

LegCo Panel on Planning, Lands and Works, 14 November 2006

HKCA Submission on

“Kai Tak Planning Review – Revised Preliminary Outline Development Plan”

Introduction

Thank you for giving the Hong Kong Construction Association (HKCA) the opportunity to give views on this subject. The Kai Tak Development area is the single largest remaining parcel of undeveloped land, with a total area of 328 hectares, in the urban district. It is therefore very important that proper and balanced planning is exercised in its development. The fact that it also possesses a long coastline facing the beautiful inner Victoria Harbour makes the piece of land even more prestigious.

The Kai Tak site has been vacant for over 8 years since the airport was relocated. It is a waste of society resources to let it remain idle. Now that we have gone through the lengthy comprehensive planning, review, public participation and consultation processes, HKCA urges that design and construction should commence without further delay.

Revised Outline Plan

We note that the Revised Outline Plan has taken into considerations of some constructive views presented during the last consultation exercise. In line with the “Always People First” agenda, the land use proportion is now more balanced, people, sports and environment oriented. The planned population is now 86,000, represents a more comfortable living environment as compare with the original 320,000 planned in 1998 or 260,000 planned in 2001. A total of 53.2 hectares or 16.2% of the development, 11 hectares more than the 2005 proposal, are assigned for government/institution or community/other specific uses which will be able to accommodate more facilities for public use.

In our previous submission, HKCA has emphasized the layout of the building blocks and facilities need to consider the environmental effects in addition to enhancing the scenic views of the Harbour and preserving the prominent ridgeline. We are pleased to see that the Revised Outline Plan has improved in this aspect and air ventilation assessment has been considered. Smaller, podium free sites with grid layouts are now oriented to capture the Southeast prevailing winds will provide better ventilation to the community.

A regional hospital has been included at the South Apron area. Health care and medical services have been one of the essential factors of the society, a regional hospital will better serve the South-east Kowloon area, share and reduce the service

demand of neighbour hospitals as well as better prepared for any future outbreak of infectious disease. HKCA fully supports this proposal.

Metro Park, Waterfront Promenade and Open Space

A water-frontage Metro Park of 24 hectares is proposed. We commend the proposal as it represents a green, leisure area equivalent to 1.4 times of Hong Kong Victoria Park will be available to the future residents and public. Together with the harbourfront promenade and other open spaces, over 30% of the total area is proposed for leisure and recreational use. The public and overseas visitors will be able to enjoy our beautiful harbour view.

We understand the complete development will take place in phases and span over a lengthy period. However, we would urge to commence construction of the waterfront promenade the soonest for the early enjoyment by the public. It can also serve as an ideal place for holding cultural activities in the southeast Kowloon area. Short-term lease to organisations for carnivals, performances or leisure activities could also be considered while the public and tourists.

Connectivity and Accessibility

The Revised Outline Plan has created various regional and local nodes, a cruise terminal as well as a heliport. It is important to have an efficient transportation and connection network for the easy access to all the locations either by vehicle or on foot. We strongly support the inclusion and construction of the link bridge connecting Kwun Tong and the monorail system. The bridge will be able to serve as a complete transportation ring for the Kai Tak development. In addition, it provides a direct link and enhances the connectivity with the existing neighbourhood of Kwun Tong and Ngau Tau Kok district.

The monorail system is not only environmentally friendly, but also an efficient means of mass transportation to serve the local area. It alone could well serve as an attraction in addition to bringing the public to the cruise terminal, Metro Park and stadium. Passengers will be able to enjoy the beautiful harbour while riding the train.

In later detail studies and planning, HKCA would request that decent pedestrian access, such as walkways, footbridges or trails, to facilitate the public going to the harbour-front and various nodes be provided. To achieve the aim of encouraging more people to enjoy the facilities, convenient and easy pedestrian accessibility planning should be the prime objective and taken as an integral part of the overall sustainable transport planning.

Kai Tak Approach Channel

The revised Outline Plan is still based on “no reclamation” scenarios with mitigation measures to improve water circulation and sediment treatment to remove odour as study findings on the effectiveness would only be available by late 2006. Any possible environmental impact resulting from the removal of the polluted sediments must be reviewed. HKCA maintains the view that the effectiveness of the mitigation measures must be fully studied and the future implementation costs evaluated to avoid imposing a heavy recurrent cost burden to the community for maintaining the long-term mitigation measures.

All these concerns and findings must be made known to the public so that we could all evaluate the pros and cons of the “no reclamation” and “reclamation” alternatives in terms of environmental friendliness and cost effectiveness. Therefore we should be open-minded in considering this issue and not to preclude any possible options.

Multi-purpose Stadium

HKCA supports the construction of a multi-purpose stadium with 45,000 seats and ancillary facilities, which will definitely support the long-term sports development in Hong Kong. In the first place Hong Kong, as a world-class city, lacks such facilities and thus the capability to host international sports functions that will benefit the tourist industry in addition to our sports development. As to the concerns that the huge number of audience attending functions would exert great pressure on the transport infrastructure in the neighbouring area, provisions of integrated walkways and direct connections to the future Kai Tak and To Kwa Wan station of the Shatin to Central Link which are in the vicinity of the stadium complex should resolve the issue. Therefore early completion of the Shatin to Central Link is essential.

Cruise Terminal

HKCA is supportive and agree that there is an urgent need of having additional docking facilities to cater for the growth in the cruise and tourism industry. It is very inconvenient to the tourists and embarrassing to have cruise liners calling in Hong Kong to dock at Kwai Chung container terminal while we want to maintain Hong Kong as a leading international city in the Asia area. The proposed alongside berths do not have arguments on the issue of reclamation and should commence work immediately.

HKCA wishes also to highlight that adequate and well-planned transportation network connecting various trunk roads is essential to serve the tourists in visiting other attractions and shopping areas. Planning of a 3rd berth should also be considered and land be reserved for future expansion.