

1. DESIGNING HONG KONG HARBOUR DISTRICT

- 1.1 The *Designing the Hong Kong Harbour District* (DHKHD) initiative was set up in December 2003 as a consensus building exercise to help achieve a world-class Harbour District for Hong Kong. Over a 6-month period the initiative has engaged a great number of key stakeholders, including from Government, business and civic sectors, in a constructive and formative dialogue. The initiative has been jointly organised by The Experience Group, The Business Environment Council (BEC) and GML Consulting (GML), and is supported by over twenty major organisations and prominent opinion leaders in the Hong Kong community.
- 1.2 Victoria Harbour and its adjoining districts, labelled by the initiative as the Harbour District, is the core of Hong Kong and includes the majority of the key assets defining Hong Kong's image and lifestyle: the Harbour, the major financial and commercial buildings, the Government and public offices, key heritage sites and the main culture, art, sports, entertainment, accommodation and food & beverage (F&B) venues. The Harbour and the immediate adjuncts form the heart of the Pearl River Delta where visiting tourists spend much of their time and money, and where residents undertake many of their retail, leisure, arts, entertainment and sports activities.
- 1.3 The 'Harbour District' as such does not exist under the current administration, planning schemes or outlining zoning plan system. There is no integrated OZP specially prepared for the Harbour area and it is not covered by Government's Plan for Victoria Harbour which covers a smaller area. The definition of the **Harbour District** for this study is taken as **the districts surrounding Victoria Harbour from Yau Ma Tei Typhoon Shelter to Kwun Tong, and from Quarry Bay to Sheung Wan**. This area includes the majority of the key assets defining Hong Kong's image and lifestyle as illustrated in the Tourism Action Plan by the Planning Department in 2001 (See inside cover). The foreshore, the land, public facilities and transport infrastructure immediately connected with the Harbour, and specifically all those controlled by Government, are the concern of this initiative.
- 1.4 The Government has established the Harbour-front Enhancement Committee to consider the Harbour-front (foreshore) of Victoria Harbour, protected under the Protection of the Harbour Ordinance. The boundaries of this extend over a greater area, namely from Siu Chau Wan Point and Ah Kung Ngam Point in the east to the western points of Hong Kong and Tsing Yi (and straight north to the mainland). Although the terms of reference have since been expanded to include the 'adjacent areas' and related transport infrastructure, the Harbour District definition reflects the need to include the surroundings districts in their entirety in the planning (See inside cover).

1.5 Based on our research, we have identified several general issues:

- Majority of the foreshore is dominated by transport infrastructure including surface and elevated roads and no new land will be added;
- Roads are visual and physical barriers separating the lively districts and the Harbour, which are both at ground level, and the limited number of elevated or subway crossings are difficult for elderly and invalid persons.
- There is a lack of public amenities and facilities along the foreshore as much of the space is occupied by fenced-off temporary uses, utility facilities like sewage works, refuse transfer stations, car parks and transport infrastructure;
- There is no vibrancy because the facilities for entertainment, retail, F&B, hospitality, accommodation, arts, culture, sports, in addition to open spaces such as parks and promenades, are missing;
- Access to the Harbour itself is limited as there are no public boating facilities for mooring, berthing or storage, and marine activities like fishing are rarely allowed or encouraged;
- The views of the Harbour and the stunning city panorama are obstructed by tall buildings and elevated roads.

1.6 These and other issues are addressed and recommendations are included in the form of 'principles'. These 'principles' are an invitation for further comment and debate and are aimed to contribute to building consensus on a way forward for the future of the Harbour District. By engaging in this process proactively, the Government has been part of a process which will enable the development of a framework for a sustainable and vibrant foreshore that that will more closely reflect community aspirations.