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Panel on Planning, Lands and Works

**Subcommittee to Review the Planning for the
Central Waterfront (including the Tamar Site)**

**Background brief on
planning for the new Central waterfront**

Purpose

This paper provides background information on the planning for the Central waterfront and set out the relevant major issues raised during the past discussions on the subject at Council meetings and at meetings of the Panel on Planning, Lands and Works (the Panel) and the Subcommittee to Review the Planning for the Central Waterfront (including the Tamar Site) (the Subcommittee).

2. Please refer to the Background Brief on “Central and Wan Chai reclamation” (LC Paper No. CB(1)921/04-05(02)) for background information on the reclamation projects in Central for the period from July 1993 and March 2004.

The new Central waterfront

3. The Planning Department plans to carry out an urban design study for the new Central waterfront commencing in October 2006. The scope and objectives of the study are detailed in the paper (LC Paper No. CB(1)2219/05-06(01)) provided by the Administration in mid-September 2006 to the Subcommittee. The study area covers the entire planning scheme area of the approved Central District (Extension) Outline Zoning Plan, the adjacent waterfront area of Central Reclamation Phase I around the Central Piers and a portion of Wan Chai Phase II Study. According to the Administration, the aforesaid study is proposed in response to the request of the Town Planning Board made on 5 August 2005 to refine the existing urban design framework of the Central Reclamation Phase III (CRIII) and to prepare planning/design briefs or guidelines for key development sites in the subject area.

Deliberations of the Panel and the Subcommittee

Discussion at the Panel on 25 October 2005

4. The planning for the reclamation area under the CRIII was discussed at the Panel meeting on 25 October 2005. Some members considered that the extent of new developments along the Central waterfront was excessive, giving rise to adverse environmental and traffic impacts and was not concordant with the present-day aspirations of the public. They were particularly concerned that there might be too much commercial development at the new Central waterfront. They asked the Administration to critically review the planning for the Central waterfront in consultation with the public and based on sustainability principles. The following motion was passed at the meeting –

“本事務委員會要求政府大幅減低中環填海計劃第三期內的商業用地，不容許任何寫字樓、酒店等商業樓宇，把土地轉為休憩用地。所有填海土地均應以以民為本的原則歸公眾使用。”

(Translation)

“That the Panel demands the Government to substantially reduce the amount of area for commercial uses under Central Reclamation Phase III; prohibit the use of the reclaimed land for any commercial developments such as office premises, hotels, etc; and rezone the relevant sites to “Open Space”. All reclaimed land should be designated for public use in line with the people-oriented principle.”

Views expressed by deputations

5. At the previous meetings of the Subcommittee held between February and April 2006, the deliberations of the Subcommittee had focused on issues directly related to the Tamar development project as the funding proposal for the project was scheduled to be considered by the Finance Committee in June 2006. Notwithstanding this, the Subcommittee had listened to views from interested groups and individuals on wider planning issues covering the new Central waterfront and even the entire Central district. Deputations were mainly concerned about the intensity of the future developments on the new Central waterfront, and the air quality and traffic impacts of those developments. Other concerns include accessibility of the waterfront to pedestrians, built form of the future developments, configuration and design of Road P2, availability of environmentally-friendly transportation modes to meet the increased traffic demand etc.

Proposed preservation of the building structures and clock tower of the Star Ferry Pier at Central

6. The proposed preservation of the building structures and clock tower of the existing Star Ferry Pier at Central was discussed at the Panel meeting on 20 September 2006. Members noted the Administration's plan to demolish the existing Star Ferry Pier to make way for the planned Road P2 network and some underground works including the Airport Railway Hong Kong Station Extended Overrun Tunnel and the extension of an existing drainage box culvert at Man Yiu Street. Having listened to the views of deputations and having regard to the Administration's position, the Panel passed a motion urging the Government to defer its plan to demolish the existing Star Ferry Pier and to incorporate, upon extensive public consultation, the existing clock tower together with the relevant building structures into the future new development plan for the Central District, with a view to preserving, on a people-oriented basis, the historical traces that formed part of the collective memory.

Concerns raised by Members at Council meetings

7. Following the release of an illustrative design concept for the New Central Harbourfront by the Planning Department in late May 2006, Hon Audrey EU Yuet-mee raised an oral question at the Council meeting on 5 July 2006 regarding two "Comprehensive Development Area" (CDA) sites and a "Commercial" site at the new Central waterfront. She enquired about the total gross floor area of the future buildings on the sites, the anticipated traffic volume to be generated upon occupation of the buildings, and whether the construction of these buildings was in line with the promise made by the former Chief Executive at a Council meeting in October 2004 that any new reclaimed land would be used only to a limited extent for low-density commercial use. In their follow-up questions, Ms EU and some other Members also queried how those future developments, which would cover a total gross site area of about 7.5 hectares with a total gross floor area of 306 550 square metres, could comply with the "overriding public need" principle laid down by the Court of Final Appeal in its judgment delivered on 9 January 2004 in respect of the draft Wan Chai North OZP.

8. During the motion debate on "Protecting the Harbour" at the Council meeting on 12 July 2006, some Members also expressed reservation on the apparently large amount of new commercial developments planned for the new Central waterfront, in particular the "groundscraper" at the "CDA" site to the north of Statue Square with a maximum height of 44 metres and gross floor area of 190 000 square metres.

Relevant papers

9. A list of relevant papers is at the **Appendix**.

Council Business Division 1
Legislative Council Secretariat
3 October 2006

Planning for the new Central waterfront

List of relevant papers

Council/Committee	Date of meeting	Paper
Planning, Lands and Works Panel (PLW Panel)	25 October 2005	<p>Information paper on “Central Reclamation Phase III – Land Uses of the Reclamation Area” provided by the Administration (LC Paper No. CB(1)123/05-06(06)) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr05-06/english/panels/plw/papers/plw1025cb1-123-6e.pdf</p> <p>Administration’s response to the motion passed at the meeting of the Panel on Planning, Lands and Works on 25 October 2005 on the land uses of the reclamation area under Central Reclamation Phase III (LC Paper No. CB(1)444/05-06(01)) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr05-06/english/panels/plw/papers/plw1025cb1-444-1e.pdf</p> <p>Minutes of meeting (LC Paper No. CB(1)290/05-06) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr05-06/english/panels/plw/minutes/pl051025.pdf</p>
Subcommittee to Review the Planning for the Central Waterfront (including the Tamar Site)	9 February 2006 7 March 2006 3 April 2006	<p>Summary of views on the planning for the Central Waterfront raised by deputations and in submissions to the Panel on Planning, Lands and Works and the Administration’s response (LC Paper No. CB(1)855/05-06(02)) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr05-06/english/panels/plw/plw_cw/papers/plw_cw0209cb1-855-2e.pdf</p>

Council/Committee	Date of meeting	Paper
		<p>Views of deputations on traffic and environmental issues submitted to the Subcommittee and the Administration's response (position as at 31 March 2006) (LC Paper No. CB(1)1201/05-06(01)) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr05-06/english/panels/plw/plw_cw/papers/plw_cw0403cb1-1201-1e.pdf</p> <p>Summary of views of deputations made at the meeting of the Subcommittee to Review the Planning for the Central Waterfront (including the Tamar Site) on 3 April 2006 and the Administration's response (LC Paper No. CB(1)1320/05-06(03)) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr05-06/english/panels/plw/papers/plw0425cb1-1320-3e.pdf</p>
PLW Panel	--	<p>Submission dated 5 July 2006 from Designing Hong Kong to the Chairman of the Town Planning Board on comprehensive review of the planning for the Central waterfront (LC Paper No. CB(1)1983/05-06(01)) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr05-06/chinese/panels/plw/papers/plwcb1-1983-1ec-scan.pdf</p> <p>Reply letter dated 17 July 2006 from the Secretary, Town Planning Board to Designing Hong Kong on comprehensive review of the planning for the Central waterfront (LC Paper No. CB(1)2025/05-06(01)) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr05-06/english/panels/plw/papers/plwcb1-2025-1e-scan.pdf</p>
Council meeting	5 July 2006	<p>Oral question raised by Hon Audrey EU Yuet-mee on the provisions of buildings at the new Central harbourfront (Hansard, "page 41") http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr05-06/chinese/counmtg/floor/cm0705ti-confirm-c.pdf</p>

Council/Committee	Date of meeting	Paper
Council meeting	12 July 2006	A motion moved by Dr Hon KWOK Ka-ki on “Protecting the Harbour” (Hansard not yet available)
PLW Panel	20 September 2006	<p>Information paper on “Reprovisioning of Star Ferry Pier in Central” provided by the Administration (LC Paper No. CB(1)2208/05-06(02)) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr05-06/english/panels/plw/papers/plw0920cb1-2208-2e.pdf</p> <p>Submission dated 4 September 2006 from The “Star” Ferry Company, Limited (Chinese version only) (LC Paper No. CB(1)2199/05-06(01)) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr05-06/chinese/panels/plw/papers/plw0920cb1-2199-1c.pdf</p> <p>Submission dated 10 September 2006 from SEE Network (Chinese version only) (LC Paper No. CB(1)2227/05-06(01)) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr05-06/chinese/panels/plw/papers/plw0920cb1-2227-1c.pdf</p> <p>Submission dated 18 September 2006 from The Conservancy Association (English version only) (LC Paper No. CB(1)2227/05-06(02)) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr05-06/english/panels/plw/papers/plw0920cb1-2227-2e.pdf</p> <p>Submission dated 18 September 2006 from Designing Hong Kong Harbour District (English version only) (LC Paper No. CB(1)2236/05-06(01)) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr05-06/english/panels/plw/papers/plw0920cb1-2236-1e.pdf</p>

Council/Committee	Date of meeting	Paper
		Submission dated 20 September 2006 from The Hong Kong Institute of Architects (Chinese version only) (LC Paper No. CB(1)2236/05-06(04)) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr05-06/chinese/panels/plw/papers/plw0920cb1-2236-4c.pdf