

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

**Citizen Envisioning@Harbour**



3 April 2006

**Sustainability Planning and Design Principles**

We should use existing internationally and locally endorsed documents to look for common parameters to design CRIII. These include Rio Declaration endorsed after the first Earth Summit; Sustainable Development Principles and Indicators (CASET) established by the Government of Hong Kong; Protection of the Harbour Ordinance; Goal and Vision of Victoria Harbour by the Town Planning Board; Harbourfront Enhancement Committee Harbour Planning Principles; Wanchai Phase II Review sustainability principles and indicators; Chapter 11: Urban Design Guidelines in the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines; general urban design principles and planning and design principles adopted by Battery Park City right next to the commercial heart of New York. The attached table lists the synthesised principles and discusses implications for CRIII including the Tamar site.

**Holistic View**

Should not just focus on CRIII or Tamar—should have a holistic view. For instance, the conservation of the Government Hill is very important for economic, social and environmental reasons (see attached table). The current Government Hills is a history book written by “brick and mortar”.

**Need for More Scientific Data**

We need more data such as floor spaces required for government headquarters, market analysis for office spaces and retailing activities...

**Urban Form**

- Tamar, Groundscraper (conveys a bad monstrous image) and Festival Markets: should be of smaller block size, preferably should look like an “organic and natural” extension of urban fabric in Central District but with pedestrian friendly transportation network. Skyline in Tamar should be say similar to that of the City Hall which is of much more human scale.

- Smaller block sizes will encourage finer grained development and opportunity for multiple uses and multi-players to promote competition and prosperity, an essential element for economic sustainability.
- Ground level vitality is very important. Should aim at designing a transit-pedestrian oriented places with a variety of land uses at the ground level nested within a lush green and open space network. For instance, turn the landscaped deck into an at grade landscaped area serviced by shops on either side; and turn P2 into a boulevard (a road lined with trees).

### **Connectivity**

- Connectivity between waterfront and hinterland. Very important to have connections at different levels especially at grade and underground levels (which require careful prior planning and design).
- A plethora of sustainable transportation means especially tram (a unique character of Hong Kong), transit, pedestrianisation etc.
- Connectivity within CRIII and between CRIII and the rest of Hong Kong
- Water-land connectivity and add more marine related activities at the waterside.

### **Engagement Process**

- Should provide open and transparent opportunities to engage the general public in enhancing the planning and design of CRIII to create a sense of ownership and to build social trust and social capital in Hong Kong.
- *CE@H is organising with Central and Western District Council a charrette to be held on 23 April 2006 to enhance the planning and design of CRIII.*

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<b>Synthesised SUSTAINABILITY PLANNING AND DESIGN PRINCIPLES from internationally &amp; locally endorsed documents<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Implications for Central OZP</b>
<b><i>Economic Aspects</i></b>	
Capitalise on natural, social and cultural heritage to promote local and international tourism.	<i>Natural heritage:</i> Victoria Harbour & visual qualities. <i>Social &amp; cultural heritage:</i> Look at Central District as a whole, not just Tamar or CRIII, e.g. conservation of Government Hills, a history book “written by brick and mortar”, cityscape in natural setting.
Provide a variety of land uses (public, commercial, infrastructural, sports, culture and marine-related) at activity nodes to realise a competitive and prosperous market-based economy and to meet the needs and aspirations of the population.	<i>Activity nodes in CRIII:</i> Tamar, Groundscraper, Festival Market, Festival Market east of Tamar and promenade along the waterfront → should have a diversity of public, commercial, cultural and leisure activities to promote competition and prosperity
<b><i>Social Aspects</i></b>	
Protect and promote the physical and mental health and safety of people in Hong Kong.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CRIII should aim to improve air quality in Central &amp; minimise health impacts.</li> <li>• Should provide high-quality and accessible recreational spaces set within an open space framework.</li> </ul>
Provide fair gain to all.	
Allow all sectors of community to be engaged in the planning, development and management of Victoria Harbour and the harbourfront areas through consensus building processes involving relevant institutions.	Provide opportunities to engage the general public in enhancing the planning and design of CRIII to create a sense of ownership and move forward in a positive way to realise a community vision.
Eradicate poverty.	Where ever possible, provide long-lasting employment opportunities for grass root people to make a living in the new space, e.g. food kiosk etc.
Bring the people to the Harbour and the Harbour to the people	View people’s attachment to Victoria Harbour as an asset: a sense of belonging to Hong Kong and utilise the opportunity to accumulate social capital..
<b><i>Environmental Aspects</i></b>	
Enhance environmental quality: biodiversity, marine ecology, water, air, noise pollution...	Should be sensitive to the impacts of CRIII reclamation on the natural environment (land and sea). Should be a demonstration project on sustainable development: minimum reclamation, energy, use of resources, sustainable transport and improving air and water qualities, etc and greening.
Environmentally friendly design to minimise environmental impacts: energy, building materials, air quality, circulation, odour, greening...	
Maximise existing natural features	
Principle of presumption against reclamation in the Harbour	

<sup>1</sup> These documents include: Rio Declaration at the international level; Sustainable Development Principles and Indicators established by the Government of Hong Kong; Protection of the Harbour Ordinance; Goal and Vision of Victoria Harbour by the Town Planning Board; Harbourfront Enhancement Committee Harbour Planning Principles; Wanchai Phase II Review sustainability principles and indicators; Chapter 11: Urban Design Guidelines in the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines; general urban design principles and planning and design principles adopted by Battery Park City right next to the commercial heart of New York.

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<b><i>Sustainable Transportation</i></b>	
Provide safe modes of transportation. Segregation of pedestrian and vehicular transport or use traffic calming measures to enhance pedestrian-friendly environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CRIII should provide a pedestrian friendly environment including at the ground level. Wherever possible, pedestrianisation schemes and traffic calming measures should be in place. Connectivity between CRIII and existing Central District should be maximised through high quality landscaped linkages &amp; connections.</li> <li>• Monitor development and consequent trip generations in Central.</li> </ul>
Pedestrian connectivity between hinterland and waterfront and at different levels, including ground level.	
A marine and logistics hub for the safe and efficient passage of people and goods.	CRIII should be a hub for north-south, east-west and land and sea transportation, not just by cars but a plethora of environmentally friendly modes of transport, e.g. tram mall—trams are unique to HK Island and can connect CRIII with the rest of Hong Kong.
Multi-model environmentally friendly access such as rail, tram, bicycles, roads...	
Minimise land for transportation infrastructure.	Road surfaces should be minimised as far as possible to allow for a transit-pedestrian oriented development, e.g. turn the 6-lane P2 into a boulevard (a street lined with trees).
Provide a barrier-free environment for the physically challenged.	Mandatory for CRIII.
With good signage and direction instructions.	Very important for a pedestrian friendly environment.
Lower construction and operating costs.	Good design for long-term sustainable transport will certainly save a lot of money later on. For example, a transit line built now will be much cheaper than say after above ground development is in place.
Portal and entry area of tunnels should be properly integrated with the city form in a convincing way.	The portal and entry area of Central Wanchai Bypass or even P2 should be carefully designed, landscaped and constructed to integrate with the city form.
<b><i>Connectivity and Integration</i></b>	
Physical connectivity between waterfront and hinterland especially for pedestrians.	Elevated, at grade and underground connections should be carefully designed and constructed when reclamation is under way especially at Tamar site, groundscraper, Festival Markets areas nested within lush green and open space network.
Coherent open space framework.	Open spaces should be connected along the waterfront and orchestrated with activity nodes and heritage sites.
“Organic” extension of existing urban fabric: “reproduce and improve” Central’s system of streets and blocks.	Groundscraper, Festive Market and Tamar Site: all should be in smaller block size resembling the Central Business District to give a sense of continuity of space. This means that developments may need to be undertaken by different developers. This echoes or reinforces the need for diversity under economic aspects.
Connectivity between different districts.	Tram mall, transit lines or underground passages connected to transit lines will help connect CRIII with other districts

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Integration of land and sea.	Marine uses should also be considered, e.g. more piers, waterfront recreational uses.
Minimise land for incompatible land uses, eg. Mechanical plant rooms.	Relocate incompatible land uses as far as possible.
<b>Place Making: Heritage, Urban Design and Visual Qualities</b>	
Value historical continuity, heritage setting and local character.	Respect Statue Square & its existing visual corridor to future Star Ferry: instead of a landscaped deck, should retain at grade pedestrian movement with shops on either side to create a pleasant walking environment. More direct link can be provided through the groundscraper and shops on say the eastern side of the site.
Protect and enhance Hong Kong's harbour and harbourfront areas as Hong Kong's "brand identity" and symbol of urban design excellence with unique landmarks.	CRIII needs to be refined with introduction of more mixed development and specific urban design guidelines and careful place-making review before TPB approval to turn it into a genuine "brand identity".
Preserve panoramic view from Victoria Peak to Victoria Harbour	<b>Tamar site:</b>
Sensitive building height profile to preserve ridge line.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There should not be tall buildings. The massing of the buildings should not be massive to create "wall" effects. A skyline akin to City Hall in Central is more desirable.</li> </ul>
Visual compatibility with surrounding environment: overall height profile and massing—waterfront buildings should be of appropriate scale and façade treatment to avoid creating an impermeable "wall" along waterfronts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Should preserve ridge line and also panoramic view from Victoria Peak to Victoria Harbour.</li> </ul>
Protect and enhance relationship of the city and its with natural and landscaping setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tamar site with civil spaces should add to the character of Hong Kong's waterfront cityscape.</li> </ul>
Quality of traditional and modern architecture.	Groundscraper, Tamar site and Festival Market:
Human scale development: functional appropriateness at street level, pedestrian friendly environment, including, among others, sheds from rain etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Architectural design is important Should be of Park Lane style?</li> <li>• Should be of finer grained smaller blocks to allow human scale development at street level and allow for a diverse economic and social activity.</li> </ul>
A continuous vibrant and attractive waterfront with valuable recreational and leisure activities and social amenities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Should have various nodes with a variety of interesting activities.</li> <li>• Public realm: of higher grade materials and high design and landscape quality with display of art work and appropriate street furniture.</li> </ul>
Display of art and street furniture.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building masses should be manipulated to maintain clear north-south visual access of the waterfront from the hinterland and allow maximum pedestrian connections at grade where possible and penetration of light and air.</li> </ul>
Visual corridors (towards Harbourfront and Central District) and breeze ways.	
Impact on penetration of light and air	
Night-time appearance.	Should catch the imagination of the world!
<b>Strong Leadership and Management</b>	
Aftercare and management	The development should be designed in such a way that it's easy to manage afterwards.

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Accountability	Bureaucratic compartmentalisation will not realise all these good principles embedded in various endorsed documents found in Hong Kong. We need an authority/body/institution within or beyond the government to be responsible for the planning, design, decision making, implementation, management and monitoring in order to realise this vision for a world class harbourfront@Central for Asia's aspiring world city!