

Members
Subcommittee to Review the Planning for the
Central Waterfront (including the Tamar site)
Panel on Planning, Lands and Works
Legislative Council
Jackson Road
Central
Hong Kong

1 February, 2006

Dear Members,

**Re: (1) Central and Tamar Roads and Planning Review
(2) Civic Exchange 'New Central' Plan**

We are grateful to Members of the Planning, Lands and Works Panel for setting-up a sub-committee to review the Central harbour-front plans, which necessitate revisiting a number of inter-related areas, including Tamar, roads and highways plans, and also rail planning. We also wish to take this opportunity to show Members the 'New Central' harbour-front plan, which Civic Exchange launched on 26 January to stimulate public discussion. Copies of the images and the powerpoint presentation are enclosed for you.

1. Hong Kong going against world trends for waterfront planning

The plan that the Hong Kong administration currently has for the Central harbour-front is a high density plan that goes against world trends in waterfront urban design. We urge Members to look at Singapore's most recent plans to create a large park along their waterfront to enhance their Business District and city as a whole. We enclose a report in Newsweek for your quick reference. More information is also available at the following three websites:

- a) <http://www.ura.gov.sg/pr/text/pr04-04.html>;
- b) <http://www.ura.gov.sg/skyline/skyline04/skyline04-03/text/skylinemain.html>; and
- c) <http://www.ura.gov.sg/skyline/skyline05/skyline05-04/skylinemain.html>.

The logic of the Singapore plan takes a very long-term view of the kind of waterfront design that will forever enhance a city. At the Panel meeting on 17 December 2005, Mr. Paul Zimmerman of Designing Hong Kong, showed a series of photographs illustrating waterfront planning in Tokyo, Kaohsiung, Ningbo, Sydney and Singapore. We urge Members to look through the images again to see how other cities are planning and designing their waterfronts and to contrast those with what Hong Kong is planning to do.

2. High density planning unsuited to harbour-front

The Central Outline Zoning Plan is a very high-density plan. A Transport Department report released on 3 September 2005 showed that between IFC2 and Tamar, there are plans for adding 9.2 million square foot of new GFA. When we add the density of the HKCEC expansion, the total new floor space will be even greater. This is a plan that will add so much more new density along the very front of the waterfront in Central that it will lead to more traffic congestion, noise and air pollution, on top of which it will create a poor urban environment, where pedestrians will be subservient to vehicles as the high-capacity highway, P2, cuts people from walking to the waterfront at sea level. The idea of forcing people to walk on bridges and through an extended shopping mall (the Groundscraper) is the administration's way of dealing with pedestrians after giving priority to roads and vehicles.

3. Height and mass along waterfront

Members can see from examples elsewhere in the world that at the areas closest to the waterfront, building height is restricted to only one or two storeys high and building heights are then permitted to go higher further back in a progressive manner. We believe the Groundscraper, the offices to the Western-end of the Groundscraper, and the Festival Market are far too high and massive to allow for the right kind of waterfront aesthetic for Hong Kong.

Members already know that the Groundscraper provides for 106,303 square metres of retail, 54,733 square metres of commercial space and 29,839 square metres of commercial parking totalling 190,875 square metres; and other CDA sites in the vicinity could add another 92,465 square metres of retail/commercial space.

As for the Legislative Council (LegCo) Building and Tamar, the Transport Plan issued on 3 September 2005 showed LegCo to be on a site towards the waterfront in front of Citic Tower that is to be reclaimed. However, the administration has since told LegCo that the LegCo development will instead now be on the main Tamar site instead. Members may wish to question why there was this sudden change and assess the reasons to determine its veracity. There is then the question of height for both structures.

4. Highways, roads, utilities planning and funding

We urge Members to consider carefully the presentation of Mr. John Bowden of Save Our Shorelines on 17 December. Furthermore, we also urge Members to look at the attached plan (Central Reclamation Phase III Site Layout No. 5). This layout can be found at http://www.archsd.gov.hk/tamar/0_Welcome_1024.asp. The various access and emergency roads that will be constructed IN ADDITION to the Central-Wanchai Bypass and P2 can then be seen. The plan also shows the various bus and transport facilities. Members can also ask the administration to provide exact locations and size dimensions for provision of other utilities to get a real appreciation of what will be put at the waterfront. Members can then contrast this layout and its provision of utilities with the concept drawings for the waterfront that the administration has provided to persuade the public on the aesthetics of their planned development there. We believe that if the administration went ahead with their current layout, the Central waterfront will continue to be an embarrassment – an extension of the type of utilitarian waterfront that is seen now between Western and Wanchai districts, and an opportunity for intelligent improvement will have been lost.

Furthermore, Members need to ask why the administration is not giving further consideration to the North Island underground rail line since having more rail services will benefit many more people and the plan had already been provided in the Railway Development Strategy (No. 2) in 2000. In fact, the government plans may well preclude ever building the North Island line at reasonable cost. By designing the reclamation and related utilities works without considering the North Island line, many cost-effective routing and system design options are likely to be forever precluded. In other words, ignoring the North Island line now, will make it far more expensive and probably impractical to ever build. Further, by building into the area even more road traffic, it will make it difficult to have rail become the priority (government's proclaimed goal). By looking at the No.5 Layout plan, Members can assess for themselves whether first putting in the roads and utilities will in fact either preclude the provision for rail in the future, or make the process much more complex and expensive, neither of which will be in the best public interest.

5. Urgency of review

There is one very important point regarding the urgency of the review. It appears that the funding for most of the roads and perhaps even utilities provision has been granted by LegCo as part of the budget for the Central Reclamation Phase III works. Members may not have understood the full extent of the works involved when the money was voted upon. Members may wish therefore to review this aspect very carefully. We believe it is LegCo's duty to revisit these plans every quickly to ensure that Hong Kong will have a waterfront plan that we can all be proud of for generations to come.

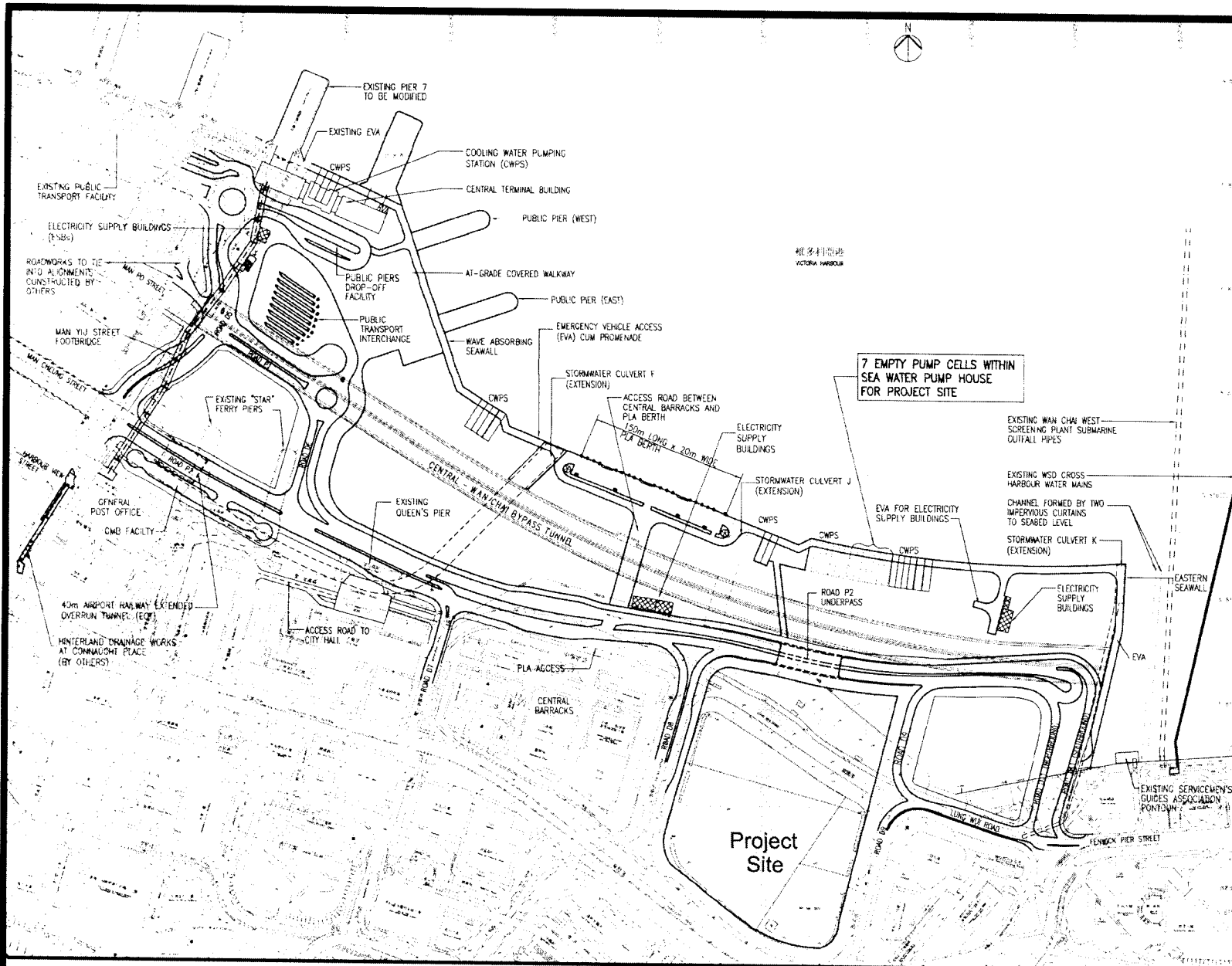
6. 'New Central' for 1,000 years

Civic Exchange has tried to put forward ideas to stimulate discussion about what can be done along the Central harbour-front which can be something Hong Kong can be proud of for many generations to come. Our plan takes into account the public aspiration to have large open, green and lush spaces for public enjoyment. Our plan takes into account the types of recreational activities that can be observed all over Hong Kong when our community can get access to rare open space. A fuller explanation of the Central Park (Hoi Sum Park) for a 'New Central' District is attached for your reference.

Yours sincerely,

Christine Loh
Chief Executive Officer

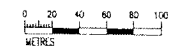
Encl.



NOTES:

1. CO-ORDINATES RELATE TO HONG KONG METRIC GRID (1980).
2. LEVELS ARE IN METRES AND REFER TO PRINCIPAL DATUM (mPD).
3. DIMENSION ARE IN MILLIMETRES AND CHAINAGES ARE METRES UNLESS OTHERWISE SHOWN.
4. THE GENERAL LAYOUT PLANS INDICATE GENERALLY THE EXTENT OF CONSTRUCTION WORKS IN THE CENTRAL RECLAMATION PHASE III CONTRACT. THE FULL EXTENT OF WORKS ARE DEFINED IN THE CONTRACT DRAWINGS AND PARTICULAR SPECIFICATION.
5. THIS SKETCH IS TO BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH DRAWING NO. 3128/ACL/1001A.
6. THE NEED OF THE REALIGNMENT OF ROAD D5 TO FACILITATE THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE CENTRAL - WAN CHAI BYPASS IS CURRENTLY UNDER REVIEW.

This drawing is a part plan reproduced from Civil Engineering and Development Department Drawing No. HK 12/02/C/1466 and is subject to revision.



CENTRAL RECLAMATION PHASE III SITE LAYOUT

PLAN 5

Central Park

City Users and Public Space

The HKSAR Government has a golden opportunity to create a unique and magnificent Central harbour-front for the people of Hong Kong and for future generations. This will require the Government to reconsider the Central District (Extension) OZP by significantly reducing GFA density permissible under the current plan. In fact, the Town Planning Board has already recommended on 5 August for the Government to do just this.

The Government currently plans for extensive new development of NINE sites in Central producing 9.25 million sq ft of GFA. In addition, an extension of 208,700 sq ft at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre will also be developed. These will add a substantial amount of traffic to the Central waterfront. The Government's plans to build the Central Wanchai By-pass and "P2" will provide little help. By its own admission, traffic will be saturated by 2016. Moreover, the "P2" highway will sterilise the harbour-front, as it will no longer be possible to walk towards the harbour at ground level. The Government's current solution is to create what are effectively elevated walkways for people to reach the waterfront. The optimal solution is to reduce development density substantially so that "P2" can then be reduced to a shortened access road, sterilisation can be prevented and further congestion avoided. This will also have a positive impact on both air and noise quality for Central District. The current plans unfortunately annihilate and compress valuable space resulting in limited and 'unfriendly' public open spaces.

We propose that the Government ought to provide an experience in Central that better meets the needs and wants of the community. There is significant value in creating an experience where people can enjoy the real Hong Kong of sea, waterside, green mountains and sky, with the tall buildings throwing this into relief. We see the possibility for the creation of *Central Park*. This peaceful oasis will act as the heart, lung and soul of the City, with a sense of connection between heaven and earth, nature and people. *Central Park* will be designed to allow people from all backgrounds and ages to enjoy many activities there. It will be a place that combines Chinese culture with community needs of the 21st century. With Central Park Hong Kong will offer a special benchmark to the world.

Our proposals are in their infancy, and require input from many directions to reach maturity, but the essence is already in place. A fountain, rising 100 feet into the sky, and illuminated in many different ways, will become a major feature of the City. This represents Hong Kong's energy and aspirations.

Water will no longer just be in the Harbour, but will come right into the heart of the City through a series of canals joining City infrastructure to its historical roots. Forest-like planting will bring the mountains into the City. Performance space will be used - day and night - by professionals and amateurs. The landscaping will be multi-purpose, durable but informal with green lounging areas, as well as hard play surfaces, and will be a showcase of indigenous plants and trees that will also encourage native birds. The open space will allow citizens to enjoy themselves in a multitude of different ways of their own choosing.

This green lung along the harbour-front will connect with existing green lungs of the City via an enhanced network of pathways. Hong Kong Park, the Zoological and Botanical Gardens, the Government House gardens as well as other spaces, will be opened up to form a continuous promenade between sea and mountains that leads our eyes to the Peak.

It is proposed that the Government will adopt environmentally sustainable attitudes and remain in its current locations at Lower Albert Road and Garden Road but use spaces much more efficiently, employing contemporary space planning principles with only limited parts needing to be redeveloped. The Legislative Council (LegCo) Building will continue to function and be refurbished, with intelligence and sensitivity, to meet current and future needs. The Central Government Offices (CGO) buildings will likewise be refurbished, but first a thorough and transparent study will take place to discover what space is needed for CGO and for LegCo. Successful enterprises, whether public or private, need to ensure that their processes and procedures are as effective and efficient as possible. The Government must do the same. Improved ways of working are commonly practised in the commercial field that are more satisfactory in terms of cost, outcome and human resources than those currently in use. From this, space requirements are developed and checked against existing premises. It is not uncommon to realise major space and cost savings through such planning initiatives.

Current government plans are to centralise operations into one location at Tamar. The concept of bringing more personnel together into one place, however, goes against modern management and also environmental thinking and accepted wisdom. It also makes the organisation more susceptible to crisis of all kinds whether terrorist, technical or human. Modern technology allows people to work together even when they are far apart. Decentralised local centres provide a better quality of life for workers, as well as reducing the environmental impact of transport. Good communication is essential, but though meeting face-to-face is useful from time to time, it is rarely a daily necessity. Technology, especially wireless connectivity, will enable the CGO buildings to be updated without difficulty to meet the most stringent standards of a modern working environment.

The Government's proposal for the Tamar site to construct Exhibition Galleries for the display of development initiatives can be located instead in many different places in the City and do not require a prime harbour-front location, or to be alongside other government functions. Thorough consideration must be given to the precise purpose of these galleries, what will actually happen in them, and how they will be managed to avoid their becoming redundant facilities on valuable public land.

A long-term strategy must be developed for the CGO buildings, based on the detailed schedule of needs. Maintenance may be expensive, but 30-year-old buildings still have decades of life. Government should be leading by example in refitting existing buildings as needed to reduce current operational and maintenance costs and environmental impact.

Car use to government offices will be reduced, with Civil Servants showing the way forward, with parking provided only for those with real need, such as those with disabilities, and staff of all seniority will be encouraged to benefit from the City's public transport. Existing parking space around government offices will be 'greened' and become part of the public realm, with trees and planting between the cars. Fences will be removed, and security handled instead with sophisticated electronics.

The Central harbour-front and Tamar proposals are located on some of the most important sites for this City, not so much in terms of content, but for the message that they provide for the community, the nation and even the world at large. Is this City, struggling to make quick money, or is Hong Kong concerned with the quality of its life? Allowing time to reflect and investigate, to consult and make informed decisions will provide space for the best solutions to emerge.

**「海心公園」：發展新中環的新計劃
中區海濱新發展概念計劃**

思匯政策研究所今天公佈一個中區海濱新發展概念計劃。這個名為「**海心公園**」的概念計劃，旨在向市民大眾展示一個可以轉化香港海旁面貌的方案，令中區海濱成為一個多姿采及令市民世代感到驕傲的地方。

過去數月，思匯政策研究所與保護海港協會及多位獨立專家合力研究如何發展這塊填海得來的珍貴土地，以締造一個真正可供市民享用的海濱。經過數月來努力的成果，跟最近一個就港人對維港發展意向的民調結果相似：希望香港設有更多公園及休憩地方，在市中心建環保綠色城市。

思匯政策研究所行政總監**陸恭蕙**表示：「我們如何利用中環填海區的土地是一個十分重要的課題。我們希望將來中環新區有更多優質的綠化公園及休憩用地，讓市民可接近及享受海濱，同時亦可舉行各種活動，而不單是購物。這區的購物中心已經非常足夠。我相信這個『**海心公園**』概念計劃絕對是一個更好的選擇。」

「**海心公園**」是一個位於中環的大型綠化地區。該區範圍東至香港會議展覽中心擴建部分，南抵香港禮賓府及中區政府總部，西及機場鐵路香港站，北面伸展至海旁。

「**海心公園**」不但是一幅連綿無間的綠化地帶，還可為市民提供用地及設施，進行各式各樣的文化、康樂及消閒活動。「**海心公園**」是一個讓市民可以同時感受平靜與熱鬧氣紛的公眾聚集地，它不但會成為中環區的新焦點，更會是香港的一個新地標。香港實在有必要重新檢討現時中區海濱土地用途及找出更好的發展方案，我們希望「**海心公園**」這個概念計劃能起拋磚引玉之效，令港人開始談論如何發展理想的海旁。

陸恭蕙補充：「現時世界的潮流顯示，不少城市都已經明白到為市民提供更多綠化地區的價值所在，而近期最好的例子非新加坡莫屬。反觀香港，我們正背道而馳。看看特區政府的計劃，我們不難發現將來海濱的密度會變得十分高，還會被多條高速公路和道路包圍，屆時海濱絕非一個優質的公用地方，而市民大眾則必須使用天橋方可到達海濱。」

為鼓勵更多港人對發展一個世界級海旁地區發表意見，2006 年 3 月 18 日（星期六）早上 9 時假金鐘太古廣場會議中心舉行研討會交換意見。查詢有關研討會的資料，請致電：2893 0213。

Press Release

[For immediate release]

“Central Park”: NEW Plan for NEW Central An alternative plan for the Central waterfront

Civic Exchange today released a **new plan for the Central Harbour-front**. The plan, “**Central Park**” shows one of the ways to transform Hong Kong’s waterfront into an exciting place people can be proud of generations to come.

Civic Exchange collaborated with the Society for Protection of the Harbour and independent experts to envision how to develop the prime land surrounding and on Central Reclamation and how Hong Kong people can truly enjoy the waterfront. The resulting ideas coincide with the results of a recent survey on Hong Kong people’s attitudes towards harbour development. Hong Kong people want more open space and greenery in the heart of the city.

*“What is going to be built on the Central Reclamation is crucial. Our vision for New Central provides more green areas and quality open public spaces. People can get close to the water and enjoy the Harbour for many different activities, other than just shopping. We do not need more malls in the area. Our **Central Park** offers Hong Kong people a better alternative to government plans,”* said Christine Loh, CEO of Civic Exchange.

Central Park is a piece of large green area situated in Central. It covers the area (reclaimed land included) bounded by the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre Extension to the East, the Government House and the Central Government Offices to the South and Airport Railway Hong Kong Station to the West. To the North, the Park extends to the waterfront.

Other than providing greenery, **Central Park** is also an open space for people to relax and enjoy various kinds of cultural and sports activities. The Park can be a place where people experience both peace and excitement. It can become an icon, not only for Central, but for Hong Kong as a whole.

Central Park, however, is **not** a definitive plan. It is a starting point to get Hong Kong people talking and thinking about the kind of waterfront they like to have. There is a need to rethink the Government’s plan and to counter-propose better options to develop the waterfront into a more dynamic and people-friendly area.

“The current world trend shows other cities realised the value in providing more green areas. The most recent example is how Singapore wants to develop its waterfront. Hong Kong is going against this trend. The Government’s plan has extremely high density, many highways and roads, and likely low quality open spaces. The Harbour will become less accessible with people having to use elevated walkways,” Loh added.

In order to encourage Hong Kong people to generate ideas for developing a world-class waterfront, a forum will be held on Saturday, 18 March 2006 at 9am at the Pacific Place Conference Centre to provide a platform exchanging ideas. For information, please call 2893 0213.

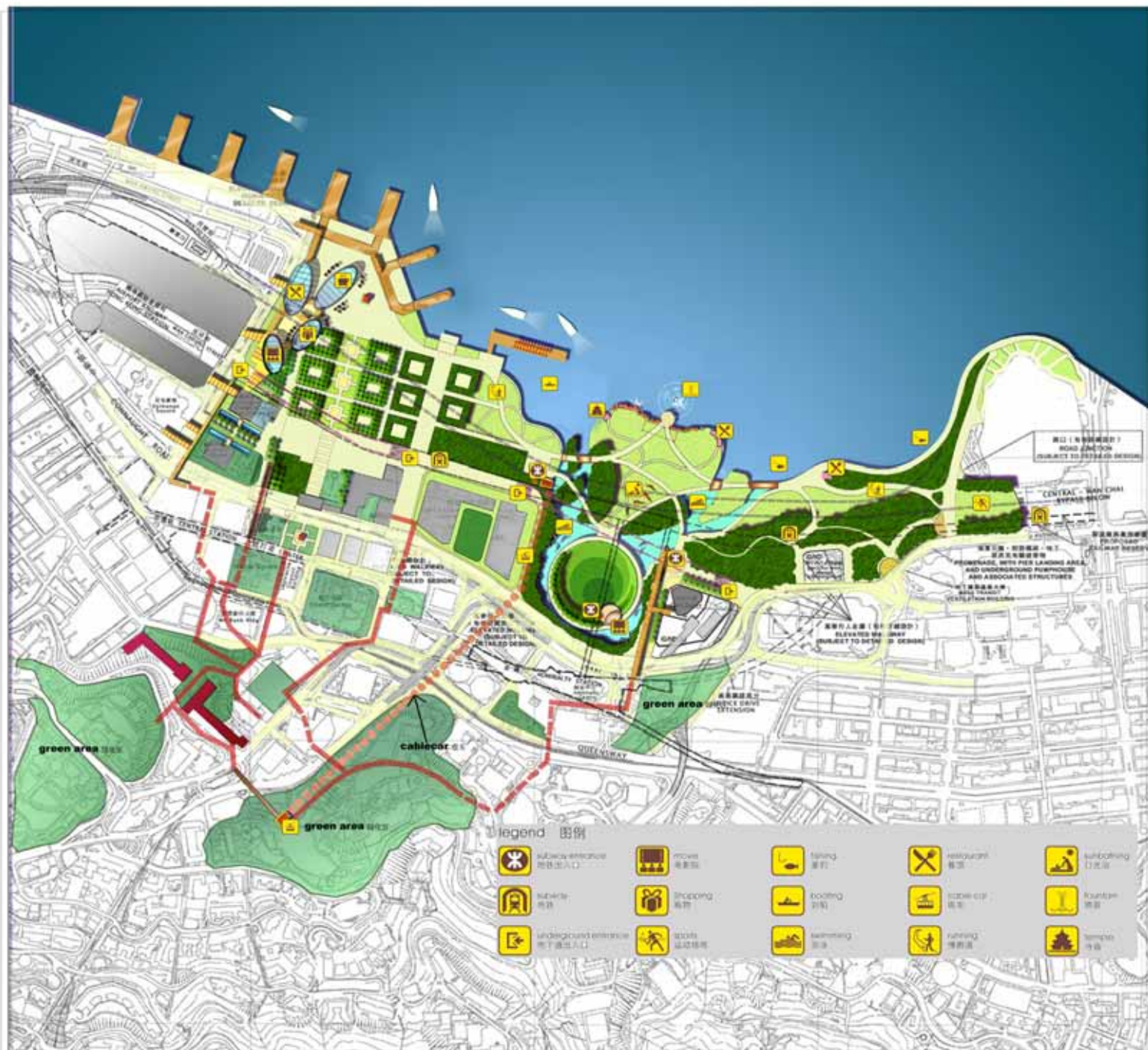
26 January, 2006

- ENDS -

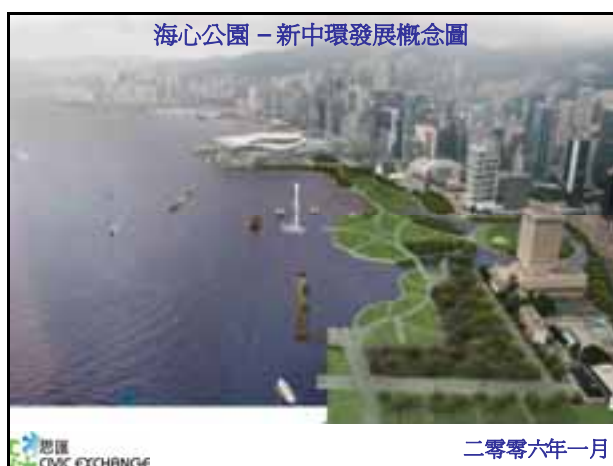












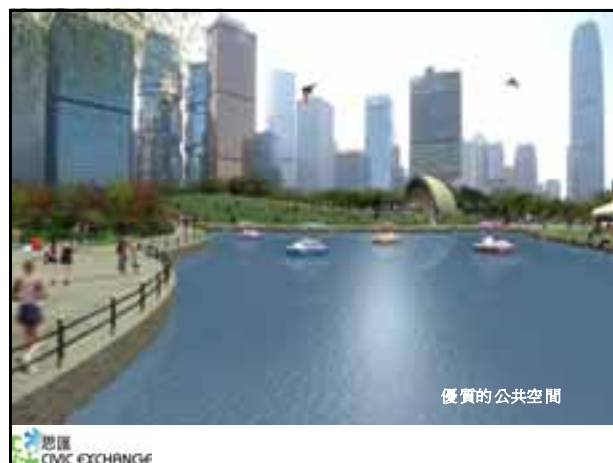


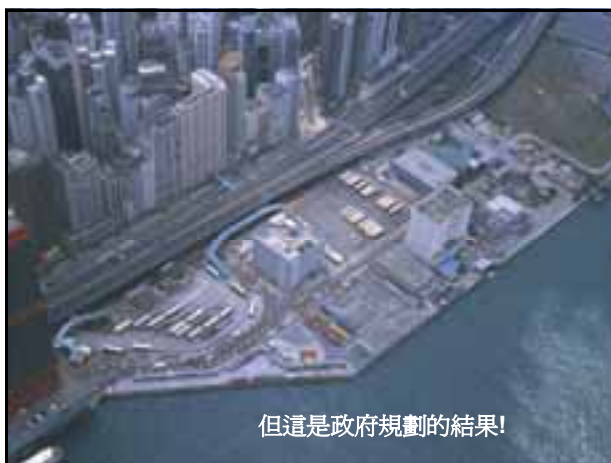
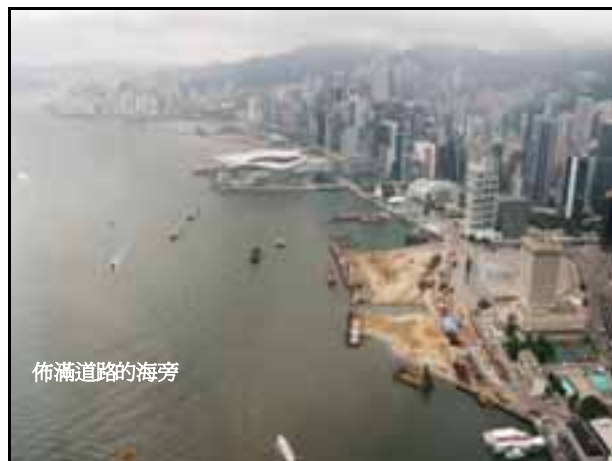
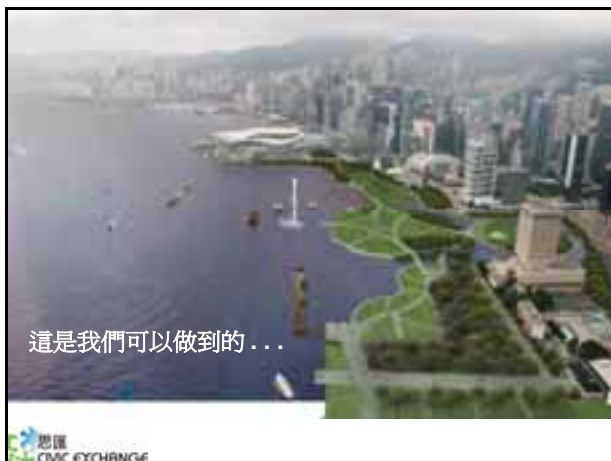
香港人的訴求

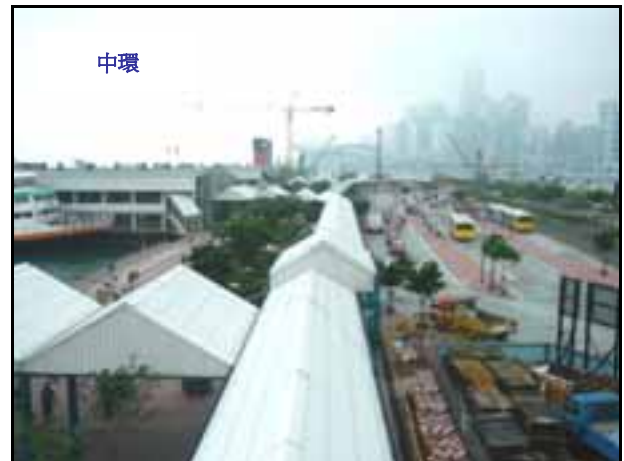
- 非常 / 幾希望香港能成為一個環保的綠色城市。 [90.4%]
- 非常 / 幾支持香港提供更多公共空間及公園。 [76.1%]
- 非常 / 幾支持為社區提供文化、康體及消閒設施。 [65.2%]

想匯 CIVIC EXCHANGE

香港人喜歡的活動







另一個商場

... 可以興建的龐然大物 ... 注意 P2



摩地大樓

[東面]: 更多購物體驗



辦公室 [西面]: 商場及辦公室



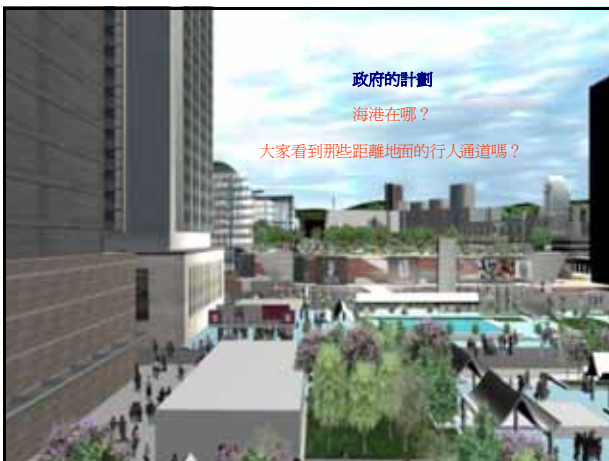
政府的版本
... 置身此地的感受將會是怎樣的呢？



政府的計劃

海港在哪？

大家看到那些距離地面的行人通道嗎？



政府的願景 並未顯示其中一幢大廈



發揮左右腦的創造力



我們可以令置身於大會堂前中環填海區的人有這樣舒暢的感覺？

大家會喜歡這樣的環境嗎？

香港在這方面的發展會跟其他城市一樣嗎？



靜下來，再細想
讓我們可以締造
一個令港人世代感到自豪的海旁

思匯
CIVIC EXCHANGE







What do Hong Kong people want?

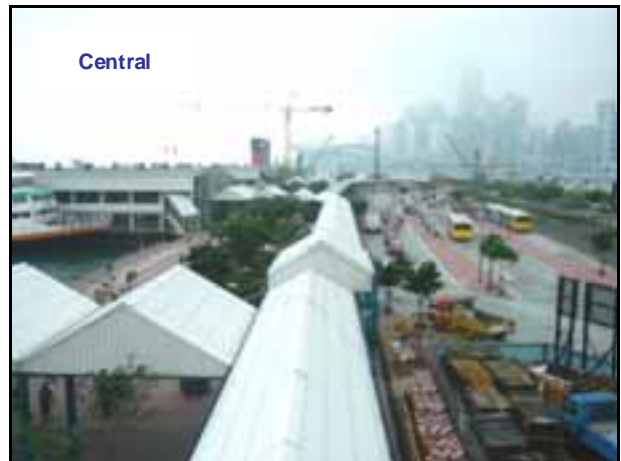
- Very much / quite like to develop HK into an environmentally friendly green city. [90.4%]
- Very much / somewhat support providing more open space and green parks. [76.1%]
- Very much / somewhat support providing the community with cultural, sports and leisure facilities. [65.2%]

想匯 CIVIC EXCHANGE

What do Hong Kong people like to do?







Festival Market
... potential mass ... note P2 highway



Groundscraper
[east side]: more shopping experience



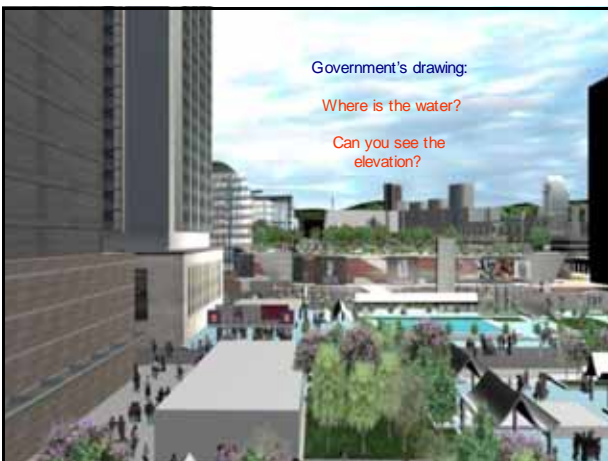
Offices [west side]:
malls and offices



Government's version
... what will the REAL experience be like?



Government's drawing:
Where is the water?
Can you see the
elevation?



Government's vision
there is one building they are not showing



A left & right brain creation



Can you create such
a feel in front of
City Hall on Central
Reclamation?

Will the people like
this?

Will it set Hong Kong
apart from other
cities?



Take time out
Rethink
Do something
We can be proud of in
1,000 years

想匯
CIVIC EXCHANGE

