

Panel on Planning, Lands and Works
Subcommittee to Review the Planning for the Central Waterfront (including the Tamar Site)

**Views of deputations on traffic and environmental issues submitted to the Subcommittee
and the Administration's response
(Position as as 31 March 2006)**

| Organization/individual | Views | Administration's response |
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| The Hong Kong Institute of Planners | <p>We do not object to devoting this last piece of prime site overlooking the Victoria Harbour to government uses – we support developing at the Tamar site government, institution or community (GIC) facilities for use mainly by the Legislative Council, the Executive Council and the Chief Executive's Office. As for other offices accommodated in the Government Secretariat, the majority of them should remain where they currently are. There is no need for demolition.</p> <p>Whether led by the Government or by the commercial sector, high density development will certainly add to the pressure on the transport system in the Central and Wan Chai areas. The Government should voluntarily follow the various guidelines it introduces, such as the urban planning guidelines, traffic and environment assessments, ventilation assessment, and so on, rather than acting in contravention of such rules.</p> | <p>When the Government announced deferment of the Tamar development project in 2003, it was made clear that the long term goal was to develop the Tamar site into Hong Kong's prime civic core. The project scope of the Tamar project covered the construction of the Legislative Council Complex, the Central Government Complex and the Civic Place. Given that the Chief Executive's Office, the Principal Officials and the policy bureaux have to work closely in policy formulation, accommodating them and their supporting staff under one roof at the new Central Government Complex at Tamar could enhance operational efficiency of the Government Secretariat. Savings in administrative costs would also be achieved through reducing the number of out-station offices currently scattered in different locations.</p> <p>In implementing the Tamar development project, the Government would endeavour to reduce the development intensity and require tenderers to take due account of relevant guidelines such as the Urban Design Guidelines and the Harbour Planning Principles. We would tighten up the height restriction to 130mPD to 160mPD, to ensure a 20%</p> |

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| | <p>Judging from a planning perspective, this outline zoning plan should indeed be revised in line with the development in the vicinity and along the waterfront. Alleviating the traffic congestion situation is one of today's planning requirements. We suggest the Government comply strictly with the various guidelines it introduces when developing this precious core lot, thereby taking the lead in setting an example for the future planning for the developments along the harbour front.</p> <p>In designing the buildings, the Government should adopt the "people-oriented" and "community cohesion" concepts and pair them with the idea of a multi-functional city centre, with a view to directing the pedestrian flow from Admiralty to the waterfront, thereby turning the area into an easily accessible and amiable place. Efforts should also be made to ensure that the development can really attain a high standard and meet the various requirements concerned. This will create for Hong Kong a landmark which signifies the status of the city on the one hand and helps to enhance the quality of people's lives on the other. Developing a Government Secretariat with high security</p> | <p>building-free zone under the Victoria Peak ridgeline. The Government will also consider requiring the tenderers to conduct an Air Ventilation Assessment to address possible air ventilation issues, and to prevent the Tamar development creating a wall effect.</p> <p>We consider that the Tamar development project would not contravene the "community cohesion" concept. Half of the Tamar site is for "Government, Institution or Community" use, whilst the other half is an "Open Space" for the construction of a Civic Place with soft landscaping designs. Since the project scope includes the construction of an elevated walkway connecting the Tamar site to Admiralty, and the Civic Place will be connected to the waterfront promenade through a 50m to 60m wide landscaped deck, citizens can stroll leisurely from Admiralty through the Tamar site to the beautiful harbour-front. The Tamar development would become a landmark which does not only signify Hong Kong's status, but also bring citizens to the harbour-front.</p> <p>We note the proposal of a "cultural heritage" zone. When the government plans and considers the future use of the existing Central Government Offices (CGO)/Murray Building (MB), we shall consider all relevant factors (such as economic, social, and cultural heritage value, etc.) and the views of the community.</p> |

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| | <p>control at this precious piece of land will turn the place into a barren island in the midst of a bustling city.</p> <p>We suggest the Government consider designating the area from Robinson Road and north of Hong Kong Zoological and Botanical Gardens to Saint John's Cathedral and Murray Building as Hong Kong's "cultural heritage" zone.</p> | |
| <p>Mr Steve CHAN, Wan Chai District Council Member</p> | <p>The Government has not released to the public the visual impact assessment of the proposed Tamar development. Mr CHAN's own study indicates that the Tamar project would significantly reduce the water surface area visible from The Peak.</p> <p>Redeveloping the Central Government Offices will require removing all the trees in and around the compound. The project will remove part of Hong Kong's heritage from our collective memory. To meet its ambitious land-sale target, the Government will have to build huge commercial blocks that are incompatible with the setting, violating all urban-design guidelines. And the additional traffic generated by the planned land uses in the Central reclamation area</p> | <p>Since the design for the Tamar development is not available at this stage, the issue of releasing a visual impact assessment to the public does not arise. In the prequalification/tender documents, we have required/shall require applicants/tenderers to ensure that the building developments in their designs will not block the ridgeline or the view of the Victoria Harbour from the Peak.</p> <p>At this stage, the Government has not made any decisions on the future use of the CGO/MB sites. However, future development of these two sites would take account of the Urban Design Guidelines, tree preservation and ridgeline protection principles.</p> <p>The Central-Wan Chai Bypass (CWB) and Road P2 will be able to cope with the traffic in the area including that to be generated by the planned land uses in the Central reclamation</p> |

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| | <p>would accelerate the saturation of the proposed Central-Wan Chai Bypass.</p> | <p>area. We estimate that the CWB will operate at a volume to capacity (V/C) ratio of about 0.7 by 2016, i.e. the CWB will have sufficient capacity to cope with the traffic demand in the whole area. The traffic that the planned land uses in the Central reclamation area are expected to generate will only be a small proportion of the total traffic in the area.</p> |
| <p>Designing Hong Kong Harbour District and The Experience Group, Limited Dr Bill BARRON Civic Exchange</p> | <p>The new transport infrastructure planned for Central and Wan Chai so far only consists of road projects. There are no plans whatsoever for extension of the rail based infrastructure in Central, Tamar and Wan Chai. The construction of rail based transport solutions, such as the North Island Line, after the completion of Road P2 and related roads, Central-Wan Chai Bypass, culverts, pump house etc. will become exponentially more expensive, if not technically impossible to implement.</p> <p>The Government's current plans give highways and roads priority, leading to heightened congestion and air pollution in Central. Moreover, the plan is likely to preclude, or at least make far more difficult, the subway extension provided in the Railway Development Strategy No. 2, which will be more important to a larger number of people than having more roads. The Government</p> | <p>Central, Wanchai and Tamar are already well served by the MTR Central, Wanchai and Admiralty Stations. Land has been reserved on the new reclamation for the planned North Island Line and a possible station near Tamar. The planned Shatin to Central Link will provide the area with one more rail station, near the present Hong Kong Convention & Exhibition Centre. Despite the good rail service, roads are required for non-rail commuters and delivery of goods.</p> <p>With CWB, most traffic bypassing Central, Wanchai and Causeway Bay will no longer use the Connaught Road Central/Harcourt Road/Gloucester Road Corridor. The air quality at the roadside of the Corridor should experience improvements because of the reduction of traffic.</p> |

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| | <p>therefore should consider putting in rail ahead of roads.</p> | |
| <p>Action Group on Protection of The Harbour</p> | <p>As indicated in the paper submitted to the Harbour-front Enhancement Committee by the Transport Department, even with the completion of Central-Wan Chai Bypass and Road P2, the traffic at some of the road intersections in Central and Wan Chai areas will still be saturated by 2016. The volume to capacity ratio (v/c ratio) of the section of west-bound inner Gloucester Road near Excelsior Hotel will reach 1.08 during peak hours. In other words, the traffic volume of that road section will then be in excess of its designed capacity. In addition, the traffic volumes at six other road sections, including the sections of east-bound Connaught Road near Exchange Square and west-bound Harcourt Road near Admiralty Centre, are also very close to the maximum capacity (the relevant v/c ratios range from 0.87 to 0.97).</p> <p>According to the Transport Department's submission to the Expert Panel on Sustainable Transport Planning and Central-Wan Chai Bypass in August 2005, the inner sections of certain roads in Wan chai (such as inner</p> | <p>Volume to capacity (V/C) ratio is an indicator, which reflects the performance of a road. A V/C ratio equals to or less than 1.0 means that a road has sufficient capacity to cope with the volume of vehicular traffic under consideration and the resultant traffic will flow smoothly. A V/C ratio above 1.2 indicates more serious congestion with traffic speeds deteriorating progressively with further increase in traffic.</p> <p>If we do not build the CWB and Road P2, and without planned developments in Central and Wan Chai reclamation areas, the V/C ratio of the section of west-bound inner Gloucester Road near Excelsior Hotel will reach 1.27 during peak hours by year 2016. Other roads in Central and Wan Chai will have V/C ratio range from 0.96 to 1.53.</p> <p>If we build the CWB and Road P2 and with the planned developments in Central and Wan Chai reclamation areas, the V/C ratio of the section of west-bound inner Gloucester Road near Excelsior Hotel will be 1.08 during peak hours by year 2016. Other roads in Central and Wan Chai will have V/C ratio range from 0.54 to 0.97, which is still less than 1.2.</p> |

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| | <p>Gloucester Road, east-bound Connaught Road near Exchange Square, west-bound Harcourt Road) will experience traffic congestion by 2016. However, in its reply, the Government only mentioned that that the Central-Wanchai Bypass would have sufficient capacity to cope with the volume of vehicular traffic. Such a reply is by no means made in response to our views.</p> <p>Moreover, on page 7 of another Legislative Council paper (CB(1)855/05-06(01)), it is mentioned that the traffic to be generated from the Tamar developments when in operation would amount to 3% of the total traffic flow of the Central Business District. However, according to the Transport Department submission mentioned above, the traffic flow near the new Central Government Complex and the Legislative Council Building in mornings and afternoons are 1 924 vehicles/hour and 2 281 vehicles/hour respectively. If such 2 000-odd vehicles represent only 3% of the total traffic flow of the Central Business District, the traffic volume of the entire Central Business District could reach as high as 64 133 vehicles/hour to 76 133 vehicles/hour (the traffic volume of the busiest Cross-Harbour Tunnel at Hung Hom is</p> | <p>Therefore, roads in Central and Wan Chai will not be heavily congested by 2016.</p> <p>According to Transport Department's data, the total traffic attraction and generation per hour for the new Central Government Complex (CGC)/Legislative Council Complex (LCC) in the morning and afternoon peak periods will be 1,924 passenger car units (pcu) and 1,286 pcu respectively; instead of 1,924 no. of vehicles and 2,281 no. of vehicles. Based on Transport Department's 2004 Annual Traffic Census and projecting to 2016, traffic flow per hour in the Central Business District (CBD) during peak hours will be around 57,000pcu. Hence, the traffic flow generated from the new CGC/LCC in the morning and afternoon peak periods will be 3.4% and 2.3% respectively of the CBD's total traffic flow. On average, it will be about 3%.</p> <p>The above projection is made under the assumption of a maximum permissible gross floor area development for the new CGC/LCC. As the scale of development for the new CGC/LCC would be lower than the original plan, the traffic thus generated is expected to be lower than 3% of the CBD's traffic flow.</p> |

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| | <p>only some 120 000 vehicles/day). To enable Members and the public to understand better the traffic implications of the Tamar developments, we hope the relevant authorities will publish the results of the relevant traffic impact assessments.</p> | |
| <p>Clear The Air Civic Exchange</p> | <p>The Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for Central Reclamation Phase III conducted in 2001 did not include the “canyon effect” of tall buildings. The EIA used a model that underestimated actual air pollution levels by 50% by pretending that there were no buildings in Central. The Government should produce another report using a correct air pollution model that takes account of buildings.</p> | <p>The EIA Report (Report) for CRIII, which was approved under the EIA Ordinance in August 2001, concluded that the predicted cumulative air quality impacts at the existing and planned air sensitive receivers including the Tamar development would be within established standards. Given that there is no change in the land use in CRIII, the findings are still valid and no updating is required.</p> |
| <p>Civic Exchange</p> | <p>Proposed the creation of a Central Park – a green lung along the harbour-front connecting with existing green lungs of the City via an enhanced network of pathways. Hong Kong Park, the Zoological and Botanical Gardens, the Government House gardens as well as other spaces, will be opened up to form a continuous promenade.</p> | <p>Ample open space provision has been planned in the area. The Tamar development proposed by the Government includes a 2-hectare Civic Place, which will be an open space with abundant greening and soft landscaping for public use. In addition, the harbour-front adjoining the Tamar site will also provide some 8.8 hectares of open space. We consider that the development concept of the Tamar and its adjoining Waterfront Promenade, together with the green lung effect thus produced, would be comparable to that of other development concepts. On the other hand, the proposal for a large single use of open space would undermine the planning</p> |

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| | | and design intention to create a vibrant and attractive Central waterfront with diversity of activities. |