

21 November 2005

The Hon Lau Wong-fat
Chairman - Planning, Lands & Works Panel
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Dear Sirs/Madam,

RE : Tamar site development

I am writing to urge LegCo to consider the views of ordinary HK citizens during your meeting to discuss the Government Briefing Paper about the use of the Tamar site in Central. The points that I would like to raise are as follows :

(a) LegCo should consider the entire Central waterfront development first before considering Tamar for a massive government office complex because there are severe problems with the Central Overall Zoning Plan.

(b) The OZP allows for 9.25 million sq ft of GFA and the further extension of the HK Convention Centre will add a further 208,700 sq ft of GFA to a small space, which will aggravate traffic and congestion substantially. In any event, the government admits traffic will be saturated by 2016, just a few years after the development is completed.

(c) The proposed road system at the harbour-front, especially "P2" will sterilize the harbour-front as could be seen from gov'ts plans/drawings. It is poor planning that the waterfront can only be reached in the future on

the roof-tops of the 'groundscraper'.

(d) The current plans will not result in a "world class" waterfront which is what the govt promised. Thus, I request LegCo to:

- (i) not approve the paper before the panel;
- (ii) give an opportunity by means of a special meeting to allow concerned citizens to present their concerns/alternatives to LegCo
- (iii) stress there is no urgency to the Tamar project. We believe it is more important to get the Central harbour-front right rather than to push ahead with poorly thought out plans.

There are many important issues that remain unanswered, which legislators must press for further and better particulars in order to assess both the desirability of the Tamar project as presented by the Administration, as well as the high density development allowable under the current Central OZP.

I urge legislators to provide a special meeting to enable public views to be heard and to the Administration to address the following issues :

A. Shortage of space - The assertion that the Administration needs more space depends on (i) how many people it wants to move into one location; (ii) the efficient use of government offices; and (iii) the extent to which those officers working in CGO and Murray Building need more space. We urge Members to call for details. The Administration has in fact not worked out who should be located to Tamar and it should be pressed to clarify this before Members are asked to approve the project and funding. The public also has a right to know such important information.

B. Cost of rental - The Government is one of the largest tenants of

commercial properties in Hong Kong. Members are urged to ask for a full list of space that the Government rents and the costs involved so that they can make a proper comparison of what overall savings there may be in the longer-term by moving to Tamar.

C. Impossibility of conversion - The paper asserts CGO, Murray Building and LegCo are "too old" for effective conversion into "technologically" modern offices. This is untrue if international experience is to be taken into account. Buildings that are very much older have been successfully converted to provide modern offices inside. Members should ask the Administration for the report which it has presumably carried to on its claim that these relatively new structures cannot be converted at a reasonable cost.

D. Cost of maintenance of ageing buildings and in situ redevelopment - Members should ask for more information about its current maintenance cost and a breakdown of the components of the costs; and well as release any reports that had been done for the Administration that in situ redevelopment would not be workable. The Administration should be asked whether it has considered the full environmental costs of the Tamar project.

E. Employment - Members are no doubt conscious of the fact that construction and related jobs will be created even with in situ renovation.

F. Open spaces - The Exhibition Gallery has now been removed and the

Administration says 2 ha of open space will be created for public use. We urge Members to consider issues such as: (i) the quality of the open space in terms of noise level, air quality etc of the space; (ii) its context in view of the entire Central harbour-front; (iii) alternative ideas that may be more appropriate for the use of the space that will create high quality usage of the waterfront; (iv) how much space will be required for security arrangements.

G. Traffic, air quality and noise projections - We urge Members to call for detail projections of traffic, air quality and noise level projections arising from Tamar as well as for the entire Central waterfront based on the new developments that are allowable by the Central OZP, and including (i) the development at the bus terminal in front of IFC2 and behind the Outlying Islands ferry piers; as well as (ii) the expansion of the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre.

Thank you and look forward to extracting additional information from the Administration on all the above issues through Members' intervention and also a special open meeting to enable the public to put forward their concerns in the foreseeable future.

Yours sincerely,

Tian Tse