

The LegCo Panel on Development calling for public views on Government Paper "Enhancing land supply strategy: reclamation outside Victoria Harbour and rock cavern development - Stage 2 public engagement".

Submission by: Dr. HUNG Wing-tat, Associate Professor, Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, The HKPolyU

Government's Proposal:

1. Government in this Stage 2 public engagement exercise proposes 5 near shore reclamation sites comprising Lung Kwu Tan, Siu Ho Wan and Sunny Bay, Tsing Yi Southwest and Ma Liu Shui as well as possible locations in central waters (between HK Island and Lantau Island) for reclamation.
2. Government also proposes to build caverns to relocate Diamond Hill Fresh Water and Salt Water Service Reservoirs, Sai Kung Sewage Treatment Works, and Sham Tseng Treatment Works.

My comments

3. I, same as the public, do not have adverse comments for relocating public facilities, especially dirty facilities, into caverns provided that the caverns are appropriately located with due consideration on the environment and landscape.
4. There are major arguments for and against reclamation are:

Arguments for reclamation	Arguments against reclamation
Reclamation does not only acquire land for future use but can accommodate the construction demolition. About 6 to 7 million tonnes of surplus construction and demolition materials are generated in Hong Kong annually. Reusing surplus materials for reclamation is environmentally friendly, less costly and helps avoid occupying valuable land. Reclamation can also handle the contaminated mud generated from routine dredging of navigation channels.	Reclamation will cause damages to ecology, coastal geological profiles and natural shorelines. It would also give rise to water pollution. Chinese White Dolphins are of particular concerns on reclaiming Lung Kwu Tan, Siu Ho Wan and Sunny Bay.
Reclamation provides land free of land-right dispute. Government has total free-hand to plan and develop.	There are many “brown lands” in the New Territories, i.e., farm lands that have been converted to temporary storage, vehicle scape yards and other unregulated uses. Government should first of all make good use of these “brown lands”

These arguments reflecting the conflicts of development and environment apply to any development projects, big or small in any corner of the world; Hong Kong is no exception. The Government’s proposed reclamations are certainly big projects.

5. Over decades, locally and international communities have developed theories and mechanisms to deal with conflicts of development and environment, i.e., the concept of sustainable development – to strike the balance among development, environment and social needs without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet these needs. The crucial mechanism to implement this concept is engaging the stakeholders and partnership among stakeholders.
6. The mechanism in Hong Kong is the well-developed EIA process and the Susdev Council's engaging process which is still in an embryonic stage. These processes enable Hong Kong to be in a leading position of the major national and world city. I beg my fellow Hong Kong citizens to treasure this critical process. I would like to see future development of these processes through handling the current disputed reclamation projects.
7. No matter the development is on land or in the sea areas, the same due process should be followed. One cannot judge without evidence that the existing land areas should be developed first or otherwise. Simply speaking, we have to have the knowledge of the impacts of the specific development, either on land or at sea, for a sensible decision.
8. I am glad to see that Government has been following the due process; two rounds of public engagement processes have been carried out. For the engagement process to be successful, it is crucial that Government does listen and address to opposing views as well as give full recognition of these views (of individual parties) if at all possible. Eventually, all the stakeholders will have shared *ownership* of the final solution.
9. After the first engagement exercise, Government identified 5 definite sites plus one possible site for second engagement exercise with consideration of avoidance of encroaching on natural shorelines and environmentally sensitive areas and the impacts on the Chinese White Dolphins at these sites. It is in the right direction but I do not consider it adequate to make a decision.
10. First, I would treat this as a scoping exercise for identify development spots. Final decision can only be made when the full knowledge of the impacts is acquired (i.e., a full EIA study).
11. Second, Government's proposal does not meet the full spirit of sustainable development. Government proposes to reclaim the sea first (destroy first) and to establish coastline ecology shoreline as a compensation (compensation after). Had Government proposed development (i.e., reclamation) and conservation (marine ecology and shoreline conservation) in parallel, it would be more acceptable and in line with sustainable development.
12. Third, Government insists to have easy accessible sites as a priority consideration is fault. The three sites at Lung Kwu Tan, Siu Ho Wan and Sunny Bay have obvious concerns of the natural shorelines and the Chinese White Dolphins, in addition to the local concerns of the nuisance generated by the traffic of heavy trucks. As Government is already transporting 6 to 7 million tonnes of surplus construction and demolition materials annually by barges to dump elsewhere outside Hong Kong, this same process can be used to reclaim possible locations in central water which is less ecologically sensitive.

My submissions

13. A marine and shoreline conservation plan should be put forward together with the current Government's reclamation plan for the next stage public engagement exercise.
14. Government should not prior road accessibility as the top priority consideration in the reclamation site selection exercise, the locations in central water are obviously less

ecologically sensitive and away from the natural shoreline and thus should be explored further.

15. Developments on land of at sea should follow the same due process, i.e., EIA process in Hong Kong. The current engagement exercise can only be treated as a scoping exercise for site identification. Final decision on exact location of reclamation can only be made after the detailed EIA study.