

For discussion on
14.5.2001

LegCo Panel on Planning, Lands and Works

Planning Study on the Harbour and its Waterfront Areas
An Assessment of the Potential of the Harbour for Tourism Purposes

Stage 1 Public Consultation
Harbour Planning Framework

PURPOSE

1. This paper presents a planning framework for Victoria Harbour and its waterfront areas proposed in the "Planning Study on the Harbour and its Waterfront Areas - An Assessment of the Potential of the Harbour for Tourism Purposes" (the Study) for Member's discussion and comments.

BACKGROUND

2. In October 1999, the Town Planning Board promulgated a "Vision Statement for Victoria Harbour". The vision is "to make Victoria Harbour attractive, vibrant, accessible and symbolic of Hong Kong - a harbour for the people and a harbour of life". The Planning Department subsequently commissioned the Study to translate the Vision Statement into a planning framework to guide future developments along the harbourfront areas, in particular for tourism purposes.

STUDY APPROACH

3. The Study Area covers the entire Victoria Harbour and its waterfront areas from Shau Kei Wan to Kennedy Town on Hong Kong Island; from Lei Yue Mun in Kowloon stretching westward to Tsuen Wan and Ting Kau; and on north and northeast Tsing Yi facing Rambler Channel. The entire coastline measures approximately 70 km.
4. The Study is undertaken in four stages, namely:
 - (a) Stage 1 - Preparation of a Harbour Planning Framework;
 - (b) Stage 2 - Recommendations for a Harbour and Waterfront Plan;
 - (c) Stage 3 - Preparation of a Tourism Plan and Action Area Plans; and
 - (d) Stage 4 - Recommendations for Implementation and Institutional Mechanisms.

5. Stage 1 of the Study, now largely completed, covers the following tasks:
 - (a) studying comparable international experience on waterfront developments;
 - (b) reviewing existing and planned land uses and identifying areas of absolute constraints as well as potential opportunity areas for promoting tourism for further examination in the next stages;
 - (c) identifying key issues for harbour and waterfront development and possible approaches to address those issues; and
 - (d) preparing a Harbour Planning Framework.
6. Two stages of public consultation are planned for the Study - with the current one on the Harbour Planning Framework and second one on the recommendations of Stages 2 to 4 works. Since the Study is undertaken in parallel with the Metroplan Review and its recommendations will provide an input to the Recommended Strategy for Metroplan, the current consultation is undertaken together with the second consultation on the Metroplan Review.

INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

7. The Study has examined the waterfront development of various cities, such as Singapore, Vancouver, Sydney, San Francisco, Baltimore and Cape Town. Relevant successful experience from these cities is being examined in detail to see whether some development concepts and ideas could be adopted locally, while recognising the inherent geographical, social and economic differences between these cities and Hong Kong.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS

Opportunities

8. Victoria Harbour and its waterfront are famous for their skyline, landmark buildings and night views. This is the biggest asset which future developments can capitalise on. The planned reclamation areas provide opportunities for comprehensive and well designed waterfront developments, for example, the new Central Waterfront and Wanchai Development, the proposed Arts, Cultural and Entertainment District in West Kowloon Reclamation and the South East Kowloon Development. Opportunities also exist for incremental improvements to existing facilities and locations, for example, improvement to the Tsim Sha Tsui promenade, revitalisation of the Tsim Sha Tsui East and Hung Hom Bay area.

Constraints

9. The major constraint for tourist development within the Harbour are the existing port-related developments such as container terminals at Kwai Chung, the naval basin at Stonecutters Island and the active industrial area in Kwun Tong. Other areas

may be subject to constraints, such as poor accessibility due to road barriers, discontinuous waterfront access, unattractive pedestrian facilities, the lack of waterfront attractions, monotonously designed waterfront promenades and open space with minimal landscaping, seating and supporting facilities. Such constraints need to be addressed and could be improved.

Competing Waterfront Uses

10. Uses in the harbourfront evolve through time. Many of them have witnessed the changes of Hong Kong from an entrepot to a commercial/financial centre, but still remain as key uses of the harbour and the waterfront. The existence of these "incompatible" uses constitute constraint in developing the harbour to a world-class tourism attraction. The freight yard at Hung Hom, a number of public cargo working areas (PCWAs) and barging points, all centrally located within and around the Inner Harbour Core are such examples. From economic development viewpoint, these uses are part and parcel of the port function and waterfront access is necessary. Finding alternative locations for them are very difficult, if not impossible. Therefore, the planning framework for the Harbour has to have regard to the needs of all other necessary waterfront users in the interim, while striving for an attractive tourism and recreational focussed theme.

HARBOUR PLANNING FRAMEWORK

Planning Principles

11. Having studied the opportunities and constraints of Victoria Harbour vis-a-vis the Vision, we have adopted the following planning principles in devising a Harbour Planning Framework to co-ordinate the planning of the harbour and waterfront areas:
- (a) Tourist attractions should be grouped in clusters so as to create critical masses of attractions and facilities;
 - (b) Tourism clusters should be concentrated within the Inner Harbour Core through intensification and consolidation of existing tourism attractions and services, and creation of additional clusters on newly planned areas;
 - (c) Secondary tourism nodes should be created through expansion beyond the Inner Harbour Core;
 - (d) Linkages to the waterfront should be improved by integrating the waterfront with existing and planned activity nodes or areas with particular tourism potential in the hinterland;
 - (e) Greater continuity of waterfront promenades should be provided with characteristic linkages including waterfront parks, plazas and focal points;

- (f) Tourism and recreational uses should be given priority whilst balancing requirements for other essential waterfront uses in the Inner Harbour Core;
- (g) Connections between tourism attractions should be improved by facilitating access to public transportation, provision of travellers, and/or new shuttle ferries/waterbuses;
- (h) Physical and visual intrusion into the Harbour should be minimized through stronger urban design at the seafront; and
- (i) Waterfront promenades should be beautified with higher quality landscaping, a larger variety of open space amenities and activities and more sensitive treatment of waterfront edges.

Key Components

12. Based on the above planning principles, the following key components are proposed for further examination in the next stage of the Study (see Harbour Planning Framework on pages 10 and 11 of Consultation Digest in Annex A).
13. Within the **Inner Harbour Core**, the proposals are for improvements to existing tourist attraction areas (i.e. Tsim Sha Tsui, Wanchai, Central and Causeway Bay); revitalization of areas close to the core (e.g. Tsim Sha Tsui East); and integration between existing and planned waterfront areas.
14. Two **new secondary nodes** around the Inner Harbour Core are proposed -
 - at the tip of the former Kai Tak runway : it may include such tourism uses as a cruise terminal, an aviation museum, retailing, leisure and entertainment uses and hotels for medium term implementation.
 - the West Kowloon node : to make use of the Yau Ma Tei Typhoon Shelter and PCWA for new tourist facilities. However, in view of its potential implementation issues, i.e. the need for relocation of the typhoon shelter and the PCWA, the proposal can only be regarded as a long-term one. Conceptually, two possible options are put forward. A 'low-key' option with tourist attractions accommodated in artifact boats to be moored within the typhoon shelter; and a more 'elaborate' option, involving partial filling of the typhoon shelter to create an artificial island (within the typhoon shelter boundary) for various tourist facilities such as retailing, aquarium, outdoor performance venues etc. The remaining water body of the typhoon shelter can be used for water-based events and festivities, perhaps also with floating attractions.
15. **Outside the Inner Harbour Core**, we propose to enhance existing tourist attractions, e.g. seafood restaurants at Lei Yue Mun and Museum of Coastal Defence at Shau Kei Wan. Consideration of new attractions at other opportunity areas, such as at Tsing Yi and Ting Kau, to capture the views of the landmark

bridges, should be given.

16. As the waterfront is an important public place, we propose to incorporate district parks at suitable waterfront locations to serve as **activity nodes**. It is proposed that these parks should be designed with special themes that suit the local characters.

PRIVATE SECTOR PROPOSALS

17. A number of private sector proposals or development concepts for the waterfront areas have been received in the course of the Study. These private sector proposals are incorporated in the Consultation Digest to solicit public views (pages 6 and 7 in Annex A).

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

18. A Consultation Digest setting out the proposals of the Harbour Planning Framework is at Annex A. A joint public consultation with the Metroplan Review was started in March 2001 with a joint public forum already held on 31.3.2001.
19. Apart from presentation to Members, other public bodies that have been/will be consulted include Town Planning Board, District Councils of Metro Area, Services Promotion Strategy Group, Port and Maritime Board, Tourism Strategy Group, Planning Sub-committee of Land and Building Advisory Committee, Long Term Provisional Local Vessel Advisory Committee, Port Operations Committee etc. The whole exercise is expected to last until end May 2001.
20. The views collected from this round of public consultation will be taken into account in preparing a Harbour and Waterfront Plan, specific Action Area Plans and Institutional and Implementation Mechanism in the subsequent stages of the Study. Members would be consulted again upon completion of the above tasks.

ADVICE SOUGHT

21. Members are invited to comment on the Harbour Planning Framework and key proposals as presented in the Consultation Digest at Annex A.

ATTACHMENT

Annex A: Planning Study on the Harbour and its Waterfront Areas – Harbour Planning Framework - Consultation Digest

PLANNING DEPARTMENT
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