

**Task Force on Water-land Interface**  
**Thirteenth Meeting**

Date : 2 June 2016 (Thursday)  
Time : 9:30 a.m.  
Venue : 15/F Conference Room, North Point Government Offices,  
333 Java Road, North Point

Minutes of Thirteenth Meeting

Present

Mr LEUNG Kong-yui Chairman

Organization Members

Mrs Margaret BROOKE	Representing Business Environment Council
Mr SO Kwok-yin	Representing Conservancy Association
Mrs Karen BARRETTO	Representing Friends of the Earth
Mr Freddie HAI	Representing Hong Kong Institute of Architects
Prof TANG Bo-sin	Representing Hong Kong Institute of Planners
Sr Lesly LAM	Representing Hong Kong Institute of Surveyors
Mr TAM Po-yiu	Representing Hong Kong Institute of Urban Design
Ir Prof CHOY Kin-kuen	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

Individual Member

Ms Lily CHOW	Individual Member
Mr Hans Joachim ISLER	Individual Member
Captain CHEUNG Tai-kee	Co-opted Member
Mr Bondy WEN	Co-opted Member
Mr WONG Yiu-kan	Co-opted Member

Official Members

Mr Thomas CHAN	Deputy Secretary (Planning and Lands)1, Development Bureau (DEVB)
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Mr Edward LEUNG	Senior Manager (Tourism) <sup>2</sup> , Tourism Commission (TC)
Mr LEE Man-ho	Chief Transport Officer/Housing Project, Transport Department (TD)
Ms YING Fun-fong	Head (Kai Tak Office), Civil Engineering and Development Department (CEDD)
Mr CHEUNG Koon-lam	Chief Leisure Manager (Management), Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD)
Mr Michael CHAU	General Manager/Planning, Development & Port Security, Marine Department (MD)
Ms Amy CHEUNG	Assistant Director of Planning/Territorial, Planning Department (PlanD)
Miss Ingrid TJENDRO	Secretary

*In attendance*

Mr Nicholas BROOKE	HC Chair
Miss Christine AU	Principal Assistant Secretary (Harbour), DEVB
Mr Larry CHU	Assistant Secretary (Harbour) <sup>1</sup> , DEVB
Miss Emily SOM	Assistant Secretary (Harbour) <sup>2</sup> (Des.), DEVB

*Absent with Apologies*

Mr Vincent NG	Individual Member
Mr KAN Chak-fan	Individual Member
Mr Karl KWOK Chi-leung	Co-opted Member
Mr Evans IU	Representing Hong Kong Institute of Landscape Architects

*For Agenda Item 3*

Miss Christine AU	Principal Assistant Secretary (Harbour), DEVB
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**The Chair** welcomed all attending the meeting. He announced that **Ms Rebecca LOU Wai-yi** (in absentia) had taken over from Mr Donal CHOY as Assistant Director (Leisure Services) 3 of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD). He thanked Mr CHOY for his contribution to the Task Force.

He informed Members that **Mr CHEUNG Koon-lam**, Chief Leisure Manager (Management) of LCSD attended on behalf of Ms Rebecca LOU. **Mr LEE Man-ho**, Chief Transport Officer/Housing Project of Transport Department (TD) attended on behalf of Ms Stella LEE. **Mr Edward LEUNG**, Senior Manager (Tourism) 2 of Tourism Commission (TC) attended on behalf of Ms Emily MO. **Mr Michael CHAU**, General Manager/Planning, Development & Port Security of Marine Department (MD), attended on behalf of Mr CHEUK Fan-lun.

**Item 1 Confirmation of the Minutes of the Last Meeting**

1.1 The draft minutes of the 12<sup>th</sup> Task Force on Water-land Interface (TFWL) meeting were circulated to Members for comments on 26 May 2016. The revised draft minutes with Members' comments incorporated were circulated again on 31 May 2016.

1.2 There being no further comments received from Members, the draft minutes were confirmed.

**Item 2 Matters Arising**

2.1 **The Chair** said that MD presented the "Review on Public Cargo Working Areas - Findings and Recommendations" at the last Task Force meeting. He asked Members whether there were follow-up issues arising from the last meeting. Members raised no follow-up issues.

**Item 3 An Overview on railing Design along Victoria Harbour  
(Paper No. TFWL/02/2016)**

3.1 **The Chair** informed Members that the Secretariat had conducted a stock-taking exercise of the existing railing design along the harbourfront in response to Members' interests on the subject as expressed in past discussions. Paper No. TFWL/02/2016 presented the result of the exercise, which sought to give Members an overview. He welcomed **Miss Christine AU**, Principal Assistant Secretary (Harbour) of Development Bureau (DEVB) to the meeting.

3.2 **Mr Freddie HAI** declared that he had been involved in the Tsuen Wan West Station (TW5) project 10 years ago. **The Chair** viewed that would not present a conflict of interest.

3.3 **Miss Christine AU** presented the paper with the aid of a PowerPoint. **Mr Paul ZIMMERMAN** also shared his views on the topic with the aid of a PowerPoint.

3.4 **Mr Paul ZIMMERMAN** suggested that the discussion should focus on the relation between railings and the functions of the waterfront. He opined that mooring facilities should be made available at promenades and seawalls. Bollards at the Kwun Tong promenade had been preserved but the glass panels installed by LCSD had stopped boats from making use of the facility. He raised similar concerns over the Tsing Yi promenade.

3.5 He doubted the technical feasibility of the proposed water facilities for Wan Chai and Kai Tak development, such as floating swimming pools and those for, without the installation of bollards necessary for mooring these facilities included in the development plans of the areas.

3.6 He raised the following water-land interface aspects to facilitate Members' further discussion:

- (a) water-land interface function along the waterfront, especially in regard to where marine access will be allowed;
- (b) ownership and management of the seawalls at Yau Mai Tei,

Yau Tong Bay, and the future development of Wanchai and Kai Tak;

- (c) existing and potential locations of marine access;
- (d) fishing opportunity and visual permeability along the waterfront; and
- (e) function of railings, whether sitting on railings should be allowed and encouraged by railing design.

3.7 **The Chair** thanked Mr ZIMMERMAN for his comments on the relationship between railings and adjoining activities, as well as the berthing needs of vessels. He shared his view that sitting should not be considered as the primary function of railings.

3.8 **Captain CHEUNG** agreed with Mr ZIMMERMAN's views and welcomed the discussion on railing design. However, he noted that the examples cited in Mr ZIMMERMAN's presentation were mainly promenades adjacent to sheltered water, where wind and wave conditions were very different from those along the Victoria Harbour. Requirements on railing design would vary in the two different cases. Concurring with the Chair, he said that the prime function of railings was for safety, that is, the protection of people from falling into the water. The railings in Sai Wan, for instance, were not designed for seating. Such use could only be considered as an unintentional one resulting from the design concerned. He supplemented that factors such as the amount of land recess along the waterfront, the sustainability of seawalls and the aesthetics of railings should also be taken into consideration during the design process.

3.9 **Mrs Karen BARRETTO** agreed with Mr. Zimmerman's observations. She asked if there were figures or reports on people and pets falling into the Victoria Harbour by accident.

3.10 **Mr TAM Po-yiu** welcomed an overall review on the design and functionality of railing and water-land interface facilities and commented that the demand for, quantity as well as location of railing should be scientifically analyzed. He suggested the Government to strike a balance between uniformity and variety and make reference to different local characteristics and geographical concerns before approaching each railing design. He also agreed with Mr.

Zimmerman's view that it would be necessary to clarify the management responsibility of these facilities.

3.11 **Mrs Margaret BROOKE** commented that the Task Force should put forward proper and sensibly safe water-land accesses at suitable locations around the Harbour. She echoed Mr ZIMMERMAN's views that marine access should be provided, wherever it is safe. Whilst safety was of paramount importance, it should not be the only overriding concern. She also urged the Government to review and deliver a set of principles on railings that could lead to a more attractive, visually permeable and accessible harbourfront.

3.12 **Prof CHOY Kin-kuen** commented that there were no specific guidelines governing the design of railing along public waterfront promenades per se. Regulation 8 of the Building (Construction) Regulations (Cap 123B) could only serve as a reference in railing design and choices of materials. He also pointed out that wind conditions and crowd load were also important factors in railing design.

3.13 **Mr Freddie HAI** agreed with Members' views and raised the following points:

- (a) to clarify regarding the safety of barriers, the existing building (construction) regulations took into account the impact of human-induced crowd loads, but not the loading derived from wave and wind. Hence, if the barriers fell onto private land the lot owner would need to comply with the building (construction) regulations whereas those barriers falling onto government land might not be subject to such limitation. This might explain why the visual appearance of the barriers could vary a lot in different areas;
- (b) there was a fundamental conflict between building protective barriers to prevent people from falling into the water and the promulgation of a water-friendly culture;
- (c) the fact that people has managed to sit on railings not designed for sitting and resting is not a design error, but a matter of human nature that the design should have taken into consideration of such desire;
- (d) Kwun Tong promenade could serve as a case to verify the

durability of glass panels or balusters under severe weather conditions. He believed that durable glass panels could create a more diverse and permeable waterfront; and

- (e) to balance the need for visual consistency and district variety, a set of railing design principles should be laid down to prevent over-fragmentation within short distance, especially for promenades that are shorter than a certain length, for example, 250 meters.

3.14 **Mr Nicholas BROOKE** agreed with Mr. ZIMMERMAN's view that a more integrated approach to seawall and promenade design and clarity in relation to the responsibility for management and ownership of these water-land interfacing facilities would be desirable. He suggested the Government to analyze and explore a no-railing scenario and carefully consider launching a pilot scheme (under controlled conditions) at a suitable location along the waterfront.

3.15 **Prof TANG Bo-sin** supported Mr HAI's views and said that railings should reflect local characteristics and fulfill community needs. Safety, maintenance as well as conditions for wear and tear etc. should all play a part in determining the design of railing and location of marine accesses.

3.16 **Mr Shuki LEUNG** opined that Members' views contributed to a comprehensive consideration of the various aspects of waterfront and railing design. He tabulated the following factors as points of contention:

- (a) the question for the need of railing along waterfront;
- (b) variation or uniformity on railing design and material used;
- (c) the conflict between railings as protective barriers and the aspiration to promote water-friendly culture and allowing marine access;
- (d) marine operation or recreational function of the waterfront;
- (e) the relationship between waterfront and its adjoining land uses and the provision of relevant supporting facilities in terms of transportation;
- (f) the responsibility regarding the management of seawall and waterfront; and

- (g) the possibility of having diversified activities along the waterfront to facilitate unique experience of the general public.

3.17 **Mr Ken SO** welcomed diversified railings that carried local characteristics. He suggested incorporating Principle 4 “Integrated Planning” and Principle 7 “Accessible Harbour” of the Harbour Planning Principles into relevant harbourfront enhancement projects in the future.

3.18 From the operators’ perspective, **Mr WONG Yiu-kan** said that marine traffic and operations within and along the Harbour, e.g. near Heng Fa Cheun and Hoi Fai Road promenade, would directly affect the railing design requirements. He commented that while safety measures could be more relaxed for sheltered locations, high safety requirements should be set for more exposed areas. He supplemented that three unused berths (about 200m in length) at the Western District Public Cargo Working Area (PCWA) were proposed to be released for public enjoyment but no railings had been erected prior to the hand over. A ‘no railing’ approach or scheme should be carefully considered before possible implementation.

3.19 **Mr Hans Joachim ISLER** shared Members’ views and said that functionality should be a primary concern in railing design. A good balance between functionality, safety and aesthetics on railing design would be important. He opined that the Western District PCWA could be a possible location to test the no railing approach suggested by Mr BROOKE. He concurred with Members that the ownership and management responsibilities of seawalls should be looked into. To make the harbour more pleasant and safe for the public, he suggested making wave attenuation seawalls a mandatory requirement in all future Government projects.

3.20 **Miss Christine AU** thanked Members for their extensive comments and responded as follows:

- (a) there was no intent to prescribe one set of standard on railing design. Members views at the meeting would be collected for the enhancement of the design of railing at future promenade projects;



- (b) Members' desire for a variation of railing design was noted. The Harbour Unit would endeavor to coordinate with agencies of different projects to ensure a balance is struck between uniformity and variety in railing design;
- (c) it was affirmative that an integrated approach should be adopted to look at water-land interface issues. There were more than 50 locations with landing facilities along both sides of the Harbour. Throughout the process, the Government has taken into account the types of seawalls and the availability of water-land interface facilities;
- (d) not all locations along the Victoria Harbour would be suitable for erecting landing steps for marine access;
- (e) the railing design is also affected by the design of the seawall;
- (f) the Kwun Tong promenade was completed in 2015 and the condition of the glass panels/balusters were considered satisfactory. While the Government could look into the feasibility of opening some bollards for public use, members should note that there were no landing facilities along the Kwun Tong promenade and opening the promenade for water access would entail more thoughts and significant related works;
- (g) in response to Mr BROOKE's proposal of 'no railing' approach, the Government applied such concept in the Urban Design Study for the Wan Chai North and North Point Harbourfront Areas. In the study, the Government proposed having harbour steps instead of railings at the Ex-Wan Chai Public Cargo Working Area (ex-PCWA); and
- (h) the community's aspiration for more protective and safe barriers along the waterfront was noted. The Government would try to engage the public before the implementation of future railing projects.

3.21 **The Chair** reiterated that it was not the intention of the meeting to devise a standardized railing design. He advised the Secretariat to prepare some general principles for railing design to facilitate Members' further discussion of future waterfront projects in geographic Task Force meetings.

3.22 **Mr Paul ZIMMERMAN** urged for agreement and actions on a proposed way forward. He suggested reviewing and indicating suitable locations for railing setback, bollards and berthing facilities along the 73km waterfront. He noted there were over 50 landing steps along the Harbour but they mainly served to embark and disembark passengers and that the mooring of vessels at landing steps is prohibited. Mooring of boats would require the provision of bollards along seawalls, the presence of which could allow greater flexibility for a wider range of activities to take place along the waterfront.

3.23 **The Chair** advised that Mr ZIMMERMAN's concerns were noted. He summarized that local conditions, land ownership, visual permeability, water access and a range of other factors would affect the design of railing and the potential of a 'no railing' approach. He commented that the government should have considered these factors in the planning of waterfront areas and railing design. Regarding the availability of berthing spaces in Hong Kong, he opined that this should be discussed in a separate meeting in collaboration with the Marine Department (MD).

3.24 **Mr Freddie HAI** noted that Members supported Mr ZIMMERMAN's views in principle. He opined that a summary of principles for railing design as mentioned by the Chair would facilitate a follow-up discussion in future meetings.

3.25 **The Chair** clarified that railing design should be aimed at facilitating the usage of waterfront by the community. Thus, the question of railings and access should be left for discussion by geographic Task Force meetings.

3.26 **Mr Paul ZIMMERMAN** argued that the committee had the role to identify suitable locations of railing setback and mooring facilities and define clear management and ownership of seawalls. It was not desirable to leave it to other parties.

3.27 **The Chair** disagreed. He responded that berthing need might be important for some stakeholders, but interests of other stakeholders should also be taken into consideration. It would be imprudent for the government to build such berthing facilities without

explicit expression of community demand.

3.28 **Mr Paul ZIMMERMAN** said that planning of waterfront required imagination, and this was the responsibility of the Harbourfront Commission.

3.29 **The Chair** advised that Members' comments would be recorded.

#### **Item 4 Any Other Business**

4.1 **Mr Nicholas BROOKE** suggested inviting relevant departments, such as LCSD and MD, which are involved in the design and management of waterfront to future meeting for a discussion in relation to an integrated approach on water-land interface issues. **The Chair** agreed.

#### Date of Next Meeting

4.2 **The Chair** invited Members to give views and suggestions on specific water-land interface issues for discussion at the next meeting.

4.3 **The Chair** announced that **Miss Emily SOM** would take over from Miss Ingrid TJENDRO as Secretary of the Task Force with effect from 6 June 2016. He thanked Miss TJENDRO for her past contributions to the work of the Task Force.

4.4 **The Chair** informed Members that the next meeting would be scheduled in co-ordination with meetings of the Harbourfront Commission and other Task Forces. The Secretariat would inform Members of the meeting date in due course.

4.5 There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:45 a.m.

#### **Secretariat**

**Task Force on Water-land Interface  
June 2016**