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**Panel on Development**

**Report of the Subcommittee to Study Policy Issues  
Relating to the Harbourfront**

**Purpose**

This paper reports the deliberations of the Subcommittee to Study Policy Issues Relating to the Harbourfront (“the Subcommittee”) set up under the Panel on Development (“the Panel”).

**Background**

2. The Victoria Harbour is a symbol of Hong Kong, and a precious natural asset for the public. It is the policy objective and vision of the Government to provide the public with harbourfront sites that are diversified, vibrant, accessible and inclusive by enhancing the harbourfront of the Victoria Harbour. The Administration, in continual partnership with the Harbourfront Commission (“HC”),<sup>1</sup> has been enhancing the harbourfront through developing new waterfront promenades and open space, as well as improving harbourfront facilities for public enjoyment. To strengthen harbourfront enhancement efforts, the Harbour Unit under the Development Bureau (“DEVB”) was reorganized into the multi-disciplinary Harbour Office (“HO”) on 1 July 2018. Moreover, the Administration has earmarked a total of \$6.5 billion to progressively implement various harbourfront enhancement projects with a view to making the harbourfront more connected, continuous and enjoyable. In taking forward such projects, the Government and HC adopt an “incremental approach”<sup>2</sup> and pursue the vision of “Harbourfront Shared Space”. To bring vibrancy and diversity to the harbourfront, diversified management models including

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<sup>1</sup> The Harbourfront Commission is an advisory committee established in July 2010 to advise the Government on harbourfront planning, design, management and other related matters.

<sup>2</sup> The “incremental approach” (“先駁通、再優化”) aims at connecting different parts of waterfront promenades as quickly as possible for early public enjoyment.

management by the Government, operation by private contractors and cooperative management by non-governmental organizations have been implemented for harbourfront sites.

3. The harbourfront along both sides of the Victoria Harbour has a total length of about 73 kilometres (“km”). As at July 2023, of the 25-km-long waterfront promenades which had been opened, about 10.2 km and 9.8 km were located on Hong Kong Island and in Kowloon respectively, while about 5.5 km were located at the waterfront in Tsuen Wan and Kwai Tsing areas. An additional 9-km-long harbourfront, mainly in Kowloon, is expected to be opened for public use in the coming few years up to 2028. Development of another 4 km of waterfront promenades hinges on the progress of land sale or private developments in the adjacent areas.<sup>3</sup> The remaining 35-km-long harbourfront is considered not developable into promenades as those harbourfront areas are occupied mostly by facilities such as container terminals and public cargo working areas (“PCWAs”), developed with private residential premises or commercial blocks, or natural coastlines.

4. With a view to improving the connectivity of the harbourfront and increasing public space while maintaining the protection of the harbour, the Administration announced in the 2021 Policy Address that discussion on the review of the Protection of the Harbour Ordinance (Cap. 531) (“PHO”) would commence. Subsequently, the Administration consulted the Panel on the proposed framework of legislative amendments to PHO in March 2023, and its plan is to submit the Protection of the Harbour (Amendment) Bill to the Legislative Council (“LegCo”) in 2024.

## **The Subcommittee**

5. At its meeting on 10 February 2022, the Panel decided to appoint the Subcommittee to study policy issues relating to the harbourfront. The terms of reference and membership of the Subcommittee are given in **Appendices 1** and **2** respectively.

6. Under the chairmanship of Hon Tony TSE Wai-chuen, the Subcommittee has held six meetings since it commenced work in May 2023. The public was also invited to give views on the development and future planning of the harbourfront and the uses and management of harbourfront sites at the Subcommittee’s meeting on 12 October 2023. A list of organizations and individuals which/who have submitted written views to

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<sup>3</sup> An overview of the Administration’s strategy of connecting and enhancing the harbourfront within and beyond the Victoria Harbour is set out in the Administration’s [paper](#), which was discussed by the Subcommittee on 24 July 2023.

the Subcommittee or have expressed views at the aforesaid meeting is in **Appendix 3**. The Administration has provided a written response ([LC Paper No. CB\(1\)129/2024\(01\)](#)) to the submissions<sup>4</sup> received by the Subcommittee. In addition, at the invitation of the Administration, members inspected the harbourfront development along the Victoria Harbour on board a government launch on 20 September 2023 to learn about the planning and implementation progress of a number of harbourfront promenade projects on both the Hong Kong Island and Kowloon sides.

7. To facilitate the deliberation of the Subcommittee on the relevant subjects, the Research Office of LegCo has conducted a study on the harbourfront management measures in Sydney, Shanghai and Tokyo.<sup>5</sup>

### **Deliberations of the Subcommittee**

8. The Subcommittee has focused its work on the following areas:

- (a) strategies of connecting and enhancing the harbourfront within and beyond the Victoria Harbour;
- (b) land use of waterfront sites along the Victoria Harbour and the feasibility of developing waterfront sites into tourist attractions alongside the adjoining areas;
- (c) operation and management modes of harbourfront sites; and
- (d) potential harbour enhancement works to be implemented by the Administration after the amendment of PHO.

#### Strategies of connecting and enhancing the harbourfront within and beyond the Victoria Harbour

##### *Hong Kong's overall strategy of harbourfront development*

9. The Subcommittee agrees with the Administration's strategy of connecting the waterfront promenades for public enjoyment first and then carrying out further enhancement under the "incremental approach", and recognizes the efforts made by the Administration in promoting the development of a more connected harbourfront and the effectiveness of the relevant work. The Subcommittee has noted that according to the research

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<sup>4</sup> The submissions from deputations and individuals on the relevant subjects are available on the Legislative Council's [website](#).

<sup>5</sup> Please refer to the [Information Note](#) issued on 26 January 2024.

conducted by the Research Office, cities such as Shanghai, Sydney and Tokyo all aspire to use harbourfront spaces to attract tourists and local visitors and various harbourfront development measures have been introduced to that end. Those measures are centred on aspects including improving the accessibility to harbourfront sites, constructing visitor-friendly harbourfront facilities (such as parks), and encouraging the organization of more recreational and commercial activities.

10. Members opine that the Administration should shift the focus of the harbourfront from recreation and leisure to include public open space, tourism and commercial elements, so as to create an energetic harbourfront. A more holistic and forward-looking approach should also be adopted in the planning of the harbourfront. Regarding the strategy of harbourfront development in different districts, members have suggested that harbourfront sites located in business districts (e.g. Tsim Sha Tsui, Central and Wan Chai) should be used for holding various kinds of activities, and commercial facilities such as food and beverages (“F&B”), retail and entertainment should be introduced to bring vibrancy to the harbourfront. On the other hand, harbourfront sites situated close to residential dwellings should be used mainly for passive recreational purpose to avoid causing noise nuisance to residents. The Administration should also determine the development positioning of individual harbourfront sites in the light of their respective characteristics and strengths. Some of the sites may be developed into tourist attractions and not merely be used for public leisure.<sup>6</sup>

11. Taking note of members’ views, the Administration has advised that it will first connect the waterfront promenades on both sides of the Victoria Harbour under the “incremental approach” and press ahead with the harbourfront enhancement work. Such enhancement work includes adopting new management models and providing diverse activities and facilities at harbourfront sites. Different elements will also be introduced in view of the respective characteristics of the sites, including the provision of F&B services at suitable locations (e.g. the waterfront in Wan Chai and Kwun Tong).

#### *Impact of harbourfront development on waterfront operations*

12. At the public hearing held by the Subcommittee in October 2023, members noted some deputations’ view that waterfront operations (e.g. ship repair and cargo handling) are key components of Hong Kong’s economic activities. In view of this, the Administration should ensure that the

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<sup>6</sup> For example, being the best viewing location of the New Year Fireworks Display in Kowloon East, the Cha Kwo Ling Promenade has high potential for tourism development.

operational space of waterfront operations will not be affected when developments are carried out for connecting the harbourfront. Deputations have also suggested that the Administration should grant longer tenancy terms for operators of waterfront sites to enable the sustainable development of the trade, and adopt an “incremental” approach of settlement before development by identifying reprovisioning sites for the affected waterfront operations before the commencement of harbourfront development projects. Members generally agree with the above views of deputations, and opine that the Administration should draw up a development blueprint of facilities for waterfront and maritime operations (e.g. berthing areas for yachts) to support the development of the relevant industries.

13. The Administration has remarked that port industries are important economic activities in Hong Kong, as well as a part of the city’s history. The operation of port facilities will be maintained according to actual needs. Therefore, one of the directions for the planning of harbourfront development is to allow the public to enjoy the harbourfront areas and to allow port facilities to coexist at the same time. The Administration will improve harbourfront facilities under the condition that the port operation will not be affected. For example, given that the West Kowloon Cultural District (“WKCD”) and the Tai Kok Tsui waterfront are separated by the New Yau Ma Tei PCWA, the Administration will construct a pedestrian walkway along the inland boundary of the PCWA to connect the two aforesaid places in a bid to improve the accessibility of the waterfront area concerned.<sup>7</sup> The Administration has also stressed that it does not have any current plans to reduce the number of PCWAs or typhoon shelters.

#### *Connecting and development of individual sections of the harbourfront*

14. The Subcommittee opines that the Administration should adopt more proactive strategies to connect the harbourfront areas along the Victoria Harbour and beyond to enhance the continuity of the harbourfront. To that end, the Administration can request the relevant government departments/statutory bodies/private developers to build and open the waterfront promenade portion of their harbourfront development projects first to allow public access and enjoyment in advance of the completion of

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<sup>7</sup> The gazettal procedures for the project under the Roads (Works, Use and Compensation) Ordinance (Cap. 370) have been completed. The Administration expects that the construction works will commence in the second half of 2024 with the target of opening up the pedestrian walkway to the public in 2026. Moreover, the provision of the proposed walkway requires minor adjustment to the land area of the New Yau Ma Tei PCWA. Amendment will be made to the provision concerning the land area of the said PCWA under the Port Control (Public Cargo Working Area) (Consolidation) Order (Cap. 81B) at an appropriate juncture.

the entire project. For certain waterfront areas that are not developable into promenades, members have urged the Administration to continue with its effort of working out a solution to link up those areas with the relevant stakeholders. If the proposals of freeing up space in waterfront sites for provision of pedestrian walkways are not accepted by the private land owners concerned, the Administration should formulate alternative connecting proposals and the timetable for linking up those waterfront areas.

15. Regarding the connection and development of individual sections of the harbourfront on **Hong Kong Island**, members have raised to the Administration the following concerns and suggestions:

- (a) building a boardwalk at New Praya in Kennedy Town to address the safety issues arising from members of the public standing along the roadside there to admire the view of the Victoria Harbour;
- (b) connecting the harbourfront section currently occupied by the Western District PCWA without affecting the operation of the PCWA (e.g. through constructing an elevated footpath), so as to address the needs of both the operation of the sector and public enjoyment; and discussing with the private owner of Shun Tak Centre in Sheung Wan about the construction of a pedestrian link on its waterfront site for connecting the waterfront promenade;
- (c) as some sites at the Central harbourfront are required for carrying out the construction works of the Airport Railway Extended Overrun Tunnel by the MTR Corporation Limited (“MTRCL”) for quite a long period of time, the Administration should identify an alternative harbourfront site as replacement for public enjoyment; and
- (d) extending the waterfront promenade in Hong Kong Island North to the east from Tam Kung Temple in Shau Kei Wan to Heng Fa Chuen or Chai Wan; and connecting the waterfront section between Wah Kwai Estate and Tin Wan along the Aberdeen Typhoon Shelter without affecting the operation of the waterfront factories there.

16. Regarding the above concerns and suggestions raised by members, the Administration has responded as follows:

- (a) subject to the outcome of the legislative amendment exercise of PHO, the Administration will explore the provision of a boardwalk connecting the waterfront space in the vicinity of New Praya in Kennedy Town, and will take forward the relevant works in the context of implementing the strategic road works near New Praya in Kennedy Town in the future;
- (b) the strategic roads of the Kau Yi Chau Artificial Islands include the construction of a fourth cross-harbour tunnel connecting the artificial islands and Kennedy Town. Using the road works of the connecting roads as an opportunity, the relevant departments will explore actively the feasibility of connecting the Belcher Bay Promenade, which will be reprovisioned in-situ, to the existing Central and Western District Promenade to the east, the waterfront site of ex-Kennedy Town Incineration Plant/Abattoir to the west, and Belcher Bay Park to the south. The relevant stakeholders will be consulted on the proposal in due course. The Administration will also discuss with the private owner of Shun Tak Centre in Sheung Wan the feasibility of constructing a pedestrian link on its waterfront site;
- (c) the Administration is looking closely into the possibility of downsizing the area covered by the construction works of the Airport Railway Extended Overrun Tunnel in order to maintain the scale of the Central Harbourfront Event Space as far as possible;
- (d) the Administration will explore how the pedestrian path between Tam Kung Temple in Shau Kei Wan and Heng Fa Chuen in Chai Wan can be linked up through the “Round-the-Island Trail” project. Regarding one of the key sections of the path which passes through the Hong Kong Museum of Coastal Defence (which will be renamed as the Hong Kong Museum of the War of Resistance and Coastal Defence), the Administration is studying the feasibility of providing a pedestrian walkway in the museum precinct and at some more inland locations on the adjacent slopes; and
- (e) the waterfront area between Wah Kwai Estate and Tin Wan is part of the “Round-the-Island Trail”. As some of the waterfront sites there are privately owned, the Administration intends to consider providing part of the Trail by making use of some more inland sites.

17. The Subcommittee opines that contrary to Hong Kong Island North with a waterfront promenade that will be fully connected in the future,<sup>8</sup> the continuity of the harbourfront on the Kowloon side still awaits improvement.<sup>9</sup> Regarding the connection and development of individual sections of the harbourfront in **Kowloon**, members have raised to the Administration the following views:

- (a) the Administration should explore the construction of a pedestrian walkway skirting the Fishtail Rock in Hoi Sham Park in To Kwa Wan to link up the waterfront at the location, and communicate more proactively with the private owners of the waterfront gas facility site off Grand Waterfront in To Kwa Wan, the waterfront area near the Green Island Cement Pier in Hung Hom, Harbour Centre Tower 2 and Hilder Centre, so as to explore the feasibility of vacating space at those waterfront locations for provision of pedestrian walkways;
- (b) the Administration should adopt an innovative mindset for the re-planning and development of Hung Hom Station and the railway facility sites in the vicinity, as well as the waterfront and pier facility sites to the south of Hong Kong Coliseum (with a total area of about 10 hectares). The development of the relevant sites should be considered in conjunction with the use of Hung Hom Toll Plaza of Cross Harbour Tunnel which is vacated after the implementation of HKEToll, so as to create a vibrant harbourfront;
- (c) it is suggested that consideration should be given to building a marina at Yau Tong Bay, and the relevant developer should be motivated to kick-start the project of Yau Tong Bay Comprehensive Development Area as soon as possible, including the construction of the public waterfront promenade and introducing water-friendly design to the promenade; and

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<sup>8</sup> Of the 13.2-km-long developable harbourfront in Hong Kong Island North, 10.2 km had been opened as at July 2023, and another 2.8 km will be opened in the coming five years. By then, over 90% (or 13 km) of the developable harbourfront in Hong Kong Island North will be connected, spanning all the way from Kennedy Town to Shau Kei Wan.

<sup>9</sup> Kowloon has a developable harbourfront stretching up to 20.2 km, of which 9.8 km had been opened as at July 2023 and 6 km will be opened in the coming five years. By then, over 80% (or 15.8 km) of the developable harbourfront in Kowloon will be connected.



- (d) the Administration should collaborate with other public organizations for early construction of waterfront promenades on land owned directly or indirectly by the Government. That includes discussing with the West Kowloon Cultural District Authority (“WKCDA”) how the about 800-metre-long remaining portion of the West Kowloon Cultural District Waterfront Promenade can be completed as soon as possible.

18. Regarding the above views raised by members, the Administration has responded as follows:

- (a) the Administration will adopt the approach of “dealing with the easy part first before coming to the difficult part” to improve the accessibility of the waterfront areas in Hung Hom and To Kwa Wan. That includes:
  - (i) for the waterfront in the vicinity of the Fishtail Rock in Hoi Sham Park: as the waterfront off the Fishtail Rock is a natural shoreline, the Administration will first explore an inland connection passing through Hoi Sham Park to link up the adjacent waterfront sites, so as to preserve and avoid affecting the only remaining natural shorelines in the Victoria Harbour;
  - (ii) for the waterfront gas facility site off Grand Waterfront in To Kwa Wan: the Administration has agreed with the landowner on the possibility of exploring the provision of a connecting path in the precinct of the existing facilities, and will first conduct the risk assessment with the landowner;
  - (iii) for the waterfront area near the Green Island Cement Pier in Hung Hom: the Administration will first explore non-reclamation solutions to link up the waterfront sites there. Should such options prove not feasible in the end, the Administration may consider the possibility of building boardwalks that involve small-scale reclamation at such waterfront locations;
- (b) MTRCL has been invited to conduct a preliminary study to re-plan and develop Hung Hom Station and the railway facility sites in the vicinity, and submit proposals in 2024. The study will cover enhancement to the pedestrian connectivity of the waterfront areas between Hung Hom and Tsim Sha Tsui East, and improvement to the waiting areas of the bus stops at Cross

Harbour Tunnel. In addition, in the course of conducting the study and implementing the revitalization works, the Administration will explore the feasibility of opening up the aforesaid waterfront areas on a short-term basis if the situation so permits;

- (c) according to the relevant Outline Zoning Plan, the developer is required to provide a public waterfront promenade with a width of not less than 15 metres at the relevant site within Yau Tong Bay Comprehensive Development Area. The above development is an example of the Administration's application of market forces to link up the harbourfront. In addition to the waterfront promenade, the Administration will amend the zoning of the Yau Tong Bay area to allow landowners to provide marina-related landside facilities in the area through planning applications. It will also study the feasibility of the proposal of building a marina in the area. However, a number of problems have to be overcome in that matter. It is necessary to study carefully with relevant departments from perspectives such as planning, land administration and marine affairs before determining the way forward of the development; and
- (d) compared to private land in general, it would be easier to build waterfront promenades on land owned by the Government or public organizations. Taking WKCD as an example, WKCD has planned to develop its waterfront sites and the waterfront promenade concurrently and will take forward the relevant projects at an appropriate time. The Administration will maintain contact with WKCD to ascertain the relevant development timetable.

*Upgrading the hardware and software support for the harbourfront*

19. The Subcommittee has raised a number of suggestions on upgrading the hardware support for the harbourfront, such as the introduction of the eco-shoreline design at suitable harbourfront locations for leisure purpose and resistance against inclement weather and to further diversify the harbourfront environment. Members have also suggested adding green building elements to harbourfront development projects to promote sustainable development. Regarding upgrading the software support for the harbourfront, the Subcommittee has suggested organizing various types of activities with elements of local characteristics and creativity at harbourfront sites on a regular basis. In this connection, the Administration

should remove the barriers of regulatory mechanisms on the holding of harbourfront activities<sup>10</sup> and strengthen the communication and coordination among government departments, so as to facilitate the public's enjoyment of the harbourfront and the organization of harbourfront activities by groups and leverage the market's creativity to attract patronage.

20. The Administration has advised that consideration will be given to introducing the eco-shoreline design at suitable locations on both sides of the Victoria Harbour and other suggestions raised by members on enhancing the hardware support for the harbourfront. Further regarding hardware support, at harbourfront sites under development or planning, the departments responsible for the construction will build the necessary utilities (such as electricity, water supply and sewerage facilities) to facilitate the organization of large-scale events at those venues. Drawing on the experience gained from past events, including those staged under the "Night Vibes Hong Kong" initiative at harbourfront sites under DEVB between September and November 2023, the Administration will, where practicable, incorporate in future harbourfront enhancement projects the requirement that suitable supporting facilities such as electricity, water supply and sewerage facilities should be provided to cope with the needs of holding large-scale events. The suggestion of including more elements with local characteristics and creativity will also be given consideration. In the short run, the Administration plans to set up smart specialty vending facilities providing popular light snacks and beverages at harbourfront sites, with vending machines offering different combinations of light snacks, beverages, etc. In the long run, it will continue to identify suitable locations for introducing different types of F&B facilities.

21. The Administration has also advised that measures have been introduced to encourage and facilitate the organization of various activities by groups at harbourfront sites. The relevant government departments will provide appropriate assistance to applicants on procedures such as application for licences and hiring of venue as far as possible. For example, the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department provides one-stop service, by which information is referred to relevant departments for parallel processing once an application for a Temporary Places of Public Entertainment Licence or a Temporary Food Factory Licence is received, so as to shorten the processing time. The Leisure and Cultural Services Department ("LCSD") also offers assistance to activity organizers, such as providing advice on, among other things, application for licences, compliance with laws and regulations, and water and electricity supply requirements.

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<sup>10</sup> Such as bazaars involving fee-charging activities, late-night festive activities, and the requirements of applying to different government departments for licences.

*Enhancing the accessibility of the harbourfront of the Victoria Harbour both on land and at sea*

22. The Subcommittee has urged the Administration to enhance the accessibility of the harbourfront of the Victoria Harbour both on land and at sea to facilitate the access of both the public and tourists to the harbourfront. For connectivity on land, members have remarked that currently, many harbourfront sites are not connected accessibly to other harbourfront and inland areas, and the signage directing the way to harbourfront sites are inadequate. For transport at sea, members suggested that landing facilities should be added to suitable locations on both sides of the Victoria Harbour, and operators should be requested to provide different types of water-borne transport services (e.g. island-hopping tours, boat tours narrating the history of both sides of the Victoria Harbour, and water taxis serving exclusively the landing points on either the north shore of Hong Kong Island or the Kowloon side) to enhance the marine accessibility of harbourfront sites and promote tourism development of the harbourfront.

23. The Administration has advised that in developing harbourfront sites for provision of more open space and sightseeing spots, it will pay attention to the access links between these sites and the hinterland and enhance the directional signs along the way to harbourfront sites when necessary, so as to bring convenience to members of the public and tourists as far as practicable. The Administration has also advised that proactive efforts will be made to explore improvement to the support for marine transport in the Victoria Harbour (such as enhancing the ferry services, including water taxi service, between both sides of the Victoria Harbour in the light of passenger demand, and optimizing the use of the existing landing points or providing additional landing facilities at suitable locations on both sides of the Victoria Harbour), and the various suggestions raised by members will be referred to the relevant departments for consideration.

Land use of waterfront sites along the Victoria Harbour and the feasibility of developing waterfront sites into tourist attractions alongside the adjoining areas

24. The Subcommittee has noted that the Administration is developing harbourfront sites into tourist attractions alongside the adjoining areas by approaches such as making use of market forces to develop the harbourfront, staging events within the Victoria Harbour, developing key harbourfront areas, introducing diversified harbourfront experiences, and making use of the water bodies and enhancing water-land interfaces. Members have urged the Administration to study the integration of harbourfront sites and existing nearby operations with unique characteristics for their development into attractions for the public and tourists, with a view to further increasing

the appeal of the harbourfront of the Victoria Harbour and promoting Hong Kong's tourism development. In this connection, members have put forward proposals to:

- (a) link the waterfront promenades with nearby attractions/monuments<sup>11</sup> and blend historical and cultural elements into harbourfront sites;<sup>12</sup>
- (b) allow adjacent harbourfront sites (e.g. waterfront parks) to join up as event venues with a view to facilitating the holding of large-scale activities and enhancing the commercial viability of the relevant activities;
- (c) set up more stalls selling snacks and goods, F&B facilities and permanent night markets at the harbourfront and, by drawing reference from the experience of boats mooring at the Causeway Bay Typhoon Shelter and offering gastronomic treats and performances in the old days, develop similar tourist attractions at the harbourfront;
- (d) create a unified theme for promoting the waterfront promenades, introduce street performances, arts and cultural programmes and bazaars and step up publicity campaigns targeting tourists; and
- (e) promote the holding of various types of water sports or recreational activities at Kwun Tong Typhoon Shelter and the adjoining Kai Tak Approach Channel.

25. Members have also emphasized that the Administration should explore at the policy level how the role played by the Victoria Harbour in tourism can be maximized through harbourfront development (including by way of the proposed amendments to PHO). They have suggested that the Administration consider providing comprehensive support packages (e.g. waiver of venue hire charges and offering facilitation and coordination to mega event organizers hiring large harbourfront sites) to enable the holding of concerts by internationally renowned stars or the staging of other major international events at harbourfront sites in Hong Kong, so as to attract inbound tourists.

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<sup>11</sup> Citing the vicinity of Lei Yue Mun as an example, some members have suggested that the Administration link up the Lei Yue Mun seafood street with the nearby historical and cultural attractions (e.g. the bamboo theatre for staging ritualistic Cantonese opera in Cha Kwo Ling and the quarries in "Si Shan" (i.e. Four Hills)) with a view to developing the area into a tourist attraction.

<sup>12</sup> For example, harbourfront facilities can be revamped to reflect their history (e.g. as port facilities) while being used for tourism purpose.

26. The Administration has advised that HO and HC will continue to support relevant government departments, public organizations (e.g. the Energizing Kowloon East Office and the Hong Kong Tourism Board) and private organizations in organizing activities of various scales and types at harbourfront sites with a view to providing different experiences for visitors. The Administration will also step up publicity (including publicizing the major activities sponsored by the Government at the main sections of waterfront promenades) to attract tourists to visit the harbourfront, and it will consider presenting the history and characteristics of individual harbourfront sections at suitable locations. In addition, elements such as retail, F&B and entertainment of considerable scale will be introduced to appropriate harbourfront areas. For instance, Site 3 of the Central harbourfront will be developed into a landmark location offering various leisure and entertainment facilities such as commerce, retail and F&B. The Administration has also advised that diversified harbourfront experiences will be introduced and consideration will be given to various proposals which are useful in enabling the staging of international events within the Victoria Harbour.

#### Operation and management modes of harbourfront sites

##### *Harbourfront governance structure*

27. Members have enquired whether the Administration will consider setting up a Harbourfront Authority entrusted with statutory powers and suggested introducing more elements of public engagement in the harbourfront governance structure for better management of the harbourfront. There is also a view that consideration should be given to expanding the area under the jurisdiction of HO from the harbourfront areas on both sides of the Victoria Harbour to cover the open space adjoining the harbourfront, so as to facilitate HO in coordinating and holding various kinds of harbourfront activities. During the public hearing held by the Subcommittee in October 2023, members noted the suggestions made by some deputations that the purview of HC should be expanded from the harbourfront areas on both sides of the Victoria Harbour at present to cover all the harbourfront areas in Hong Kong, so as to conduct holistic planning for the harbourfront of the territory. In addition, the incumbent HC members are mainly representatives of the planning, engineering, design and environmental protection sectors and they have attached greater importance to the landscaping and recreational facilities of the harbourfront. In this regard, the Administration should invite representatives of the fisheries sector and waterfront and maritime operations to join HC so that the views of the trades can be heard and their operational needs can be taken into account in harbourfront development.

28. The Administration has advised that HC comprises official members and non-official members from different sectors and its terms of reference was set based on the extent of Victoria Harbour. As for the harbourfront areas outside the Victoria Harbour, relevant government departments will consider the matters relating to their development. Since its inception in 2010, HC has been an effective platform for the Government, stakeholders and the public to discuss matters relating to the harbourfront, and it has made some achievements in its harbourfront enhancement initiatives. Moreover, the Administration and HC always have the opportunity to get in touch with different sectors and stakeholders, so that their views can be incorporated when issues including the planning and development of the harbourfront are being worked out. The Administration has also advised that public opinions have been divided in the past as to whether a statutory Harbourfront Authority should be established. In this regard, the Administration has no plan to set up a separate Harbourfront Authority for the time being. It will continue to make the best use of HO and HC as the platform for harbourfront development work to succeed by incorporating the intelligence and strengths in the community, removing barriers and bringing in creativity.

#### *Operation and management modes of harbourfront sites*

29. The Subcommittee has noted that according to the research conducted by the Research Office, cities such as Sydney, Shanghai and Tokyo have adopted different approaches in managing harbourfront areas while the market participation varied to a certain extent.<sup>13</sup> Given that many waterfront promenades and parks in Hong Kong are managed by LCSD and they are subject to restrictions under the Pleasure Grounds Regulation (Cap. 132BC), members are of the view that the utilization and management

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<sup>13</sup> Among the cities surveyed by the Research Office, Sydney has established a statutory entity to manage harbourfront sites in a centralized manner and the formulation of strategic directions and day-to-day management fall under the purview of the Board of Directors of the relevant statutory entity. Moreover, the entity is required to present its financial position to the public through its annual reports. With these requirements, the entity can be more closely aligned with the needs of the market in managing its assets (e.g. setting the criteria for selecting business operators in accordance with market surveys). In Shanghai, the day-to-day management of the public spaces along the Huangpu River falls in the hands of the municipal government and the district governments along the riverfront while the developers of commercial projects are responsible for building public spaces related to the projects. As for the Tokyo Waterfront City, its harbourfront area is directly owned and managed by the Tokyo Metropolitan Government and mechanisms have been put in place for stakeholders to be involved in the management of the harbourfront. Private companies are also allowed to participate in the management of harbourfront facilities such as seaside parks, port parks and greenway parks with a view to enhancing the flexibility in meeting service demand.

of the relevant harbourfront sites lack flexibility and fail to fully optimize their tourism and economic benefits. Members have suggested that the Administration make use of market forces for harbourfront management (e.g. inviting private organizations to provide facilities and organize activities to enhance the appeal of the harbourfront) and hand over gradually the harbourfront sites managed by government departments to private organizations for management with a view to reducing government expenditure and at the same time bringing in market creativity. There are also views pointing out that given the short lease term of some harbourfront sites, the operators, having made capital investments in the sites, may not have sufficient time to earn reasonable returns. In this regard, members have suggested that the Administration should adopt a more proactive attitude and implement measures that align with the expectations of operators, so as to promote public-private partnership and change the management model of the sites.

30. The Administration has advised that under the vision of “making every section special” for harbourfront development, a flexible and diversified management mode has been adopted at various harbourfront sites along the Victoria Harbour. The daily operation and management of these sites are undertaken by different government departments, public organizations, non-profit-making organizations as well as private contractors and developers. Most of the public pleasure grounds along the harbourfront of the Victoria Harbour are managed by LCSD, which is committed to providing quality leisure, sports and recreational facilities to meet the public’s various leisure and recreational needs. Furthermore, HO and HC have been actively experimenting with novel and more open management approaches, including the promotion of “Harbourfront Shared Space”<sup>14</sup> at some of the harbourfront sites opened in recent years. Under this approach, the restrictions on the use of the harbourfront space have been minimized and the public is encouraged to enjoy the space with mutual respect, creativity and inclusiveness according to their preferences. Some waterfront promenades are “Public Open Space in Private Development”<sup>15</sup> for which developers are required to construct waterfront promenades for the development projects within their private harbourfront lots, and the

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<sup>14</sup> At present, there are a total of six “Harbourfront Shared Space” sites in Hong Kong, namely the Belcher Bay Promenade, the “HarbourChill” in Wan Chai, the Water Sports and Recreation Precinct in Wan Chai, the Revitalized Typhoon Shelter Precinct in Causeway Bay, the breakwater at the East Coast Park Precinct in North Point, and the Tsuen Wan Promenade.

<sup>15</sup> Examples of such waterfront promenades include those of Kai Tak Sports Park Hotel Development, Hotel Development at Lai Ying Street of Cheung Sha Wan, and the redevelopment project of the Yau Tong Comprehensive Development Area.



completed promenades will be managed by the developers and opened for public enjoyment in accordance with the lease conditions with a view to leveraging the capacity of private development projects and enhancing the connectivity of waterfront areas. In addition, WKCD and Kai Tak Sports Park Limited will make use of the waterfront areas of WKCD and the Kai Tak Sports Park to hold various kinds of cultural, arts, entertainment and sports activities.

31. The Administration has also advised that ongoing efforts are being made in collaboration with private/non-profit-making organizations to revitalize vacant government sites at the harbourfront.<sup>16</sup> Some waterfront sites are let to private /non-profit-making organizations for development and operation by way of short-term tenancies,<sup>17</sup> and such organizations are encouraged to adopt innovative and flexible approaches in managing and operating the harbourfront sites. The Administration will also continue to identify harbourfront locations suitable for introducing market elements. For instance, the Boardwalk underneath the Island Eastern Corridor will be outsourced to private organizations for operation and F&B elements as well as commercial activities will be incorporated. Regarding the Hong Kong Observation Wheel in Central which has been well received by tourists, the fixed operational period will be extended from three years at present to five years in the future granting of tenancies in a bid to encourage the tenant to make longer-term investment and provide more attractive facilities and leisure initiatives.

*Other management issues relating to harbourfront sites*

32. The Subcommittee has requested the Administration to rectify the problem of misconnection of sewers to stormwater drains and install dry weather flow interceptors so as to improve the water quality and ameliorate the odour problem at the waterfront areas in some districts. The Administration should also ensure that the noises generated from activities held at harbourfront venues will not cause nuisance to nearby residents. Members have also suggested that the Administration review whether the arrangement for pedestrians and cyclists to share the use of the waterfront promenades is safe and suitable.

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<sup>16</sup> For example, the “Fly the Flyover Operation” run by the Energizing Kowloon East Office and the operator under a partnership approach has transformed vacant government sites beneath Kwun Tong Bypass into creative arts and cultural venues.

<sup>17</sup> For example, under short-term tenancies, the Harbourfront Event Spaces in Central and Wan Chai are let to private organizations for development and operation at market rent, and waterfront sites in Quarry Bay and Hung Hom are let to non-profit-making organizations for development and operation at nominal rent.

33. The Administration has advised that for the sake of tackling the odour problem at some waterfront areas caused by misconnection of sewers to stormwater drains, the relevant government departments are making every effort to rectify the misconnection of sewers, including the key task of intercepting the pollutants at the source to prevent them from entering the harbour.<sup>18</sup> The Administration will also adopt appropriate venue management arrangements in the light of site-specific circumstances to ensure that the noises arising from activities held at harbourfront sites will not affect nearby residents.<sup>19</sup> In the long run, the Administration hopes that the waterfront promenades can be made available for shared use by both pedestrians and cyclists. In this connection, a shared path is being implemented at the promenade section between Central and Wan Chai on a trial basis and the Administration will review the relevant arrangement in the light of the result of the programme.

Potential harbour enhancement works to be implemented by the Administration after the amendment of the Protection of the Harbour Ordinance

34. The Subcommittee has noted that under the current regime of PHO, all reclamations in the harbour, regardless of permanence, scale or nature, are subject to the “presumption against reclamation” which can only be rebutted by proving that the “overriding public need” test (“the Test”) is met.<sup>20</sup> With the Test being unduly stringent and its indiscriminate application to projects involving only small scale reclamation within the harbour, the current regime has imposed undue constraints on the Administration in taking forward projects to improve harbourfront connectivity or enhance harbourfront areas for public enjoyment. In view

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<sup>18</sup> In response to members’ concerns, the Environment and Ecology Bureau has given an account of the work progress of and the future plans for improving the water quality of the Victoria Harbour and addressing the coastal odour problem at a meeting of the Panel on Environmental Affairs held on 26 February 2024.

<sup>19</sup> For instance, in response to the earlier noise complaints arising from the activities of skateboard users at the Belcher Bay Promenade during night time, the Administration, with effect from 23 March 2022, has prohibited any noise generating activities (including skateboarding) from 11 pm to 9 am at the site and additional manpower has been deployed to patrol the area at midnight. Since the implementation of the new measures, the number of complaints in relation to noise generated by skateboard users at night has decreased significantly.

<sup>20</sup> To satisfy the demanding Test, the Administration is required to substantiate not only the public need for the reclamation but also that such public need is compelling and present; that there is no reasonable alternative to reclamation; and the reclamation extent should not go beyond the minimum of that which is required by the overriding need.

of this, members support the Administration's introduction of amendments to PHO as early as possible and its implementation of harbour enhancement works involving small-scale reclamations (e.g. construction of boardwalks to enhance harbourfront connectivity), with a view to promoting harbourfront development along the Victoria Harbour and enhancing the public enjoyment of the harbourfront.

35. The Administration has advised that it has proposed the legislative amendments to PHO with a view to maintaining the protection of the harbour while promoting enhancement of the harbourfront for public enjoyment and strengthening the harbour functions. The Administration had consulted the Panel in March 2023 on the proposed framework of legislative amendments to PHO and conducted the public engagement exercise. The Administration has proposed two strategic directions for the legislative amendments: on one hand, to further strengthen the regulatory mechanism for large-scale reclamations in the harbour upon the existing regime; and on the other hand, to introduce a streamlined process for handling harbour enhancement works involving small-scale reclamations<sup>21</sup> and non-permanent reclamations meeting specific requirements. The Administration is preparing the detailed legislative amendments and its target is to submit the Protection of the Harbour (Amendment) Bill to LegCo in 2024.

36. The Administration has pointed out that subject to the passage of the proposed amendments to PHO, it will be given more flexibility to take forward harbour enhancement works under the streamlined mechanism provided under the amended PHO. That will include the construction of a boardwalk at New Praya in Kennedy Town and the works that may require reclamation for improving the connectivity of the waterfront areas in the vicinity of Hung Hom and To Kwa Wan as mentioned above. The Administration also plans to consider the possibility of revitalizing the Kowloon City Vehicular Ferry Pier, which is a Grade 2 historic building, into an activity node with F&B and other attractions to increase harbourfront vibrancy. The Administration will also study the possibility of extending the harbour steps in the Water Sports and Recreation Precinct in Wan Chai and the Revitalized Typhoon Shelter Precinct in Causeway Bay to the water body and providing new steps with a view to promoting a water-friendly culture.

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<sup>21</sup> One of the Administration's proposals is to set out in PHO a list of works projects and enable a works project falling within the categories on the list and having an area of reclamation not more than the statutory limit (0.8 hectare according to the preliminary proposal) to be exempted from the "presumption against reclamation". To provide appropriate internal checks and balances while at the same time simplifying the process, the exemption will not be automatic and will require approval from a Secretary-level government official (e.g. the Financial Secretary).

37. Members in general welcome the aforesaid harbour enhancement works proposed to be implemented by the Administration and they have suggested that the Administration should further enhance the harbourfront areas in other districts through such means as building a marina at Yau Tong Bay, providing a swimming shed between the piers of the Western Wholesale Food Market in Island West, and providing additional landing facilities on both sides of the Victoria Harbour (e.g. the waterfront off the Main Stadium of the Kai Tak Sports Park and the Tsim Sha Tsui harbourfront) or improving such facilities, so as to facilitate tourists' visit to the relevant tourist spots and maximize the role played by the Victoria Harbour in tourism. Some members are concerned whether the categories of harbour enhancement works to which the streamlined process provided under the amended PHO applies will cover transport infrastructure. If so, the Administration should consider extending the proposed smart and green mass transit system across the harbour from Kai Tak to Kwun Tong with a view to maximizing the efficiency of the relevant transport infrastructure.

38. The Administration has explained that capital works expenditure is expected to reach its peak in the next three years and the Administration needs to contain the capital works expenditure to ensure sustainability of public finance. In face of budgetary constraints, the implementation schedule of some harbourfront projects, including the proposed projects mentioned in paragraph 36 above, may need to be reviewed and adjusted. Subject to availability of resources, the Administration will take forward the planning, design and implementation of the aforesaid potential projects, while keeping an open mind towards the implementation of other harbour enhancement works. In addition, given that reclamation works for transport infrastructure may involve a certain scale of works, the relevant works are still required to fulfil the requirements of the Test and will not be exempted from the "presumption against reclamation" after the amendment of PHO.

## **Recommendations**

39. During the deliberations, the Subcommittee has put forward the following recommendations for the Administration's consideration:

### Strategies of connecting and enhancing the harbourfront within and beyond the Victoria Harbour

#### *Hong Kong's overall strategy of harbourfront development*

- (a) enhancing the connectivity of various harbourfront sites, making proactive efforts to connect certain waterfront areas which are not developable into waterfront promenades, and

formulating alternative connecting proposals and the timetable for linking up those waterfront areas (please refer to paragraphs 14, 15 and 17 above);

- (b) formulating more holistic and forward-looking plans for harbourfront development and determining the development positioning of individual harbourfront sites in the light of their respective characteristics and strengths. Harbourfront sites located in business districts (e.g. Tsim Sha Tsui, Central and Wan Chai) should be used for holding various kinds of activities, and commercial facilities such as F&B, retail and entertainment should be introduced to bring vibrancy to the harbourfront, while harbourfront sites situated close to residential dwellings should be used mainly for passive recreational purpose (please refer to paragraph 10 above);
- (c) harbourfront development should take into account the operational needs of waterfront operations. The Administration should draw up a development blueprint of facilities for waterfront and maritime operations to support the development of the relevant industries (please refer to paragraph 12 above);

*Upgrading the hardware and software support for the harbourfront*

- (d) introducing the eco-shoreline design at suitable harbourfront locations and adding green building elements to harbourfront development projects to promote sustainable development (please refer to paragraph 19 above);
- (e) improving the software support for the harbourfront, including organizing various types of activities with elements of local characteristics and creativity at harbourfront sites on a regular basis; and removing the barriers of regulatory mechanisms on the holding of harbourfront activities and strengthening the communication and coordination among government departments (please refer to paragraph 19 above);

*Enhancing the accessibility of the harbourfront of the Victoria Harbour both on land and at sea*

- (f) enhancing the connectivity between the harbourfront and the hinterland and improving the signage directing the way to harbourfront sites. Regarding marine transport, operators should be requested to provide diverse types of water-borne

transport services and more landing facilities should be provided at the harbourfront to facilitate tourists' access to tourist attractions on both sides of the Victoria Harbour (please refer to paragraph 22 above);

Land use of waterfront sites along the Victoria Harbour and the feasibility of developing waterfront sites into tourist attractions alongside the adjoining areas

- (g) exploring at the policy level how the role played by the Victoria Harbour in tourism can be maximized through harbourfront development (please refer to paragraph 25 above);
- (h) studying the integration of harbourfront sites and existing nearby operations with unique characteristics for their development into attractions for the public and tourists with a view to further enhancing the appeal of the harbourfront of the Victoria Harbour (please refer to paragraph 24 above);
- (i) providing comprehensive support packages to enable the holding of concerts by internationally renowned stars or the staging of other major international events at harbourfront sites in Hong Kong, so as to attract inbound tourists (please refer to paragraph 25 above);

Operation and management modes of harbourfront sites

*Harbourfront governance structure*

- (j) introducing more elements of public engagement in the harbourfront governance structure for better management of the harbourfront (please refer to paragraph 27 above);
- (k) expanding the area under HO's jurisdiction from the harbourfront areas on both sides of the Victoria Harbour to cover the open space adjoining the harbourfront so as to facilitate HO in coordinating and holding various kinds of harbourfront activities (please refer to paragraph 27 above);

*Operation and management modes of harbourfront sites*

- (l) making use of market forces for harbourfront management and inviting private organizations to provide facilities and organize activities so as to enhance the appeal of harbourfront; and

handing over gradually the harbourfront sites managed by government departments to private organizations for management (please refer to paragraph 29 above);

*Other management issues relating to harbourfront sites*

- (m) rectifying the problem of misconnection of sewers to stormwater drains and installing dry weather flow interceptors so as to improve the water quality and ameliorate the odour problem at the waterfront areas in some districts (please refer to paragraph 32 above); and

Potential harbour enhancement works to be implemented by the Administration after the amendment of the Protection of the Harbour Ordinance

- (n) support has been given to the introduction of amendments to PHO as early as possible to allow the Administration to take forward harbour enhancement works involving small-scale reclamations, thereby promoting the enhancement of the harbourfront for public enjoyment and strengthening the harbour functions (please refer to paragraph 34 above).

**Advice sought**

40. Members are invited to note the deliberations and proposals made by the Subcommittee as set out above.

Council Business Division 1 and Public Complaints Office  
Legislative Council Secretariat  
28 June 2024

**Panel on Development**

**Subcommittee to Study Policy Issues Relating to the Harbourfront**

**Terms of Reference**

- To review the conditions of the completed harbourfront development projects across the territory, monitor the progress of the ongoing harbourfront improvement projects, and make recommendations on future harbourfront planning;
- To review the effectiveness of the completed harbourfront development projects, including their uses, usage and management approaches, draw reference from overseas experience in harbourfront management if necessary, and make recommendations on the management mode of the harbourfront; and
- To review the existing legislation and works guidelines relating to harbourfront projects to ensure that harbourfront developments are in the best interests of Hong Kong as a whole.



**Panel on Development**

**Subcommittee to Study Policy Issues Relating to the Harbourfront**

**Membership list\***

**Chairman** Hon Tony TSE Wai-chuen, BBS, JP

**Deputy Chairman** Hon Edward LEUNG Hei

**Members** Hon Andrew LAM Siu-lo, SBS, JP  
Hon CHAN Hok-fung, MH, JP  
Hon TANG Ka-piu, BBS, JP

(Total: 5 members)

**Clerk** Ms Connie HO

**Legal Adviser** Ms Vanessa CHENG

\* Changes in membership are shown in Annex to Appendix 2.

## **Annex to Appendix 2**

### **Panel on Development**

#### **Subcommittee to Study Policy Issues Relating to the Harbourfront**

#### **Changes in membership**

<b>Members</b>	<b>Relevant date</b>
Hon TANG Ka-piu, BBS, JP	Since 29 May 2023
Hon Starry LEE Wai-king, GBS, JP	Up to 9 January 2024
Hon Doreen KONG Yuk-foon	Up to 9 January 2024
Ir Hon LEE Chun-keung, JP	Up to 9 January 2024

**Panel on Development**

**Subcommittee to Study Policy Issues Relating to the Harbourfront**

**List of organizations/individuals which/who have given views to  
the Subcommittee**

Organizations which attended the meeting on 12 October 2023 to give views

1. Hong Kong Fishery Alliance
2. Designing Hong Kong Limited
3. Liberal Party Development and Construction Industry Concern Group
4. Hong Kong & Kowloon Motor Boats & Tug Boats Association
5. Society for Protection of the Harbour
6. Committee on Youth, Business and Professionals Alliance for Hong Kong
7. Hong Kong Island South Branch, Business and Professionals Alliance for Hong Kong
8. Sham Shui Po Branch, Business and Professionals Alliance for Hong Kong

Organizations/individuals which/who have submitted written views only

9. New Territories Cargo Transport Association Limited
10. A member of the public (LSK)
11. Friends of the Earth (HK)
12. Kowloon City Transport