

# Designing Hong Kong

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Clerk to Panel on Economic Development  
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Hon Jeffrey LAM Kin-fung,

The Marine Department requires adequate funding and quality facilities. For many years the department has been underfunded and under resourced.

A visit to the Harbour Patrol Office in Yau Ma Tei shows the lack of support, as staff has inadequate facilities for their operations. Another example of the lack of support for the Marine Department is the location of the ship survey area in Yau Ma Tei. It is next to a park and promenade and lacks vehicular access for engineers to attend. A suitable site to the east of the current location has recently been converted into park. This would be ideal for the Marine Department as it has immediate road access, is close to the Harbor Patrol Office and has easier access to rail and transport. It would offer a far more efficient ship survey location.

Marine activities in Hong Kong is shifting from industrial to recreational users, and with our magnificent waters and shorelines the number of local and visiting vessels will continue to increase. These need to be supported with berthing, landing and maintenance facilities. Hong Kong lacks 20,000 safe moorings for leisure, recreational, tourism and water sports related vessels. The increase in boat use and ownership will in turn offer jobs for fishermen obliged to abandon their trade. And importantly, as more people learn about the sea through sports, leisure and recreation, we can start to address the systemic shortfall in manpower faced by the Marine Department and the commercial marine industry, as identified in reviews following the Lamma ferry tragedy.

Finally, the Marine Department must be mandated to represent the marine industry and be tasked to champion marine activities in Hong Kong, and not be limited to Marine Safety and Safety of Vessels. Only with extreme effort have we been able to safeguard just in time the land for shipyards in Ap Lei Chau so that ships can be maintained properly.

We urge for a broad review of the marine industry, beyond the obvious safety issues.

Yours sincerely,



Paul Zimmerman  
CEO, Designing Hong Kong Limited

Encl. Hong Kong Needs A Boat Policy

## Hong Kong needs a boat policy tied to real needs

Paul Zimmerman says the review of vessel berthing space must address supply shortfall

1. The Hong Kong government has belatedly acknowledged the need for a fundamental review of policy and management issues relating to vessel berthing space. The review will explore solutions for better management of berthing spaces for local vessels and the challenges faced by the Marine Department.
2. The marine industry wants this review to include supply, given the dramatic shortfall of over 20,000 berthing facilities for leisure, recreational and sports vessels. A champion is needed within government to ensure waterfront land and seabed is set aside to address this.
3. Today there are more than 14,000 vessels used for leisure, recreation and sports in Hong Kong and they demand very different berthing facilities from commercial and working boats, which can safely use anchorage areas. Small recreational vessels are best stored onshore or in sheltered water alongside pontoons. And this is where the problem lies.
4. Aside from naturally protected waters like Port Shelter in Sai Kung, the government has created typhoon shelters around bays. But these are primarily designed as big-vessel anchorages. Within these protected waters, there are only 3,230 wet moorings. Together with the estimated 800 dry berths, that makes only 4,000 berths in Hong Kong.
5. This shortfall of over 10,000 berths has led to people creating illegal moorings which are rented out at extortionate rates. Small-boat owners who can't afford these expensive sublets or a private marina membership leave their boats exposed to the risk of damage, lack of insurance cover and the wrath of government.
6. Further, two studies have identified a latent demand of over 10,000 would-be boat owners, deterred by the lack of mooring facilities. A Dutch business consultancy concluded that recreational ownership would double if safe, affordable public moorings were available. Last year, a team from the Worcester Polytechnic Institute analysed boat lengths in different markets and concluded that there is a shortfall of 12,000 small cruisers in Hong Kong: owners have either very small craft they can pull out of the water or they can pay to moor their large vessel in a marina.
7. We have yet to account for the potential increase in commercial leisure and tourism vessels.
8. New berthing facilities will enable an increase in boat use and ownership, which in turn will offer jobs for fishermen obliged to abandon their trade. Importantly, as more people learn about the sea through sports, leisure and recreation, we can start to address the systemic shortfall in manpower faced by the Marine Department and the commercial marine industry, as identified in reviews following the Lamma ferry tragedy.

**Paul Zimmerman is CEO of Designing Hong Kong Limited.**