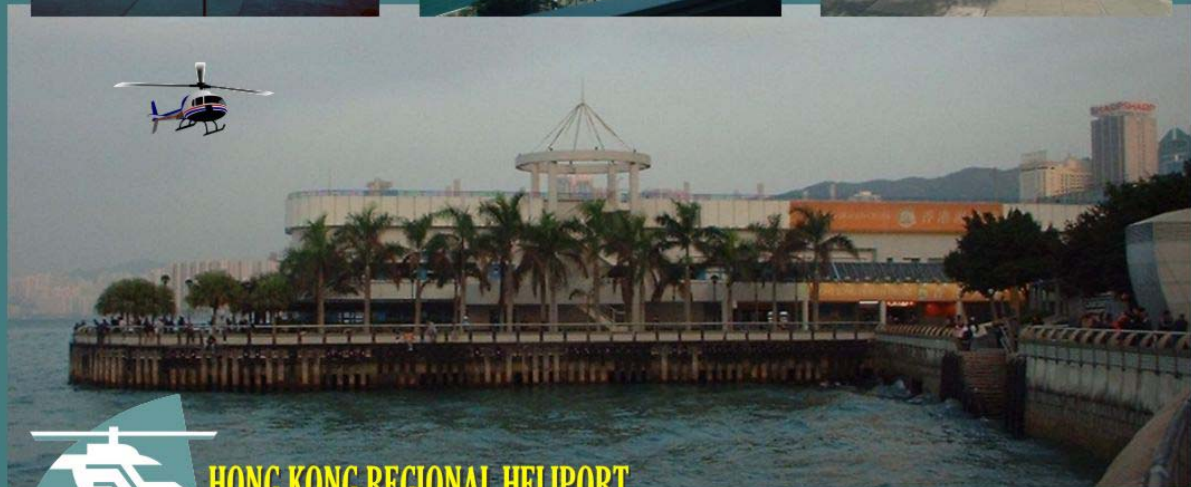




# ***The Case for a \*Hong Kong Regional Heliport***

**GIVING THE BEST TO THE COMMUNITY**



**HONG KONG REGIONAL HELIPORT**  
HKRH WORKING GROUP

# **The Case for a Hong Kong Regional Heliport**

## **Giving the Best to the Community**

**The Hong Kong Regional Heliport Working Group (香港區域直升機場工作組) represents the helicopter industry in Hong Kong. Its goal is to work with government and interested parties for the establishment of a permanent heliport in the Central Business District as an amenity serving business, tourism and community needs within the Pearl River Delta.**

### **Significant Direct and Indirect Economic Benefits**

1. With continued economic growth within the Hong Kong SAR and the Pearl River Delta region, there is increasing demand for helicopter services to provide swift point-to-point transportation.
2. According to government statistics, between 2001 and 2003, the number of Hong Kong domestic helicopter flights increased by 126%. Further, government has estimated that between now and 2020, the demand for domestic private helicopter services will grow at an average of 6.3% per annum. At this rate, the number of domestic flights will increase by more than 50% between 2003 and 2010 [LC Paper No. CB(1)376/04-05(04)].
3. There is also significant and growing pent-up demand for the yet untapped cross-border helicopter charter market. The MVA consultancy study on Helicopter Traffic Demand and Heliport Development in Hong Kong issued in August 2002 projected that the growth in demand for cross-border helicopter services between Hong Kong and the Pearl River Delta could be as high as 9.4% p.a. up to 2020. At this rate, cross-border flights will increase by nearly 90% between 2003 and 2010.
4. Hong Kong is the largest investor in the Pearl River Delta with total investment reaching HK\$1,170 billion at the end of 2004. In recent years government, business and community groups on both sides of the border have stepped up efforts to promote the economic integration of Hong

Kong and the Pearl River Delta. Inbound tourism from the Mainland is at a record high, and rising. In short, Hong Kong is emerging as the key service hub for the entire region.

5. By helicopter, Hong Kong is only 30 minutes away from anywhere in the Pearl River Delta. A typical ferry or road journey could take two to four hours. The time advantage provided by helicopter services brings a real and valuable competitive business edge to Hong Kong. The Hong Kong economy and therefore the entire community will benefit greatly through unlocking this important yet virtually untapped market.
6. **There is a genuine and urgent need for a permanent commercial heliport for both domestic and ad hoc cross-border services.**

#### **Central Business District and Waterfront Location**

7. The main advantages of a helicopter journey are speed and accessibility. Therefore, a heliport must be located in the Central Business District in order to generate maximum benefit for the community at large. It should thus be conveniently located for tourists and the business community alike, and also provide easy connectivity with other modes of transportation.
8. Currently the only centrally located helipad on Hong Kong Island is at the Shun Tak Centre (Macau Ferry Terminal). This caters exclusively for twin-engine helicopters operating scheduled cross-border services. The restriction to twin-engine helicopters is dictated by Hong Kong Civil Aviation Department regulations that forbid operation of single-engine helicopters from elevated helipads.
9. Over 80% of the local helicopter fleet are single engine and this preference for single-engine helicopters is mirrored in worldwide markets. Single-engine helicopters are fast, capable, safe and economical to operate. Operating statistics show that they are as safe or safer than twin-engine machines. Single-engine helicopters are normally smaller and thus generate less noise than twin-engine machines. However, they must be operated from ground-level helipads.

10. **To capture the potential for both domestic and Hong Kong-Pearl River Delta charter services, any proposed ground-level heliport within the Central Business District must cater to both domestic and regional services.**

**Government and Working Group Proposals**

11. Government is currently proposing two ground-level heliports for the north shore of Hong Kong Island. The government proposes:
- A ground-level heliport suitable for single-engine helicopters to be built on the Sheung Wan reclamation to cater for domestic services only.
  - A ground-level heliport at Golden Bauhinia Square next to the Convention and Exhibition Centre to serve the Government Flying Service (GFS) only.
12. The Working Group believes that Hong Kong's interests would be best served by combining these proposals into a single heliport to be shared by both the private sector and Government Flying Service. The helicopter industry has hitherto always shared heliports with the Government Flying Service without difficulty on either side. A single shared facility would create economic synergies and help the community make better use of scarce harbour resources.
13. Of the two sites proposed by government, the Working Group believes that the ground-level site adjacent to Golden Bauhinia Square is the most suitable for the combined facility. This location, at a maximum distance from the foreshore, restricts helicopter flights to a less noise sensitive area over the water. The site provides a more effective use of scarce waterfront. Furthermore, the contour of the shoreline allows the heliport to be optimally integrated into an active harbourfront.
14. **The Working Group proposes that the heliport adjacent to Golden Bauhinia Square, already earmarked for Government Flying Service**

**use, be redesigned for shared use. This heliport should be planned as an integral part of a public waterfront amenity area, thereby adding a popular feature to what is already a prominent tourist destination.**

### **Protection of the Harbour**

15. Under the Protection of the Harbour Ordinance, reclamation can only be undertaken if (i) there is a compelling present public need for reclamation, (ii) it is kept to the minimum and (iii) there is no reasonable alternative. The Working Group is speaking to community groups and taking legal advice but believes that the provisions of this ordinance should not become an insuperable barrier to these proposals as the heliport construction can be demonstrated to be a vital element for the sustainable development of the harbour.
16. The proposed site adjoining Golden Bauhinia Square is located well away from residential buildings and is thus less noise sensitive than any other on the north shore of Hong Kong Island. At the residential buildings along Jaffe Road, the noise of helicopter traffic would be indistinguishable from the background noise. (See the noise profiles at Appendices A and E)

### **Benefits to the Community**

17. The Working Group's goal is to make the Hong Kong Regional Heliport a key attraction in its own right, designed to encourage active participation and enjoyment by the broad community. Experience from Hong Kong's previous centrally located heliports has shown that helicopters are a popular attraction for both Hong Kong people and visitors. With a creative approach, the Hong Kong Regional Heliport adjacent to Golden Bauhinia Square will be an attractive community amenity.
18. The views of the community are being sought on the best way to integrate the heliport within the waterfront promenade. Subject to the community's views, the existing waterfront ferry pier can be outfitted with a viewing lounge and a helicopter/aviation museum to entertain and

educate both the young and adults. In addition, other public amenities could include aviation themed gift shops, educational amenities, restaurants, coffee shops, etc.

19. **A heliport, if properly designed and integrated into the urban fabric, will be an attractive amenity providing a further element for a vibrant, active, accessible and interesting waterfront.**

### **The Way Forward - a Hong Kong Regional Heliport**

20. With the building of a heliport adjoining Golden Bauhinia Square, the helicopter industry wishes to work with government, the community and other interested parties to create an attractive facility serving the local community, business travellers and tourists alike. The heliport will be a transportation hub acting as a gateway to the Pearl River Delta, and a spectacular gateway into Hong Kong - providing opportunities to showcase Hong Kong at its best.

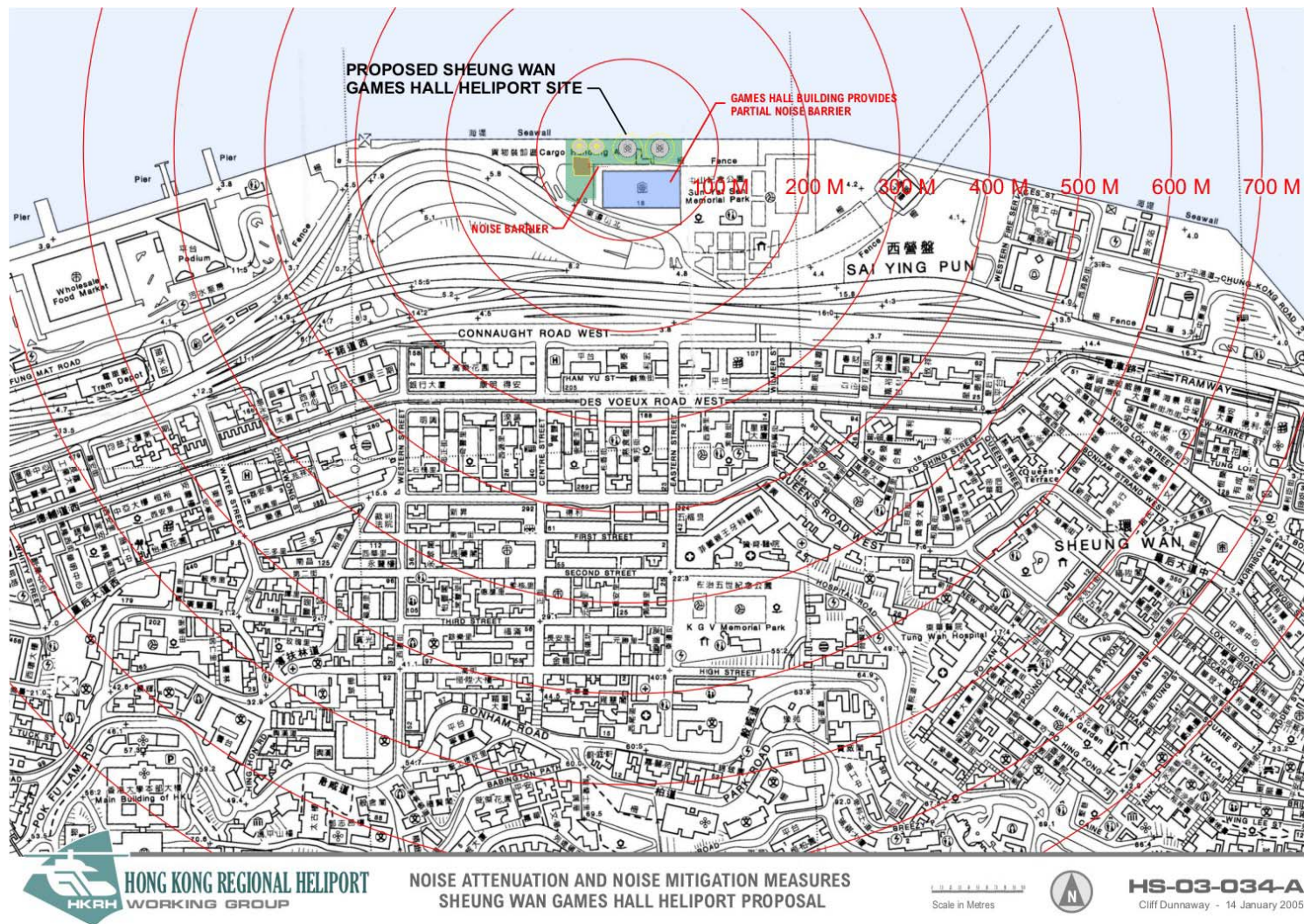
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## ***APPENDICES:***

- A. Noise attenuation and noise mitigation measures - Sheung Wan Games Hall heliport proposal.
- B. Proposed government heliport at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre.
- C. Concept location plan for a regional heliport at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre.
- D. Concept for a vibrant, active waterfront amenity area.
- E. Noise attenuation and noise mitigation measures - Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre heliport proposal.



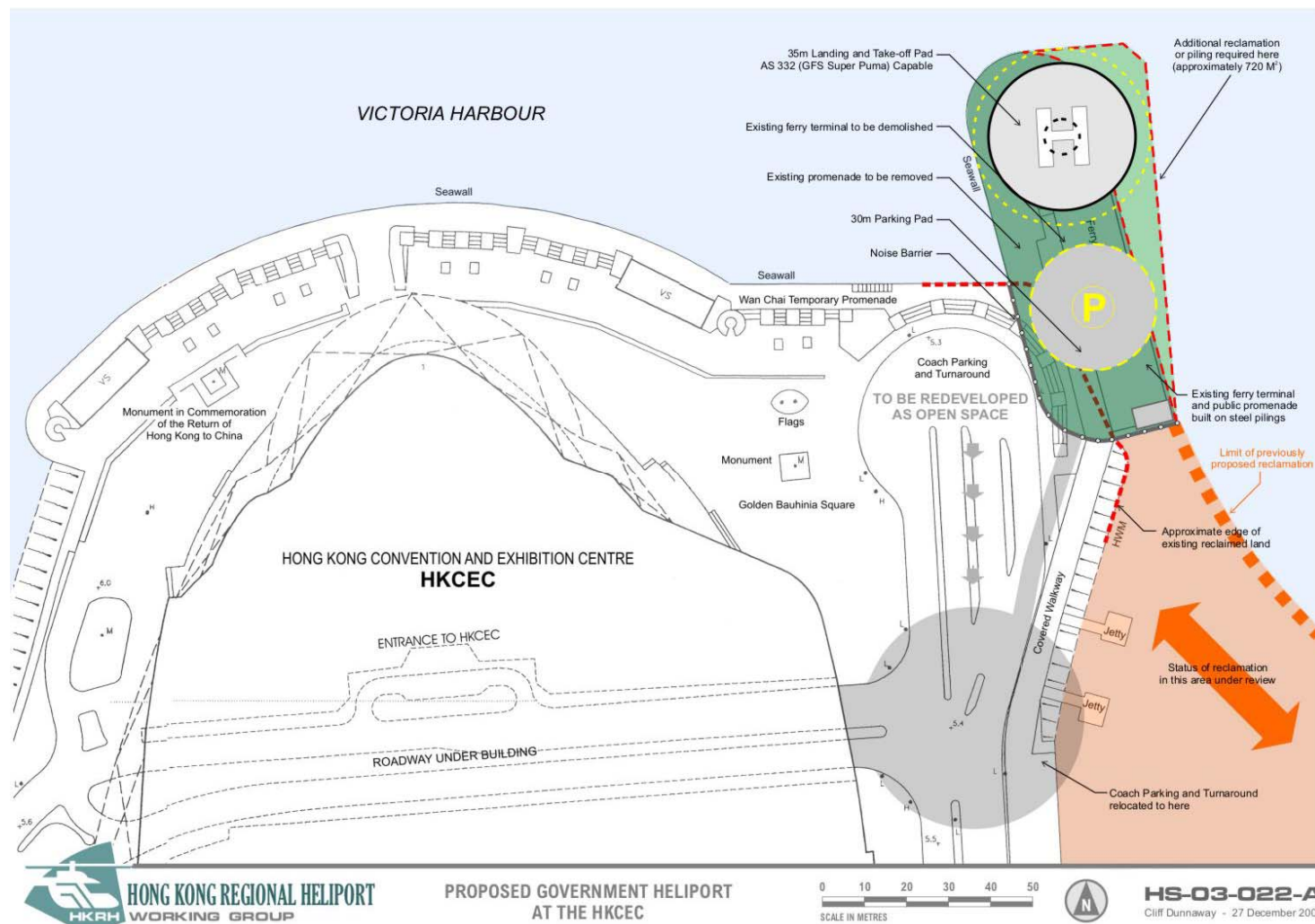
## APPENDIX A



Government proposal for a domestic heliport adjacent to the Sheung Wan Indoor Games Hall. This site is fairly distant from the preferred location in the Central Business District. Although the Games Hall building would provide a partial noise barrier, the noise profile map shows the proximity to noise sensitive residential areas.



## APPENDIX B



Working Group's impression of government proposal for a Government Flying Service (GFS) heliport. The provisional layout shows one LTO pad and one parking pad with no amenities or visual separation from the heavily used tourist node to the west. This proposal would require removal of the public promenade and demolition of the existing ferry terminal building thereby eliminating substantial public amenities.

## APPENDIX C



This overall aerial view of the harbourfront from Central to Wan Chai is centred on the landmark Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre. The conceptual heliport shown at the northeast corner of the HKCEC highlights the strategic location away from residential areas.

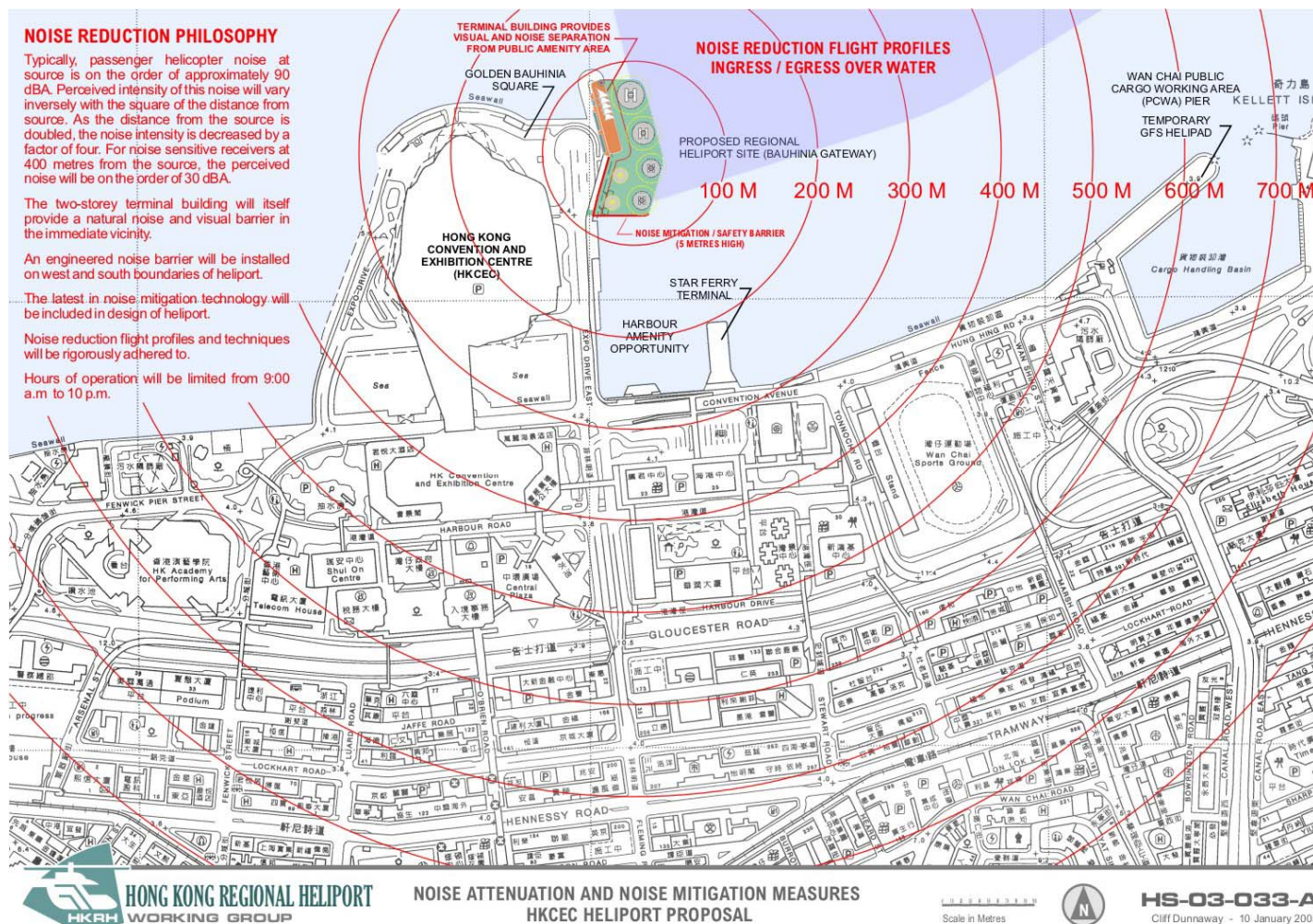


## APPENDIX D



The Working Group's concept shows that a creatively planned heliport can provide not only an essential component of our transportation infrastructure but at the same time be an enhancement to the harbourfront, combining a vibrant point of visual interest, activities and public amenities. Combined with other attractions (in this concept, a historic harbour basin) the whole area can be transformed for the benefit of business, tourism and the local community - an exciting, interesting and educational destination to showcase our harbour, maritime and aviation history - and a new world class heliport.

## APPENDIX E



Sensitivity to noise and noise reduction will be paramount in the planning, design and operation of the heliport. This plan shows the advantage of the proposed location - on the extreme edge of the Convention Centre promontory and as far away as possible from noise sensitive receivers and residential areas. Helicopter noise in these areas will, in fact, be no greater than ambient noise from normal urban activities. Retention of the existing ferry terminal also will provide a substantial noise and visual separation from the popular adjacent tourist area while still allowing visitors to experience the excitement of helicopters landing and taking off, mingled with the other activities of our busy harbour.





Report prepared by members of the ***Hong Kong Regional Heliport Working Group***, 14 January 2005.

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