

Harbourfront Commission

For discussion
on 7 September 2011

HC/16/2011

Progress Report from Task Force on Harbourfront Developments on Hong Kong Island

REPORTING PERIOD

This progress report covers the period from July to September 2011.

MEETING(S) HELD AND THE MAJOR OUTCOME, FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Seventh Meeting – 30 August 2011

2. The Task Force discussed the following issues/items -

(a) Hong Kong Island East Harbour-front Study

- The Planning Department and its consultant briefed the Task Force on the recommended enhancement proposals formulated under the Hong Kong Island East Harbour-front Study.
- Members were supportive of the proposals, and suggested that there was scope for further refinement of the proposals in some areas, such as, the connectivity between the proposed lookout point of the Sky Trail and Heng Fa Chuen.
- The Task Force considered that priority should be given to the proposed streetscape enhancement works, the

boardwalk under the Island Eastern Corridor as well as the Sky Trail, and suggested that the relevant Government bureaux and departments should commence preparation work with a view to taking forward the proposals as soon as practicable.

(b) Proposal for the Construction of Additional Floors above Central Piers Nos. 4 to 6

- Civil Engineering and Development Department (CEDD) and its consultant briefed the Task Force on the public views collected in Stage 1 Public Engagement for the construction of additional floors above Central Piers Nos. 4 to 6 and the proposed design of the piers.
- Members in general commented that there should be a holistic planning of the area and the design of these piers should be in harmony with the other piers and the future developments at Sites 1 and 2. Some Members also raised concerns in relation to the management of the piers; connectivity and accessibility of the piers; as well as parking facilities and loading / unloading areas.
- Noting that CEDD would carry out a commercial feasibility study to ascertain marketing positioning and reaffirm optimal trade mix in the piers, a few Members suggested that CEDD establish the business case for the additional facilities in the three piers, and explore the option of enhancing both the business case as well as vibrancy of the harbourfront by constructing more than one and a half floors above the piers. Some Members were of the view that the design of the piers should be supported by the study result.
- The Meeting asked CEDD to review the proposals in light

of Members' comments and revert to the Task Force with the outcome of its study.

(c) Proposal for Accommodating Dining Services in the New Wan Chai Ferry Pier

- CEDD and Transport Department (TD) briefed the Task Force on the proposal for accommodating dining services in the new Wan Chai ferry Pier being constructed under the Wan Chai Development Phase II.
- Members in general supported the proposal for accommodating dining services in the pier. Members suggested and CEDD agreed to consider adopting a simple and neutral design for the proposed transformer room with greening features added on its façade.
- Some Members also said that there was a need to kick start the detailed planning of the Wan Chai reclamation area, having regard to the result of the “Harbour-front Enhancement Review (“HER”) – Wan Chai, Causeway Bay and Adjoining Areas” Study.

(d) A Proposal to Erect an Observation Wheel at the Central Harbourfront

- Representative of the Hall Organisation Ltd. briefed the Task Force on the proposal.
- The majority of Members were supportive of the proposal. Some Members were of the view that the proposal had its tourism value and suggested that educational elements (e.g. history of Victoria Harbour and development of the harbourfront) might be added as appropriate.

- The Task Force supported the proposal. While some Members opined that the proponent should consider placing the giant observation wheel at other suitable harbourfront sites (e.g. West Kowloon Cultural District), other Members thought that the Central site was a suitable location. Noting that the choice of location would be after all a business decision of the proponent, Members understood that the Government departments would play a facilitating role in processing the short term tenancy in Central submitted by the proponent.

(e) Connectivity at Central and Wanchai Harbourfront

- TD presented an overview of the existing pedestrian connectivity at Central and Wanchai harbourfront. Members requested TD to provide a briefing on its future plan to improve the existing pedestrian network at a later meeting.

(f) Consultant's Preliminary Analysis – the Market Sounding Exercise for the Development of Sites 4 and 7 at the New Central Harbourfront

- GHK (Hong Kong) Ltd, the consultant appointed by the Development Bureau to undertake the business viability study of developing Site 4 and potentially Site 7 via public-private collaboration (PPC), briefed the Task Force on the preliminary assessment of the Market Sounding Exercise. Its presentation covered the feedback from the respondents, the success factors and constraints of the project, and various possible options in developing the two sites.
- Members noted that the analysis was only on a preliminary basis and the consultant would need to

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provide further details in order that the Task Force could evaluate the alternative approaches, and their pros and cons. The Task Force asked the consultant to report back as soon as practicable. Members agreed to have a more in-depth discussion on the PPC model, and to hold extra meetings as necessary.

(g) Draft Checklist for Submissions on Advertisement / Signboard at Harbourfront Area

- The Task Force endorsed the draft checklist for submissions on advertisement/signboard at harbourfront area (**Annex**) and agreed that the draft should be submitted to the Harbourfront Commission for endorsement before applying to all three Task Forces.

Secretariat

**Task Force on Harbourfront Developments on Hong Kong Island
September 2011**

CHECKLIST FOR SUBMISSIONS ON ADVERTISEMENT/SIGNBOARD AT HARBOURFRONT AREA

(Draft)

Introduction

Signage is, in one form or another, something that we could say is expressive of Hong Kong's urban character. It comes, both literally and figuratively in all shapes and sizes, but we need to be clear on the context. What works to make a shopping street environment visually exciting and vibrant in Mong Kok with its mix of huge billboard, electronic signage and screens would not be appropriate in say the Statue Square area, where billboards simply make the area shabby and dislocative. The array of lighted buildings and incidental signs that give the harbour area its night-time magic and attraction, can in some cases exert a downside during daytime hours when buildings covered with large signs, together with massive signs associated with harbourfront areas, establish no visual benefit whatsoever. Similarly signage that might be attractive and have a positive impact in a wider harbour situation, might cause some degree of negative impact to certain Visually Sensitive Receivers (VSRs), for example when there is a large amount of glare in close proximity to sensitive receivers, or where signage in a prominent harbourfront situation would stand out in an isolated and intrusive way.

2. It is proposed that the Harbourfront Commission and its Task Forces should have a checklist of factors and considerations that should be taken into account when reviewing proposals of this nature. Most importantly, the submission will be assessed in the context of and against the backcloth of the Harbour Planning Guidelines and Principles. The checklist is to encourage consistency on the submission format/requirement before being brought forward to the Task Forces for discussion and would ensure common ground between the Task Forces in considering the various proposals. It is indeed a recommendation to proponents when submitting proposals and not a guideline nor rule of thumbs for processing the proposals.

Recommended Checklist

3. It is recommended that any advertisement/signboard that has visual impact to the harbourfront should be submitted. Proponents who wish to erect signage on existing buildings should provide the following as far as possible when submitting their proposal.

An Assessment of Visual Impact

4. This should involve the following:

- (a) identification of the Zone of Visual Influence (ZVI) around the harbour to illustrate the visibility of the sign from prominent locations and from the harbour itself;
- (b) location (at roof level or attached to façade);
- (c) a breakdown of Signage Size;
- (d) material (illuminated or non-illuminated);
- (e) height in metres above Principal Datum (mPD), and if located on roof, the overall height above building parapet;
- (f) means of structural attachment; and
- (g) elevations (from four sides).

Identification of Potential Sources of Visual Impacts (SVI)

5. These represent the various elements of the signage that would generate visual impacts. It should be noted that this need not be a negative impact, but the latter is something to be assessed by the Task Force.

Identification of Visually Sensitive Receivers (VSRs) within the ZVI

6. These represent those people or groups who would view the sign during daytime and/or in different evening conditions, either through residence, work, travel or recreation.

7. Assessment of the degree of sensitivity of the VSRs factors should include:

- (a) whether VSRs are in a static situation (e.g. residents and office workers) or active (e.g. travellers and visitors);
- (b) the visual context of the source of impact (e.g. whether the existing view quality takes in a wide view shed embracing other signs, or whether this is an isolated situation e.g. on a pier);
- (c) the duration of the impact, the distance of the source of impact from the viewer, the degree of visibility of the impact, the scale of the impact, the permanent or temporary nature of the impact, the level of illumination (if relevant), and the degree to which the impact dominates the field of vision and/or blocks views; and
- (d) broad consideration of the relative numbers of VSRs potentially negatively affected.

8. Proponents should also note the format required in relation to the presentation of findings, which have been set out below –

- (a) findings should be presented in English (only) and in a streamlined manner so as not to appear overly complex;
- (b) demonstration should be made that the signage would not affect the view to the ridgelines should be maintained when viewed from the key public viewing points, the proponents

- may refer too the relevant information on the Planning Department's website;
- (c) colour photographs and illustrative materials supporting conclusions should be provided and the locations of all viewpoints should be clearly mapped;
 - (d) site plan should be provided (if possible, the plan should be presented in scale of 1:1000);
 - (e) elevations of signage on building in scale commensurate with the scale of the project (from four sides) should be provided (if possible, the elevations should be presented in scale of 1:500);
 - (f) cross sections with surrounding buildings in scale commensurate with the scale of the project should be provided (if possible, the sections should be presented in scale of 1:500);
 - (g) all potential impacts should be clearly mapped in colour and illustrated with clear annotation and cross-referencing between text and illustrations;
 - (h) photomontages can be used to provide comparison between existing views and proposals (also night time if possible); and
 - (i) proposed measures, if any, to minimise light pollution should be clearly set out.

Background Reading

- (a) Harbour Planning Principles
- (b) Harbour Planning Guidelines for Victoria Harbour and its Harbourfront Areas

Notes:

- i. In a usual visual impact assessment it is normal to identify potential visual mitigation measures, and prediction of impacts after their implementation.
- ii. It should be emphasised that the Commission is not actively attempting to prevent the use of signage, but to most easily assess its impact on the Harbour and to Sensitive Receivers.