

Task Force on Harbourfront Developments in Kowloon, Tsuen Wan and Kwai Tsing

For Information
on 20 November 2012

TFK/09/2012

Shelving of the "Development of a Piazza in Tsim Sha Tsui" Project

PURPOSE

This paper aims to brief Members on the Administration's decision to shelve the "Development of a Piazza in Tsim Sha Tsui" Project (TST Piazza Project).

BACKGROUND

2. The Government originally planned to develop a piazza adjacent to the Tsim Sha Tsui Pier (TST Pier), with the objective of creating a new attraction and landmark in Tsim Sha Tsui (TST). The Tourism Commission consulted the Sub-committee on Harbour Plan Review, and the Task Group on Management Model for the Harbourfront of the former Harbourfront Enhancement Committee in January and February 2008 respectively, and received no objection to the proposed piazza.

3. Over the past few years, we conducted a series of public consultation exercises on the proposed project, and arranged for the gazettal of works for construction of the new turnaround under the project in 2009 and 2010 respectively. During the period of gazettal in 2009 and 2010, we received more than 5,000 and 13,000 representations respectively. Public views collected showed that there were considerable concerns over the traffic and transport arrangements related to the project, notably the future arrangements for bus service, and possible impact of the piazza project on the traffic flow. All District Councils (DCs) in Kowloon, namely the Yau Tsim Mong DC (YTMDC), Sham Shui Po DC, Kowloon City DC, Wong Tai Sin DC and Kwun Tong DC, were very concerned about the impact of the project on the existing level of bus service. In particular, there were strong aspirations from the YTMDC for preserving all bus routes currently using the TST Pier Bus Terminus to continue their existing service at the TST Pier. Apart from traffic and transport concerns, there was strong objection to the proposed demolition of the TST Pier Bus Terminus and the related works given the historic value of the site in question. Objectors insisted that the TST Pier Bus Terminus should be conserved for the sake of the collective memories of Hong Kong people.

4. We note that on 31 May 2011, the "Star" Ferry Company Limited (Star Ferry Co. Ltd.) consulted The Harbourfront Commission's Task Force on Harbourfront Developments in Kowloon, Tsuen Wan and Kwai Tsing (HC

Task Force on Harbourfront Developments in Kowloon, Tsuen Wan and Kwai Tsing

TFK/09/2012

Kowloon Task Force) on a proposal to upgrade the existing facilities at the TST Pier and extend the pier's boundary, so as to provide more area for retail shops, restaurants and public open space. The Task Force had a preliminary discussion on Star Ferry Co. Ltd.'s proposal, and welcomed the suggestion. Since the TST Pier is a government property, the revitalization works will need to be implemented by the Government.

THE REVISED PROPOSAL IN 2011

5. In June 2011, in view of the developments set out in paragraphs 3 and 4 above, we put forth a revised proposal for the TST Piazza Project. Under the revised proposal, the piazza development would be integrated with the renovation and expansion of the TST Pier, with an aim to developing the pier and its vicinity into a TST Pier-themed tourism node so as to showcase the history of the area as a public transport interchange. In order to address the strong aspirations of the YTMDC and other relevant DCs in Kowloon, as well as the public over the traffic and transport arrangements, we also proposed to expand the planned turnaround outside the Hong Kong Cultural Centre into a new public transport interchange, so that all bus routes currently using the TST Pier Bus Terminus could continue to do so.

6. During the period from June to July 2011, we consulted the YTMDC on the revised proposal and the related arrangements for gazettal of amendments to the turnaround road scheme, and the Traffic and Transport Committees of other affected DCs in Kowloon on the revised bus routes arrangements, and obtained their support. We also consulted the HC Kowloon Task Force on the revised proposal and the related gazettal arrangements on 27 July 2011. The Task Force noted our proposal and was in support of our proposed gazettal of the revised turnaround road scheme, on the understanding that the scheme could be further amended to take into account the public views received during the gazettal period.

7. The Administration arranged for gazettal of works for the expansion of the turnaround under the revised proposal in September 2011, and handled another round of more than 7,000 representations received during the period of gazettal in accordance with the statutory procedures. Most of these representations were made by the heritage conservation activists and the post-80 generation who insisted that the TST Pier Bus Terminus should be preserved as part of the collective memories of Hong Kong people. Some representations set out alternative proposals on the design of the TST public transport interchange. In accordance with the relevant statutory provision, we sought the Chief Executive's approval for extension of the statutory time limit for handling public views for six months to August this year.

Task Force on Harbourfront Developments in Kowloon, Tsuen Wan and Kwai Tsing

TFK/09/2012

DECISION ON THE FUTURE OF THE PROJECT

8. Following the introduction of the revised proposal last year, the relevant works departments actively conducted technical assessment on the feasibility of the project, with a view to drawing up a concrete design for further consultation with the DC and the public. Nevertheless, the works departments discovered that the foundation of the existing TST Pier would not be able to support a substantial renovation and expansion with meaningful increase of floor area for additional open space for public enjoyment of the harbourfront (such as a roof top garden on top of the existing pier).

9. We have considered re-adopting the original design proposal. However, the expanded turnaround plan for accommodating all bus routes currently using the TST Pier Bus Terminus could not be incorporated into the original design. If the strong aspirations of the DC for preserving the current level of bus service are to be addressed, the size of the planned piazza would inevitably have to be reduced by 40%, from the original size of around 8,500 square metres to around 5,000 square metres. This would not allow adequate room for any substantial piazza development.

10. Over the past few years, the Government has made its best endeavours to take forward the project. Nevertheless, we encountered considerable technical problems as well as strong aspirations from the DCs and local residents for maintaining the existing level of bus service and from conservation groups for preserving the TST Pier Bus Terminus. On the other hand, with the opening of the heritage hotel (1881 Heritage) at the site of the Former Marine Police Headquarter as well as the development of Canton Road and its vicinity into a popular tourist shopping area in recent years, the additional tourism and economic benefits that the piazza project may bring has become relatively limited. Having balanced these considerations, we have decided to shelve the TST Piazza Project. We will however continue to look into ways to improve the environment and facilities of the TST waterfront for the enjoyment of tourists and local residents.

11. The concerned turnaround road scheme under the revised proposal lapsed on the statutory deadline (i.e. August 8, 2012). The Administration subsequently published a notice in the Gazette on 14 September 2012 to announce the decision not to execute the works for the project.

Task Force on Harbourfront Developments in Kowloon, Tsuen Wan and Kwai Tsing

TFK/09/2012

MEMBERS TO NOTE

12. Members are invited to note the Administration's decision to shelve the TST Piazza Project.

**Tourism Commission
November 2012**