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Members of  
The Finance Committee  
Legco  
Hong Kong SAR

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

### **WORK TO BE CARRIED OUT ON THE WATERFRONT OF TST**

I believe that the Legco Finance Committee will soon debate the budget for the proposed renovation of the TST waterfront. As a long time resident of the area, I hope that the committee will ensure that the proposals are in line with public expectations, and that they will extract a promise from the departments concerned that when this programme is completed the waterfront will not be closed off again for a number of years.

Some years ago when TST was turned into one noisy, dirty building site, the residents were assured that their suffering would be repaid in time with a more pleasant environment, and were asked to bear with the multitude of inconveniences for the greater benefit of the community at large. Local residents have had to put up with constant noise, air pollution and road works since the Hung Hom Bypass was constructed in the later part of the nineties. This involved extensive remodeling of the waterfront area at TST East and made it a no go area.

The concrete had no sooner dried on this project than Salisbury Road was dug up again, wasting millions of dollars. The KCR moved in, barriers went up again and all seating was again removed from the waterfront in front of TST East. Later on the area in front of the New World complex was closed off to create the Avenue of the Stars.

The Highways and Transport Departments have taken advantage of the chaos to widen the roads, shrink the pavements and close off all pedestrian crossings at street level. In order to access the waterfront pedestrians are forced to trudge up and down numerous steps and navigate endless subways, many with steep inclines. At some points they have to trudge through shopping malls they have no interest in just to cross the road.

The public was informed that the extension of the KCR to TST would encourage more people to use public transport and guarantee a greener future. The result however has been quite the opposite. The children's playground on Middle Road has disappeared and will be replaced with a much smaller footprint on a podium. The gardens at Wing On

Plaza have been covered with a large concrete block, cutting off the harbour views and sea breezes. All this in spite of the fact that residents had been promised that the gardens in both places would be reinstated, definition - restored to their original setting.

By the time the proposed refurbishment of the waterfront is completed it will be almost ten years that the waterfront esplanade of TST East has been off limits because of building works. It is therefore essential that this final phase will ensure that all Hong Kong residents and visitors can once more visit and enjoy the waterfront.

Our fear now is that this section of the waterfront will be turned into a row of commercial enterprises, restaurants and such like.

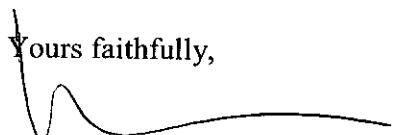
I would like to remind the members of the committee that the section of the waterfront at TST East was traditionally the family area. The section in front of the Cultural Centre is usually full of groups of young people, skateboarders, domestic helpers, tourists, etc. and there is no seating suitable for family groups. The families headed for the TST East waterfront as the concrete block seating was ideal for family picnics and, in the good old days, when pedestrian crossing were at street level, was convenient for wheelchairs and pushchairs. It was also much quieter and a favourite place for those who just wanted to relax in peace and enjoy the view.

I hope that member of the committee will ensure that the public funds will be spent on a project that takes into consideration the lifestyles of different sectors and age groups in the community. The subject of easy access to the waterfront should also be evaluated. There is no point in spending millions of dollars on refurbishment if the waterfront is not once again integrated into the surrounding area.

I can guarantee that if a poll were taken, the majority of Honk Kong residents would be anti subways. People want to enjoy the full experience of sight and sound. The reaction to having to trudge through subways is invariably 'ho ma fan', despite the official line of safe and weather proof environment. The only residents in favour of subways are the hawkers. Yet the interests of drivers are always given priority over those of pedestrians.

Recent events have shown that Hong Kong residents have aspirations to a better quality of life and place high importance on the preservation of our harbour, on clean air, and more pleasant surroundings. I encourage you to bear these matters in mind when you are discussing the financing of the waterfront project and look forward to the day when residents can once again pop across the road to enjoy Hong Kong's greatest asset.

Yours faithfully,



Mary Mulvihill