

Task Force on Harbourfront Developments on Hong Kong Island

For discussion
on 12 January 2017

TFHK/01/2017

Proposed Temporary Use at the Three Berths Released from the Western District Public Cargo Working Area in Kennedy Town

PURPOSE

This paper aims to seek Members' views on a proposal to use the three vacant berths released from the Western District Public Cargo Working Area (WDPCWA) for the temporary use as a community farm.

BACKGROUND

2. A motion was passed at the Working Group on the Central & Western District Harbourfront on 20 December 2016 urging the Government to develop community farms in the harbourfront areas of the Central & Western District Council (C&WDC) in order to promote greening at the community level and enhance public awareness of the importance of environmental protection. In particular, the three berths released from WDPCWA in Kennedy Town (the Site, see location map at **Annex**) was recommended as the location for such use to be realized after reviewing the development progress of other possible sites within the district. The Development Bureau (DEVB) undertook to carefully study C&WDC's recommendation.

CURRENT LAND USE

3. The Site is about 7 500m² in size and is currently held by Marine Department. It was excluded from the boundary of WDPCWA under Port Control (Cargo Working Areas) Ordinance (Cap.81) in August 2016, after the Marine Department had completed a comprehensive review on the utilisation and future arrangement of public cargo working areas in the territory for the next five years from 2016 to 2021 in April 2016.

4. The Site is zoned "Other Specified Uses (Public Cargo Working Area)" on the Kennedy Town and Mount Davis Outline

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Zoning Plan (OZP). It occupies the waterfront area in front of the Belcher Bay Park across Shing Sai Road and is adjacent to a public bus terminus. While the Site was recommended to be developed into waterfront promenade under the Conceptual Master Plan for the Western Harbourfront formulated by C&WDC and the Department of Urban Planning and Design of The University of Hong Kong, the Government is reviewing the long-term land use of the Site.

5. Even if a public works project could be created to convert the Site into permanent waterfront promenade, the development (including preparation work, design and acquiring funding approval) would take at least three to four years to complete before commencement of construction works. In other words, the permanent development of the Site would not commence before 2021-22. While retaining the permanent development of the Site, the Government is committed to make use of vacant harbourfront sites for temporary uses for early public enjoyment pending their long-term development. After establishing this principle, there is then the need to consider what temporary use would be most suitable for the Site.

PROPOSED TEMPORARY USE

6. In response to local community's request and referencing other leisure farms in Hong Kong, it is proposed to use the Site for the short-term operation of a leisure farm with ancillary facilities.

7. Recreational or leisure farming within urban areas could help promote the co-existence of city and the nature, and introduce more elements of greening to the community. We are aware that the service provided by the existing Community Garden Programme at Sun Yat Sen Memorial Park in Sai Ying Pun has received an overwhelming amount of positive responses from the local community and there is the demand for additional sites for more leisure farming activities. The Site seems able to provide additional space to allow more members of the public to join in leisure farming activities and to increase their knowledge about and liking of greening.

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8. The Site is currently allocated to the Marine Department and public access is not officially permitted. While some members of the public are already gaining access to the Site, it may actually constitute trespass. It is recommended to provide for safe and pleasant public enjoyment of this part of the waterfront. If the proposed temporary use is supported, we would include a requirement that the future operator would need to design and construct a promenade of at least 10m at the edge of the Site and allow public access at all times so that the public could continue to have guaranteed free access to the harbourfront along the shoreline.

9. While majority of the Site should be used for leisure farming, it is proposed to allow using some portion of the Site for other uses including ancillary commercial activities such as provision of food and beverage (F&B) or organising events to bring vibrancy to the waterfront and to help sustain the operator's operation on a commercial basis.

10. We expect that the proposed temporary use could help enhance vibrancy of the harbourfront concerned. More members of the public may be drawn to enjoy this part of the harbourfront with a safe and pleasant access and environment. However, we do not expect an overwhelming amount of patronage that would cause any nuisance to the surrounding area and residents thereon. Location-wise, the Site is also separated from main residential area in the neighborhood by the Belcher Bay Park. DEVB will work with other Government departments to monitor the future operation of the proposed temporary use.

HARBOUR PLANNING PRINCIPLES

11. We consider that the proposal aligns with the Harbour Planning Principles in the following aspects –

Preserving Victoria Harbour

The proposal attract members of the public who may not have much prior knowledge or experience with leisure farming to develop an interest in plantation and green living.

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Public Engagement

The proposal arises from a request from C&WDC after taking into consideration local aspirations. If the Task Force is also supportive of the proposal, we would proceed with taking the proposal forward in accordance with established administrative procedures.

Sustainable Development and Integrated Planning

As the proposal is temporary in nature, it would not affect any long-term development of the subject site in the future. DEVB will consult both C&WDC and Harbourfront Commission for any extension of the proposed temporary use should there be such a view in the community in the future.

Proactive Harbour Enhancement

The proposal aims to allow early public enjoyment of the waterfront and further extend the length of accessible harbourfront. The provision of ancillary facilities could also add vibrancy to the harbourfront.

Vibrant Harbour and Public Enjoyment

The Government has implemented a number of temporary uses along the harbourfront areas in the Central & Western District. The proposal will bring a new form of leisure use to the harbourfront areas. DEVB will work with other Government departments to monitor this proposed mode of operation which seeks to integrate leisure farming with commercial elements such as F&B. We would also pose suitable restrictions on the running of commercial activities within the Site, to ensure free public access to the waterfront, as well as to mandate the future tenant to carry out community outreach and engagement programmes. These are all intended to maximize possible public enjoyment of harbourfront sites.

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WAY FORWARD

12. If the proposal is supported by both the C&WDC and the Task Force, DEVB and the Lands Department would work with various Government departments to proceed with taking the proposal forward.

13. Members are invited to give views on the proposal.

**Development Bureau
January 2017**

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