

**Submission from
Dr Andrew Thomson**



Business Environment Council Limited 商界環保協會有限公司

Room 201, 2/F, Jockey Club Environmental Building, 77 Tai Chee Avenue, Kowloon, Hong Kong 香港九龍達之路77號賽馬會環保樓2樓201室
Telephone 電話: (852) 2784 3900 Facsimile 傳真: (852) 2784 6699 Web site 網址: <http://www.bec.org.hk>

June 17, 2004

Chairman and Members of the
Harbour-front Enhancement Committee
c/o The Secretariat of the Harbour-front Enhancement Committee
Housing, Planning and Lands Bureau
18/F Murray Building
Garden Road
Central, Hong Kong

Tel: (852) 2126 7272
Fax: (852) 2868 4530
Email: enquiry@harbourfront.org.hk

Honorable Chairman and Colleagues,

Re: First meeting, harbour tour, and various documents submitted.

The business community has a strong interest in ensuring that we maximize the potential of Victoria Harbour. Key is the sustainable development of the foreshore with the following objectives:

- To increase Hong Kong's capacity for entertaining residents and attracting more tourists to spend more time and money;
- To be the premier address for Asia's corporate headquarters and that of the global leaders in the financial and business services industry – a mainstay of our economy.

The foreshore is currently underdeveloped and is primarily used as a vehicular transport thoroughfare. The limited land available is dominated, and increasingly so, by surface and elevated roads. This means that little land is available for developing the foreshore and that the road infrastructure greatly limits pedestrian access to the harbour-front.

With reclamation no longer a material option, great care and coordinated effort is required to ensure we create a sustainable and vibrant foreshore, and an active harbour.

With a multitude of views represented on the Harbour-front Enhancement Committee (HEC) we trust that the advice and ideas generated by members of the HEC will be considered crucial cues for resolving conflicting requirements, especially between individual departments within Government.

We look forward to participation by all members of the HEC as equal stakeholders, and that there will be a genuine search for optimal and sustainable solutions, not merely justifications of prior decisions.

To this effect, we do expect that the work and effort expended by the unofficial members at no pay and entirely out of their concern for the betterment of Hong Kong, will be honored with a true and transparent review of all alternative options and that the official member organizations will provide ample resources to support all reasonable requests by the unofficial members.

Under such circumstances, one may equally expect full support from the unofficial members in engaging the stakeholder communities they represent in planning, decision-making and implementation. We certainly undertake to engage the business community in this regard.


In response to the various documents submitted during the first meeting and during the Harbour Tour, we attach the following submissions:

- A. Modus Operandi
- B. Guiding Assumptions and Principles For Harbour-front Enhancement
- C. Southeast Kowloon Development Planning and Engineering Review
- D. Central Reclamation III
- E. Wanchai Development Phase II Study
- F. Eastern Island Corridor
- G. Harbour and Waterfront Plan Review, Harbour Agency and Community Engagement
- H. Quick Enhancement Projects

Finally, we look forward to schedule a time and create an opportunity for the presentation of the findings from Designing Hong Kong Harbour District to the Harbour-front Enhancement Committee, and have proposed to table the final report, and present the findings at the coming meeting on July 8th

The findings are the outcome of a research and consensus building exercise on the guiding principles for sustainable planning of a world-class harbour district.

Yours sincerely,
Business Environment Council



Dr Andrew L. Thomson
Chief Executive Officer

Submission by the Business Environment Council

To: Harbour-front Enhancement Committee

Re: Modus Operandi

Date: June 15, 2004

1. SUB – COMMITTEES: We recommend that in addition to Sub-committees focused on Wanchai, SEK and the Harbour Plan, that additional Sub-committee specifically focus on a. Community Participation, b. Foreshore Authority and Institutional Arrangements, c. An Active Harbour (use of the harbour itself).
2. REPRESENTATION: To ensure expediency, we request that unofficial member organizations can appoint alternate members to represent the relevant organization on the HEC and the various sub-committees. Our time is provided free and in addition to our regular work commitments. This arrangement will facilitate providing ongoing and quality input in the work of the HEC and the various projects. As the representative of the business sector, we certainly have an interest in ensuring appropriate participation at all times in all sub-committees.
3. GUIDING PRINCIPLES: Prior to separating the work at hand in different work groups, we request that a process is agreed on to build consensus among the HEC members on the overall principles and objectives of the work of the Harbour-front Enhancement Committee. As a starting point we recommend:
 - a. The Harbour Planning Principles identified in the Harbour Plan and previously published by the Town Planning Board
 - b. The Urban Design and Landscaping Principles identified in the Harbour Plan
 - c. The principles established by CE @ H
 - d. The 21 measures of success published by Designing Hong Kong Harbour District
 - e. The findings and recommendations by Designing Hong Kong Harbour District, a 6-month research and consensus building exercise on the guiding principles for sustainable planning of a world-class harbour district.
 - f. To this effect, we recommend a workshop for members of the HEC to review the above sets of principles, and agree the final guiding principles for the work of the HEC. The workshop to may include presentations by the proponents of the above sets of principles.

Submission by the Business Environment Council

To: Harbour-front Enhancement Committee

Re: Guiding Assumptions and Principles for Harbour-front Enhancement

Date: June 15, 2004

A. Guiding Assumptions

1. With the Harbour Protection 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.
2. Hong Kong will need to build capacity to handle an estimated 70 million tourist trips and 9.2 million residents by 2030.
3. 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.
4. The foreshore of Victoria Harbour defines our global brand image and is an invaluable asset in building this capacity.

B. Guiding Principles for Harbour-front Enhancement

5. Physical Access – A 'pedestrian first' strategy is required with a goal of ensuring ample, convenient and liberal access to the foreshore areas. With the harbour naturally at grade, a rethink of grade separation of various modes of traffic is needed. Rather than a simple 'City-in-the-sky' concept, an integrated multiple grade living, working and transport approach is needed with an absolute preference for depressed or sub-merged transport infrastructure. In general, open-air at-grade crossings are preferred to ensure convenience as well as visual access to the harbour. Wide underground passages such as to the Central Star Ferry (and wider) are preferred over for example the crossings under Salisbury road. Most of the current elevated walkways over road works in the foreshore are limited in function and inconvenient, especially for invalids and elderly. Walkway systems need to be developed further, fully integrated with indoor and open-air podiums, to provide the necessary capacity for pedestrian mobility in the key foreshore areas, including Tsimshatsui. But such elevated environment can't replace the need for a high-quality at-grade environment, and great care is needed for how the different grade environments merge and connect with the harbour-front.
6. 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. In this regards, a long-term goal could be the removal of the Space Museum and Museum of Art to open up the views from Nathan Road and The Peninsula.

7. 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. Commercial zoned land is needed annex public land and facilities, and new procedures for licenses and permits are needed for the establishment and operation of commercial ventures on public land.
8. 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'. Critical is a new attitude towards licencing stalls, vendors, entertainers and others on public land and facilities. Mixed usage – not just high-end tourist facilities is key.
9. Activation – With the exception of one private yacht club and Queen's Pier, there is no public access to the water itself. In fact, in many places it is even forbidden to fish. Public marinas, boat clubs, shelters, moorings, piers, launches, and boat storage facilities are required east of the Star Ferry piers along both sides of the harbour, to allow the public to access the water for leisure activities. More over, competitive water sports events such as sailing, boating, rowing, and Dragon Boat Races as well as the preparation and training for these events, will add life and excitement and draw people to the foreshore.
10. Space – There is no material new land to be added. Clear choices will need to be made on land-use between property development, surface/elevated transport infrastructure, and public open space. Given the limited space available and the domination by transport infrastructure, reducing the 'footprint' (and 'waterprint') of surface and elevated roads in the foreshore is logical and critical. The consequence of this is that more money will be needed for re-engineering existing corridors. Failing to increase capacity further, traffic volume must be strictly managed including a moratorium on development to maintain or reduce the traffic flows into certain areas.
11. The Harbour Protection Ordinance – It may appear that under the current interpretation of the Harbour Protection Ordinance, only reclamation for transport infrastructure can pass the 'overriding public needs test'. If proven true, and especially when combined with the current process whereby the lowest cost engineering solutions are applied, this will lead to a sterile waterfront, a harbour without activity, and a foreshore consisting of only transport infrastructure. This threat is real and present as demonstrated in the latest submissions to LegCo of plans regarding Route 4. A clear policy is required from all Departments to steer Hong Kong away from this scenario.
12. 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.

13. Process and Independent Experts - A clear process needs to be agreed for the testing of all reasonable alternatives, including the appointment of Independent Experts required for such reviews by the HEC. This will ensure that reviews are truly independent rather than a promotion of existing plans or prevailing views of certain Departments.
14. 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, including with setting the agenda and briefs, is required.
15. Institutions – It is strongly recommended that foreshore development is placed with a statutory body such as a 'Foreshore Authority' with a board composed of different stakeholders, full ownership of land, ultimate control and power over all facilities and infrastructure within its domain, and with clear guidelines on consultation, participation, adjudication, mediation and appeals.

Submission by the Business Environment Council

To: Harbour-front Enhancement Committee

Re: Southeast Kowloon Development Planning and Engineering Review (SEK)

Date: June 15, 2004

1. The brief for SEK must recognize that this area is the only 'virgin' land within Victoria Harbour. The designated land-use and function must therefore take into account of the need for shifting planned developments to reduce intensity and density in other areas. Examples include new financial and commercial offices, government offices and conferencing/exhibition facilities, which are currently planned for Central and Wanchai.
2. SEK is the only area without major surface or elevated transport infrastructure limiting visual or physical access to the harbour front – this must be safeguarded and explored as a high value asset.
3. For the longer term, consideration should be given to submerging and depressing the current Kwun Tong Bypass to stimulate the redevelopment of Kwun Tong and Kowloon Bay together with the Kai Tak area.
4. The review must include at least consider the possibility of reducing the current land mass as well as lengthening the harbour-front to provide a more interesting coastline and land form.
5. The review must include the need for public amenities which facilitate activation of the harbour itself, including boat clubs, piers, moorings, board walks, and others which enable the public to store and launch boats, enjoy fishing, or otherwise use the harbour as they see fit.
6. Reviewing the current draft of the brief and the specified tender procedure (which normally leads to acceptance of the lowest cost bidder), special care must be given to ensure that the review is foremost a strategic planning study.
7. We recommend that Kai Tak be granted to a Harbour or Foreshore Authority, responsible for the planning, development and management of the area.

Submission by the Business Environment Council

To: Harbour-front Enhancement Committee

Re: Central Reclamation III (CR3)

Date: June 15, 2004

1. We understand the urgency of providing capacity for the vehicular traffic related to IFC2 and the Four Seasons Hotel. We recommend though that the designs for P2 and related transport infrastructure is reviewed and agreed with HEC. We specifically urge that P2 is engineered in such a way as to minimize obstruction to pedestrian traffic.
2. Given the review of Wanchai, and the observations made earlier, we urge the relevant Departments to ensure that the engineering of CR III currently underway does not preclude other alternative transport policies and infrastructure for Wanchai and Causeway Bay. In cases where alternatives for transport infrastructure in Wanchai and Causeway Bay are limited because of engineering constraints in existence at CR3, then these should be identified at once.
3. Given the impact of land-use on CR3 and adjacent areas on the need for surface roads, we request that these plans are reviewed and agreed with HEC. Specifically we recommend a review of the location of major new traffic contributors such as the Groundscraper, the Government Offices planned for Tamar, and the Extension of the Convention and Exhibition Center.

Submission by the Business Environment Council

To: Harbour-front Enhancement Committee

Re: Wanchai Development Phase II Study (WII)

Date: June 15, 2004

1. The review of the CWB, P2 and IEC link requires a new set of parameters for the design brief, including minimizing the aggregate footprint of transport infrastructure and improving harbour-front access. Moreover, review of reasonable alternatives should include the planned intensity, the volume of trips, the modal split and the trip assignment, plus any specific design brief objectives. The base line option should be maintaining or reducing the existing intensity and density in both the new and existing foreshore as well as adjacent areas.
2. Further to submissions by HEC member, Dr. W.K. Chan, and the representative of CE @ H, we support the need for a comprehensive sustainable development review of Hong Kong Island North including land-use, transport policy and infrastructure.
3. The objectives should include among others to:
 - i. Improve the Hong Kong Island foreshore as a world class environment for tourists and residents;
 - ii. Mitigate the current shortcomings of Wanchai North, pedestrian linkages, foreshore, and harbour-front;
 - iii. Minimize the footprint of surface and elevated infrastructure, including a possible re-engineering of existing road infrastructure;
 - iv. Improve visual and physical pedestrian access to and along the harbour;
 - v. Minimize the need for reclamation;
 - vi. Create generous opportunities for people to enjoy the harbour-front with mixed 'vibrancy' – from free, to affordable, to luxurious;
 - vii. Accommodate all alternative modes of transport including train, ferry, helicopter, and others;
 - viii. Ensure public access to the harbour itself;
 - ix. Ensure sustainable vehicular mobility both with infrastructure and transport management systems;
 - x. Review the possibility of lengthening the harbour-front to provide a more interesting urban form.

4. At a minimum WII must be reviewed together with land-use plans and policies for Central, Wanchai and Causeway Bay, the impact on transport demand and an analysis of how changes in these plans and policies may impact possible needs for reclamation, and meet the overall guiding principles. Specifically we recommend a review of the location of major new traffic contributors such as the Groundscraper, the Government Offices planned for Tamar, and the Extension of the Convention and Exhibition Center.
5. The review should not shy away from studying the possibility of re-engineering existing infrastructure including identifying the cost and benefit of making changes to Connaught Road and the Happy Valley/Harbour Tunnel interchange (even if that requires temporary reclamation for a temporary road-deck).



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Room 201, 2/F, Jockey Club Environmental Building, 77 Tat Chee Avenue, Kowloon, Hong Kong 香港九龍達之路77號賽馬會環保樓2樓201室
Telephone 電話: (852) 2784 3900 Facsimile 傳真: (852) 2784 6699 Web site 網址: <http://www.bec.org.hk>

Submission by the Business Environment Council

To: Harbour-front Enhancement Committee

Re: Eastern Island Corridor

Date: June 15, 2004

Prior to final decisions on extending the elevated Eastern Island Corridor to Wanchai, or finalizing the decision on the Eastern Island Corridor and Central-Wanchai Bypass Link, we strongly suggest a full assessment of the cost and benefits of submerging the Eastern Island Corridor.

The new tunnel can be built north of the current road works, and once completed, the elevated road can be demolished and replaced with land ready for both development and public amenities.

Submission by the Business Environment Council

To: Harbour-front Enhancement Committee

Re: Harbour and Waterfront Plan Review, Harbour Agency and Community Engagement

Date: June 15, 2004

Harbour and Waterfront Plan Review

1. We welcome the 'Harbour and Waterfront Plan' review. We believe though that the term 'enhancement', design and improvement schemes' understates the development and re-engineering work required.
2. The Planning Study on the Harbour and its Waterfront Areas was a comprehensive study, which clearly identified a wide range of opportunities. Key shortcomings include:
 - i. Failure to identify that tourists will follow residents;
 - ii. The need for organic development;
 - iii. The need to re-engineer road works;
 - iv. That the entire 'harbour district' between East and West tunnel is a cluster for tourism and related facilities;
 - v. That there is no natural coastline, and that the existing coastline requires improvement;
 - vi. That the continuous promenade concept and various urban design principles identified have been in existence for quite some time, the promenade was first envisaged in 1972, and that the key is to rectify the system failures in delivering on these principles
 - vii. That an active harbour requires boating facilities, piers, moorings, ramps, club houses, storage facilities and others to facilitate usage of the harbour itself.

Harbour Agency/Authority

3. We strongly recommend a separate sub-committee and a seminar or conference – including the academic, legal and property stakeholders - to review the various possible models for a Harbour Agency/Authority and to discuss the merits of each for Hong Kong, as a means of fast-tracking the decision on the establishment of the Agency/Authority.

Community Engagement Programme

4. We strongly support a well-funded, well-promoted and planned community engagement programme. It appears that the current programme is somewhat ambitious – specifically the consultation of HEC will need a dedicated workshop to ensure the principles have been well identified. To this effect we recommend that the a presentation by 'Designing Hong Kong Harbour District' is arranged to HEC and Town Planning Board, with a subsequent discussion on the key principles for our work.

Submission by the Business Environment Council

To: Harbour-front Enhancement Committee

Re: Quick Enhancement Projects

Date: June 15, 2004

Following are comments on the quick enhancement projects, and suggestions for new ones.

Our view is that the projects should meet the guiding principles outlined separately, should be sustainable, and where possible should generate jobs and profits.

1. Tsimshatsui Promenade

- a. Reclaim or deck the 'inland water' between the Tsimshatsui promenade and the Intercontinental hotel to create more useable space.
- b. Re-engineer the back of the Museum of Art, the restaurant facilities of the Cultural Centre and the various ponds, to create restaurants and bars with outdoor seating facing the harbour.
- c. Create visual access to the harbour and the surrounding city for pedestrians on the main roads (Salisbury Road, Nathan Road, etc).
- d. Restore a wide at-grade pedestrian crossing over Salisbury Road in front of The Peninsula Hotel.
- e. Depress the Salisbury Road surface to facilitate a low pedestrian deck to cross over to the harbour-front.

2. Tamar

- a. Facilitate a semi-permanent venue on Tamar for events and entertainment.

3. Cargo Bay Handling Areas

- a. Facilitate temporary usage of the previous cargo handling areas in Wanchai for the enjoyment of the public, as well as any other open space available pending development around the harbour.
- b. Make the helicopter pier open to all helicopter services and improve access and directions from Excelsior Hotel and the Police Club.

4. Victoria Park

- a. Open up access and provide signage to the stairs to the leading waterfront via Victoria Park (currently closed with a fence).

5. Sheung Wan Harbour Front

- a. Access is a significant problem
- b. The possibility of wide underpasses or other alternatives need to be considered
- c. In addition to park amenities, we recommend a commercial venue operation, including possibly facilities such as X-Games Park, pavilions, etc.

6. Outlying Island Ferry Piers

- a. They are too remote to become an attraction on their own.
- b. An integrated review of the area is required.
- c. The entire pedestrian commute to the Central and Outlying Island Ferry Piers must be addressed
- d. Consideration must be given to allow temporary market and/or stalls in the area.

7. Central Reclamation 3

- a. Turn the hoardings of CR3 into an art project.
- b. Provide more comprehensive information on timing, progress, etc both on site and on the web.

8. Quarry Bay Park

- a. Provide wide under pass for access to Quarry Bay Park from Taikoo Shing playground
- b. Make land available for public boating club, and construct pier and other facilities.

9. The Hung Hom Waterfront

- a. Hung Hom has ample space for 'vibrancy' – with a range of possible facilities, for day and night time, with suitable amenities and commercial operations
- b. Hung Hom has space for 'harbour activation' – with a boating club, pier, launch and mooring facilities.

10. West Kowloon

- a. Ensure an affordable 'vibrancy' with a flexible approach licensing to allow street artists and commercial stalls.

11. General

- a. Remove the "no fishing" signs anywhere and everywhere along the harbour-front.
- b. Remove unsightly fences and barriers to the harbour, and relocate temporary storage areas to less valuable locations.
- c. Facilitate temporary usage of open land around the harbour, which is pending development in the future.