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Clerk to Panel on Economic Development
Legislative Council
Legislative Council Building
8 Jackson Road, Central
Hong Kong
(Attn: Ms Debbie Yau)

31 December 2009

Dear Ms Yau,

**Panel on Economic Development
Submission on Lei Yue Mun Waterfront Enhancement**

Thank you for your letter of 10 December 2009 enclosing a submission from Designing Hong Kong Limited (DHKL). Our response to the submission is set out in the following paragraphs.

Lei Yue Mun Waterfront Enhancement Project

Since 2000 the Tourism Commission (TC) has been implementing the Tourism District Enhancement Programme to enhance Hong Kong's appeal to visitors. Lei Yue Mun (LYM), being one of our most popular tourist spots, has been identified for improvement under the Programme.

In 2003, we implemented a number of minor improvement works in LYM. These included the renovation of the LYM Sitting-out Area, repaving of the footpath serving the seafood restaurants, construction of a "Pai Lau", and provision of a taxi stand and coach laybys nearby.

In 2004, the LYM community approached the Government urging for further actions to revitalize the LYM area including the construction of a landing facility to facilitate access to LYM by leisure boats. Both the TC and Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB) considered that their proposal would help promote tourism in Hong Kong. In response to the request of the LYM community, TC introduced the Lei

Yue Mun Waterfront Enhancement Project (the LYM Project) in 2005, which aims to further improve the facilities along the waterfront. The scope of project includes the construction of a public landing facility, a breakwater and a waterfront promenade, a new viewing platform, and other streetscape improvement works.

Between 2005 and 2008, the Administration carried out a series of public consultation on the LYM Project. Parties consulted included Kwun Tong District Council (KTDC), LYM residents and restaurant operators, fishermen's association, green groups, and the Subcommittee on Harbour Plan Review of the Harbourfront Enhancement Committee (HEC Subcommittee). With the support of KTDC and the LYM community as well as the in-principle agreement of other stakeholders including the HEC Subcommittee, TC and the relevant works departments proceeded, in October 2009, to arrange for gazettal under the Town Planning Ordinance for the amendment of the Outline Zoning Plan in relation to the project works, and gazettal under the Foreshore & Seabed (Reclamations) Ordinance for the related dredging works. Meanwhile, the works departments are drawing up the detailed design for the LYM Project. We plan to consult the Panel on Economic Development when the statutory procedures are completed, expected in the second half of 2010, before seeking funding approval from the Finance Committee.

Response to Designing Hong Kong Limited's Concerns

We have consulted the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) and Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) on the concerns of DHKL. Our response is as follows:

Seawater for Keeping Live Seafood

We note DHKL's observations on the e. coli content of seawater in the vicinity of LYM. According to the Food and Health Bureau (FHB) and FEHD, amendments to the Food Business Regulation had been made earlier this year to prohibit the extraction of seawater from prohibited areas for keeping of live seafood. Under the new regulation, which will take effect on 1 August 2010, it will be an offence for any person to extract seawater from a prohibited area for the purpose of keeping, in the course of any food business, any live fish that is intended for human consumption. The coastal strip of waters along the LYM coast is one of the

prohibited areas. We understand that LYM seafood traders are working out remedial measures to meet the requirements of the new regulation. FEHD would closely monitor the situation to ensure compliance of the new regulation upon commencement of the new regulation.

Problems of Sewerage Discharge

The provision of sewerage to the area is a complex issue. As advised by EPD, there is only limited public sewerage provided up to the end of Lei Yue Mun Praya Road just outside the LYM village. Similar to other villages in Hong Kong, inhabitants and commercial establishments in the village rely largely on private treatment systems such as septic tanks, where provided, to treat the wastewater generated from their premises. Under their Review of Central and East Kowloon Sewerage Master Plan Study, an investigation of the sewerage issue in the village was conducted. The findings in 2003 indicated that in general, the provision of sewerage to the village was considered not feasible, both in terms of construction and long-term operations, and that the flows involved were fairly small. No works were therefore recommended for LYM under the Study. In response to DHKL's observations, EPD re-visited the issue recently and found that the topography and narrow alleys inside the village were still posing a major challenge to the provisioning of new sewers in the area. Despite these difficulties, EPD would liaise closely with the Drainage Services Department to work out some improvement schemes having regard to site conditions and technical constraints to meet the demand for public sewerage in the area.

EPD supplemented that all restaurants in the LYM area were required to install grease traps to remove oil and grease to minimize pollution. The department carries out regular inspections to the restaurants to ensure that the grease traps installed are operating in a proper working condition, and to check against any untreated and greasy effluents discharged from the restaurants. EPD's records show that the grease trap facilities in these restaurants are operating properly.

Proposed New Landing Facility

TC's LYM Project provides, inter alia, a landing facility near the

seafood restaurants in LYM to facilitate visitors' access by sea, thereby enhancing their experience. In considering the provision of the landing facility, TC has taken due account of the presence of the Sam Ka Tsuen public pier in Yau Tong. Since the public pier is located some walking distance away (about 10 minutes' walk) from the seafood restaurants in LYM, it does not offer an attractive and convenient means of transport for visitors and sight-seeing vessels. The proposed landing facility, which is supported by the Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB) and Kwun Tong District Council, is expected to bring significant tourism benefits. According to HKTB's estimate, the new landing facility may attract about 8,200 visitors to travel to LYM by sea for lunch or dinner per month, and up to 14,000 per month during the peak season, compared with the existing monthly visitation of about 2,000 to 3,000 visitors only. The estimated cost of the proposed landing facility (including the construction of landing steps and breakwater) is about \$100 million instead of \$210 million quoted by DHKL.

Cleansing Service for Oyster Shell Beach

To help maintain the environmental hygiene of the LYM area, FEHD has undertaken to increase the frequency of cleansing at the Oyster Shell Beach and closely monitor the performance of its contractor. Should the situation warrant, special cleansing operations will be arranged by the department. FEHD will also improve the existing refuse collection points in the LYM area and consider upgrading their design and appearance where feasible.

Tin Hau Statue Proposed by LYM Community

The planned Tin Hau Statue is a private venture proposed by the LYM community. The Statue as well as the Oyster Shell Beach are outside the scope of TC's LYM Project. We will convey DHKL's observations to LYM locals through the Kwun Tong District Office for their consideration.

Foundation of Footpath

We note DHKL's observations on the foundation of the footpath leading to the Tin Hau Temple in LYM. Since this falls outside the scope of the LYM Project, we will refer the situation to the Development Bureau for their consideration of necessary

improvement works.

DHKL's other suggestions including improvement for the Sam Ka Tsuen Ferry Pier and typhoon shelter, Tin Hau Temple, LYM lighthouse, LYM village, the existing village jetty, the LYM sitting-out area, etc. are also outside the scope of the LYM Project and involve a number of complex technical and land resumption issues which need to be further examined by the relevant bureaux/departments. We will refer these suggestions to them for consideration.

The LYM Project is already at a very advanced stage, and the Kwun Tong District Council has repeatedly urged for its early implementation. TC and the related works departments have been making all preparations for the project including drawing up the detailed design with a view to seeking funding approval as early as possible. For this reason, we do not consider it appropriate to include the suggestions of DHKL into the project at this stage.

Yours sincerely,

(Mrs Winifred Chung)
for Commissioner for Tourism

c.c.

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