



8th September, 2005

Subcommittee on West Kowloon Cultural District Development
Legislative Council
Legislative Council Building
8 Jackson Road
Central, Hong Kong
(Fax: 2869-6794 / email: oleung@legco.gov.hk)

Re: Report on Phase I Study and Phase II Work Plan

We recommend separating the urban planning and cultural planning mechanisms:

1. Establish a land agency or authority ('Agency'), to coordinate and manage harbour-front land including West Kowloon.

The responsibility includes place making and place management, and the Agency has a power to direct spending of funds, within a specific mandate, received from land leases, facility rental, and facility management.

The mandate includes subsidizing construction of venues and facilities, re-engineering of the harbour-front and land-water interfaces, creating pedestrian linkages to and from the water-front, subsidizing of transport facilities such as rail stations, tram lines and mono rails as seen required to improve mobility around the core harbour areas, etc.

2. Diversify the funding institutions for arts, culture and sports development.

To promote 'software' development, the Agency subsidizes arts, culture and sports development bodies ('Arts Bodies') financially and/or with the provision of subsidized space. These are bodies established by a variety of private, NGO or Government organisations in addition to existing ones. Such Arts Bodies could be new or existing, focused on generic arts development or specifically tied to a venue controlled by the Agency (An Orchestra for a Concert Hall, for example). The Agency is advised by a dedicated 'Arts and Culture Committee' to steer the approval of funding requests.

3. Diversify the management of arts, culture and sports facilities.

The diversification of the management of facilities has been long outstanding. By outsourcing facilities to the private sector or non-government organisations, an element of competition and innovation is introduced. The sooner the outsourcing of existing venues is started, the quicker we built the experience and talent pool required to manage the new facilities. The contract form for outsourcing will depend on the type of venue, and is determined by the Agency. Critical is to ensure diversification with venues under the control of the Agency, venues outsourced to specific Arts Bodies and venues managed by commercial or Government operators as deemed appropriate.



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Building Consensus on Sustainable Planning

We recommend sustainable planning for the harbour-front:

- 4. Consider the harbour-front as a whole for the sustainable distribution of new sports, arts, culture, entertainment, exhibition, and marine facilities, as well as residential, commercial, and Government developments.**

Hong Kong's harbour-front has naturally evolved into an agglomeration of facilities catering to residents, tourists and business visitors. Research has shown that there is a need for improvement of the area, and specifically non-vehicular mobility (including by foot), the need for specific additional facilities and venues, and a sustainable plan for vehicular movements in the core harbour-front areas.

Sustainable distribution guides the placement of 'peak time traffic' developments in areas with a stronger road infrastructure, and the placement of 'off-peak time traffic generating facilities' in areas where we lack the land for expansion of road capacity.

Other considerations for placement include, among others, the impact on the value and usage of existing facilities, marine safety and others.

- 5. Lower the intensity of harbour-front developments, lower the density around the harbour**

The critical value decision facing Hong Kong's community is whether or not to forego short term gains in land sales revenue by lowering the development intensity and density for the remaining harbour-front land, for long term gains in quality of life, enjoyment of the harbour, and a more diversified economy around the harbour. Reducing the density around the harbour will reduce the need for additional vehicular transportation in the areas immediately around the harbour where there is acute limited scope for expansion. The Comprehensive Transport Study 3 acknowledges that traffic congestion in TST can't be resolved. Recent presentation by the Transport Department to the Harbour-front Enhancement Committee demonstrates that even with P2 and CWB, we will run out of capacity in 2016 in Central and Wanchai. Moreover, there appears to be broad consensus in the community for more land for enhancement of the harbour-front with public open space, pedestrian access, promenades, and vibrancy - provided by a diverse commercial facilities (from Dai Pai Dongs to 5-Star Coffee Shops). We believe there is no justification for further high - intensity agglomeration of facilities around the harbour, other than maximisation of the land sales revenue potential. However, the proposed 'city in the sky' style developments have a detrimental impact on the street level environment, the diversity of Hong Kong's economy, and create unsustainable demand for transport infrastructure.

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