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 Subject Tamar, the new Government Headquarters, and underused Stadium at So Kon Po

History:

 This message has been forwarded.

I've been following the debate about land use, the planned new Government HQ at Tamar and the so-called concept plans for the Central reclamation. It does seem that a more integrated approach could solve several problems at once, whilst making better use of under-utilised facilities.

For example: the Hong Kong stadium is So Kon Po is massively under utilised. It is also an extremely good location (right in the middle of Hong Kong Island, geographically), but cannot be used as an entertainment venue because of noise constraints. Why therefore could the Government not do a land swap - Tamar for So Kon Po. The current stadium site would be ideal for the Government HQ, and (given a bit of creative land use) the Tamar site could be re-developed as a stadium for both sports and entertainment purposes, in the perfect location for such. Anybody who saw The Rolling Stones in Tamar in 2003 will already know what a fantastic location for a concert it is. Imagine the Three Tenors or U2 performing there, in a custom built stadium (with sliding roof for all season use), right in the middle of Central, with MTR access, Airport Express access and hotels and entertainment all in walking distance. Likewise the HK Sevens and other big sporting events. With the HK\$1 billion that has been allocated for developing venues for the 2009 East Asian Games, surely the Government (and the HKJC?) could find a way to create something that would truly be a world-acclaimed venue, right in the heart of Hong Kong, much like the Sydney Opera House. Of course re-knowned international architects should be asked to enter a competition, to come up with a world-class design, rather than leaving it to the Architectural Services Department, unless we want another Central Library. It could even be semi-underground, with the opening roof just above ground level.-

Similarly, So Kon Po could be a great location for Government. Central, handy for transport (i.e. driving down from the Peak) and big enough for future expansion, plus the bureaucrats would not have to suffer the perceived indignity of being shunted off to Kai Tek, as has also been suggested by other opponents of the Government HQ at Tamar.

In terms of a more integrated approach to a plan for the city as a whole, if a new world class stadium was built in Central, the Hong Kong Colosseum could then be demolished and made available for either Government or developer use. And perhaps even the PLA headquarters could be moved - to So Kon Po, Kai Tek or even Hung Hom, thus freeing up more space for "the people" (in fact to make a truly world-class stadium at Tamar would probably require slightly more land than is currently available, and the PLA headquarters occupy the adjoining plot). City Hall, with its smaller concert venues, could also be demolished and the smaller venues integrated into the stadium concept. And now is the time to integrate all these concerns, as Central reclamation is just getting underway, and the planning for the 2009 East Asian Games beginning.

And once all of the government departments that are currently in Central were moved, then Hong Kong Park could be expanded, or the land made available for "the people" in so many

different ways, making the centre of Hong Kong truly world class.

A long term integrated approach to planning Hong Kong should not be based on maximising short term land revenues.-

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