

To: Clerk to the Panel on Development
Legislative Council Secretariat,
2/F Legislative Council Complex.

From: Mo Pak Hung (Ph.D)
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Re: The Legislative Council of the
Hong Kong Special Administrative Region

Panel on Development
Invitation for submissions

Dear Sir/Mdm.,

It is my pleasure to provide some economic viewpoints and opinions on the issue.

1. increase land supply, establish a land reserve is essential for the long-term development of Hong Kong and the well-being of Hong Kong people:

1a. Increase the scale of Hong Kong economy can lower the average cost of better infrastructure, general more exchange opportunities with the neighboring economies and therefore the competitive advantage and development the economy.

2b. increasing land supply can provide more affordable accommodation when the scale of our economy expands.

3c. more land supply improves the public finance strength of the government. It can therefore provide better public infrastructures and service without raising counter-productive taxes like salary, profit and sales taxes.

2. To reduce the damage, destruction on the existing environment, reclamation outside Victoria Harbour probably is the best choice in the current environment in Hong Kong.

2a. in comparing to other options, it minimizes the disturbance on the existing communities and the environment as the sites are normally of less populated in comparing to other sites.

2b. About one third of the Earth is covered by sea water and sea creatures are normally more mobile than landed creatures. Development project in land therefore create more damages and disturbance to the related creatures than those on sea normally.

2c. Having said that, when we reclaim land from the sea, we should maximize the bio-diversity and enrich the leisure life quality of the residents in the process:

- i. In the newly created artificial coasts, they should have ample space for the proliferation of sea creatures, such as many holes, rocks, and may be even artificial coral reefs on the near-by sea-beds. Sea creatures are therefore benefited from the projects.
- ii. The created sea-coasts should be 'leisure-friendly' such that the people can easily enjoy them through fishing, cycling, picnicking, etc.. This will substantially reduce the objections of the people in the future similar projects.
- iii. In general, the rule is to make the created sea coasts more enjoyable to all related creatures, including us.

3. What are the impacts on Chinese White Dolphins (CWD) due to near-shore reclamation in the Western Waters? How would the impacts assessment be conducted?

3a. With the effort of 2ci, the projects may promote the well-being of CWD by providing better feeding ground, longer-coastal line and bio-diversity.

3b. "life will find its way": remember, two thirds of the Earth are covered by sea-water. They have many more options to go than Hong Kong people.

3c. their fates are much more determined by the regions out of our control as they commute around the regions.

B5.The Government proposes to construct eco-shorelines in future reclamation zones. What are the methodologies involved?

We will consider designing eco-friendly shorelines at appropriate locations of the new reclamation area, by planting mangroves and other suitable native plants within intertidal zones. We will give further consideration to put in place reef balls to increase fishery resources, if the seabed level near the reclamation area is deep enough.

When there is a natural shoreline of high ecological value, we will consider building an intertidal zone to separate the natural shoreline and the reclamation area, such that the ecological environment along the natural shorelines could be maintained.

Apart from the above, under appropriate circumstances, we will also consider restoring artificial seawalls in the vicinity (by converting them into eco-shorelines), so as to enhance the overall ecological environment.

We shall organise workshops, and invite experts, academics as well as environmentalists to work together with us to explore the design of eco-shorelines.

Comment: They are good initiatives. As a tax-payer, I think they should be done only when the social benefit is larger than the social cost. For instance, "when there is a natural shoreline of high ecological value, we will consider building an intertidal zone to separate the natural shoreline and the reclamation area, such that the ecological environment along the natural shorelines could be maintained." Can we just explore the possibility to relocate the related plants/creatures to neighboring sea coasts instead of the costly projects that potentially damage the other unknown eco-system. Anyway, our knowledge about the nature is very limited. When we think about protecting something, we are at the same time destroying something else.

B8. There were quite many objections to the reclamation proposal at Tolo Harbour in Stage 1 Public Engagement. Why is the Government still insist to propose the Ma Liu Shui site?

Located at the development axis where housing and education/ knowledge creation facilities are recommended by the HK2030 Study, the Ma Liu Shui site is adjacent to the Chinese University and the Hong Kong Science Park. The site will provide newly-created land close to the Sha Tin New Town, and can be easily connected to railway systems, including East Rail Line, Ma On Shan Rail Line and the Shatin-to-Central Link (SCL) under construction. It creates synergy with the land to be released by relocating the Sha Tin Sewage Treatment Works into a rock cavern, thereby providing additional land in Sha Tin town centre for the development of housing and community facilities to meet local needs.

Comment: I think the reasons are justified for the overall benefits of the Hong Kong people. Of course, most projects for the overall benefit are also objected by special vested interests. The major role of the government, as delegated with the coercive power by the people, is to pursue the overall benefit of the society while minimize the damages to the vested interests.