

Panel on Planning, Lands and Works

**Subcommittee to Review the Planning for the
Central Waterfront (including the Tamar Site)**

Meeting on Monday, 3rd April 2006

Further Submission by Winston K.S. Chu

Chairman & Honourable Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to address you on this very important issue regarding the future of the Central Harbourfront of which the Tamar Site is the key. Your decision will affect the future of Hong Kong forever as this will be the permanent harbourfront of Hong Kong for all times.

This is the only opportunity in the history of Hong Kong for it to have a world-class Central Harbourfront that future generations can enjoy and be proud of. We must get it right. Government offices, shops and commercial buildings can be built elsewhere, but the Central Harbourfront is unique.

The starting point for you to consider is this question: what is the purpose of town planning?

The Town Planning Ordinance provides that town planning must be for "the health, safety, convenience and general welfare of the community". Therefore the first purpose of town planning is to provide a healthy environment and a good quality of life to the people of Hong Kong.

The Government has accepted this responsibility. By various policy statements and publications, the Government has made commitments to the people of Hong Kong:-

- (a) To enhance the harbour and the harbourfront; and
- (b) To make the harbourfront vibrant and accessible for the enjoyment of the people.

The Vision Statement for the Victoria Harbour of the Town Planning Board also set the following objectives:-

“ **Town Planning Board** ”
Vision Statement for the Victoria Harbour

Our Vision for Victoria Harbour

To make Victoria Harbour attractive, vibrant, accessible and symbolic of Hong Kong.
- *a harbour for the people and a harbour of life.*

Our Goals for the Harbour

1. To bring the people to the Harbour and the Harbour to the people.
2. To enhance the scenic views of the Harbour and maintain visual access to the harbour-front.
3. To enhance the Harbour as a unique attraction for our people and tourists.
4. To create a quality harbour-front through encouraging innovative building design and a variety of tourist, retail, leisure and recreational activities, and providing an integrated network of open space and pedestrian links.

May I also refer to the Harbour Planning Principles of the Harbour-front Enhancement Committee annexed hereto as Annexure “A”. These principles are important because the Harbour-front Enhancement Committee (“HEC”) was specifically created by the Government to advise it on the use of the harbourfront.

The present proposal of building the new Government Headquarters on Tamar offends the above and will aggravate the environment in the following ways:-

1. According to figures supplied by the Transport Department, the Tamar Project will attract an additional 3,210 vehicle trips per hour to the Central Harbourfront (2,288 by the new Government Headquarters and 922 by the new Legislative Council Building) and will aggravate traffic congestion.

2. The Tamar Project and the additional traffic it generates will aggravate the already severe air pollution of Central.
3. The Tamar Project and the additional traffic necessitates a new 6-lane surface super highway called P2 as well as a whole system of slip roads. These will sterilize the Central Harbourfront and will make it inaccessible to the public contrary to the Harbour Planning Mission propounded by the HEC.
4. Even with the maximum height being reduced from 190 metres to 160 metres above principal datum, the new Government building will still be 525 ft. high and more than 40 storeys tall. This is as high as the Far East Financial Centre and United Centre nearby and will block the scenic view of the harbour contrary to Principle 4 of the HEC.
5. Like the Government Offices in Wanchai, the new Government Headquarters will be dead after office hours. This hardly makes the Harbourfront 'an attractive, vibrant, accessible and sustainable world-class asset' as proposed by the 'Harbour Planning Vision' of the HEC.
6. The Tamar Project will also degrade the Harbour and the Harbourfront as a tourist attraction. The proposed 'design & build' contract the Government proposes to award cannot produce an outstanding building which can become 'Hong Kong's symbol of urban design excellence and Hong Kong's "brand identity" to the international community' as proposed by Principle 2 of the HEC.
7. Finally, it will deny the public and future generations enjoyment of the last sizable piece of the Central Harbourfront for all times contrary to the principle of 'Sustainable Development' as proposed by Principle 7.

In conclusion, in accordance with Principle 8, we urge this Subcommittee to direct the Government to carry out a review of the proper planning of the Central Harbourfront including the Tamar Site with due public consultation.



Winston K.S. Chu
29th March 2006



VICTORIA HARBOUR AND ITS WATERFRONT AREAS
VISION, MISSION & PLANNING PRINCIPLES

Harbour Planning Vision

Victoria Harbour: A harbour for the people, a harbour of life.

Harbour Planning Mission

To transform Victoria Harbour and its harbour-front areas into: an attractive, vibrant, accessible and sustainable world-class asset.

Harbour Planning Principles

The Harbour Planning Principles are a set of guidelines for all individuals and organisations in the sustainable planning, development and management of Victoria Harbour, and the harbour-front areas.

The principles are developed and monitored by the Harbour-front Enhancement Committee. The principles are dynamic and may be changed to meet future aspirations of the people of Hong Kong.

Preserving Victoria Harbour as a Natural, Public and Economic Asset

Principle 1: Victoria Harbour must be preserved for Hong Kong people and visitors as a special public asset, a natural and cultural heritage, and a driver for the economy.

Victoria Harbour as Hong Kong's Identity

Principle 2: Planning, developing and managing Victoria Harbour must enhance the harbour and harbour-front areas as Hong Kong's symbol of urban design excellence and Hong Kong's "brand identity" to the international community.

A Vibrant Harbour

Principle 3: Balancing the harbour as a maritime and logistics hub for the safe and efficient passage of people and goods, with the harbour as a culture and leisure facility catering to the aspirations of all sectors of the community, requires diverse, attractive and vibrant harbour-front areas and a multitude of commercial, public, tourist, leisure, sports, culture, infrastructure and marine facilities.

An Accessible Harbour

Principle 4: Victoria Harbour must integrate with the hinterland in a comprehensive manner, including ample unrestricted and convenient visual and physical access to and along it as well as around the harbour-front areas.

Maximizing Opportunities for Public Enjoyment

Principle 5: With limited land available around Victoria Harbour, land required for transport infrastructure, utilities and uses incompatible with these planning principles should be minimized.

Integrated Planning for a World-class Harbour

Principle 6: Integrated and long-term planning, development and management of infrastructure, land and marine uses, and water quality is required to ensure that Victoria Harbour and its harbour-front areas support Hong Kong's economic pillars and the aspirations of Hong Kong's people.

Sustainable Development for the Harbour

Principle 7: The planning, development and management of Victoria Harbour and its harbour-front areas should embrace the principles of sustainable development, i.e. balancing and catering to the economic, social and environmental needs of all sectors of the present generation, without compromising the needs of future generations.

Early and Ongoing Stakeholder Engagement

Principle 8: All sectors of the community must be engaged in the planning, development and management of Victoria Harbour and the harbour-front areas, through comprehensive consensus building processes involving relevant institutions.