



3 September 2018

Planning on Development
Planning for Land Supply in Hong Kong

Dear Sirs,

The Land Supply Task Force has asked members of the public to consider various options to increase the land supply available for Public Housing. One of the options being considered is that the Government cancel the Private Recreational Leases granted to sporting clubs and reuse that land for public housing. The Royal Hong Kong Yacht Club strongly objects to that proposal.

Sport is an essential part of a balanced working and living environment for the citizens of any city and Hong Kong, as Asia's World City, should be encouraging the further development of all sports - not considering taking back land currently being used for these purposes for additional public housing. There are many other options to provide land for public housing which will not destroy the city's sporting infrastructure and RHKYC would urge government to consider these rather than cancelling the PRLs of genuine sporting clubs.

For over 170 years, the Royal Hong Kong Yacht Club has been a vital part of the fabric of Hong Kong. The Club has an impressive track record of nurturing and developing sportsmen and women, from youth to adult, through myriad training programmes, the organisation of local, regional and international regattas and providing opportunities for its sailors and rowers to fly the flag for Hong Kong by competing at overseas events.

Should the government take back the land currently allocated to our club to make up the land shortfall for public housing, Hong Kong will lose its ability to stand on the regional and international stage in our sports, as our athletes will no longer be receiving the training or have the opportunities to compete and develop the experience necessary that they receive through the Club, which bridges the gap between LCSD's beginner level classes and the elite programmes at HKSI.

Not only would we lose our place on the international sporting stage, Hong Kong runs the risk of being unable to attract international companies and their staff who are looking for business opportunities



together with a good balance of living environment, education and sports for themselves and their families. Doing away with private recreational leases puts Hong Kong in jeopardy of not only losing existing residents but also of being unable to attract talent to Hong Kong in future. In so doing Hong Kong will lose our competitive edge to cities such as Singapore which will look far more favourable.

Furthermore, the Royal Hong Kong Yacht Club has made great contributions to its core sports throughout its near 170 years of existence. The Club is renowned the world over for its professionalism and excellence in hosting regional and international events from its facilities.

Our last sailing season was our most successful yet; highlights include a wide range of top international regattas held by the Club, including the following:

1. Volvo China Coast Regatta
2. Volvo Hong Kong to Vietnam Race
3. Optimist Asian & Oceanian Championship
4. Hong Kong 29er Open
5. 2018 29er World Championship
6. Hong Kong Race Week / ASAF Youth Cup, and
7. Rolex China Sea Race.

The RHKYC was also able to provide the on-water race management and volunteers that allowed the Hong Kong Sailing Federation to act on behalf of the Hong Kong Government, to allow Hong Kong to be a Host City of one of the Volvo Ocean Race Stopovers.

In addition to these major and international events, regular class racing has been held at the Club's three venues on most weekends, totalling more than 300 races during the September 2017 to May 2018 sailing season. Thousands of sailors - both members and non-members, be they professional, amateur or beginners from Hong Kong and abroad, have had the opportunity to take part in our Club-organised racing.

For the coming year, our calendar highlights will encourage athletes from across the world to come to Hong Kong. These include the Sportsboats Asia Pacific Championships, the Asian Rowing Coastal Championships, the China Coast Regatta and Hong Kong to Hainan Race, the Around the Island Race - which the Club created and has now developed to the point that it has had to be split into three separate events in order to accommodate all who wish to participate.

The Club has revived rowing in Victoria Harbour through its Coastal Rowing Regatta, which, in conjunction with the HKCRA, has now allowed Hong Kong to successfully bid for the Asian Rowing Coastal Championships in November 2018 and the World Rowing Coastal Championships in November 2019. RHKYC will act as the Lead In and Legacy partner as well as the host venue for both of these championships.

None of this would be possible if the Club did not exist in its current locations and as such we would urge the government to look at other options for public housing that will not have the unintended consequence of killing off the very sports that help make Hong Kong a vibrant city for all its citizens.

All of our competitions are open to non members. All of our training programmes are open to the public. The Club provides extracurricular sailing and rowing activities to many schools and has done so for decades. Furthermore, the Club has done much to nurture and develop the sports of sailing, rowing,

paddling and dragonboating at a very competitive level from all of its locations. In so doing it has done much to help put Hong Kong on the world's sporting map.

Hong Kong is desperately short of such sports and recreation facilities which are hugely undersupplied compared to just about any other major developed city. Taking these facilities back to relieve land supply issues, will simply remove another small pillar in Hong Kong's fight to retain our competitiveness.

Without sporting and good recreational facilities, Hong Kong will inevitably lose its attractiveness as a place to live and work for top talent from international firms that want to maintain their business in Hong Kong which helps the city to thrive. Hong Kong will surely lose our edge over other Asian and Chinese cities in the long run in this very competitive world. In our view these sport clubs and recreation clubs with Private Recreational Leases must be allowed to carry on their mission of promoting and developing these sports and to carry on giving relief to the busy, hectic life of its citizens including international top talent, such as those in financial and business sectors, that help Hong Kong continue to thrive as a Asia's World City.

The Government should consider other options to fulfil the shortfall in land for public housing. The possible contribution of land from Private Recreational Lease holders (60 hectares in total) would be too insignificant to be used to solve the estimated shortfall in land, targeted at 1,200 hectares. In our view it makes no sense to include PRLs in the Short to Medium term options for land supply. The land so occupied is in many instances unsuitable for large scale public housing. There are better and more obvious options that would not prove devastatingly disruptive to the entire equilibrium of Hong Kong's existing sporting and recreational structure.

In view of the above, the Royal Hong Kong Yacht Club would urge Government that the option of taking back the land from private recreational leases should be rejected.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Woo". The signature is stylized with a large, looping initial "J" and a cursive "Woo".

John Woo
Commodore