

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

Minutes of the Fifth Meeting

Date : 4 May 2009
Time : 2:30 p.m.
Venue : Conference Room
15/F, North Point Government Offices
333 Java Road, North Point, Hong Kong

Present

Ir. Dr. Greg Wong (Chairman)	Hong Kong Institution of Engineers
Dr. Alvin Kwok	Conservancy Association
Mr. Andy Leung	Hong Kong Institute of Architects (HKIA)
Mr. Kim Chan	Hong Kong Institute of Planners (HKIP)
Mr. Paul Zimmerman	Society for Protection of the Harbour Limited (SPH)
Mr. Nicholas Brooke	
Mr. Jimmy Kwok	
Mr. Patrick Lau	
Ms. Alice Cheung	Principal Assistant Secretary (Harbour), Development Bureau (DEVB)
Mr. Chan Chung-yuen	Senior Engineer/Housing & Planning, Traffic Engineering (HK) Division, Transport Department (TD)
Mr. Eric Fung	Chief Engineer/Hong Kong 1, Civil Engineering and Development Department (CEDD)
Miss Ophelia Wong	Deputy Director/District, Planning Department (PlanD)
Mr. Roy Li (Secretary)	Senior Town Planner/Special Duties 2, PlanD

In Attendance

Ms. Lydia Lam	Assistant Secretary (Harbour)1, DEVB
Ms. Phyllis Li	Assistant Director/Special Duties, PlanD
Miss Fiona Lung	Chief Town Planner/Special Duties, PlanD
Ms. Jenny Poon	Senior Estate Surveyor/West, District Lands Office,

Miss Regina Yeung	Hong Kong West & South, Lands Department
Mr. Wong Kam-tong	Chief Transport Officer/Hong Kong, TD Engineer/Central and Western 3, Drainage Services Department
Mr. Stephen Yiu	Senior Engineer/Technical Services 1/Railway Development Office, Highways Department
Mr. Kryan Sze	Aedas Ltd. (Aedas)
Ms. Irene Ip	Aedas
Mr. Tony Yeung	Aedas
Miss Elaine Lee	Aedas
Professor C.M. Tam	CityU Professional Services Ltd. (CPS)
Dr. K. K. Yuen	PolyU Public Policy Research Institute (PPRI)

Absent with Apologies

Mr. Roger Nissim	Business Environment Council
Professor S.C. Wong	Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport in Hong Kong
Dr. Ng Mee-kam	Citizen Envisioning @ Harbour (CE@H)
Mr. Samuel Mok	
Mr. Derrick Pang	
Mr. Michael Hui	

Item 1 Confirmation of Minutes of the Fourth Meeting

Action

- 1.1 **The Secretary** reported that the draft minutes of the fourth meeting were circulated to Members for comment on 30.12.2008 and no comment was received. He clarified that the copy forwarded to TGUDS members via the emails of 24.4.2009 and 30.4.2009 was not the correct version. The correct version of the minutes circulated on 30.12.2008 was tabled at the meeting for Members' reference.
- 1.2 As there were no comments raised by Members, the draft minutes were confirmed.

Item 2 Matters Arising

- 2.1 **The Secretary** reported that the follow up issues arising from the last meeting had been dealt with in the two informal meetings held for the preparation of the Consolidation Forum on 8.1.2009 and 12.2.2009 respectively. The respective minutes had already been issued to Members. The Forum was held on 28.2.2009. Hence, there was no item under matters arising for discussion at this meeting.

**Item 3 Review of Outstanding Issues
Raised at the Consolidation Forum (Paper No. 1/2009)**

- 3.1 Before inviting the Study Team to make the presentation, **the Chairman** said that during the afternoon session of the Forum held on 28.2.2009, there was thorough discussion on some alternative proposals and views made by the participants and the responses made by the Technical Panel, which was composed of the concerned Government departments. He cited some of the issues that were discussed and agreed at the Consolidation Forum :

- (a) The Government would examine the proposed development bulk for Sites 1 and 2.
- (b) There would be additional commercial floorspace provided above the ferry piers.
- (c) There would be a hybrid option of Urban Green and Urban Park options for the waterfront promenade.
- (d) There would be provision for electric trolley cars at the waterfront promenade.

- 3.2 **The Chairman** explained that the purpose of this

meeting was for the Study Team to report back the outstanding issues which the Technical Panel agreed to undertake further review after the Consolidation Forum, which included :

- Technical feasibility of the “lagoon” proposal;
- Design proposal for locating the old Star Ferry Clock Tower (SFCT) at original location;
- Comprehensive Review on public transport facilities; and
- Additional decks over roads.

3.3 **Mr. Nicholas Brooke** asked whether the Study Team’s responses to be provided at this meeting could be taken as ‘Technical Responses’. **The Chairman** said that some issues, such as public transport facilities and the proposed deck developments, were related to both technical and planning aspects. He therefore considered that it was not necessary to distinguish whether the Study Team’s responses were ‘Technical Responses’.

3.4 **Miss Fiona Lung** introduced the background and purpose of the paper. **Mr. Kyran Sze** then presented the paper with the aid of a powerpoint presentation.

3.5 **Miss Fiona Lung** remarked that Members had already been briefed on 10.12.2008 and 8.1.2009 on the findings of the Stage 2 Public Engagement and the Study Team’s initial design responses. A report on the Consolidation Forum held on 28.2.2009 had also been submitted to Members on 30.4.2009 for consideration. Given that the Stage 2 Public Engagement had been completed, she invited Members to formulate their views on the design proposals of the Study for consideration by HEC.

Technical Feasibility of the “Lagoon” Proposal

3.6 The key points raised by individual Members were summarized as follows:

- (a) **The Chairman** enquired whether the proposed lagoon would be filled with salt water or fresh water, and whether the Study Team had examined the technical feasibility to connect the proposed lagoon to the sea, like a ‘reflective pool’. Furthermore, referring to Figure 3b of the TGUDS Paper No. 1/2009, he noted that there was a large water body to the west of the reassembled Queen’s Pier (QP) at its original location, but only a small one to its east. He enquired the shortest distance within the lagoon area from the QP to the realigned Road P2;
- (b) **Mr. Paul Zimmerman** asked if there was any particular reason of examining the “lagoon” proposal put forward by HKIA, instead of the “inner harbour” proposal put forward by Hong Kong Urban Design Alliance (HKUDA). He objected to the modified “lagoon” proposals put forward by the Study Team and said that a waterbody in the shape of an inner harbour could be considered. **Mr. Andy Leung** clarified that HKIA’s preference was the “inner harbour” proposal. The “lagoon” proposal was presented in view of the concerns on the technical practicability of the “inner harbour” proposal.
- (c) **The Chairman** asked if Road P2 could be further realigned northwards to cater for a larger lagoon, such as further adjusting the portion of the realigned Road P2 between the roundabout of Road P1 and the underpass at the Tamar site.
- (d) **Dr. Alvin Kwok** enquired whether it was technically feasible to raise part of Road P2 to allow a continuous flow of the water body underneath Road P2.
- (e) **Mr. Andy Leung** reckoned that there was concern

on the shallow water depth and the exposure of the Central-Wanchai Bypass (CWB) tunnel structure with its 4.5m rockfill protection layer during the low tide when examining the “inner harbour” proposal. He enquired if the design of the protection layer during the low tide could be revised. He also suggested CEDD to explore the possibility of extending the lagoon beyond Road P2 by raising part of Road P2 to allow water to pass through underneath.

- (f) **Mr. Nicholas Brooke** said that there was a clear message from the participants at the Consolidation Forum to demand for some water feature in the harbourfront area, no matter it was an “inner harbour” or a “lagoon”. The Government should have creative thinking and an open mind to address the public aspiration.

- (g) **Mr. Paul Zimmerman** said that he was disappointed that the Government could not gain insights from the previous HEC site visits to the 3 cities (i.e. Sydney, Vancouver and San Francisco) with fantastic harbourfront design. It seemed that the Government did not intend to have a constructive dialogue with the public, and examine positively the feed-back. He asked CEDD to advise the feasibility of a closed water body or a partially closed water body with ‘dolphin buoys’ to avoid the need for the protection layer. He also asked how the Study Team would take forward the constructive ideas proposed by the public, particularly whether the new roads were needed after taking into account the revised planning and design proposals. He expressed concern over the delay in responding to the public comments as raised in the Consolidation Forum, and the lack of flexibility in adapting to the proposals received.

- (h) **Dr. Alvin Kwok** said that like some of the leisure resorts in South-east Asia, the Study Team might explore the technical feasibility of providing a lagoon close to the sea with a virtual connection of water bodies. **Mr. Nicholas Brooke** opined that the provision of another seawall structure could address the tidal impact and might make the inner harbour feasible. **Mr. Andy Leung** suggested putting the lagoon close to the waterfront. He pointed out that although the seawalls in Hong Kong would normally be 4 to 5m high, it would still be feasible to raise the water level of the lagoon, since it was not directly connected to the sea. He cited the example of Amsterdam, Holland that there was a tunnel built under the sea at the waterfront with a museum above. He said that for reference purpose, there was a wide variety of waterfront designs and the Government should keep an open-minded attitude in studying the proposals.
- (i) **The Chairman** asked the Study Team whether the exposure of the CWB tunnel and its protection layer was the main obstacle rendering the “inner harbour” proposal not feasible. **Mr. Kim Chan** also enquired what major drawbacks of exposing the tunnel structures above the “inner harbour” would be. He opined that, with creative design, the constraint might become an interesting design feature.

3.7 In response, the Study Team made the following key points:

- (a) The proposed lagoon would be filled with fresh water.
- (b) Miss Fiona Lung said that the technical constraints of the “inner harbour” proposal had already been

thoroughly explained at the Consolidation Forum. The Study Team only undertook to further examine HKIA's "lagoon" proposal and report back to the TGUDS. The Study Team had asked TD to review the possibility of realigning Road P2 to join Road P1 and deleting Road D6, as proposed by HKIA. TD advised that HKIA's proposal is not workable as it would adversely affect the capacity of the existing main road. To cater for the "lagoon" proposal, TD proposed an alternative alignment of Road P2 by connecting Road P2 with the junction of Roads P1 and D6 (Figure 2 of the TGUDS Paper No. 1/2009). Based on TD's proposal, the Study Consultant then considered how the "lagoon" proposal could be incorporated and developed 2 options for illustration (Figures 3a and 3b of the TGUDS Paper).

- (c) Referring to Figure 3b of the TGUDS paper, the shortest distance between Road P2 and the eastern and western ends of the QP ranged from about 10m to 30m respectively.
- (d) The "inner harbour" proposal was considered impracticable as the CWB tunnel would be running underneath the proposed inner harbour. The protection layer of the CWB tunnel would be completely exposed during low tide. **Mr. Stephen Yiu** explained that a thick protection layer was needed to protect the CWB tunnel. Exposing the tunnel structure was unsafe due to the risk of the crash of vessels from the sea under adverse weather conditions.
- (e) With regard to the HKIA's proposal to cancel the junction serving Man Cheung Street, Road P2 and Man Yiu Street, **Mr. Chan Chung-yuen** advised that the removal of the junction would lead to adverse traffic impact to the road network in the

vicinity.

- (f) **Mr. Chan Chung-yuen** explained that the realignment of Road P2 was constrained by the underpass that was built near the Tamar Site. It was not technically feasible to substantially shift Road P2 further northwards. There might be scope for a slight shift of the road subject to further assessment. **Mr. Eric Fung** also explained that the realignment would require a transition curve of adequate length to ensure compliance with the relevant road design standard.
- (g) On the proposal of raising part of Road P2 to allow a continuous flow of the water body underneath, **Mr. Chan Chung-yuen** opined that the scope would be very limited because adequate space would need to be reserved for the columns and other supports for the elevated structures. He cautioned that if an elevated road was built above the lagoon, it would inevitably create a blocking effect and lead to adverse visual impact.
- (h) In comparing the options of shifting the road alignment northwards and raising the road structure, **Mr. Chan Chung-yuen** considered the former option would be relatively more practicable, subject to further examination, but the alignment might look odd.
- (i) As previously explained at the Consolidation Forum, even without the protection layer, the top level of the roof slab of the CWB tunnel was about 0 to -2.0 mPD across the proposed “inner harbour”. In other words, there might be a portion of the tunnel totally exposed and without any water coverage. The exposed portion of CWB protective layer would render the inner harbour impracticable. The shallow water depth might also create odour

problem. Anyway, HyD would further confirm the minimum thickness of the protective layer and CEDD would examine the ‘dolphin’ feature proposed at the entrance of the “inner harbour”.

Old SFCT at Original Location

3.8 The key points raised by individual Members were summarized as follows:

- (a) **Mr. Paul Zimmerman** said that the old Star Ferry Clock should chime at its original location from heritage conservation point of view. He used the example of the Sun Yat Sen Trail to highlight that the SFCT could be a simple street art at low cost to highlight a historic fact. Additional cost incurred for the foundation was considered acceptable. He opined that it would not be necessary to provide the exhibition gallery around the old SFCT.
- (b) **Dr. Alvin Kwok** supported the reassembly of the old SFCT at its original location.
- (c) **Mr. Jimmy Kwok** took a neutral stance on the location of the old SFCT. He commented that whether the old SFCT should be reassembled at the original location would depend on technical feasibility. He expressed concern on the additional cost involved in reconstructing the old SFCT at its original location as public money should be used cautiously.
- (d) **The Chairman** and **Mr. Nicholas Brooke** were concerned about the surrounding context of the reconstructed old SFCT. They opined that the areas around the old SFCT should be well planned and its visibility from Site 3 should be well taken care of.

3.9 In response, the Study Team made the following key

points:

- (a) **Ms. Irene Ip** advised that the old SFCT at its original location would be close to Road P2 and more susceptible to traffic noise nuisance. The location was also close to the landscaped deck of Site 3 and the design of the two should be well integrated. The old SFCT would be visible mainly from the landscape deck of Site 3.
- (b) **Mr. Eric Fung** said that the estimated additional cost of \$20M was for the foundation works of the SFCT only and the current proposed location for the gallery was not directly above the culvert.

Comprehensive Review on Public Transport Facilities

3.10 The key points raised by individual Members were summarized as follows:

- (a) **The Chairman** said that TGUDS generally welcomed the removal of the PTI from Site 2 to allow more pedestrian space at the waterfront, while bus laybys at the pier area were retained.
- (b) **Mr. Paul Zimmerman** questioned the need of Roads P1 and D6, and suggested to realign, remove or pedestrianize (at specific times, such as night time) the roads. He also requested TD to provide more information on the traffic assessment for Members' consideration, and indicated that he might provide further comments after the meeting.

[Post Meeting Note : In Mr. Paul Zimmerman's email dated 18.6.2009, he raised objection to the proposed arrangements for transport infrastructure as highlighted in Figure 5 of the TGUDS Paper No. 1/2009 as it appeared from the plan that the actual amount of land used by bus stops was similar to that by the PTI, and that the transport facilities under Site 3 had yet to be

moved elsewhere or underground.]

3.11 In response, the Study Team made the following key points:

(a) **Mr. Chan Chung-yuen** explained that the new road network at the Central Harbourfront would primarily serve 3 purposes :

- as district road distributing the traffic of CWB;
- as service roads for existing developments at the Central Harbourfront, e.g. IFC I & II and Hong Kong Airport Express Station etc.. At present, the traffic generated by these developments still had to rely on Connaught Road Central and Man Yiu Street, which had aggravated the traffic congestion problem in the area; and
- as service roads for the new developments, e.g. Sites 1 to 3 under the study.

Mr. Chan further elaborated that, the traffic generated by the existing developments, committed developments and the CWB already accounted for more than half of the traffic using the at-grade roads in the reclamation area. The reduction of GFA of the new developments only accounted for a small percentage of the estimated traffic volume.

(b) The main function of Road D6 was to connect Roads P1 with P2. Regarding the road width of Roads P1 and P2, they should remain as a dual 2-lane road as a single lane road would not be able to cope with the anticipated traffic demand. As explained in previous occasions, additional turning pockets would be required at the junctions of these roads to enhance junction performance.

Additional Decks over Roads

3.12 The key points raised by individual Members were summarized as follows:

- (a) **Mr. Paul Zimmerman** explained that the issue was not pedestrian connectivity with tubes, decks or walkways but the concerns over the lack of uses and the density in the area, and ways and means to overcome the segregation of different sites by massive transport infrastructure. He called for extensive decks and developments over the roads which segregated HKAPA, Site 5, Site 6, Grand Hyatt and HKCEC, enabling multiple uses and offering multiple attractions. He supported the HKUDA concepts of cultural and leisure facilities including a large marine museum to allow developments above to make the area more vibrant. He questioned why a deck was provided in Site 3, but the proposed deck near Site 6 was not supported.
- (b) **Mr. Patrick Lau** enquired if there were any merits to plan a large outdoor open space serving as an ancillary area of HKCEC, which was one of the major exhibition centres in Hong Kong. He considered that the provision of proposed deck was more than a connectivity issue. It should be addressed from planning and urban design perspectives.
- (c) **Mr. Nicholas Brooke** considered that there was an extensive area west of HKCEC being sterilized by road infrastructure. The Study Consultant should examine and put forward a solution to mitigate the problem to achieve a quality waterfront.
- (d) **Mr. Andy Leung** was concerned about the poor connection from the inner part of Wanchai to the waterfront. He suggested to make better use of the

area and asked the Study Consultant to explore the possibility of developing a vibrant elevated walkway system to link the area up to the west of HKCEC site, but not necessarily by putting an extensive deck over the planned open space. He suggested the Study Consultant to explore an integrated solution to link up the proposed landscaped deck (as shown orange on Slide 16 of the powerpoint), future HKCEC and HKAPA extensions, planned open space and existing developments through a vibrant elevated walkway system to make the area more vibrant. The Government should also encourage all future owners to open up some of their area for public passage to strengthen the character of the area as an art and cultural precinct.

- 3.13 The Consultant pointed out that the large open space to the south of Site 6 was outside the key sites identified for detailed study.
- 3.14 In response to Members' comments, the Study Team made the following key points:
- (a) The Study Team had thoroughly examined the deck proposal and considered that an extensive deck along the harbour edge and covering the planned open space was not supported from planning and urban design points of view because of the adverse impacts on the planned open space, the visual permeability/access to the harbourfront and air ventilation aspects.
 - (b) The building of a deck across Road P2 would result in reducing the usable space of Site 6 as the supporting structures of the proposed deck would take up valuable space along, and there would likely result in a high wall structure and adverse visual impact along the waterfront. There were also

concerns of having too many decks along the Central harbourfront.

- (c) The landscaped deck to the west of HKCEC had been carefully considered in the WD II Review and could cater for activities other than pedestrian circulation.
- (d) Regarding the suggestion of opening up some area within the HKAPA extension for public passage as part of the integrated walkway system, such request could be further examined.

3.15 **The Chairman** summarized the views and the follow up action agreed to be undertaken by the concerned departments as follows :

Lagoon Proposal

- (a) TD to look into the possibility of revising the proposed alignment of Road P2 further northwards to allow forming a larger water body for the “lagoon” proposal; and

TD

- (b) CEDD and HyD to further look into the “inner harbour” proposal and provide more information on the water depth in relation to the required thickness of the protection layer of CWB tunnel and the feasibility of the ‘dolphin’ feature proposed at the entrance to the inner harbour.

CEDD, HyD

Old SFCT at Original Location

- (c) Members generally supported reassembling the old SFCT at its original location, and requested that the area around the old SFCT should be carefully planned.

Public Transport Facilities

- (d) Members generally welcomed the revised proposal on the public transport facilities, which

was to remove the PTI at Site 2 from the new Central harbourfront; and

- (e) TD was asked to provide more detailed information and data on the traffic demand in relation to the requirement for Roads P1 and P2.

TD

Additional Decks over Roads

- (f) Members were in favour of a vibrant elevated walkway system for the arts and cultural precinct to link up the area to the south of Site 6. The Study Team was asked to explore an integrated solution relating to the provision of a vibrant elevated walkway system to link up the development sites south of Road P2 with Site 6.

Aedas

- 3.16 As proposed by **Mr. Paul Zimmerman, the Chairman** agreed that Members could make written comments on the Paper after the meeting.

All to Note

(Post-meeting Note : Written comment received from Dr. Mee-kam Ng on 6.5.2009 was attached at **Annex.**)

Item 4 Any Other Business

- 4.1 **The Chairman** said that in view of the forthcoming expiry of the current term of HEC members and expected change of membership of TGUDS, he suggested and the meeting agreed to prepare a report summarizing the work TGUDS had done in the past two years, including the issues discussed and the views expressed for HEC's consideration. He instructed the Secretary to follow up with the drafting of the report for Members' comment.

Secretary

- 4.2 **Miss Ophelia Wong** added that it would be desirable if TGUDS could formulate its views on the major issues so as to facilitate an early completion of the Study.

4.3 There being no other business, the meeting was closed at 5:00 pm.

**HEC Task Group on Urban Design Study
for the New Central Harbourfront
May 2009**