

Task Force on Harbourfront Developments on Hong Kong Island

For discussion
on 19 October 2016

TFHK/14/2016

The Urban Design Study for the Wan Chai North and North Point Harbourfront Area Study Progress – Stage 2 Public Engagement

PURPOSE

This paper updates Members on the latest study progress of the Urban Design Study for the Wan Chai North and North Point Harbourfront Areas (the UDS), including the key public comments gathered from Stage 2 Public Engagement (PE2).

STUDY PROGRESS

2. A two-stage public engagement (PE) approach is adopted for the UDS to engage various stakeholders as well as the general public comprehensively during the study process and solicit their aspirations and views. Stage 1 Public Engagement (PE1) was held in June to August 2015 to gauge the public's views on the preliminary urban design framework and themes of the individual character precincts. Taking into account the comments received, the Study Team formulated the harbourfront enhancement proposals (HEPs) in collaboration with the Working Group on the UDS (WGUDS) under the Task Force. The draft PE2 consultation digest, and the PE2 work plan were also finalised after deliberation with WGUDS and the Task Force on 6 May 2016 and 25 May 2016 respectively. PE2 was then launched on 11 June 2016 to engage the public on the HEPs. The two-month PE2 was concluded on 20 August 2016.

3. During PE2, a series of events and activities, including three focus group meetings (FGMs), two public workshops, a roving exhibition and on-street exhibition were organised to gather views from professional institutions, water sports and recreation, arts, culture and heritage related groups and the general public. The study team also engaged the Wan Chai and Eastern District Councils (DCs). A list of meetings and events organised during PE2 are set out in **Appendix A**. To facilitate the general public in understanding the HEPs and providing their views, the bilingual PE2 digest was distributed through various channels. The study website was also updated to disseminate relevant information including a video showing the proposed design concepts of individual character precincts and also to provide a direct way to collect public views.

4. A total of 55 written public comments were received through various channels, among which 17 were from organisations whereas 38 were from

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individuals. The names of the 17 organisations are listed in **Appendix B**. These written comments would be uploaded onto the study website for the public's information shortly.

MAJOR COMMENTS RECEIVED DURING PE2

5. The Wan Chai and Eastern DCs were engaged on 27 June 2016 and 12 July 2016 respectively. In general, both DCs supported the HEPs and provided valuable comments and suggestions. The Wan Chai DC raised that user-friendly pedestrian links from the hinterland to and along the waterfront were of primary importance. It was suggested that the waterfront should include pet-friendly space, a continuous cycle track, car parking facilities, covered and weather-proof pedestrian connections. The water quality of the harbour should also be improved to facilitate the public to enjoy the harbour once the HEPs were implemented. The Eastern DC raised similar comments on land uses and facilities to be provided along the waterfront, but pointed out that the current HEPs might be extravagant as it could involve substantial investment of public resources. Both DCs urged for a timely implementation of the HEPs to allow public enjoyment and vibrancy to be added to the harbourfront.

6. Views and suggestions from the wider community on the HEPs received during PE2 are also generally supportive. The key comments are consolidated in **Appendix C** and summarised as follows:

The Refined Urban Design Framework

- The public in general supported the refined urban design framework including the proposed design themes of the five character precincts.

Attractions and Activities

- Most comments concurred that the waterfront uses/activities proposed under the HEPs would bring diversity and add vibrancy to the harbourfront areas concerned.
- The concept that harbourfront areas should be shared by users of different age groups including those physically disabled was generally supported. At the same time, the public requested that potential conflicts and public safety issues arising from shared uses should be properly addressed.
- Some comments from cyclists and cycling organisations expressed reservation on the need to dismount from bicycles at some sections of the proposed cycle trail due to site constraints.

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On the other hand, some members of the public raised concerns over safety of pedestrians especially the elderly and children when cyclists and pedestrians have to share a limited width of promenade. They requested the proposed cycle track to be properly designed having regard to the needs of cyclists while taking into account public safety concerns.

- Some commented that art and cultural elements such as public art should be encouraged and incorporated all along the waterfront, instead of being confined to selected areas such as the Sunset Plaza in the Celebration Precinct. Besides, art elements to be selected for displaying should blend in well with the waterfront context.
- A few comments asked for the provision of more landing steps and bollards at suitable locations along the waterfront to enhance water-land interface and facilitate berthing of vessels in sheltered waters.
- Some suggested not erecting any railings along the waterfront. If railings were needed for safety purpose, the design should provide more functions such as allowing pedestrians to sit and enjoy the view of the harbour, or the design should be as simple as possible to minimise blockage of the seaview.
- More shading and seating facilities, greenery, trees and landscaping should be provided along the waterfront.
- A few were concerned that some of the HEPs might be too extravagant and require substantial investment of public resources.

Connectivity

- The public generally supported the HEPs to provide and strengthen north-south connections between the waterfront and the hinterland, and east-west connections along the waterfront. Many requested that barrier-free access should be incorporated in the design of these connections. Noting the site constraints to allow provision for car parking facilities, many comments shared the view that the public should be encouraged to access to the waterfront by using public transport.

Implementation Issues

- Some comments enquired the implementation agents and timetable of the HEPs. They looked forward to timely

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implementation of the HEPs so that the public could enjoy this part of the waterfront as early as practicable.

Protection of the Harbour Ordinance (PHO) Implications

- The comments received generally supported the proposed cantilevered boardwalk along Victoria Park Road for enhancing pedestrian environment even though the proposal might involve small scale reclamation that might require establishing the overriding public need under the Protection of Harbour Ordinance.

WAY FORWARD

7. The Study Team is compiling the PE2 Report which would include all public comments received and the corresponding responses. In parallel, by taking into account public views and suggestions received, the Study Team is refining the HEPs and will put forward some preliminary refinements for discussion with WGUDS in due course.

8. Subject to the refinement of the HEPs, detailed technical assessments on visual and traffic impact, air ventilation, business viability and sustainability would be conducted to ascertain that the HEPs could be implemented. Planning and design briefs for individual character precincts will be prepared to provide detailed guidelines for taking forward the HEPs. The implementation matrix would be formulated to cover the implementation mode, programme/phasing and any quick-win waterfront opportunities. The Study Team shall continue to work with Members during the process.

ADVICE SOUGHT

9. Members are invited to note the major public views and suggestions gathered during PE2.

ATTACHMENTS

Appendix A: List of PE Meetings and Events

Appendix B: List of Organisations Submitting Written Comments

Appendix C: Summary of Public Comments

**Planning Department
October 2016**

**List of Public Engagement Meetings and Events
organized during the Stage 2 Public Engagement (PE2)**

Date	Meetings / PE Activities
PE2 Launch	
11 June 2016	Launch of PE2 with issuance of press release (Launching Events included the prize presentation ceremony of the Design Ideas Competition and the Focus Group Meeting of the Professional Institutes held in City Gallery)
Design Ideas Competition	
11 June 2016	Announcement of Winners & Prize Presentation Ceremony
Roving Exhibition	
11 June – 25 June 2016	City Gallery, 3 Edinburgh Place, Central
27 June – 9 July 2016	G/F Lobby, North Point Government Offices, 333 Java Road, North Point
11 July – 23 July 2016	G/F Lobby, Revenue Tower, 5 Gloucester Road, Wan Chai
25 July – 7 August 2016	The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts, 1 Gloucester Road, Wan Chai
8 August – 12 August 2016	Central Pier No. 8, Man Kwong Street, Central
On-Street Project Exhibition at Pak Sha Road, Causeway Bay	
31 July 2016	Displaying of Study Materials and Interactive discussions with the public plus delivery of PE2 Digest
Focus Group Meetings	
11 June 2016	Professional Institutes
15 June 2016	Water Recreation-related Groups
28 July 2016	Arts, Culture, and Heritage-related Groups
Public Workshops	
6 August 2016	Public Workshop (1) at Causeway Bay Community Centre, 7 Fook Yum Road, Causeway Bay
13 August 2016	Public Workshop (2) at Wan Chai Activities Centre, LG/F, Wan Chai Market, 258 Queen's Road East, Wan Chai
District Council Meetings	
27 June 2016	Planning, Works and Housing Committee Meeting of Eastern District Council
12 July 2016	Wan Chai District Council Meeting

**List of Organisations submitting Written Comments
during the Stage 2 Public Engagement (PE2)**

<p>Professional Organisations</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hong Kong Institute of Planners 2. Hong Kong Institute of Architects 3. Hong Kong Institute of Urban Design 4. Hong Kong Professionals and Senior Executives Association
<p>Sports and Recreation Organisations</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Hong Kong Cycling Alliance 6. Action Asia Foundation
<p>Other Stakeholder Groups</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Civic Party 8. Hong Kong Trade Development Council / Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre 9. The "Star" Ferry Company, Limited 10. Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Hong Kong) 11. Designing Hong Kong 12. Good Day Wanchai (灣仔好日誌) 13. Hong Kong Comics and Animation Federation 14. The Y. Elites Association (香港菁英會) 15. Prudential Surveyors (Hong Kong) Limited 16. CL3 Architects 17. Glory United Development Limited

Summary of Public Comments
Collected in the Stage 2 Public Engagement

Views and suggestions on the harbourfront enhancement proposals (HEPs) from the wider community received during Stage 2 Public Engagement (PE2) are generally supportive. The major comments are consolidated as follows:

Refined Urban Design Framework

1. The public generally supported the refined urban design framework including the proposed design themes of the five character precincts.
2. The public supported adopting a coherent design to give the Wan Chai and North Point harbourfront a unique character that reflected its historical and cultural heritage.
3. Many public members pointed out that overwhelming design should be avoided.
4. An appropriate balance on the nature of future uses and activities should be struck to cater for the needs of both the local people and tourists.
5. To realise the study vision of “re-connecting people to the water”, the proposed design and uses of the water bodies was equally important as the proposed uses/activities on land.
6. Many public members emphasised that the design themes of the precincts should respect the historical heritage and existing context, and alternative names were suggested, such as “Civic Precinct” for Celebration Precinct; “Pierside Fun Precinct” for the Pierside Precinct; “Wan Chai Basin” for the Water Sports and Recreation Precinct; “Typhoon Shelter Precinct” for the Revitalised Typhoon Shelter Precinct, etc.

Attractions and Activities

General Comments

7. Most comments concurred that the waterfront uses/activities proposed under the HEPs would bring diversity and add vibrancy to the harbourfront areas concerned.
8. In general, the provision of more easily accessible public open space with flexible design/uses for different users of different age groups was welcomed.
9. The concept that harbourfront areas should be shared by users of different age groups including those physically disabled was generally supported. At the same time, the public requested that potential conflicts and public

safety issues arising from shared uses should be properly addressed.

10. Some comments from cyclists and cycling organisations expressed reservation on the need to dismount from bicycles at some sections of the proposed cycle trail due to site constraints. They considered this was undesirable. They considered the long “off-bike” portions of the cycle trail might result in issues of management difficulties and negative impacts on the responses/behaviour of the cyclists, etc. Counter proposals included:
 - (a) confining the cycling trail and facilities within an integral part of the waterfront, e.g. at the East Coast Park Precinct, to avoid discontinuity; while some even suggested giving up the whole cycle trail at all if a continuous trail could not be provided;
 - (b) opening up more spaces for bicycle access, such as open space and promenades nearby; and
 - (c) exploring a thorough cycling trail through grade-separated design (underpass or overpass) where necessary (e.g. tunnel under the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre and a decked-up trail at the Ex-Public Cargo Working Area and Causeway Bay Typhoon Shelter where continuous cycling connections were found to be infeasible.) Besides, opportunity should be explored to make use of the space at the Royal Hong Kong Yacht Club/Police Officers’ Club for improving the connection.
11. On the other hand, some members of the public raised concerns over safety of pedestrians especially the elderly and children when cyclists and pedestrians have to share a limited width of promenade. This tallied with the public views on provision of cycle track along the waterfront received in PE1. They requested the proposed cycle track to be properly designed having regard to the needs of cyclists while taking into account public safety concerns.
12. Some commented that art and cultural elements such as public art should be encouraged and incorporated all along the waterfront, instead of being confined to selected areas such as the Sunset Plaza in the Celebration Precinct. Besides, art elements to be selected for displaying should blend in well with the waterfront context.
13. A few comments asked for the provision of more landing steps and bollards at suitable locations along the waterfront to enhance water-land interface and facilitate berthing of vessels in sheltered waters.
14. Some suggested not erecting any railings along the waterfront. If railings were needed for safety purpose, the design should provide more functions such as allowing pedestrians to sit and enjoy the view of the harbour, or the design should be as simple as possible to minimise blockage of the seaview.

15. More shading and seating facilities, greenery, trees and landscaping should be provided along the waterfront.
16. Environmentally friendly and sustainable design/features, such as wind and solar power panels or the use of rainwater, were suggested.
17. Water safety measures, such as wave absorbing seawalls, wave attenuation measures, etc. should be adopted in suitable locations where water activities would take place.
18. A few were concerned that some of the HEPs might be too extravagant and require substantial investment of public resources.

Specific Public Views and Comments by Individual Character Precincts

Celebration Precinct

19. The public generally agreed to the HEPs in Celebration Precinct to strengthen the ceremonial significance and identity of the Golden Bauhinia Square and the promenade nearby by developing three new plazas with distinctive themes, i.e. Celebration Plaza, City View Plaza and Sunset Plaza, where people could enjoy the public events, the sunset and the panoramic view of the Victoria Harbour.
20. The western portion of the precinct could be integrated with the Tamar Park to become an “Art and Community Park”.
21. The precinct should be designed with high flexibility to cater for multi-purpose public events (e.g. festival events and weekend markets) other than the official celebration events.
22. Some art elements for showcasing the art work by local students/designers were suggested to be incorporated into the overall design of the precinct especially in the area near the Hong Kong Arts Centre and Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts to echo with the artistic ambience in the area.
23. Alfresco dining, more greening/planting, shading facilities, etc. were suggested to be provided/incorporated into the overall design in this precinct.
24. There was suggestion for enhancing pedestrian connectivity with the promenade through the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre.

Pierside Precinct

25. The public generally supported developing the Pierside Precinct into a vibrant waterfront park with diversified activities and attractions including multi-purpose festive event space, outdoor performance, gourmet dining facilities, waterfront features, family corner, flower garden, market square,

etc.

26. The multi-purpose lawn space should be open for public use during non-event times. Proper maintenance of the lawn area would be needed.
27. Due to the lack of similar facility within Wan Chai District, the proposed Market Square was suggested to be enlarged and located opposite to the New Wan Chai Ferry Pier.
28. Some public members raised specific comments on the commercial/retail activities for the Gourmet Dining Square:
 - (a) Smaller scale F&B outlets or small eateries (e.g. Tai Pai Tong, food stalls) of typical Hong Kong style and local character of old Wan Chai, instead of high-end or chain restaurants were requested.
 - (b) Small shops that reflected local Hong Kong heritage (e.g. stationary shops, old-style grocery stores, newspaper stands, etc.) should be promoted in the waterfront areas.
29. Noting that pet garden was provided at East Coast Park in the Eastern District, some public members requested provision of pet facilities within Wan Chai District.

Water Sports and Recreation Precinct

30. Public members generally supported developing the Wan Chai Basin for water sports and recreational uses.
31. Most public members agreed that the proposed uses of the water space should be beneficial to the general public at large while many water sports organisations considered that the water space should be used to promote local and international water sports events. Some public members suggested transforming the area into a “boutique marina” for Hong Kong.
32. In addition to the barge pool proposal, there was suggestion for incorporating additional water activities, such as dragon boat, cable wakeboarding, children’s sailing, paddling, rowing at the water space, etc. There was suggestion for making reference to the Marina Bay Sands’ infinity pool in Singapore.
33. Some public members doubted the popularity of the proposal floating pool and sand beach noting that swimming pools and natural beaches were easily accessible in Hong Kong elsewhere. They raised concerns on financial viability, public safety and management of the facility, as well as the use of the facility during winter seasons. Some public members preferred direct contact with water over the use of the barge pool.
34. There were also comments that sufficient supporting facilities such as

parking and loading/unloading facilities changing rooms, toilets, F&B, etc. should be provided to support the water sports and recreational activities.

35. Comments to extend waterfront promenade/public access onto Kellett Island were also received.

Revitalised Typhoon Shelter Precinct

36. The public was generally supportive to the design intention of the Revitalised Typhoon Shelter Precinct to re-discover the old typhoon shelter's historical heritage and local character by re-introducing the floating restaurant(s), water taxi, etc. Nevertheless, public members also raised concerns on the financial viability of the proposed floating restaurant(s) and water taxi. The proposed floating restaurant(s) might bring about water quality/pollution, sewerage and other operational problems.
37. Regarding the mode of the floating restaurant, some public members preferred smaller scale eateries in a designated area within the typhoon shelter while some suggested a row of sizeable floating restaurants along the water edge of the typhoon shelter.
38. The public also supported the proposed cantilevered deck of the Northern Breakwater. Noting the technical and management difficulties in having bridge connection with the Breakwater, public generally agreed with the current proposal of making use of sampan services to connect with the Breakwater. Their major concerns rested on issues about public safety and crowd control.
39. Most public members supported the proposed boardwalk along Victoria Park Road while some suggested that the proposed boardwalk should extend to the area around Noonday Gun where the bottleneck problem was even more acute.
40. The Cross Harbour Tunnel and Victoria Park Road at this precinct posed noise and air pollution issues, remediate measures, such as noise barriers, should be taken. Nevertheless, some public members pointed out that noise barriers might result in adverse visual impact, and suggested making use of tree planting to mitigate the noise and air impacts. The removal of advertising billboards around the Royal Hong Kong Yacht Club could also improve the visual impact they casted to this area.
41. There was an idea for a floating museum to display the heritage aspect of the Victoria Harbour, typhoon shelter, or the former Floating Tin Hau Temple, etc.

East Coast Park Precinct

42. The public in general agreed with the design intention to develop the newly reclaimed land at the waterfront of North Point into a vibrant and easily accessible community park.

43. Public aspirations about the design of the community park included more interactive water edges, more pedestrian friendly street design, user-friendly signage with art element and careful management of the proposed community garden.
44. Beautification/streetscape improvements in the adjacent areas of the East Coast Park Precinct must be implemented together with the overall harbourfront enhancements in order to revamp the area in one cohesive design, particularly the streetscape at Oil Street and Watson Road.
45. Some public members suggested integration between this precinct with various government lots (e.g. the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department's depot site at Tin Hau) for better design and cohesion.
46. Air quality concern was raised for this precinct due to its close proximity with the Eastern Tunnel Portal and Island Eastern Corridor.

Connectivity

47. The public generally supported the HEPs to provide and strengthen north-south connections between the waterfront and the hinterland, and east-west connections along the waterfront. Many requested that barrier-free access should be incorporated in the design of these connections.
48. Specific north-south connections requiring major improvements suggested by the public included Harbour Centre to the New Wan Chai Ferry Pier; Fortress Hill MTR Station towards the harbourfront; Tin Hau MTR Station towards the harbourfront, etc.
49. Specific east-west connections requiring major improvements mentioned by the public included area around Expo Drive East between the Celebration Precinct and Pierside Precinct; the area between the Causeway Bay Typhoon Shelter and the North Point district of the East Coast Park Precinct, etc.
50. Noting the site constraints to allow provision for car parking facilities, many comments shared the view that the public should be encouraged to access to the waterfront by using public transport.
51. Most public members supported the proposed covered walkway to provide a weather-proof access to the New Wan Chai Ferry Pier.

Implementation Issues

52. Some comments enquired the implementation agents and timetable of the HEPs. They looked forward to timely implementation of the HEPs so that

the public could enjoy this part of the waterfront as early as practicable.

53. Many public members raised that they simply looked for flexible lawn areas which were easily accessible. They were concerned that the complexities of the HEPs and the requirements of huge public money might delay the implementation programme.
54. On the implementation and management agent of the future harbourfront, some suggested that the harbourfront areas should be implemented and managed by one independent agency to ensure a holistic design, management and maintenance of such important harbourfront of Hong Kong.

Protection of the Harbour Ordinance (PHO) Implications

55. The comments received generally supported the proposed cantilevered boardwalk along Victoria Park Road for enhancing pedestrian environment even though the proposal might involve small scale reclamation that might require establishing the overriding public need under the Protection of Harbour Ordinance. Public members who raised different opinions against the proposed boardwalk (for examples, some expressed that the boardwalk was not necessary and some suggested there might be issues on management, public safety, etc.) were in the minority.

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