

25th November 2005

Chairman and Members of the
HEC Sub-committee on Wan Chai Development Phase II Review
c/o Bosco Chan,
13/F North Point Government Offices,
333 Java Road,
North Point, Hong Kong.

Email: bpchan@cedd.gov.hk

Re: Harbour-front Enhancement Review Consolidation Forum

Dear Mr Leung and Members,

Harbour Business Forum (HBF) has the following comments on the Consolidation Forum of the HER Envisioning Stage for Wan Chai, Causeway Bay and adjoining areas for your consideration:

- i. HBF welcomes the Harbour-front Enhancement Review (HER) for Wan Chai, Causeway Bay and adjoining areas. We are encouraged to see the expression of the community's visions and views for our harbour-front.
- ii. We would like to remind the committee that the need for this HER is largely due to a need to reverse past traffic and engineering lead planning that has left our harbour-front in its current state. There is also a lack of long-term vision for the design of Hong Kong's harbour and harbour-front districts. We need a responsive planning process and innovative solutions to rectify and to prevent a repeat of these past mistakes.
- iii. Transport and engineering has been given a disproportionate weighting in Government's planning and decision making processes; transport and engineering planning should be lead by land use planning. We need to stop approaching this as a road building project and remember it is a harbour enhancement project.
- iv. The harbour and the harbour-front belong to the public and the public's aspirations need to take priority. Government departments need to embrace these visions and goals for the harbour and only involve consultants with the same attitudes. Government also needs to ensure economic value as well as the long term social and environmental values are given equal weightings in any decision making process and that cost is not the major criteria.
- v. HBF would like to see this HER as a first step in the adoption of a holistic planning process. All professionals involved should be using their expertise to identify and deliver these goals. Government should be aiming for the best urban design, encouraging proactive and cross discipline collaborations and rediscovering engineering as a problem solving tool rather than a prevention tool of good visions.

For example one task is to reduce and relocate incompatible waterfront uses, in the spirit of Harbour Planning Principles (HPP) 5 (Maximizing Harbour-front for Public Enjoyment), such as the electricity substation and the sewage treatment plant so that the tunnel alignment is better and minimising necessary reclamation. By dismissing the possibility of relocation off hand without apparent thorough investigation is neither responsible nor in tune with the aims of the project.

- vi. We believe the five key 'consolidated opinions' 《合理意見》 are good suggestions and they follow the HPP. We believe however the 'progression' from outline concept plan 'consolidation opinions 1' 《整合意見一》 to 'consolidation opinions 3' 《整合意見三》 show a regression of ideas and progressively fail to satisfy the five key consolidated opinions (most

notably the heavily popular 'extend Victoria Park to the waterfront') and, by inference, the HPP. The 'progression' in fact would take us back almost to the status quo and failing the exercise, the public and our Harbour.

- vii. We also believe the following 'dismissed suggestions' 《不再考慮的意見》 are detail design items that pose no threat to the viability of the larger Wanchai – Causeway Bay improvement concept, especially at this juncture in the public process when considerations of value-enhancement are more appropriate than considerations of cost-efficiency. These ideas should be kept and reconsidered for their suitability against the finalized vision and concept for the area when it is completed.
- a. Wanchai north shore docking
沿灣仔海岸線的浮臺繫泊設施
- In accordance with HPP 2 and 3 (Victoria Harbour as Hong Kong's Identity; and A Vibrant Harbour), a diversity of maritime uses that could host marine craft from around the world can add vibrancy, visual interest, and opportunities for international exposure of the Harbour, complementing the Harbour's role in identity of Hong Kong.*
- b. Pedestrians connection to breakwater
連接海堤的開合行人橋
- We need to take every opportunity to provide different environments and opportunities for activities for the enjoyment of the harbour. Access to the breakwater and other such otherwise featureless structures can allow for it to double as an interesting promenade, a linear garden or a fishing pier (c.f Sai Kung Public Pier). Encouraging these is an embodiment of Harbour Planning Principles 4 and 5 (An Accessible Harbour; and Maximizing Opportunities for Public Enjoyment).*
- c. Typhoon shelter artificial beach
銅鑼灣避風塘人工海灘
- A natural edge condition at the culmination of the Tai Hang watershed, where there is currently a unique collection of egrets and aquatic life, would be a laudable step toward sustaining the enjoyment of the Harbour for generations HPP 1 and 7 (Preserving Victoria Harbour as a Natural, Public and Economic Asset; and Sustainable Development for the Harbour). By dismissing the idea before investigating solutions for improving water quality, but offer reclamation as a solution is another example of indolent engineering.*
- viii. There is urgent need for a specialist harbour body to assume responsibility for the development of the harbour district, to develop a holistic and integrated planning framework and to consolidate the many and diverse views on the enhancement of Hong Kong's harbour-front. This is the only way to drive this entire process forward, to ensure Government departments and consultants are working towards the same goal and to ensure this process will be delivered as envisioned, in the spirit of Harbour Planning Principles 6 and 8 (Integrated Planning for a World-class Harbour; and Early and Ongoing Stakeholder Engagement).

Yours sincerely,



Andrew Thomson
On behalf of the Harbour Business Forum

c.c. Chairman of HEC <enquiry@harbourfront.org.hk>