

Harbourfront Commission
Task Force on Harbourfront Developments
on Hong Kong Island

Minutes of Forty-fifth Meeting

Date : 25 April 2023
Time : 2:15 pm
Venue : Room 1303, 13/F, Wing On Kowloon Centre, 345 Nathan
Road, Kowloon

Present (attending in person)

Mr Ivan HO	Chairman, Task Force on Harbourfront Developments on Hong Kong Island
Dr Vivian WONG	Representing Friends of the Earth (HK) Charity Limited
Mr Paul ZIMMERMAN	Representing Society for Protection of the Harbour
Mr LEUNG Kong-yui	Representing the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport in Hong Kong

Present (attending online)

Mr Vincent NG	Chairman, Harbourfront Commission
Mr Joel CHAN	Representing Hong Kong Institute of Urban Design
Dr Rico WONG	Representing the Conservancy Association
Mr Anthony CHEUNG	Representing the Hong Kong Institute of Architects
Ir Victor CHEUNG	Representing the Hong Kong Institution of Engineers
Mr Edward LO	Representing the Hong Kong Institute of Planners
Sr Francis LAM	Representing the Hong Kong Institute of Surveyors
Mr Desmond NG	Representing the Real Estate Developers Association of Hong Kong
Mr Mac CHAN	Individual Member
Miss Sunnie LAU	Individual Member
Dr Lawrence LI	Individual Member
Hon Tony TSE	Individual Member
Dr Frankie YEUNG	Individual Member

Official Members (attending in person)

Ms Leonie LEE	Commissioner for Harbourfront, Development Bureau (DEVB)
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Mr Horace HONG	Chief Traffic Engineer/Hong Kong, Transport Department (TD)
Mr Charles LEE	Senior Engineer/13(South), Civil Engineering and Development Department (CEDD)
Mr Benjamin HUNG	Assistant Director (Leisure Services) 2, Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD)
Miss Karmin TONG	Senior Town Planner/Hong Kong 4, Planning Department (PlanD)
Mr Nelson SO	Secretary

Official Members (attending online)

Ms Anny TANG	Senior Manager (Tourism) 21, Tourism Commission (TC)
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In Attendance

Mr NG Shing-kit	Senior Engineer (Harbour) 2, DEVB
Mr Peter MOK	Project Manager (Harbour) Special Duties, DEVB

Absent with Apologies

Mrs Margaret BROOKE	Representing Business Environment Council
Mr Paul CHAN	Representing the Hong Kong Institute of Landscape Architects
Mr Karl KWOK	Individual Member
Ms Angela SO	Individual Member
Ir Janice LAI	Individual Member

For Agenda Item 3

Mr Lawrence LEE	Principal Project Coordinator, System Management Division, Drainage Services Department (DSD)
Ms Karen CHAN	Senior Engineer/SMD3, DSD
Mr Ricky LIU	Senior Environment Protection Officer (Sewerage Infrastructure) 6, Environmental Protection Department (EPD)
Mr Calvin LI	Director, WSP Asia Limited
Mr Ellis LI	Technical Director, WSP Asia Limited
Mr Kentis BEH	Director, A.LEAD Architects Ltd.

For Agenda Item 4

Mr Jones LAI	Chief Engineer/RD1-3, Highways Department (HyD)
Mr TING Yuen-chi	Senior Engineer/SCL(2), HyD
Mr Mike BEZZANO	Chief Construction Manager – Civil, MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL)
Ms Karin CHEUNG	Senior Design Manager – Civil, MTRCL
Mr William CHAN	Senior Liaison Engineer, MTRCL
Mr Henry MAN	Senior Corporate Communications Manager, MTRCL
Ms Gloria SO	Senior Project Architect, MTRCL

Action

Welcoming Message

The Chairman welcomed all to the meeting and informed the meeting that –

- (a) **Ms Leonie LEE** attends on behalf of Ms Louisa YAN, Acting Deputy Secretary (Planning and Lands) 1; and
- (b) **Ms Anny TANG**, Senior Manager of the Tourism Commission (TC), attends on behalf of Ms Elsa HUNG, Assistant Commissioner for Tourism (2).

Item 1 Confirmation of Minutes of the 43rd and 44th Meetings

- 1.1 The draft minutes of the 43rd and 44th meetings were circulated to Members on 21 April 2023. **The Chairman** informed Members that except paragraph 3.19 of the 43rd meeting minutes, no further comments were received from Members regarding the minutes of the 43rd and 44th meetings. Therefore, apart from the aforesaid paragraph, the minutes of both meetings were confirmed.

[Post-meeting note: The finalised minutes of the 43rd meeting with Members' comments on paragraph 3.19 incorporated were further circulated to Members on 16 May 2023; and no further comments were received.]

Item 2 Matters Arising

- 2.1 There was no follow-up matter arising from the last meeting.

Item 3 Conceptual Design of Dry Weather Flow Interceptor at Wan Chai East (Paper No. TFHK/02/2023)

Introduction

- 3.1 **The Chairman** informed Members that DSD would present to Members today a revised design of Dry Weather Flow Interceptor (DWFI) at Wan Chai East.
- 3.2 Upon **the Chairman's** invitation, **Mr Nelson SO** briefed Members on the background of the project as follows:
- To improve the water quality and alleviate odour nuisance at the waterfront of Wan Chai East, DSD was planning to construct DWFI at Wan Chai East. DSD consulted the Task Force on the proposed DWFI, among others, at the 43rd meeting on 1 December 2022. Members considered the proposed design not desirable and suggested DSD to revise the design, with comments including relocating the filtering station at Tunnel Approach Rest Garden (TARG) and reducing the building footprint of the filtering station. DSD would present a revised design in response to Members' comments.

Presentation by the Project Proponent

- 3.3 With the aid of a PowerPoint, **Mr Calvin LI** presented to Members the revised proposal. He remarked that DSD had taken into account Members' comments at the 43rd meeting by enhancing the design of the filtering station. On the other hand, he also explained the constraints of locating the filtering station at TARG, including the technical infeasibility given the presence of the existing Shatin to Central Link under the TARG, an existing large box culvert which took up a lot of room, congested raking piles of Canal Road Flyover, the sightline limit of the existing flyover, etc.

Discussion

- 3.4 **Mr Paul Zimmerman** expressed his appreciation that DSD had taken into account the feedback provided by Members during the last consultation and had made appropriate modifications to their design. Additionally, he suggested widening the pavement near the filtering station as it appeared to be quite narrow.

- 3.5 **Mr Joel CHAN** thanked DSD for retaining the existing tree at the filtering station at Wan Shing Street. He considered that the tree would have a high chance of survival after being transplanted to a nearby location. Also, he appreciated DSD for taking his comments into consideration and also for refining the design of the filtering station to blend in with the surrounding environment.
- 3.6 **Mr Vincent NG** expressed his support to the revised design, which was fenceless and could enhance the permeability and connectivity of the area.

Way Forward

- 3.7 **The Chairman** appreciated DSD's efforts in incorporating Members' comments into the amended proposal, noting that under the revised design, DSD had effectively utilized the resources and spatial arrangement to significantly minimise the footprint of the DWF1 building, retained the tree as a visual screen, integrated nicely with the surrounding environment, and improved pedestrian connectivity through the fenceless design. He expressed his gratitude for the revised proposal and looked forward to its implementation.

Item 4 Development of Airport Railway Extended Overrun Tunnel (Paper No. TFHK/03/2023)

Introduction

- 4.1 **The Chairman** welcomed representatives of MTRCL and HyD to the meeting and invited Members to declare any conflict of interest.
- 4.2 Upon **the Chairman's** invitation, **Mr Nelson SO** briefed Members on the background of the project as follows:
- (a) The scheme for the Airport Railway Extended Overrun Tunnel (ARO) project was gazetted in 2001. According to the latest proposal on Tung Chung Line Extension project promulgated in 2020, it consisted of the construction of an underground tunnel of around 460 metres long to be built beneath Lung Wo Road at the east of Hong Kong Station, which would enable trains running on the Tung Chung Line

and Airport Express Line to turn around at the back of the Hong Kong Station, and to attain the maximum train frequency;

- (b) The project also comprised the construction of an aboveground ventilation building (ARB) of about 18m tall, to be located at the far southeast corner of Site 4, for providing emergency access to the eastern end of the new tunnel; and
- (c) MTRCL would brief Members on the details of the ARO project including implications to the harbourfront during and after the construction period.

Presentation by the Project Proponent

4.3 With the aid of a PowerPoint, **Mr Mike BEZZANO** presented to Members the proposed plan.

4.4 Upon **the Chairman's** invitation, **Ms Leonie LEE** supplemented that:

- (a) The construction of the ARO would have significant impacts on the harbourfront. Among others, it would lead to both temporary and permanent reduction in the surface area of Site 4. On the one hand, almost half of the Central Harbourfront Event Space (CHES), which covered Site 4 and part of Site 7 would be used as temporary works area. On the other hand, a portion of Site 4 would be permanently occupied by the ARB;
- (b) The proposed construction period for the ARO project from 2025 to 2032 would also have a considerable impact on the operation of the Central Harbourfront Event Space (CHES) due to its close proximity to the construction site. Event organizers might have concerns regarding the potential disruption to events during this period;
- (c) The Harbour Office had been in communication with the project proponent concerning the ARO project, including suggesting reducing the building mass of the ARB. The occupancy of Site 4 had been reduced through continuous negotiations with relevant Bureaux/Departments (B/Ds); and
- (d) Site 3 would also be affected by the ARO project indirectly. As the programme of ARO project overlapped with that of Site 3, the developer of Site 3 had to, amongst others, advanced the

construction of a deck above Lo Wo Road to minimise the conflict of the two projects. Additional arrangement had to be made with the Lands Department (LandsD).

Discussion

Timing of the ARO project

- 4.5 **Mr Paul ZIMMERMAN** considered that the delay in the project for about 20 years was due to poor communication between the Government and MTRCL. In addition, he requested MTRCL to provide an explanation of why the project did not start earlier, given that the proposed plan would now cause a significant impact on the harbourfront. He also enquired about the additional cost to the public due to this delay.

The proposed ARB

- 4.6 **Mr Paul ZIMMERMAN** noted that the ARB as currently proposed would not be favourable for public enjoyment of the harbourfront. Besides, he presented his Powerpoint slides with Members and opined that the proposed ARB was not pleasant. He inquired about the size of the proposed ARB and the boundary of the site; wondered whether the site area could be reduced and whether the design could blend with the adjacent environment. He also suggested an underground approach for the construction in order to minimise land use.
- 4.7 In addition, **Mr Paul ZIMMERMAN** suggested that the ARB be designed as a building that could contribute to the functionality and aesthetic of the harbourfront setting by providing amenities such as seating, shading, a café, and/or an art piece. Furthermore, he asked if it was possible to construct a footbridge connecting CHES with Site 3.
- 4.8 **Mr LEUNG Kong-yui** raised concerns about MTRCL's lack of consultation with the Task Force on the design of the ARB. He agreed with Mr Paul ZIMMERMAN's comments and urged for a reduction of the bulk of the ARB, minimising its visual impact on the harbourfront. He considered that MTRCL's refusal to build the tunnel 20 years ago resulted in having to construct it now using public funds. Moreover, he highlighted that half of the CHES would need to be occupied for the proposed construction, and suggested MTRCL paying for the cost in addition to the rental fee normally charged by CHES.

Furthermore, he suggested MTRCL to provide additional facilities for public enjoyment as a part of the reinstatement in order to compensate the public for the impact caused by the construction.

- 4.9 **Mr Anthony CHEUNG** concurred that the ARB looked unattractive, especially considering its prominent location at the harbourfront. As compensation, he suggested that the proponent considered making use of ARB's utility and providing facilities at a site in the proximity, such as restrooms, for public enjoyment.
- 4.10 **The Chairman** supplemented that the proposed ARB was roughly 1.6 to 1.7 times of the size of the City Gallery, as illustrated in the proponent's presentation material.
- 4.11 **Mr Joel CHAN** suggested reviewing the construction method for the ARB to reduce the impact to the harbourfront. He observed that the proposed plan lacked interaction with Site 3 and recommended relocating the ARB closer to Site 3 to provide public facilities and enhance overall connectivity of the area through the provision of additional pedestrian walkway. He also highlighted the importance of considering the needs and preferences of the public in the design and planning of the ARB and surrounding area. By incorporating more public facilities and improving connectivity with Site 3, the proposed plan could better serve the needs of the community and enhance its overall appeal. In summary, he was not able to support the current proposed plan due to a lack of clear benefits to the public.
- 4.12 **Mr Vincent NG** expressed his reservations about the proposed plan. He opined that the size of the proposed ARB was unnecessarily massive. He commented that the proponent did not provide sufficient information, including details on the size of the ARB, which made it difficult for him to support the proposed plan. To mitigate the impact of the construction on the harbourfront, he suggested MTRCL to enhance Site 4 as a compensation measure.

- 4.13 **Mr Edward LO** opined that MTRCL had not taken into account the importance of the integration with the surrounding area of their proposed ARB, and that MTRCL had only considered the project from a construction perspective and from the company's interests. He observed that the presentation material did not include any design elements or concept of design, nor did they demonstrate the connectivity of the proposed ARB with the surrounding area. He requested the project proponent to present the revised plan to the Harbourfront Commission (HC) after taken into consideration all the comments and concerns from the Members.
- 4.14 **Dr Rico WONG** commented that the proposed footprint for the ARB was too large and suggested the project proponent to consider reducing its size and scope. He suggested the project proponent to make reference to other examples such that the proposed ARB would be more aesthetically pleasant and friendly to the harbourfront.
- 4.15 **Mr Henry MAN** noted Members' comments and responded that the project team placed great importance on the partnership with the HC and valued Members' comments on the proposed plan. He explained that the project consisted of several phases. During the design stage of the ARB, they would improve its appearance and minimize the building mass. They were committed to incorporating Members' comments during the detailed design stage, and would further seek HC's views on an improved proposed plan in the near future.

Construction-related matters of the ARO project

- 4.16 **Sr Francis LAM** considered that the proposed plan would primarily benefit MTRCL while undermining the public interest. He wondered whether MTRCL adopting the conventional open cut approach was because it was the cheapest construction method. The approach however would require a significant works area and a longer construction period, as well as would cause nuisance to the surrounding. He considered the proposed seven-year construction period was disproportionate to the works to be undertaken and unreasonable. He opined that MTRCL should be required to pay rent to LandsD for occupying the land. He suggested MTRCL to adopt a more costly approach, such as the use of Tunnel Boring Machines, which would require less works area. He also criticized the design of the proposed ARB. Hence, he objected to the proposed plan.

- 4.17 Regarding the cost for occupying government land as a works area, **Mr Jones LAI** responded that MTRCL would need to apply for short-term tenancy (STT) and pay rent to the LandsD.
- 4.18 **Mr Vincent NG** considered that MTRCL's plan to occupy a sizeable piece of land at Site 4 for a period of seven years as works area would adversely affect the landscape at the harbourfront. The proposed works area would deprive the CHES of the ability to organise activities and events; and it would also render the provision of any new facilities around the harbourfront difficult during the construction period.
- 4.19 Regarding the duration of the construction period, **Mr Mike BEZZANO** responded that the long duration was due to the project team's commitment to maintaining local traffic and pedestrian flow. The phasing of tunnel excavation, designed to minimize disruption, would take longer to complete the project. In addition, the complexity of utilities along Lung Wo Road posed significant challenges for the project team.
- 4.20 **The Chairman** emphasized the importance of upholding the Harbour Planning Principles and Guidelines, including minimizing the massing of buildings along the harbourfront, adopting an integrated planning approach, and enhancing the connectivity and accessibility from the hinterland to the harbourfront. He opined that the proponent should explain how the public would be able to access the harbourfront with ease during the construction period and whether the land would be optimally used.
- 4.21 **Mr Paul ZIMMERMAN** questioned why the ARB was not put underground during the construction of the Central-Wan Chai Bypass Tunnel. He considered that the current proposed plan would destroy the harbourfront and result in increased costs to the public because HyD did not have sufficient control over the project.

4.22 **Mr Jones LAI** responded that the proposed development followed an "ownership" approach, where MTRCL was responsible for leading and constructing the project. The decision to commence the project was based on the need of railway development, and when necessary, MTRCL would seek assistance from the Government to carry out the works. He understood that in 2001, MTRCL considered that the passenger flow and frequency of trains at that time did not warrant the commencement of the project. He explained that HyD was responsible for monitoring and coordinating the project, ensuring its full compliance with statutory requirements and minimizing any potential impact on the public during the construction period. In response to concerns raised by Members, he assured that HyD would request MTRCL to improve its proposed plan by duly addressing Members' comments and concerns to satisfy the aspirations of the public and Members.

Other comments

4.23 **The Chairman** enquired whether the scheme had been gazetted. **Mr Mike BEZZANO** responded that the proposed plan had been gazetted in 2001 and approved at that time. However, there would be an amendment to the gazette, which was currently under preparation and expected to be gazetted in the latter half of 2023.

Way Forward

4.24 **The Chairman** concluded that the proponent provided insufficient information, including a lack of design details and parameters, for Members to fully comprehend the proposed plan. Also, the proposed land intake and construction period were not adequately justified in the proposed plan. Moreover, Members expressed grave concerns over the negative impacts on the public enjoyment caused by the construction of the proposed ARO project; and questioned how the public would be compensated for this. The Task Force unanimously disagreed with the proposed plan and requested the proponent to consult with them again with a revised plan for further discussions in future meetings.

Item 5 Any Other Business

5.1 **The Chairman** said that the Secretariat would inform Members of the date of the next meeting in due course.

5.2 There being no other business, the meeting adjourned at 4:00 p.m.

Secretariat

Task Force on Harbourfront Developments on Hong Kong Island

Harbourfront Commission

September 2023