



保護海港協會有限公司

Society For Protection Of The Harbour Limited

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Central Waterfront and Tamar

Irresponsible Planning for Central?

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3 April 2006

The following is a summary of the presentation to the Planning, Lands and Works Panel of the Hong Kong Legislative Council.

1. Planning for Central has Serious Faults

Government studies show road capacities planned for the Central waterfront will reach capacity by 2016, which is now less than a decade away.

Road capacity will reach saturation so soon despite large highways and many new roads being designed and built because of the high density of the expected office and commercial developments (permitted under the Central Outline Zoning Plan - COZP).

Beyond the new developments envisaged in the COZP, there will be other high density developments in Central. These include when the Government sells the land at CGO and Murray Building for commercial uses, which will add traffic in Central overall.

It is unclear what the Government's mid-term traffic plans are. Since the Government says CRIII is the last piece of reclamation along the North Island shoreline, how will it accommodate more traffic in the future?

We know the Government has delayed the building of the North Island Rail Line to beyond 2016, and it is carrying out yet another study on ERP. We remain concerned that by pushing high density development in Central, it will want to reclaim more of Victoria Harbour again in the not too distant future.



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2. Good planning: Land use and development density

In order to control traffic growth, forward-looking planning needs to look at controlling land use and development density. The COZP is a good example of packing density into a relatively small area, which will in turn generate high traffic.

We have looked at Civic Exchange's assessment that some 30% of land in the area at and near the Central waterfront will be given over to highways and roads, which is a considerable amount of valuable land. Dr Bill Barron's presentation also shows that even by the Government's own analyses, adding more density at the Central waterfront will lead to more traffic than the Central-Wanchai Bypass is expected to handle thereby throwing away much of the traffic gains from building the Bypass. We wish to recall the Government's statement that THE reason for CRIII was to build the Bypass. Thus, by cramming high density developments on top of the reclamation the Government is only going to make a bad situation far worse.

3. Land use planning and peak vs. off-peak traffic

Substantial parts of the COZP, including Tamar, will be used for offices and commercial developments. This type of development generates the greatest peak time traffic. Moreover, the denser the development, the greater the peak time traffic. Thus, the development mix is vital for good traffic management. We are not satisfied that the COZP provides the best option on managing traffic by controlling land use and density wisely. Indeed, we are convinced the density as envisaged in the COZP needs to be substantially lowered.

4. Reclamation-Land Use-Traffic-Air Quality Nexus

Having studied CRIII intensely for many years, and looking at how development ideas are being promoted, we believe the Bypass was never the primary reason for the reclamation. The real reason is to generate land for high density developments that will provide substantial revenue for the Government.



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The external costs for society will be very high. Needless to say, Hong Kong loses another chunk of Victoria Harbour, and environmental conditions, especially air and noise qualities will deteriorate, which will impact on our public health. The waterfront aesthetic experience will continue to be poor as people will still be too close to highways and roads.

5. Rail deserves higher priority

Sensitive planning would have given priority to rail development rather than highways. In the Government's Railway Development Study II, a North Island Line (NIL) has already been identified. Instead of actively planning to build it as part of CRIII and Wanchai Development II, it is not even being discussed. The NIL is estimated to cost between HK\$7-9 billion but it will cost more (perhaps another HK\$2-3 billion) if it is not done as part of CRIII and WDII. Moreover, building it after the Bypass and P2 are completed will mean a lot more disruptions.

Building the NIL sooner rather than later will generate many construction jobs, and many more people will benefit than giving priority to highways. Moreover, rail has lower external costs than roads in terms of air and noise qualities and public health.

SUMMARY

We call upon legislators to assess the Government's proposal for Tamar not as a stand alone project but as part of the COZP.

Legislators should actively support the call for a review of the COZP so that the planning for the historic heart of the city can achieve the Government's own declared sustainable development, Harbour Vision and Harbour Principles objectives.