

Task Force on Water-Land Interface

For discussion
on 19 May 2015

TFWL/03/2015

Water-friendly culture and activities – opportunities for water sports in Hong Kong

Purpose

This paper briefs Members on current water sports facilities and events in Hong Kong waters, major factors to be considered in planning for water-related events in the Harbour and further opportunities for water sports in Hong Kong.

Current water sports facilities and events in Hong Kong

2. The Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD), other government departments, non-governmental organisations, “national sports associations” (NSAs)¹ and private sports clubs operate more than 60 water sports facilities, as well as 41 gazetted beaches.

3. The NSAs and other organisations organise water sports events in Hong Kong waters on a regular basis, such as -

- **The Cross-Harbour Swimming Race** – organised by the Hong Kong Amateur Swimming Association, which has been held in October each year since 2011. Currently, 1 800 competitors take part in the race, which goes from Lei Yue Mun to Quarry Bay in the Eastern Harbour.
- **The International Dragon Boat Races** – co-organised by the Hong Kong Dragon Boat Association and the

¹ NSAs are members of the Sports Federation and Olympic Committee of Hong Kong, China (SF&OC), and are the local governing bodies for the respective sports disciplines.

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Hong Kong Tourism Board, which are held in June or July each year on a course that stretches along the Tsim Sha Tsui East Promenade. More than 3 600 competitors join the races and over 150 000 spectators watch the event.

- **Hong Kong Race Week** – co-organised by the Hong Kong Sailing Federation and the Royal Hong Kong Yacht Club. The event is based at Middle Island in the waters to the south of Hong Kong Island and attracts close to 250 competitors.
- **The Hebe Haven 24-hour Charity Dinghy Race** – organised annually by the Hebe Haven Yacht Club at its base in Sai Kung, which features teams from yacht clubs, schools and the corporate sector and which also includes a land-based fair open to the public.

4. Locations and photos of these events are at **Annex 1**.

New water sports facilities

Short-term: temporary water sports centre at Kai Tak

5. The Hong Kong Water Sports Council (HKWSC)² has applied to the Lands Department (Lands Dept.) for a Short-term Tenancy (STT) on a site at Kai Tak to establish a temporary water sports centre (a location map is at **Annex 2**). The proposed centre may open in late 2015 subject to Lands Dept. approval.

6. Data from Environmental Protection Department (EPD) and Civil Engineering and Development Department (CEDD) water quality monitoring the shows that the waters on both sides

² The HKWSC was formed by the four NSAs for: canoeing, rowing, dragon boating and sailing.

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of the former runway at Kai Tak have areas that are acceptable for “secondary contact” water sports such as rowing and dragon-boating. According to CEDD’s information, there are landing steps in several locations on the waterfront areas in and around Kai Tak that could be used for lowering small boats such as kayaks into the sea, or for embarking onto small sailing vessels.

Longer term: 1) Within the Harbour

7. The Planning Department (Plan Dept.) Urban Design Study for the New Central Harbourfront completed in 2011 proposes that the waterfront extending from the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre towards Tamar should provide landing steps to allow access to water-based sports activities. The master layout plan for the New Central Harbourfront is at **Annex 3**. The Harbour-front sites are expected to be available in phases from 2018 onwards after the completion of the Central-Wan Chai Bypass and the MTRC Sha Tin to Central Link.

8. The Wan Chai Development Phase II – Planning and Engineering Review (WDII Review) 2008 proposes the development of two “character precincts” along the Wan Chai North waterfront. One of these precincts, located at the former Public Cargo Working Area (PCWA) - the “Water Recreation Precinct” - is intended for uses such as a water sports centre. A map showing the location of this precinct is at **Annex 4**. Plan Dept. is currently undertaking the “Urban Design Study for the Wan Chai North and North Point Harbourfront Areas” to review the urban design framework of the WDII Review covering the “character precincts” and the proposed uses of the water space. The study will also formulate comprehensive planning and design briefs for guiding future developments at the Wan Chai North and North Point harbour-front. The study started in January 2015 and is scheduled for completion in mid-2016. The harbour-front sites described in the WDII Review will be available in phases from

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2018 onwards after completion of the reclamation and other works.

9. The location and the shape of the Kai Tak Approach Channel (KTAC) north of the former airport runway make it suitable for the development of a course capable of hosting international regatta events in sports such as rowing, canoeing and dragon-boating. The HKWSC has developed preliminary proposals that would require changing the planned uses of a number of sites currently zoned for “Open Space” and “G/IC” use on the Kai Tak Outline Zoning plan (OZP) to accommodate land-based support facilities for such a venue (the proposed location of the facilities is shown at Annex 2). Although at present there are concerns about the water quality in the channel, the HKWSC held an informal water sports event at the Kwun Tong Typhoon Shelter (KTTS) in late 2014 and concluded that the KTTS, together with KTAC channel would be a viable location for hosting international events in the future as the water quality improves. However, in light of the competing demand for land in Kai Tak for residential and commercial uses, careful consideration of the appropriate scale and location of the proposed water sports facilities is required.

Longer term: 2) Outside the Harbour

10. LCSD is currently at the preliminary stage of planning two new projects that would provide extensive public water sports facilities in locations outside the Harbour. The projects in Area 77, Tseung Kwan O and at Whitehead, Ma On Shan would provide land-based back-up facilities for sports such as canoeing, dragon-boating, windsurfing and sailing.

New water sports events and public activities in the Harbour

11. The Harbour would provide an attractive back-drop for

new water sports events and allow a large number of people to enjoy such events in a prominent and easily accessible location. Use of the Harbour waters for regular sports activities would likely be attractive to local residents and visitors alike. Aside from financial and organisational considerations, the two main constraints on organising large-scale events and allowing regular sports activity in the Harbour waters are water quality and marine traffic. The availability of land-based support facilities and the effect of current and wind conditions on the viability of sports such as sailing and rowing also need to be taken into account.

Water quality

12. The EPD water quality objectives stipulate that for designated bathing beaches the annual geometric mean *E. coli* level should not exceed 180 cfu/100 ml; for “secondary contact” recreation sub-zones in water control zones the level should not exceed 610 cfu/100 ml. After the commissioning of Stage 2A of the Harbour Area Treatment Scheme (HATS)³ in 2015, most of the Harbour will comply with the *E. coli* water quality objective applicable to secondary contact recreation sub-zones. The Kai Tak Office of CEDD has taken measures to improve the local water quality at the KTTS and KTAC, and the water quality in KTTS is now marginally acceptable for “secondary contact” activities.

13. EPD will continue to monitor water quality in the Harbour after Stage 2A of HATS is commissioned. Subject to funding approval from LegCo, EPD will commission a study in 2015 on how to reduce further pollution and odour nuisance caused by the discharge of pollutants into urban coastal waters.

³ HATS collects the sewage from both sides of Victoria Harbour for centralised treatment on Stonecutters Island. Stage 1 of the Scheme treats 75% of the sewage discharged into the Harbour and was fully commissioned in late 2001. Stage 2A of the Scheme will treat the remaining 25% of the sewage discharged into the Harbour.

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Marine traffic

14. The map with at **Annex 5**, developed with input from DEVB, the Marine Department (MD) and other relevant departments in late 2014 shows principal fairways, anchorage areas, and major types of water-dependent land use (transport, port and industrial, municipal and tourism and recreational) in the Harbour. We have selected a total of six potential locations that appear to be outside the principal fairway, and we have consulted MD on their preliminary view of the suitability of the sites for new water sports events. MD have advised that for one-off events, they could assess the feasibility and in particular the safety measures required if detailed information was provided. DEVB have advised that events in waters off Cha Kwo Ling and Yau Tong Bay should not unduly affect the development of the ex-Cha Kwo Ling PCWA area and Yau Tong Bay Comprehensive Development Area.

15. MD further advised that sports events may be organised in the KTTS, as long as they do not compromise the principal function of providing shelter to marine vessels, especially during typhoons. Any vessels involved in events at the typhoon shelter should observe relevant legislation related to issues such as speed limits⁴ and length restrictions on vessels.

16. As for the waterfront areas in West Kowloon, MD notes that the area is a regular fairway for high speed ferries and is not suitable for water sports. The design for the park at the West Kowloon Cultural District, for which construction is due to start in late 2015 does not provide for land-based facilities to support water sports.

⁴ Under Regulation 19(4) of the Shipping and Port Control Regulations (Cap.313A), all vessels underway in the entrance to or within any typhoon shelter shall not exceed the speed of 5 knots unless with the permission of the Director of Marine.

Land-based support facilities

17. Activities held in coastal waters require suitable land-based support facilities. These can be simple access facilities such as landing steps (for swimming and canoeing) and ramps and pontoons (for sailing, rowing and dragon-boating). Other facilities such as changing and shower rooms, storage space and spectator areas considerably increase the scope for the organisation of regular water-based activities. Facilities needed for major events can be installed on a temporary basis so that the space can be used for other purposes during non-event times.

Currents and wind conditions

18. Different types of water sports have specific requirements with regard to current and wind conditions. Some require calm waters whilst others need areas with suitable wind. The NSAs can provide advice on the suitability of particular locations for their respective sports during different times of the year.

Potential new events

19. Despite the constraints identified above, we are aware of interest from NSAs, their affiliated clubs and international water sports organisations in staging new events in the Harbour and outer Hong Kong waters. We have had discussions with sailing organisations about: the possibility of Hong Kong hosting “Extreme Racing” sailing events in the harbour featuring yachts that are especially designed for speed; and the viability of Hong Kong being one of the legs of the next edition of the Volvo Ocean Race, one of the world’s highest profile sailing events.

20. The Hong Kong Amateur Swimming Association would be keen to move the Cross-Harbour Race to a more central location in the Harbour once the water quality has improved,

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which would raise the profile of this event. The Hong Kong Triathlon Association has also expressed interest in organising triathlon events in the Harbour area if a suitable location and complementary land-based courses for the cycling and running elements of the triathlon can be identified.

Conclusion and way forward

21. With further improvements to the water quality in the Harbour, there is scope for hosting more water-related events that will help to support a “water-friendly” culture at the Harbour-front, notably at the locations described in paragraphs 7 to 9 above. Specifically, given that the HKWSC has expressed interest in organising events at proposed new facilities in Kai Tak, and that there are areas on both sides of the former runway where the water quality is acceptable, HAB will liaise with the HKWSC and other NSAs with a view to drawing up proposals for providing temporary facilities and organising events such as harbour kayaking, dragon-boating, rowing and canoeing around Kai Tak.

22. For the longer term, we will review plans for a permanent water sports centre at Kai Tak - with regard to possible competing land uses in Kai Tak - and for facilities at the Central Harbour-front and the Wan Chai North waterfront. Outside the Harbour, LCSD will continue to plan new water sports centres at Tseung Kwan O and Ma On Shan.

Home Affairs Bureau
May 2015

Examples of major water-related sports events with photos extracted from the Internet

(A) Cross-Harbour Swimming Race

Race course:



Photos:





(B) International Dragon Boat Races

Race course:



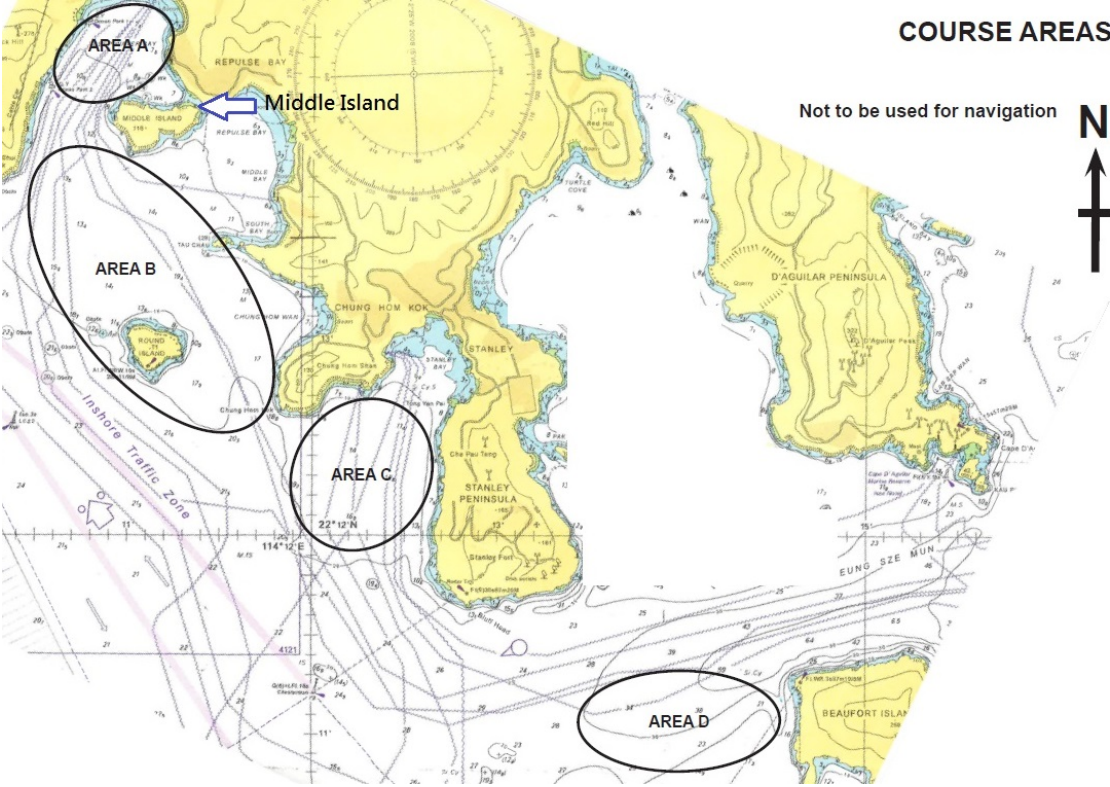
Photos:





(C) Hong Kong Race Week

Race course:



Photos:





(D) The Hebe Haven 24-hour Charity Dinghy Race

Race course:

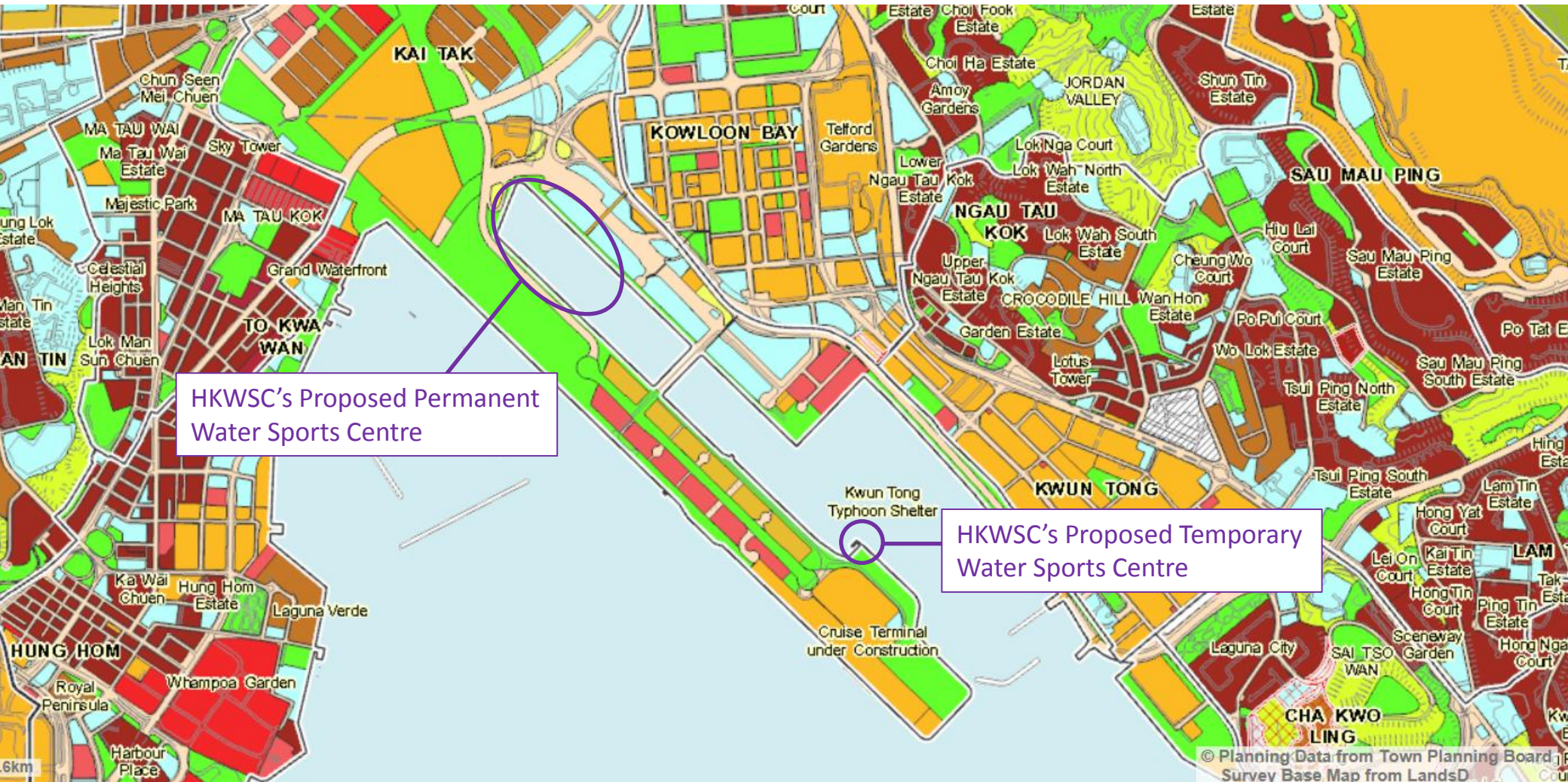


Photos:





Location of HKWSC's Proposed Temporary and Permanent Water Sports Centre, Kai Tak





Legend 圖例
Anchoring Public Spaces along the waterfront, 海濱的錨點公共空間

Leisure and Recreation Facility 消閒及康樂設施

- A1 Board Walk 木棧步行徑
- A2 Ferry Plaza 渡輪廣場
- A3 Statue Square Corridor (with Landscaped Deck and Landscaped Open Space at-grade) 皇后像廣場走廊 (包括園景平台及地面園林休憩用地)
- A4 Clock Tower & Gallery 鐘樓及展覽館
- A5 Entrance Plaza 入口廣場
- A6 Greenbridge 綠橋
- A7 Bicycles Pier 單車碼頭
- A8 Visual / Pedestrian Corridor 景觀/行人走廊
- A9 Water Feature 水景
- A10 Edinburgh Place 愛丁堡廣場
- A11 Harbourfront Place 海濱廣場
- A12 Waterfront-related Commercial and Leisure Uses (Waterfront Plaza, 海濱廣場及休憩用地)
- A13 Cycle Track 單車徑
- A14 Food and Beverage Kiosk 餐飲設施
- A15 Festival Lawn 草草
- A16 Harbourfront Promenade 海濱長廊
- A17 Viewing Platform (Sculpture Garden Theme) 觀景平台 (雕塑花園主題)
- A18 Waterfront Event Plaza 海濱廣場
- A19 Green Carpet 草草
- A21 Marine Place 海濱廣場 (與海濱有關之商業及休憩用地)
- A22 Las Rambles 林蔭步行徑
- A23 Public Plaza 公眾廣場
- A24 Public Plaza 公眾廣場
- A25 Marine Place Boardwalk 海濱廣場步行徑

Commercial Facility 商業設施

- C1 Retail / Cafe / Afternoon Dining over the Pier 碼頭上之零售商店/茶館/下午茶飲設施
- C2 Retail / Exhibition / Gallery 零售商店及展覽/畫廊
- C3 Office with Retail below 辦公室及附屬零售設施
- C4 Office with Retail below 辦公室及附屬零售設施
- C5 Landscaped Podium with Retail below 園景平台及附屬零售商店
- C6 Retail 零售商店
- C7 Office 辦公室大樓
- C8 Hotel 酒店

Public Facility 公共設施

- B1 Elevated Walkway 高架步行徑
- B2 CWB Ventilation Building 中環灣仔繞道通風大樓
- B3 Landscaped Deck 園景平台
- B4 Electricity Supply Station (below elevated walkway) 電力供應站 (於高架步行徑之下)
- B5 Environmentally Friendly Transport Reserve 環保交通上落客貨空間
- B6 Greenbridge 綠橋
- B7 PLA Bench 散放單車碼頭
- B8 Ventilation Shaft 通風塔
- B9 Military Access 軍用通道
- B10 Electricity Supply Station 電力供應站
- B11 Landscaped Podium 園景平台
- B12 Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts Extension 香港演藝學院擴建中心
- B13 Hong Kong Visual Arts Education Centre 香港視覺藝術教育中心
- B14 Landscaped Deck to HKCEC West 通往香港會議展覽中心西面的園景平台

Project Title: Urban Design Study for the New Central Harbourfront

Figure Title: Master Layout Plan

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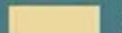

Date: Feb 2011

Scale: [Blank]

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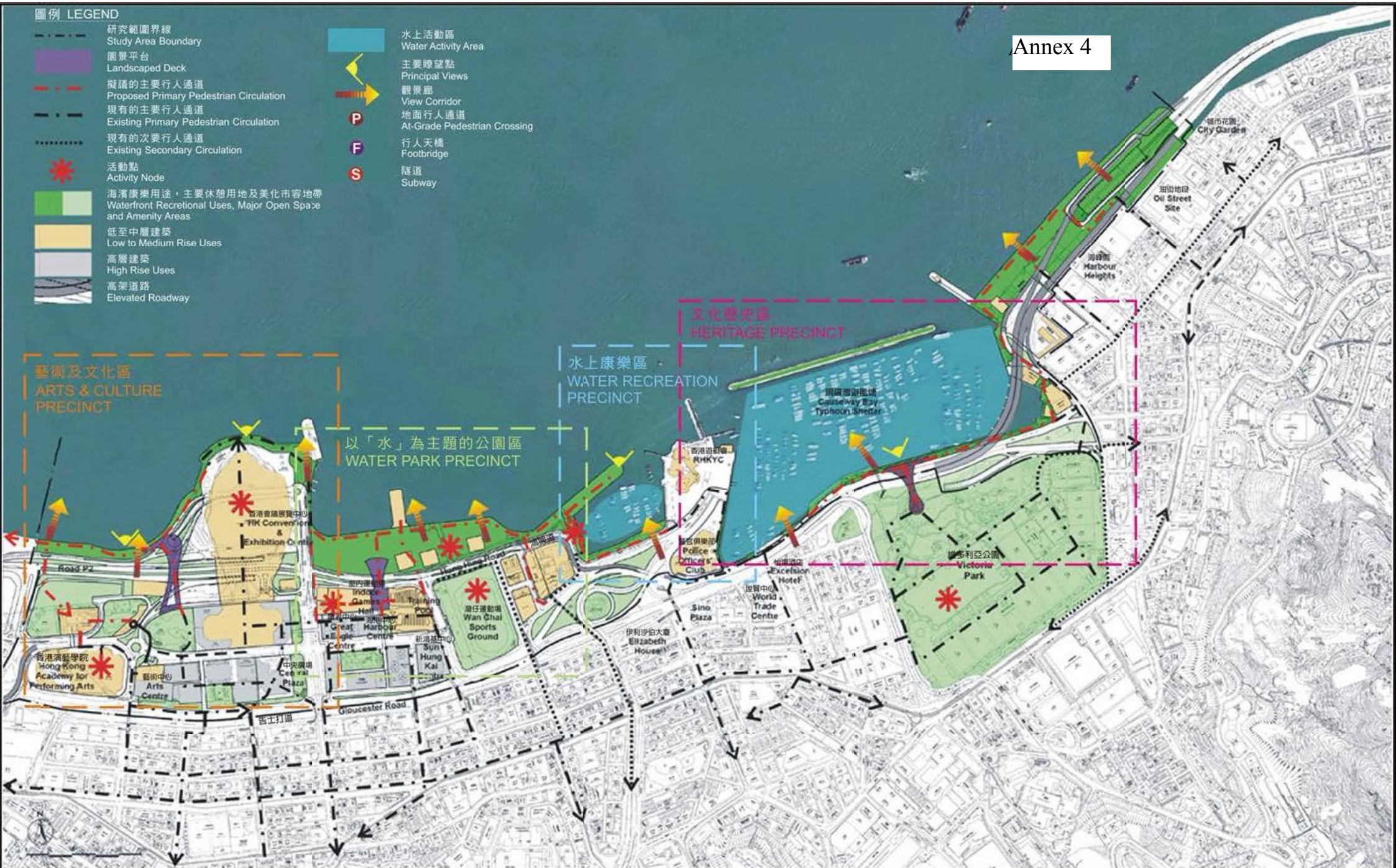
PLANNING DEPARTMENT

圖例 LEGEND

-  研究範圍界線
Study Area Boundary
-  園景平台
Landscaped Deck
-  擬議的主要行人通道
Proposed Primary Pedestrian Circulation
-  現有的主要行人通道
Existing Primary Pedestrian Circulation
-  現有的次要行人通道
Existing Secondary Circulation
-  活動點
Activity Node
-  海濱康樂用途，主要休憩用地及美化市容地帶
Waterfront Recreational Uses, Major Open Space and Amenity Areas
-  低至中層建築
Low to Medium Rise Uses
-  高層建築
High Rise Uses
-  高架道路
Elevated Roadway

-  水上活動區
Water Activity Area
-  主要瞭望點
Principal Views
-  觀景廊
View Corridor
-  地面行人通道
At-Grade Pedestrian Crossing
-  行人天橋
Footbridge
-  隧道
Subway

Annex 4



Wan Chai Development Phase II Planning and Engineering Review
Character Precincts and Urban Design Plan

