

26th March, 2006

Re : Tamar

As an ordinary citizen who has looked at the plans for waterfront development and tried to evaluate the conflicting data, I can only believe what my eyes, ears and nose tell me. Having walked the waterfront with some difficulty from Wanchai to Kennedy Town, it is difficult not to be depressed by what one sees along this stretch of water and hope and pray the same mistakes will not be repeated when it comes to Tamar.

The building of a government secretariat whatever its ultimate size on the Tamar site will inevitably bring traffic into and through the area. The new roads planned will if predictions are correct not even see out the next decade before they are saturated. So there is a need to cast a wider net than Tamar to look at traffic and the flow of people in a wider context. Vehicles make a big contribution to pollution, we all know that because you cannot avoid it. Traffic control and air pollution go hand in hand, what's the point of beautiful view if you cannot breathe the air outside. These factors alone are a cogent argument to review the siting of Government offices on Tamar.

The effect on the outer network of roads in Central and Admiralty will all need to be looked at carefully. There are already problems many of which could be solved by enforcing some restrictions. For example Queen's Road Central becomes a single lane road most of the day because of loading and unloading on both sides of the road. It is the piecemeal approach to planning of which Tamar is part that gets in the way of making the jigsaw fit. I believe Tamar should be put on hold until a comprehensive plan for the waterfront emerges that encompasses, traffic, pollution and the movement of people (like an MTR line).

Get Tamar right and the other areas like Kai Tak will fall more easily into place. Some basic principles of waterfront development have to be established. Take a look beyond the Four Seasons Hotel towards Kennedy Town and it is not a pretty sight. A wasted shoreline. Let's get Tamar right and the World City we aspire to be might happen, at the moment it is a World City we expire towards.

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