

Harbourfront Commission
Task Force on Harbourfront Developments on Hong Kong Island

Minutes of Fifteenth Meeting

Date : 18 February 2014
Time : 9:30 a.m.
Venue : Conference Room, 15/F, North Point Government Offices,
333 Java Road, North Point, Hong Kong

Present

Mr Nicholas BROOKE	Chair
Mrs Margaret BROOKE	Representing Business Environment Council
Mr LEUNG Kong-yui	Representing Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport in Hong Kong
Mrs Karen BARRETTO	Representing Friends of the Earth
Mr LAM Kin-lai	Representing the Conservancy Association
Dr Peter Cookson SMITH	Representing Hong Kong Institute of Planners
Dr Sujata GOVADA	Representing Hong Kong Institute of Urban Design
Ir Peter WONG	Representing Hong Kong Institution of Engineers
Mr Shuki LEUNG	Representing Real Estate Developers Association of Hong Kong
Mr Paul ZIMMERMAN	Representing Society for Protection of the Harbour
Mr CHAN Hok-fung	
Mr Walter CHAN	
Ms Lily CHOW	
Ms Jacqueline CHUNG	
Mrs Ayesha Macpherson LAU	
Ms LI Chun-chau	
Mr Vincent NG	
Mr Alvin YIP	
Mr Thomas CHAN	Deputy Secretary (Planning and Lands)1, Development Bureau (DEVB)
Mr Edward LEUNG	Senior Manager (Tourism) 2, Tourism Commission (TC)
Mr CHAN Chung-yuen	Chief Traffic Engineer/Hong Kong, Transport Department (TD)
Mr MAK Chi-biu	Chief Engineer/Hong Kong 1, Civil Engineering and Development Department (CEDD)
Mr Richard WONG	Chief Leisure Manager (Hong Kong West),

Ms Ginger KIANG
Mr Larry CHU

Leisure and Cultural Services Department
(LCSD)
District Planning Officer/Hong Kong,
Planning Department (PlanD)
Secretary

In Attendance

Mrs Winnie KANG
Mr Frederick YU
Miss Venus TSOI
Mr Peter MOK
Miss Josephine LO

Principal Assistant Secretary (Harbour),
DEVB
Assistant Secretary (Harbour) SD, DEVB
Assistant Secretary (Harbour) 2, DEVB
Project Manager (Harbour), DEVB
Senior Town Planner/Hong Kong 3, PlanD

Absent with Apologies

Mr Andy LEUNG
Mr Evans IU Po-lung
Mr LAU Chun-kong
Mr Eric FOK
Mr Brian David LI
Mr Raj Sital MOTWANI

Representing Hong Kong Institute of
Architects
Representing Hong Kong Institute of
Landscape Architects
Representing Hong Kong Institute of
Surveyors

For Agenda Item 3

Mr CHAN Hok-fung
Professor Anthony YEHL

Vice-Chairman, Central and Western District
Council (C&WDC)
Department of Urban Planning and Design,
The University of Hong Kong (HKU)

For Agenda Item 4

Mr Ian BROWNLEE
Mr Benson POON
Mr Johnny LEUNG
Ms Pally TSANG

Director, Masterplan Limited
Town Planner, Masterplan Limited
Managing Director, Star Ferry Company
Limited (SFCL)
Senior Operations Executive, SFCL

For Agenda Item 5

Ms Amy CHEUNG
Ms April KUN

Assistant Director/Territorial, PlanD
Chief Town Planner/Studies and Research,
PlanD

Welcoming Message

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting, including the three co-opted Members who attended the meeting for the first time, namely Mr Alvin YIP, Director of Hong Kong Polytechnic University's Jockey Club Design Institute for Social Innovation; Ms Jacqueline CHUNG, representative nominated by the Wan Chai District Council, and Ms LI Chun-chau representative nominated by the Eastern District Council. He also informed Members that Mr Edward LEUNG, Senior Manager (Tourism) 2 of TC attended this meeting on behalf of Ms Emily MO; and Mr Richard WONG, Chief Leisure Manager (Hong Kong West) of LCSD attended on behalf of Miss Olivia CHAN.

Item 1 Confirmation of Minutes of the 14th Meeting

- 1.1 **The Chair** said that the Secretariat circulated the draft minutes of the 14th meeting to Members on 28 January 2014. After incorporating the proposed amendments received, the revised draft minutes were circulated to Members on 11 February 2014. There being no further amendment, the revised draft minutes were confirmed at the meeting.

Item 2 Matters Arising

Central-Wan Chai Bypass (CWB) and Island Eastern Corridor (IEC) Link - Appearance of CWB Noise Mitigation Measures at the Harbourfront of North Point (paragraph 4.10 of the confirmed minutes of the 14th meeting)

- 2.1 **The Chair** said that a working session was arranged on 16 December 2013 for Members to discuss with the Highways Department (HyD), and HyD had been asked to provide further information to demonstrate how the current CWB project would facilitate the opening of the landscaped deck for public access in future. The department would report the findings to Members at a separate working session.

HyD

Topical Study on the Proposed Boardwalk underneath the IEC (paragraph 4.18 of the confirmed minutes of the 14th meeting)

- 2.2 **The Chair** recapped that Members had generally agreed on the refined scheme at the last meeting, and asked CEDD to come up

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with a preliminary implementation timetable. **Mr MAK Chi-biu** reported that according to the latest programme, a consultant would be engaged by Q4 2014 to handle issues related to the Protection of the Harbour Ordinance (PHO), including conducting public consultation and preparing the required cogent and convincing materials if the overriding public need test could be satisfied. After that, the detailed engineering design and construction were expected to commence in Q2 2016 and Q2 2018 respectively.

- 2.3 **Mr Paul ZIMMERMAN** asked for more details about the timetable which he considered could be further compressed. He opined that a low-level option should continue to be explored to maximize the connectivity with the existing piers. **Dr Peter Cookson SMITH** also expressed that the implementation of the project could be expedited.
- 2.4 **Mr MAK Chi-biu** responded that having regard to the previous experience, the time required for ascertaining overriding public need of the project was a realistic estimate, having regard to the required process such as public consultation, gazettal under the Foreshore and Sea-bed (Reclamations) Ordinance, resolving comments, etc. CEDD had started preparation to engage a consultant.
- 2.5 **The Chair** suggested that the timetable be circulated to Members for information and CEDD should continue exploring the possibility to further compress the schedule.
- 2.6 **Mr Paul ZIMMERMAN** suggested making a comparison with other works projects which had undergone similar test such as the CWB project. He opined that the cogent and convincing materials for the boardwalk were already available from previous public discussions on the project, and therefore it might not take a long time to prepare the required materials.
- 2.7 **Mr LEUNG Kong-yui** opined that the preparation of the cogent and convincing materials depended very much on the design of the boardwalk, and therefore the preparation had to be taken forward step by step.
- 2.8 **Mrs Winnie KANG** remarked that the timetable was a realistic estimate for a public works project in accordance with the relevant technical circular. Instead of asking Members to comment on the programme, she suggested leaving the

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implementation to CEDD which would circulate the timetable for Members' information.

CEDD

(Post-meeting note: The timetable was circulated to Members on 9 May 2014.)

Cargo Handling at the Promenade fronting Central Piers (paragraph 4.19 of the confirmed minutes of the 14th meeting)

- 2.9 **The Chair** said that the site visit to the Central Piers was organised on 16 December 2013 to let Members have a better understanding of the current situation and site constraints. While recognising the need for outlying island residents to handle small cargoes at the open areas fronting the piers and the site constraints, Members suggested improving the facilities at the open areas and enhancing management of operators. Relevant departments were working on how best to take forward Members' suggestions.

Amendments to the Approved Wan Chai North Outline Zoning Plan (OZP) No. S/H25/2 (paragraph 4.26 of the confirmed minutes of the 14th meeting)

- 2.10 In response to the Chair's enquiry about the progress of the rezoning exercise, **Ms Ginger KIANG** updated Members that the Town Planning Board (TPB) had heard the representations on the amendments to the OZP and made a decision. Subject to approval of the finalised OZP by the Chief Executive in Council, PlanD would prepare the draft planning brief of the topside development and the Task Force would be engaged during the process.

PlanD

Façade Treatment Proposals for the five Electricity Supply Buildings (ESBs) and the Ventilation Shafts of an Underground Pump House under the Central Reclamation Phase III Project (paragraph 5.12 of the confirmed minutes of the 14th meeting)

- 2.11 **The Chair** said that a separate working session was arranged on 16 December 2013 for Members to discuss with CEDD on the enhanced proposal. CEDD would take into account Members' comments when finalising the design and proceed to seek TPB's approval after discussing with relevant departments on the management and maintenance issues.

**Item 3 Conceptual Master Plan for the Western Harbourfront
(Paper No. TFHK/01/2014)**

- 3.1 **The Chair** welcomed Mr CHAN Hok-fung, who attended this item as the Vice-Chairman of C&WDC; and Professor Anthony YEH of the Department of Urban Planning and Design of HKU. **Mr CHAN** and **Professor YEH** presented the paper, with the aid of a PowerPoint.
- 3.2 **The Chair** remarked that it was a challenge to enhance the waterfront accessibility at the Western harbour which covered the Western Wholesale Food Market (WWFM) and the Western Public Cargo Works Area (WPCWA).
- 3.3 While appreciating the plan as an interesting proposal, **Dr Peter Cookson SMITH** commented that it was a conceptual idea which would be subject to detailed feasibility study. Some components of the plan reconciled with the harbourfront planning principles but some might require further study. While the feasibility would depend on further engagement with market operators, the opening of WWFM for public use might bring opportunities for vibrant activities such as alfresco dining. There were other alternatives uses for the area, for example, the basin might be used for mooring of ships. The proposed Harbourfront Authority (HA), if supported by the public to be established, could look at the harbourfront enhancement opportunities holistically and strategically, and work with the district councils closely in this regard.
- 3.4 **Mr Paul ZIMMERMAN** remarked that a proactive approach was essential to the successful redevelopment of this part of harbourfront area. For planning of the entire Western harbour, he suggested relocating WWFM, rationalising some existing uses, and reconsidering the need for an iconic feature. The inner harbour which included in WPCWA and disused piers fronting WWFM were suitable for accommodating cargo handling operations for the outlying island residents, and the existence of WPCWA was important in creating job opportunities for the community. As regards the proposal to operate water-taxi service between the Western harbour and the West Kowloon Cultural District (WKCD), he opined that the demand would not be high because of the distance and convenience of the tunnel bus.
- 3.5 **Mr Vincent NG** acknowledged and appreciated the efforts of

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C&WDC and HKU in preparing a conceptual master plan for improving the planning of this part of the waterfront. C&WDC had set a good example in seeking professional input and working together with the community in coming up with a harbourfront enhancement proposal, which was in line with the spirit of public engagement in the Harbour Planning Principles. Based on this conceptual framework, the Commission could further collaborate with C&WDC to take forward harbourfront enhancement for the area. While agreeing that coordination would be needed for the entire Victoria harbourfront, he had no objection to have an iconic feature at this waterfront provided that it was appropriately designed and properly built.

- 3.6 **Mr LEUNG Kong-yui** thanked C&WDC for adopting a systematic approach in planning this part of the waterfront and considered that the proposed water show could add vibrancy to the harbourfront and become a new tourist attraction to link with traditional tourist spots. It would be a challenge to improve the accessibility from the hinterland to WWFM through Water Street and Fung Mat Road. There might be opportunity to conduct an urban design for the area when site availability was certain.
- 3.7 **Mr LAM Kin-lai** said that the open space proposed under this plan could replenish the much-demanded leisure and recreational facilities in the district. There was a large residential area in the hinterland and residents were used to going to the waterfront for leisure like using the Sun Yat Sen Memorial Park (SYSMP). The accessibility should be improved through widening and beautifying the at-grade connections. C&WDC's characteristic features, e.g. "the triangle pier", "Possession Point" and traditional trades, etc. could be included as part of the plan. Job opportunity would be created as the shops in the vicinity could be revitalised after improving the waterfront. The future HA could work with the Government to explore releasing more space at WWFM which provided good potential for commercial, retail and dining activities. Opportunity should also be taken to extend the mid-level escalator to the waterfront for enhancement of pedestrian connectivity.
- 3.8 **Mr Shuki LEUNG** remarked that it was an exciting initiative proposed by C&WDC to enhance this part of the waterfront which had great scenic, historical, cultural and heritage values. The proposal had the support of the community and could

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promote tourism, create jobs and energise water-land interface facilities. He welcomed the concept of extending the mid-level escalator as well as building floating stage and iconic feature which could create a sense of ownership among local residents. He suggested conducting a capacity study as many visitors might be attracted to this enhanced waterfront. On job creation and business viability, he quoted a successful example of revitalising the old fisherman market in Taiwan, and said that the market operators should be engaged when enhancing WWFM by various commercial activities. He supported taking forward the plan progressively.

- 3.9 **Mr Alvin YIP** remarked that he generally supported the plan but considered that the study had adopted a rather hardware-driven approach in urban design. While he had no objection to building iconic features if funding was available, he opined that these features might not be the key elements to bring vibrancy to the waterfront. He suggested getting stakeholders' feedback early on how best to activate the waterfront. Noting that there was no proposed timeframe to open WWFM for public use, he commented that the site would be important in enhancing the accessibility of the harbourfront. While agreeing that water taxi could be an innovative idea, he concurred that the usage was unlikely to be high.
- 3.10 **Mr Walter CHAN** appreciated the work accomplished by C&WDC and HKU, and supported the concept and objective of the plan. Given the hot and humid climate in Hong Kong during summer, he suggested adding more shading and greening features to enable better public enjoyment.
- 3.11 **Dr Sujata GOVADA** supported this initiative of C&WDC, and opined that such urban design proposal could provide a good basis for the Task Force or the future HA to take forward harbourfront enhancement for the area. The plan should be integrated with the overall planning of the harbour. For iconic features, she opined that a fountain would be suitable for inner harbour so that people could sit around to enjoy the harbourfront. She added that WWFM could be the catalyst for revitalisation of the whole area and other uses like hotel and culinary institutes could be incorporated into the plan. More pedestrian connections other than footbridges should be provided for this area. As MTR's West Island Line (WLI) would be completed in the near future, the MTRCL could play a better role to connect the hinterland to the harbourfront. She

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suggested having more mixed-use developments along the waterfront, especially near WWFM to make the plan more financially viable.

- 3.12 **Mrs Ayesha Macpherson LAU** thanked C&WDC and HKU for presenting such a plan which would give this part of the waterfront a metropolis look. She asked about funding for and the Commission's role in implementing the plan, as well as the progress of the public engagement exercise for establishing the proposed HA.
- 3.13 **Mr CHAN Hok-fung** thanked Members' support to the plan. He also expressed gratitude to HKU's efforts in preparing the plan on a pro bono basis. He said that a bottom-up public participation approach had been adopted and residents' views had been taken into account when drawing up the plan. There were many challenges to be overcome when implementing the plan, e.g. more time would be needed to convince and change the mindset of the market operators of WWFM and WPCWA to release more space for public use. C&WDC would not have sufficient funding to implement the plan alone but a public-private partnership approach might be explored and the Government could provide part of the financial support. While the timetable for implementing the entire plan was not certain at this stage, C&WDC would collaborate with other stakeholders to take forward the plan gradually.
- 3.14 **Professor YEH** thanked Members' comments which would help HKU further enhance the plan, and he made the following responses:-
- (a) the plan had provided planning on pedestrian accessibility. A footbridge was specifically proposed to ensure that the eastern side would be connected to the SYSMP round the clock. The new praya at the Kennedy Town had already transformed into a dining area, with Western Soho emerging, and special traffic measures such as Sunday pedestrian walkway scheme was proposed. Some new linkages and enhancements to the existing connections were also proposed. The new MTR WLI stations had been taken into consideration when preparing the plan;
 - (b) for holistic planning, the overall position of this part of the waterfront in Hong Kong had been considered when

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proposing the activities and iconic features in order to revitalise this old urban centre and western gateway of Hong Kong;

- (c) there were proposals in the plan for vibrant uses, such as restaurants, etc, which could create job opportunities for the district; and
- (d) if WPCWA and WWFM facilities could not be relocated, the plan would need to be revised. That said, a vibrant waterfront could still be achieved through the development of the Piers area, especially the water fountain gardens an iconic observation tower, and shared uses and other improvements in the Inner Harbour and New Praya areas of the proposed plan even if these facilities were not relocated.

3.15 **Mr Paul ZIMMERMAN** opined that the plan should put more emphasis on co-existence of marine, commercial and recreational uses, instead of relocating the existing water-dependent facilities. He also thought it not necessary to provide footbridges forcing pedestrians to experience level changes as operators used the WWFM pier only a few hours daily.

3.16 **The Chair** thanked Mr CHAN and Professor YEH for the presentation, and said that there was a clear support from Members on the plan and the Task Force would be willing to collaborate with C&WDC to take the plan forward. In response to Mrs LAU's question, he said that the future HA would work closely with district councils to encourage harbourfront enhancement initiative, and take forward these initiatives in partnership. He agreed that there was a need to integrate the plan with the overall planning of the harbourfront, which would be the important role to play by the Commission.

Item 4 Proposed Rationalisation and Expansion of Public Viewing Areas at the Central Star Ferry Terminal (Paper No. TFHK/02/2014)

4.1 Noting that Ms Lily CHOW was the Executive Director of the Chevalier Pacific Holdings Limited which was the parent company of one the proponents, Café Deco Group, **the Chair** agreed that she could stay at the meeting but refrain from

participating in the discussion.

- 4.2 **The Chair** welcomed the project team to the meeting. **Mr Ian BROWNLEE** and **Mr Benson POON** of Masterplan Limited presented the paper, with the aid of a PowerPoint.
- 4.3 **The Chair** commented that the proposed public viewing platform at the roof of the Central Terminal Building (CTB) (i.e. Site C) did not include the needed facilities such as shelter and seating.
- 4.4 **Mr Paul ZIMMERMAN** remarked that the present arrangement created conflict between public and private spaces, which was undesirable to both the restaurant and the general public. He supported the proposal to rationalise the situation by relocating the public viewing deck outside Watermark (i.e. Site A) so that the space could be more properly used. He further commented that it would not be necessary to provide in-situ compensation of public open space within CTB as there were ample new public open spaces in the area for the public to enjoy the harbour view.
- 4.5 **Mr LAM Kin-lai** objected to the proposal which intended to convert existing public space for commercial use. As compared with the tip of the pier, he considered it a setback to provide a public viewing platform at Site C, which lacked facilities and was not easily accessible by the public especially under inclement weather. The proposal would hardly be acceptable by the public.
- 4.6 **Dr Peter Cookson SMITH** expressed that it might be better if one line of tables be allowed at Site A to increase utilisation of the site. The public viewing terrace outside Pier 7 Café & Bar (i.e. Site B) was also underutilised as the restaurant could not serve its clients at the site. He considered it a good idea to relocate the public viewing platform to Site C.
- 4.7 **Mr LEUNG Kong-yui** commented that CTB and Central Pier No. 7 were built by the Government, and was then approved from transport policy consideration that part of the area could be converted for commercial use in order to generate non-fare income to cross-subsidise ferry operation. While he expressed no in-principle objection to change the existing arrangement with a view to achieving better utilisation of public space, he opined that the current proposal was not satisfactory as Site C

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was a bare site without needed facilities, and not easily accessible to the public especially the elderly.

- 4.8 For Members' background, **Mrs Winnie KANG** said that a section 16 planning application was approved by the Town Planning Board some years ago to convert part of the pier area for commercial use, and maintaining the existing public viewing deck at Site A was one of the conditions of approval. She enquired the reason of excluding some shared space in Watermark restaurant and Café & Bar in the calculation of area of the existing public space, and where the public could use washroom facility if the toilet in the Watermark restaurant became exclusively used by the restaurant.
- 4.9 **Mr CHAN Hok-fung** objected to the proposal as it was a retrograde arrangement to relocate the public viewing deck to Site C which was bare, inconveniently located and would be hot in summer. The proposal in its current form would only benefit the proponents and the reprovisioned open space would not be attractive to the public.
- 4.10 **Dr Sujata GOAVDA** opined that it was a mistake to put public viewing deck at its current location in the first instance. She said that the restaurant could be relocated to Site C so that Site A could be turned into open space that would be easily accessible by the public.
- 4.11 **Mr Alvin YIP** commented that both Sites A and B were underutilised and should be activated. While the proponent mentioned in the paper that Site C would be turned into a high-quality public viewing platform, detailed design of the site was not provided to Members.
- 4.12 **Mr Shuki LEUNG** said that the restaurant operators were also stakeholders in this case through adding vibrancy to the harbourfront and creating jobs. The operational conflict at Site A should be resolved. While the paper suggested that Site B could still be used as a public viewing terrace when there was no function, the proponents should provide more details on the detailed arrangement. He supported relocating the public viewing platform at Site C, but the proponent had to elaborate details such as providing shelters and barrier-free facilities.
- 4.13 **Mr Ian BROWNLEE** made the following responses:-

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- (a) for Site A, the previous Section 16 planning application was approved many years ago when the Central Pier 7 and CTB were first constructed at the present location. While Site A was the only place available for the public to enjoy the harbour view at that time, there were other nearby alternatives now. No furniture or tables could be placed at Site A as it was an approval condition to provide public access. Therefore, the rationalisation proposal was the only option to overcome the operational difficulties faced by the restaurant operator which could also enhance utilisation of the site;
- (b) for Site C, when consulting the Task Force in February 2013, the proponents suggested installing an elevator with glass wall, but some Members commented that the elevator shaft would protrude from CTB and affect its outlook. Therefore, the current proposal proposed to install wheelchair lifting platform similar to those being used in MTR stations to meet the barrier free access requirement. To minimise the visual impact, no shelters or excessive features except some chairs and landscaping were proposed so that visitors could enjoy the panoramic harbour view. No dining facilities could be provided at Site C as there was no suitable means of access to fulfil operational requirements. While Site C might not be very comfortable in some weather, it would provide a fantastic view and people might not need to stay there for a long time. The proponents could take Members' comments into consideration when improving the design of Site C;
- (c) for Site B, the operator was facing the problem of operational conflict and financial viability as the public viewing terrace could not be used for functions. The operator was willing to enhance the space at its own cost so that the space could be closed off for functions occasionally and return the site for public enjoyment when there was no scheduled event. For the same reasons as Site C, no shelter would be proposed for Site B;
- (d) the shared space excluded in the calculation of current public viewing area was mainly internal space which was predominately used by the restaurants; and
- (e) the proposal could provide an opportunity for the public to enjoy the harbourfront at a site which was not opened

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at the moment. It could also provide financial benefit to the SFCL for providing better ferry operation and adding vibrancy to the area.

- 4.14 **Mr Paul ZIMMERMAN** expressed that it was a good idea to replace the underutilised public viewing deck by expanding the restaurant, or alternatively, the restaurant should be relocated and the entire floor be turned into public open space. He did not support the present arrangement which was a halfway solution. The Government should devise an acceptable compensatory mechanism if it was at all required.
- 4.15 **Mr LAM Kin-lai** said that the present layout of the public viewing deck at Site A was not convenient to the public as the shared entrance was narrowed by the two structures. He opined that the layout should be altered to allow easier access to Site A.
- 4.16 **Dr Sujata GOVADA** commented that the present arrangement was not a desirable situation. In the interim, the restaurant might remain at Site A and enhance Site C for public use. In the long-run, the entire restaurant and Site A should be turned into a public open space. It was a lesson to learn when planning for public open space in future.
- 4.17 **Mr CHAN Hok-fung** disagreed that any public open space which was underutilised should be converted into commercial use. For better public enjoyment, there should be sufficient publicity and signage to promote the public viewing deck at Site A outside the restaurant.
- 4.18 In response, **Mr Johnny LEUNG** stressed that the SFCL had fulfilled the approval conditions of the previous planning application by retaining the tip of the pier as a public viewing deck. However, the two irremovable pump houses near the entrance of the Watermark restaurant created a bottleneck and the public had to walk past part of the restaurant in order to enter Site A. Although the SFCL had taken the initiative to provide a public toilet, and beautify Site A to make it compatible with the restaurant, the usage of the deck remained low with less than 15 visitors a day on average. Apart from Site A, the lower floors of Central Pier 7 were waiting concourses of ferry service where members of the public could enjoy the same harbour view with only a payment of single journey ferry fare. In the present proposal, the SFCL suggested opening up the roof

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of CTB as a public viewing platform to provide more space for the public to enjoy the view. The conceptual design of Site C would be similar to that of Site B, which was paved with wooden panel and equipped with some umbrellas and landscaping.

- 4.19 In summing up, **the Chair** said that there were diverse views among Members and the views expressed would be conveyed to the TPB.

**the
Secretariat**

(Post meeting note: The Secretariat summarised the discussion to the TPB on 20 February 2014.)

Item 5 Urban Design Study for the Wan Chai North and North Point Harbourfront Areas - Proposed Study Scope (Paper No. TFHK/03/2014)

- 5.1 **The Chair** welcomed the presentation team to the meeting. **Ms Amy CHEUNG** and **Ms April KUN** of PlanD presented the paper, with the aid of a PowerPoint.
- 5.2 **Mr LAM Kin-lai** said that the Golden Bauhinia Square (GBS) was an important tourist spot and ceremonial venue. However, it was small and not a well-designed open space. It should be included in the study area with a view to improving traffic arrangement, people flow and facilities.
- 5.3 **Mr Paul ZIMMERMAN** opined that apart from government land, the study area should also include private land, the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre (HKCEC), the Police Officers' Club, the "Government, Institution or Community" (GIC) site at Whitefield Road and the pavement space on both sides along Hung Hing Road, etc. The study should also include seabed for recommending proposals to activate the water body. The land uses in the OZP, which were determined some time ago, might be used as the starting point in the study, but a flexible approach should be adopted to reconfirm the proposed land uses during the study process.
- 5.4 **Mr LEUNG Kong-yui** urged to commence the study as soon as possible, and suggested that the study could include more discussion on water-land interface issues and a comprehensive public engagement process would be crucial.

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- 5.5 **Dr Peter Cookson SMITH** said that the study should cover urban design aspects comprehensively, with an emphasis to provide more usable space such as promenade instead of creating un-usable landscaped space. He queried whether there was a need to implement the proposed themed water park, outdoor performance area and harbour education centre. He supported the removal of wall along the Causeway Bay Typhoon Shelter to facilitate public access, and opined that the water basin was a suitable venue for a maritime museum, rather than a water park. He considered it difficult to assess the business viability of the recommended harbourfront enhancement proposals.
- 5.6 **Mr Shuki LEUNG** supported taking forward this action-oriented study for completion by end 2016 so that PlanD could prepare the design brief for the area to guide the implementation. He suggested preparing a pedestrian master plan as accessibility and connectivity should be one of the prime objectives of the study.
- 5.7 **Mr Alvin YIP** supported the study, and commented that Members should be given the opportunity to revisit the proposed themes for the key sites. For the proposed arts and culture precinct, he suggested having early dialogue with potential partners such as the Hong Kong Arts Centre and LCSD before deciding the theme for the site.
- 5.8 **Mr Vincent NG** supported the study, and asked whether the Commission could play a more active role in the study to ensure a holistic planning approach would be adopted, and he concurred that comprehensive public engagement would be crucial to the success of the study.
- 5.9 **Mrs Margaret BROOKE** said that this was an opportunity for a participatory planning, and flexibility should be allowed for Members to examine whether the proposed land uses were still in congruence with the Commission's vision for this part of the harbourfront areas.
- 5.10 **Ms Jacqueline CHUNG** said that the Wan Chai District Council had been consulted on the proposal to use water as the theme for the area. There was concern over the adequacy of north-south pedestrian connections and public transport access to the waterfront. The issue of coach parking should be addressed as more tourists would be attracted to visit the sites,

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especially near GBS and HKCEC. She also pointed out that CEDD had recently consulted the Wan Chai District Council on a feasibility study on underground space which had overlapping study area with this study. She suggested that the two studies should be well interfaced.

- 5.11 **Dr Sujata GOVADA** commented that the Commission should be a co-organiser of the study, especially with the background of establishing a HA later. She opined that the “Harbour-front Enhancement Review - Wan Chai, Causeway Bay and Adjoining Areas” (“HER”) study should be used as a model for planning the public engagement activities, rather than the “Urban Design Study for the New Central Harbourfront” (“UDS”). She suggested including the North Point Ferry Pier in the study for enhancement, albeit it had been included in the “Hong Kong Island East Harbour-front Study” before. Instead of being tied up by the land uses which were determined long time ago, the study should adopt a flexible approach to allow innovative ideas with more emphasis on water-land interface issues.
- 5.12 **Ms Amy CHEUNG** thanked Members’ support for the study, and made the following responses:-
- (a) the proposed study area had included the new land formed under the Wan Chai Development Phase II (WDII) project, the expansion of GBS and some of the public footpaths. While those parts under separate active study or with committed development proposals were not included, the study team would carefully look into the interface with adjacent developments as well as related studies, including the underground space study to be undertaken by the Government;
 - (b) on Members’ suggestion of including the water body, the study team would look at the possible marine activities when formulating urban design proposals, but would not make specific proposal on marine traffic as it should be reviewed holistically under a different discipline;
 - (c) there would be opportunity to review the proposed themes for the key sites, and relevant stakeholders would be engaged in the early part of the study to ensure that their views would be taken into account when reviewing the themes;

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- (d) the current land uses under the OZPs would be the starting point, and adjustment could be proposed where necessary in the course of the study process;
- (e) in formulating the detailed public engagement plan, the study team would take into account Members' suggestion to make reference to the approach adopted by "HER";
- (f) the study scope had included a traffic review which would look into the coach parking issue; and
- (g) accessibility from the hinterland, public transport access, pedestrian connectivity along the waterfront, and streetscape improvement were all included in the study. For any immediate improvement suggestions, it could be dealt with under the existing harbourfront enhancement mechanism as the study had to go through certain process before making concrete proposals for implementation.

5.13 In response to the Chair's enquiry, **Ms Amy CHEUNG** added that while specific proposal for marine traffic would not be made under this urban design study, the study team would certainly take into account the existing and future use of the water in the nearby water body during the study process and ensure that all relevant government departments would take part in the study.

5.14 **Ms April KUN** supplemented that:-

- (a) the expansion of GBS had been included in the study area, and Members' suggestion to include the existing square would be duly considered;
- (b) all the footpaths along Hung Hing Road and its vicinity as well as the trees along the footpaths had been included in the study area, and the study team would see how this area could be improved as a waterfront promenade;
- (c) while the GIC site at Whitefield Road was not included as it had committed implementation programme, all the interface between the study area with the adjacent developments including this GIC site would be duly observed;

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- (d) pedestrian connectivity was one of the key tasks of the study, and some preliminary research had been conducted to look into the accessibility with the hinterland. The study team would look into the connections at different levels; and
 - (e) the Commission would be consulted on the proposed scope of the underground space study at its next meeting scheduled for April 2014.
- 5.15 **Mr Paul ZIMMERMAN** opined that just obtaining input from the Marine Department would not be adequate and the study should also gauge ideas of marine activities from the community and stakeholders. The study area should be expanded so that comprehensive enhancement proposal could be made for the entire harbourfront areas in Wan Chai North. “HER” conducted by the former Harbour-front Enhancement Committee had set out a preferred boundary to ensure the comprehensiveness of the study.
- 5.16 **Mrs Winnie KANG** said that the study would be conducted by the PlanD in response to Members’ previous request for an urban design study for WDII project area. This study would provide urban design framework to guide the future development of the area and look into business viability if a public-private partnership development model was adopted. The scope of study area had been carefully carved to focus on urban design elements with a view to taking forward the implementation after the completion of WDII in 2018. The Commission would play an active advisory role during the study process.
- 5.17 In response to the Chair’s suggestion, **Mrs Winnie KANG** said that there would be close collaboration between the Commission and PlanD when taking forward the study, and suggested that a working group could be set up under the Task Force to gauge Members’ views on the study on a continuous basis. **Mr Paul ZIMMERMAN** supported the suggestion as a practical way for the Commission to actively taking part in the study. He added that the area which could potentially be taken up by HA and the study area itself were two separate issues; and the Commission should take a broader view on the area to study the overall impact and propose enhancement proposals for the entire area, instead of being limited by the potential sites

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which could potentially be allocated to HA.

- 5.18 **Mrs Winnie KANG** reiterated that the study aimed to meet the objective which was to follow-up on the Commission's call to develop a detailed urban design framework to guide the permanent development of the new sites that would be formed under the WDII Project. **The Chair** said that there was a need to provide a holistic plan for this waterfront and he was delighted that the study would closely look at the adjacent developments to reinforce the interface. The working group should explore further how the Commission might work closely with the PlanD on this important study. **Ms Amy CHEUNG** responded that PlanD would closely collaborate with the Commission when conducting the study.

Item 6 Any Other Business

- 6.1 There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:00 p.m.

Secretariat

Task Force on Harbourfront Developments on Hong Kong Island

May 2014