



THE HONG KONG INSTITUTE OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS

香 港 園 境 師 學 會

Our ref: 20141224001

24 December 2014

By Email

Secretariat

Harbourfront Commission

17/F, West Wing, Central Government Offices,

2 Tim Mei Avenue, Tamar

Dear Sir/ Madam,

**Re: Phase II Public Engagement on the  
Proposed Establishment of a Harbourfront Authority**

We are writing in response to the captioned public engagement exercise. We support the establishment of a Harbourfront Authority (HFA) and in particular we have the following views and opinions:

1. We support the proposed HFA to be an independent body carrying the three main functions as set out in the consultation digest. We opine it is of vital importance that the future HFA taking up the management and operation of the sites on top of their planning, design, and implementation.
2. We agree with the key objectives of the proposed HFA set out in the consultation digest. On top we also stress the importance of –
  - a) Environmental and ecological considerations in the planning and design process, e.g. coastal restoration or enhancement of the coastline to certain areas.
  - b) Social and cultural factors. Apart from being attractive, vibrant, green, and accessible, the future HFA should also envision creating or reinforcing character of the place and facilitate social equity, e.g. providing inclusive and diverse types of facilities for the neighbourhoods.

3. Regarding definition of “Victoria Harbourfront”, in general we agree with the adoption of the current definition under the General Clauses Ordinance (Cap. 1). However, for the holistic planning and consideration by the future HFA in the long run, the advisory and advocacy function of the proposed HFA should be extended to beyond the current boundaries; it should also be allowed flexibility to liaise with the government on allocation of land beyond the area between the shoreline and the first main road/ segregator given the necessity for a holistic planning and implementation as justified by the future HFA.
4. In terms of the board composition, while agreeing that it should have broad-based representation, we also share the view that the size of the board should be limited and should comprise of members recommended by the major related professional bodies including the Hong Kong Institute of Landscape Architects to ensure its efficient operation, independence, upholding of its visions, and reflection of public aspiration.
5. For the development and management of the sites, we recommend engagement of landscape professionals for the hard and soft landscape elements both in the design and planning stage and also in their implementation, management and operation; which is currently lacking in the government-led projects.
6. While we understand the initial allocation of land to the proposed HFA should be relatively modest due to the practical and financial considerations, the currently identified sites for allocation are quite limited and only within Hong Kong Island and Kowloon East. It is worth looking into areas in Kowloon West such as the waterfront area in the immediate north of the West Kowloon Cultural District (WKCD), leveraging on the potential increase in population and visitors resulting from WKCD developments, Express Rail Link West Kowloon Terminus development, and a number of new developments near Hoi Wang Road.
7. We support the proposal that waterfront parks or open spaces currently managed by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department be also potential sites for HFA to take up. We also support and recommend the future HFA should proactively conduct studies and preliminary proposals on the identification of these potential sites.

8. In terms of financial arrangement, we support the capital injection and in-kind support by the Government at nominal or reduced land premium. We also recommend future HFA to consider collaboration with private sector, social enterprises, NGOs, education institutes, and any other potential stakeholders on both the developments and their management, in order to reduce financial burden and risks on the recurrent expenditures as well as the development cost.
9. We support the future HFA be allowed to carry out minor capital works within a pre-established level of delegated authority by the LegCo and the Government.
10. We agree in principle that the executive arm of the future HFA be supported mainly by experienced civil servants from relevant disciplines in the initial stage, and later to build up its own independent executive team, which we consider is important to the its independence, efficiency, and effectiveness. We hope the Harbourfront Commission and the Government could come up with a time-frame or road-map on such transition. In any case we stress the importance of having a strong team of professionals in related disciplines within the executive arm in order to achieve the key objectives of the future HFA.

We appreciate the great effort by the Harbourfront Commission and the Government on putting forward this visionary proposal and organizing the public engagement exercises. We look forward to seeing its realization.

Yours Sincerely,



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Tak WONG

President

Hong Kong Institute of Landscape Architects