Integrate hinterland areas with the waterfront, through improved visual, landscape and pedestrian linkages; and
- Minimise physical and visual intrusion into the Harbour.

4.12 Stakeholders report that, these principles are mostly tourism oriented and this possibly reflects the way the study was defined and carried out. Little effective public input was evident. The enhancement of the Harbour should be foremost defined from the needs of the residents, as tourists will follow residents. Other stakeholders commented on the limitation of clustering and the need for mixed development throughout the entire Harbour District as one cluster.

Transport Policy and Infrastructure

4.13 From **Paper 4** (Ch. 4), the following transport principles are proposed:

Transport Policy and Infrastructure Principles

- Mobility should be balanced with the public's wish to enjoy the space and access to the Harbour foreshore.
- Transport infrastructure to keep Hong Kong mobile should minimise the land used for elevated and surface roads in the foreshore and deploy engineering standards and designs that promote - rather than bar - pedestrian access to the Harbour-front
- With the Harbour naturally at ground level, pedestrian access is preferable at the same level. If putting roads underground is not possible and surface roads are necessary, then pedestrian access can be provided using wide tunnels or building large decks across semi submerged roads. Many of the existing elevated walkways are inconvenient or inaccessible, particularly for invalids and the elderly
- A more balanced evaluation of alternative modes of transport (such as rail) should be implemented taking into account environmental impact, footprint and sustainability, irrespective of ownership and financing mechanisms.

4.14 The road network in the foreshore is extensive. Other than in a few places, residents and tourists are unable to easily get from where they live, stay or work to the Harbour front because of road infrastructure. There are elevated and surface roads ringing the Harbour waterfront, except in West Kowloon and Kai Tak.

4.15 Following the court rulings it appears that the current interpretation of the Protection of the Harbour Ordinance, provides a bias towards reclamation for road infrastructure. It appears that roads have a better chance of passing the 'overriding public needs test' if it can be proven that the need for it is compelling and present and there is no reasonable alternative. Combined with the current process whereby the 'highest engineering standards at the lowest cost' are applied in procurement and design, this may lead to a sterile waterfront, a Harbour without activity, and a foreshore consisting of transport infrastructure. **Only a determined and coordinated land-use and transport strategy for the Harbour District (the foreshore AND adjacent areas) can steer Hong Kong away from this scenario.**

4.16 The space occupied by roads is determined by road alignment. Key factors are engineering constraints, and the cost and interruption to traffic flow. Minimising the road area is not an objective for the design of surface roads. In addition, many stakeholders perceive that alternatives such as rail or

traffic management measures often appear⁴ to be given only secondary consideration.

- 4.17 Given the limited space available, reducing the space taken up by roads in the foreshore is logical and critical. The consequence of this is that more money is needed to put roads underground in tunnels and to re-engineer existing road corridors. If capacity can't be increased, traffic volume must be strictly managed with traffic management measures, and by limiting land use and restricting intensity in the relevant areas through building height restrictions, plot ratios, change of land –use or moratoriums.
- 4.18 With both the Harbour and the main tourist and residential areas at ground level – much consideration is needed for pedestrian mobility between these and across the vehicular thoroughfares. Ideally pedestrian access should be open-air at ground level to ensure convenience and visual access to the Harbour. As an example, in Wanchai North and around the Exchange Square and IFC2 ground level is a 'dead zone' and the functionality of the 'elevated city' is limited. Expanding the 'elevated city' has the danger of creating more such dead zones. They should foremost be seen as additional pedestrian capacity rather than a replacement for ground level mobility and vibrancy.
- 4.19 The subway crossings in Tsimshatsui are cumbersome, and the staircase/walkways in Causeway Bay, Taikooshing and Sheung Wan do not resolve the need for mobility. Wide underground passages such as the one to the Central Star Ferry (and wider) are preferable to narrow subways such as under Salisbury Road. Most of the current elevated walkways over roads in the foreshore are limited in function and inconvenient, especially for invalids and elderly.
- 4.20 A new approach is required to resolve the mobility and vibrancy. For Central and Wanchai, according to the present design of CRIII, there will be open space corridors – Statue Square Corridor, Civic Corridor and Arts and Entertainment Corridor - to bring pedestrians from the hinterland to the future waterfront. They will need to be tested for the above requirements.

⁴ Government in the 17 June statement to GML cited that in the construction of the Central – Wan Chai Bypass, other options have been examined, including the Western Harbour Crossing, extension of the MTR to Kennedy Town, provision of hillside escalators from Central to Mid-levels, provision of bus-bus interchanges at the fringe areas of Central, restricting loading and unloading times in Central and adoption of Electronic Road Pricing.

In GML's survey on the harbour district (see **Paper 3**), people were asked for their views on **access to the harbour and surrounding districts**. The following topics were voted as most 'important'

- Ease of pedestrian access and mobility 86.6 %
- Wide range of public transport links 80.8 %

(% represents percentage of those surveyed who agreed)

- 4.21 Given the demand for greater mobility, the increase in residents and tourists accessing the Harbour and foreshore, and the absolute limitation on space, a complete revision of transport strategy and policy is needed, including a stronger 'pedestrian first' emphasis to answer the call for greater accessibility to the foreshore of the Harbour District.
- 4.22 Greater use of ferries, including a circular ferry system, and water taxis is recommended to improve the mobility of residents and tourists in the Harbour District.
- 4.23 Sustainable development of the foreshore will require an integrated review of transport strategy and policy, together land-use planning for the Harbour District, the foreshore and hinterland areas. Pedestrian movement along and to the foreshore should be included as an important part of such transport review.

The Central Wanchai Bypass and P2

- Mobility is at the core of the transport debate along the Harbour foreshore. Much of the current road infrastructure has been part of the overall road network planned to link up Central Business District (CBD) to the rest of Hong Kong including the New Towns and the Kowloon district.
- Phase Three of the Central reclamation (CRIII) is one of the two remaining portions of the Central and Wan Chai reclamation. At present, east-west traffic on the north side of Hong Kong Island relies mainly on the Connaught Road Central/Harcourt Road/Gloucester Road corridor. Government findings show that this has reached its capacity, resulting in the current traffic congestion.
- The Comprehensive Transport Study 3 (CTS-3), Government's transport planning tool, proposes that there is a need for a new trunk road, that is, the Central-Wan Chai Bypass (CWB) to solve the congestion problem.
- According to the Environment, Transport and Works Bureau, the current peak hour vehicle/capacity (v/c) ratio of Gloucester Road in 2001 is 1.1 to 1.2. As Connaught Road Central, Harcourt Road and Gloucester Road form a continuous corridor where traffic conditions of one will impact on the rest of the trunk route, CTS-3 has predicted v/c ratios of 1.3 and 1.4 in 2011 and 2016 respectively for the Corridor in the future if the CWB is not provided. Assuming that the CWB were in place, both the corridor and the CWB would have v/c ratios of 0.9 and 0.7 in 2011 and 2016 respectively.
- Additional surface road systems are required as slip roads for the CWB and to handle traffic from the 600-room Four Seasons Hotel and the 55-level Four Seasons Place, IFC Two, new commercial developments on CR3, new Central Government Offices at Tamar and an extension of the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre.
- The forecasted vehicular traffic arising from the proposed commercial developments on CR3 alone is about 1,200 vehicle trips per hour during the peak periods. This traffic is predicted to use mainly the Road P2 network and can affect the v/c ratios of the trunk corridor and the CWB.
- In other words, whilst the case for transport infrastructure for CRIII meets the CTS-3 requirements of maintaining mobility in a sustainable manner (i.e. capacity, alignment, form, modal split, interconnection, financial, and environmental factors), it is critical to note that pedestrian access to the Harbour front, safeguarding space for public facilities and open public space, and access to the harbour itself to ensure an active harbour, are not considered. P2 road will be a major surface road in addition to the CWB submerged in a tunnel.
- The 'cost' of land used for surface and elevated roads and limitations on access are not equated in the design of roads around the Harbour. Broad public 'acceptability' proven during consultation is of limited value as such consultation is normally limited to presentations to transport related groups and there is currently limited sensitivity for Harbour front enhancement aspects among the public, LegCo members, transport advisory board, District councilors, and others.

Source: **Paper 4** (Chapter 4)

Institutional Arrangements

4.24 From **Paper 4** (Ch. 5), the following institutional principles are proposed:

Institutional Principles

- Planning concepts, proposals and decisions should be community-focused and evolve through a *process* underpinned by early and ongoing stakeholder engagement and consensus building
- More effective and efficient mechanisms as well as new mechanisms and structures are needed to promote collaboration among the different Government Departments and balance long-term quality of life benefits over cost control and expedience, particularly for infrastructure and public space and facilities
- A single authority is recommended to be responsible for transport, land-use, planning, environment and community engagement and should be guided by the principles of sustainable development (for the Harbour district foreshore)
- A statutory body is recommended to be responsible for managing the foreshore, hold executive and consultative powers, and decide upon funding and financing of projects
- Experts for reviews of transport and land-use plans should be appointed by independent bodies to ensure that such reviews are truly independent
- Communities, including businesses, must be invited at an early stage to participate in formulating (visual) strategic plans, developing planning briefs and reviewing proposed designs to build consensus, and ensure mature solutions reducing the potential for conflict.

4.25 There is wide agreement that enhancing the Harbour District requires a high level of coordination in its planning, design, and management. At present these responsibilities are shared between numerous Government Departments and agencies, and private sector organisations, each with different objectives and priorities. Stakeholders noted that this problem is exacerbated with a planning process where boundaries of planning responsibilities are often based on administrative convenience, hence reducing the functional coherence. The way forward must include an improved mechanism for coordination of the different Departments so that they can more easily fulfill their overall mission.

4.26 The public can express their views when Government organises public exhibitions and at the public meetings arranged by planners. Often, however, this comes in the advanced stages of development and lack alternative options to choose from. Members of the public have not had the chance to be involved, in both practical and psychological terms, in the earlier

conceptual design stages, briefing or strategic planning stages. Too little is spend on the promotion of consultation exercises and the strategic plans lack visual aids and clear choices. The bodies consulted in the planning process tend to be political and professional parties, or specific committees of LegCo and District Councils, which have a limited focus.

- 4.27 Opinions may filter through via District Councilors, but this relies on their community outreach network functioning adequately. Hence there appears to be limited scope for the grass root and business communities to participate in a meaningful manner during these early stages.
- 4.28 In the last year, legal proceedings regarding reclamations within the Harbour District have aroused much interest and stimulated awareness on the part of the public. In response to wide community concerns for integrated planning for the Harbour, the Government announced on 28 April 2004 the formation of the *Harbour-front Enhancement Committee* to provide a more transparent and wider public consultation forum for different sectors of the community.
- 4.29 What is recommended is a single authority at the highest level of Government responsible for both land-use and transport planning.
- 4.30 For the Harbour District it is recommended that a statutory body, a Harbour District Authority reporting into the single authority, is fully in charge of all policies, strategies, planning and transport and land-use management for the foreshore areas. It is imperative that a Harbour District Authority is and is seen to be represented at the highest level with executive powers over planning, transport, land-use and ongoing management within the Harbour District but, importantly, also has consultative obligations to ensure comprehensive public participation.
- 4.31 How such body is implanted in Hong Kong requires urgent research and debate. Agreement is needed on what powers to purchase, sell, develop and manage land, and to market harbour and foreshore related activities, are vested appropriately in a Harbour District Authority. Whether the Harbour District Authority has limited powers or separate Authorities are established for specific areas needs to be balanced with the overhaul of the legal, fiscal, land development and planning systems required in Hong Kong.
- 4.32 Alternatively the Town Planning Board could be the 'Harbour Authority'. First a Strategic Plan and then detailed plans similar to an Outline Zoning Plans are required for the 'Harbour District' or the 'Harbour and Foreshore Areas'. These can be prepared by the Planning Department in conjunction with the Harbour-front Enhancement Committee and major public consultation exercises. Once completed, the Town Planning Board would be charged with approval of all development plans within the area, INCLUDING transport infrastructure. This will require legislation to make the

necessary amendments to the Protection of the Harbour and Town Planning Ordinances.

4.33 A clear process needs to be agreed for the testing of all reasonable development alternatives, including the appointment of Independent Experts required for such reviews. This will address the stakeholder concern that reviews are truly independent rather than a promotion, or justification of existing plans or prevailing views of the Departments involved.

4.34 Community wide participation, including the business community, is required for idea formulation, planning and implementation at an early stage to ensure that there is consensus on mature solutions, and that the potential for conflict is reduced. To accommodate changing public opinion during long-term projects such as reclamations and major roads, the community participation process needs to be a continuous one.

In GML's survey (see **Paper 3**) on the Harbour District, people were asked for their views on **planning for the future**. The following five statements were rated as 'agree'

- | | |
|---|-------|
| • Visionary, long term and future thinking instead of cost- and transport led planning | 83.3% |
| • An integrated harbour district master planning process is needed rather than a project by project approach | 82.8% |
| • Public must be consulted with alternative planning choices together with clear cost and environmental implications | 81.6% |
| • Quality of life planning, rather than an engineering-led process is needed | 81.6% |
| • Clear analyses of public concerns and willingness to change is needed from planning authorities in the course of consultation | 81.2% |

(% represents percentage of those surveyed who agreed)

Implementation Issues

4.35 From **Paper 4** (Ch. 6), the following implementation principles are proposed:

Implementation Principles

- Decision-making regarding the planning of the Harbour District should adhere to sustainable development principles. The Harbour District should be a focal point for the community and itself evolve as a community
- Vibrancy of the Harbour and the foreshore must cater to the taste and affordability of different groups of people. A mixed usage development and varying types of commercial participation - not just high-end tourist facilities - are vital
- Vibrancy requires a review of licences and permits for stalls, vendors, entertainers and others on public land and facilities to ensure the availability of retail, food and beverages and other entertainment activities
- An active Harbour should be promoted through public marinas, boat clubs, shelters, launches, boat storage facilities, piers, moorings, and fishing berths so that the public can access the Harbour for marine activities
- Ongoing planning of the foreshore areas is as important as getting the management right, with a Harbour Authority responsible for allocating land for specified developments, attracting the appropriate tenants for venues, marketing Harbour activities and organizing promotional and marketing activities.
- Public and business involvement during implementation is crucial and Government should engage in formative and continuous dialogue with the communities including District Councils and commercial stakeholders to ensure buy-in, community backing and flexibility in the development and implementation of land-use and infrastructure plans
- Broad measures are needed to mitigate the impact of construction and development of the Harbour foreshore (including temporary land-use solutions, venues, art projects) and ongoing communication with all stakeholders to ensure transparency of the work in progress.

4.36 Currently, much of the Harbour front is dominated by high vertical sea walls. To achieve a vibrant, accessible and active Harbour, the public must be provided facilities for the development of water sports and other leisure activities on and around the Harbour, including piers and different types of partly or semi-enclosed water bodies for a range of functions, which establish a relationship between the foreshore and the central Harbour area.

- 4.37 Various 'price' levels of 'vibrancy' ("the cost of a cup of coffee") on the foreshore can be achieved with mixed ownership of the land and more liberal licencing policies for the establishment of commercial ventures on public land. Tourists will follow the residents (note Stanley, Temple Street, and Sai Kung Waterfront). Care must be given to ensure that development of the foreshore does not preclude free or affordable 'vibrancy'. Mixed usage – not just high-end tourist facilities is vital.
- 4.38 During construction, continuous public involvement during this process is a crucial to keep the foreshore of the Harbour district attractive for tourists and residents. Government should work closely with the District Councils, tourism organisations, business groups, and the public on the development of the Harbour District.
- 4.39 As Hong Kong enters into construction mode around the Harbour District, it is important to make the place lively. Interesting hoarding designs, temporary licences for markets and food outlets, and temporary venues are ways of keeping the area vibrant and attractive for tourists and residents while the work is in progress.

Kowloon Canton Railway Corporation – the West Rail story

The construction of West Rail by the KCRC provides many key lessons for Government on how to engage the public during this process. Continuous public involvement was stressed throughout and has helped to bring ownership of the project to the people - a crucial ingredient of success. Points to note are:

- Consultation of different sectors of the public throughout various stages of implementation of new projects, including the statutory consultation bodies and the general public;
- Anticipation of public concerns (e.g. Mei Foo residents would have strong views on the West Rail project because they had already been affected in the past by other works projects);
- Early consultation with the residents undertaken well before gazettal of proceedings;
- Provision of detailed designs, construction programme and other associated facilities to residents and stakeholders;
- Regular communication (e.g. newsletters were produced and mailed to each household in the locality of the project before and during the project);
- Two-way communication to avoid any misunderstandings; and
- A high degree of transparency (through the setting up of a project website, 24-hour hotline and real time web camera monitoring for the public).

Source: Presentation by KCRC, EnviroSeries Conference (3 May 2004)

5. CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 **Consensus Building** – The Designing Hong Kong Harbour District initiative has demonstrated that community consensus-building is possible around an issue as complex and controversial as the development of the foreshore of Hong Kong’s Harbour District. The multifaceted and participative research process that Designing Hong Kong Harbour District has embarked on has helped pull together parties from Government, businesses and civil society to engage in constructive dialogue and to reinforce the need to implement a vision of a world class harbour. As two stakeholders summed up:

“We were pleased to participate in the Designing Hong Kong Harbour District workshop. Specifically, we consider that the workshop demonstrated very clearly the benefit and value of Government representatives, business, professionals and the wider community coming together and working together to build a wide consensus on the Hong Kong Harbour District and to develop positive plans for a way forward. The workshop also demonstrated an excellent mechanism for consensus building that could have wider application to similar issues of genuine concern.”

“As a leading local and regional company, we support the need for a sustainable decision-making and planning framework to promote and develop Hong Kong’s unique Harbour front. The Harbour must be fully accessible for leisure, recreation and tourism purposes, and this in turn requires strong decision making in terms of future transport, infrastructure and development planning. We are pleased to be a key stakeholder within this consensus building initiative and fully endorse the report’s conclusions and recommendations.”

- 5.2 **Faith in the Future** – The study comes at a time when Hong Kong itself is going through a dynamic process of political reform and debate on governance. Much of the discussions regarding the Harbour and surrounding areas are symbolic of other planning issues affecting Hong Kong’s community. Widespread concern remains as to the legitimacy of the Government’s decisions for further reclamation and the purpose and benefits of such actions, as well as the ability of the existing infrastructure planning mechanisms to deliver on the promise of a world-class Harbour District. Therefore, the process with which the Government proceeds with enhancing the Harbour District and how well this reflects community aspirations, can be an important step in developing a positive political climate and increasing faith in the future.
- 5.3 **The Protection of the Harbour Ordinance** – The Ordinance safeguards the Harbour and has served to kindle controversy, but does not provided

guidance for enhancing Hong Kong's key assets – the Harbour, its stunning views and foreshore areas. Current interpretation rests on what 'overriding need' can be construed as. The danger therein lies that this wording can be used to justify one 'thing' but not necessarily the 'things' which best serve those who wish the Harbour to be a place of enjoyment and beauty for all. Hong Kong will not have a truly world class harbour if adversarial government and community relations are allowed to persist in land-use planning, reclamation, transport infrastructure, and the development and management of public facilities.

- 5.4 **Sustainable Development** – Fundamental to the success of a world-class Harbour is the embedding of sustainable principles in the planning process and the implementation of the public's aspirations. A sustainable planning and development process should be Hong Kong's ultimate goal, and one that befits a world city of today and for the future.
- 5.5 **An Invaluable Asset** – With the Protection of the Harbour Ordinance in place and the water quality improving, the key issue is no longer the Harbour but the foreshore, i.e., the land immediately connected with the Harbour. Hong Kong will need to build capacity to handle an estimated 70 million tourist trips and 9.2 million residents by 2030. Hong Kong is destined to be Asia's world city for global financial and business services that, together with tourism, form the mainstay of our economy. The Harbour District, the Victoria Harbour, the foreshore and adjacent districts, defines our global brand image and is an invaluable asset in building this capacity.
- 5.6 **Aspirations** – Our research indicates overwhelmingly that people want a vibrant and accessible foreshore in the Harbour District. For a number of reasons, Hong Kong has only partially achieved this and there is much more that has to be done to truly effect this change. The time has arrived for the aspirations of Hong Kong's communities to be realized: early and on-going public participation in any plans for the Harbour District is key; a review of transport and land-use policies, strategies and planning mechanisms is long overdue; and a single authority needs to be put in charge of the Harbour District with the mandate to deliver a Harbour and foreshore that people want.
- 5.7 **Space** – Without reclamation, clear choices must be made between property development, surface/elevated transport infrastructure, and public open space for the remaining land in the foreshore.
- 5.8 **Physical Access** – A 'pedestrian first' strategy is required with a goal of ensuring ample, convenient and liberal access to the foreshore areas.
- 5.9 **Visual Access** – Open corridors with visual access to our Harbour and the spectacular views of the surrounding city are needed from as many points

as possible. Where possible structures can be removed to open up views from tourism districts.

- 5.10 **Vibrancy** – More than enhancement or beautification with trees and benches, vibrancy is about the availability of entertainment, retail, food & beverage, hospitality, accommodation, arts, culture, sports, in addition to open space such as parks and promenades.
- 5.11 **Affordable vibrancy** – Tourists will follow the residents (note Stanley, Temple Street, and Sai Kung Waterfront). Care must be given to ensure that development of the foreshore does not preclude free or affordable ‘vibrancy’.
- 5.12 **Active Harbour** – Public marinas, boat clubs, shelters, moorings, piers, launches, boat storage facilities, fishing piers and boardwalks are required east of the Star Ferry along both sides of the Harbour, to promote the development of water sports and other activities.
- 5.13 **Footprint of Roads** – Given the limited space available and the domination by transport infrastructure, it is critical and logical to reduce the space used (‘footprint’ and ‘waterprint’) for surface and elevated roads in the foreshore.
- 5.14 **Roads only Scenario** – Under the current interpretation of the Protection of the Harbour Ordinance it appears that Government is adopting a narrow perception that only reclamation for transport infrastructure can pass the ‘overriding public needs test’. Combined with a policy of the ‘highest engineering standards at the lowest cost’ and building infrastructure for overcapacity, the ultimate outcome is a sterile waterfront, a harbour without activity, and a foreshore consisting of only transport infrastructure. A clear policy is required that takes a wider view of “public need” to steer Hong Kong away from this scenario. Enjoyment of a high quality pedestrian waterfront by the public should be able to meet the “over-riding public need” test as easily, or easier, than the need to reclaim for roads and cars.
- 5.15 **Transport Modes** – Current financing and ownership models for the different modes of transport favor vehicular traffic. A sustainable development of the foreshore, and the evaluation of all reasonable alternatives, must therefore specifically include a review of the modal split and related policies.
- 5.16 **Process and Independent Experts** – A clear process needs to be agreed for the testing of all reasonable alternatives, including the appointment of Independent Experts. This will ensure that reviews are truly independent rather than a promotion of existing plans or prevailing views of certain Departments.
- 5.17 **Public Participation** – Community wide participation, including the business community, is required for idea formulation, planning and

implementation to ensure that there is consensus on mature solutions, and that the potential for conflict is reduced. For such consultations to be genuine, early involvement (in both practical and psychological terms), including the setting of agendas and briefs, is required. Continuous public participation is needed during the implementation stages.

- 5.18 **Institutions** – It is strongly recommended that a statutory body is responsible for foreshore development such as a ‘Harbour District Authority’ with a board composed of different stakeholders, full control over areas of land, power over all facilities and infrastructure within its domain, and with clear guidelines on consultation, participation, adjudication, mediation and appeals. This body must report into a single authority at the highest level of Government responsible for land-use and transport planning.
- 5.19 **Town Planning Ordinance** – Issues identified in the study can be taken into account in the current review of the Town Planning Ordinance.
- 5.20 **Integrated Planning** – A ‘visual’ strategic planning process is recommended defining a social, economic and environmental framework for the Harbour District as a whole, which serves as a brief for planning individual areas. Such planning should cover adjacent districts and not just the foreshore.
- 5.21 **Leisure harbour** – By declaring a long-term vision for the Harbour west of the Star Ferry as the working harbour, and east as the leisure harbour (traffic limited to Cruise liners, ferries, military vessels, sailing and fishing craft and the occasional barge when needed) all different Departments, together with the various community groups, can work towards a common goal.

5.22 In addition, a wide variety of recommendations were collected during the research process. Examples listed below are some of these suggestions.

Central and Wanchai – By moving the extension of the Convention and Exhibition Centre, and the new Government Offices to North Point/Quarry Bay, Kai Tak or elsewhere, the planned 13 lanes of road around the Grand Hyatt and the 6-lane P2 can be reduced significantly.

North Point/Quarry Bay – We recommend to commencing a feasibility study into submerging the Eastern Island Corridor. With the northern edge of the current road as the new harbour-front, significant land values can be created to fund this conversion.

Taikooshing – A wide underpass is recommended under the highway to connect with the Quarry Bay park, and the development of a public boat club and related facilities in the park.

Kwun Tong – Submerging the Kwun Tong Bypass can create a better connection between Kwun Tong and Kai Tak, giving living, working and leisure in Southeast Kowloon the full benefit of the harbour.

Tsimshatsui – Redeveloping the restaurant facilities of the Cultural Centre and ultimately consider removing the space and arts museum to create a visual corridor from Nathan Road.

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Participants

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