

## 4. KEY ISSUES AND PRINCIPLES

### Land Use and Urban Design

4.1 Based on the data collected during the research (see **Paper 4**, Ch. 3) the following land use and urban design principles are proposed:

#### Land-use and Urban Design Principles

- To achieve a world-class Harbour District, the limited land available around the Harbour must be optimised to provide foremost a vibrant, active and accessible foreshore catering for both residents and tourists
- As there is unlikely to be further extensive reclamation in the future, a coordinated effort and integrated plan for the Harbour District as a whole must ensure a well-balanced and sustainable distribution of land for utilities, property development, transport infrastructure and public open space and amenities throughout the Harbour District
- The public wants a foreshore which balances functionality with an active Harbour and a vibrant experience, including convenient pedestrian mobility, ample open space, visual access, entertainment, arts, culture, sports, retail, hospitality, accommodation, food and beverage facilities
- A determined effort is needed to implement the many existing well-developed Harbour planning, urban design and landscaping principles and enhance the Harbour as a natural and key asset for Hong Kong - including, among others, a continuous promenade (already proposed in 1972), stepped building heights, visual access (both from and towards the Harbour), open public spaces, accessibility and vibrancy
- The outline of the Harbour-front should incorporate an interesting and undulating edge profile and public boating facilities including moorings, berthing and storage, as well as piers and fishing berths to ensure that the Harbour itself is accessible for the use and enjoyment by the members of the public.

4.2 Despite efforts by different Government Departments to efficiently deliver public services and upgrade the quality of life, there have been past difficulties in bringing about enhancement of the foreshore. Stakeholders believe that urban planning for the Harbour District seems too often geared to reconciling the objectives and needs of various Government Departments who are responsible for delivering facilities for utilities, drainage systems, pumping stations and transport.

4.3 The extensive urban design principles for enhancement of the Harbour environment for the community have been in existence for some time. However Government's planning procedures which attempt to integrate

every minute requirement and constraint of every Department almost inevitably leads to a bland and utilitarian or over-functional planning solution, with little or no mechanisms to ensure that the implementation will achieve the people friendly urban design objectives set out above.

- 4.4 A large proportion of the current land use in Harbour District is therefore for utility purposes (refuse transfer points, cooling water pumps, outfalls, offices, car parks, transport, etc.), which are incompatible with harbour front enjoyment. Access to the Harbour front is constrained by the road network and often prohibited by fencing. A recent communication from Civil Engineering Department states that there are 35 public piers and landings along the Harbour waterfront, however despite these possible access points the widely expressed views of stakeholders and the public are that quality access to the harbour is limited.
- 4.5 Where the waterfront is accessible (Quarry Bay Park, Shau Kei Wan, Hung Hom, Tsimshatsui promenade, HKCEC, and Queen's Pier), there are only limited stretches of promenades, and hardly any F&B outlets, entertainment, or arts & culture activities.
- 4.6 With no new land to be added, clear choices will need to be made on land-use between utility purposes, property development, surface roads/flyovers and public open space.
- 4.7 In turn, this requires management of the hinterland and the reduction or elimination of land uses which generate the need and demand for such facilities and transport infrastructure, including limiting redevelopment in Tsimshatsui, and eliminating new traffic generating land-use in Tamar (Central Government offices) and Wanchai (Convention and Exhibition Centre Extension). As referenced in GML's survey, 62% of those surveyed indicated that locating Government offices next to the Harbour was "unimportant" compared to other priorities.
- 4.8 There are growing calls to pursue re-designing, re-engineering and enhancing existing areas and facilities over developing new ones. This requires less space and less reclamation, but does incur costs and results in more 'hassle'. New open spaces, improved pedestrian links and additional entertainment, retail, F&B, accommodation, arts, culture, sports facilities can help balance functionality and a vibrant experience in the foreshore.
- 4.9 Open corridors with visual access to the Harbour and the spectacular views of the surrounding city are needed from as many points as possible. Where possible, structures can be removed to open up views from main roads.
- 4.10 With the exception of one private yacht club and Queen's Pier, there is limited convenient access to the water itself for water sports or other activities. Public marinas, boat clubs, shelters, moorings, launches, and

boat storage facilities are required east of the Star Ferry piers along a 'long' harbour front on both sides of the Harbour, to allow the public to get onto the water for leisure activities.

4.11 More recently, the principles for Harbour design were articulated as part of the Harbour Plan Study by the Planning Department and the Hong Kong Tourism Board (May 2001) as:

- Give tourism/recreation uses which can benefit from waterfront access priority in the Inner Harbour Core, while balancing the needs of other marine uses;
- Group tourist attractions in clusters;
- Consolidate tourism clusters in and close to the Inner Harbour Core carefully designed and integrated within a landscape framework;
- Locate secondary tourism nodes and recreation uses around the Outer Harbour, provide good connection to the Inner Harbour Core;
- Improve pedestrian accessibility to the waterfront from public transport nodes;
- Provide greater continuity of waterfront promenades and other transport facilities to link tourism clusters;
- Integrate hinterland areas with the waterfront, through improved visual, landscape and pedestrian linkages; and
- Minimise physical and visual intrusion into the Harbour.

4.12 Stakeholders report that, these principles are mostly tourism oriented and this possibly reflects the way the study was defined and carried out. Little effective public input was evident. The enhancement of the Harbour should be foremost defined from the needs of the residents, as tourists will follow residents. Other stakeholders commented on the limitation of clustering and the need for mixed development throughout the entire Harbour District as one cluster.

## Transport Policy and Infrastructure

4.13 From **Paper 4** (Ch. 4), the following transport principles are proposed:

### Transport Policy and Infrastructure Principles

- Mobility should be balanced with the public's wish to enjoy the space and access to the Harbour foreshore.
- Transport infrastructure to keep Hong Kong mobile should minimise the land used for elevated and surface roads in the foreshore and deploy engineering standards and designs that promote - rather than bar - pedestrian access to the Harbour-front
- With the Harbour naturally at ground level, pedestrian access is preferable at the same level. If putting roads underground is not possible and surface roads are necessary, then pedestrian access can be provided using wide tunnels or building large decks across semi submerged roads. Many of the existing elevated walkways are inconvenient or inaccessible, particularly for invalids and the elderly
- A more balanced evaluation of alternative modes of transport (such as rail) should be implemented taking into account environmental impact, footprint and sustainability, irrespective of ownership and financing mechanisms.

4.14 The road network in the foreshore is extensive. Other than in a few places, residents and tourists are unable to easily get from where they live, stay or work to the Harbour front because of road infrastructure. There are elevated and surface roads ringing the Harbour waterfront, except in West Kowloon and Kai Tak.

4.15 Following the court rulings it appears that the current interpretation of the Protection of the Harbour Ordinance, provides a bias towards reclamation for road infrastructure. It appears that roads have a better chance of passing the 'overriding public needs test' if it can be proven that the need for it is compelling and present and there is no reasonable alternative. Combined with the current process whereby the 'highest engineering standards at the lowest cost' are applied in procurement and design, this may lead to a sterile waterfront, a Harbour without activity, and a foreshore consisting of transport infrastructure. **Only a determined and coordinated land-use and transport strategy for the Harbour District (the foreshore AND adjacent areas) can steer Hong Kong away from this scenario.**

4.16 The space occupied by roads is determined by road alignment. Key factors are engineering constraints, and the cost and interruption to traffic flow. Minimising the road area is not an objective for the design of surface roads. In addition, many stakeholders perceive that alternatives such as rail or

traffic management measures often appear<sup>4</sup> to be given only secondary consideration.

- 4.17 Given the limited space available, reducing the space taken up by roads in the foreshore is logical and critical. The consequence of this is that more money is needed to put roads underground in tunnels and to re-engineer existing road corridors. If capacity can't be increased, traffic volume must be strictly managed with traffic management measures, and by limiting land use and restricting intensity in the relevant areas through building height restrictions, plot ratios, change of land –use or moratoriums.
- 4.18 With both the Harbour and the main tourist and residential areas at ground level – much consideration is needed for pedestrian mobility between these and across the vehicular thoroughfares. Ideally pedestrian access should be open-air at ground level to ensure convenience and visual access to the Harbour. As an example, in Wanchai North and around the Exchange Square and IFC Two ground level is a 'dead zone' and the functionality of the 'elevated city' is limited. Expanding the 'elevated city' has the danger of creating more such dead zones. They should foremost be seen as additional pedestrian capacity rather than a replacement for ground level mobility and vibrancy.
- 4.19 The subway crossings in Tsimshatsui are cumbersome, and the staircase/walkways in Causeway Bay, Taikooshing and Sheung Wan do not resolve the need for mobility. Wide underground passages such as the one to the Central Star Ferry (and wider) are preferable to narrow subways such as under Salisbury Road. Most of the current elevated walkways over roads in the foreshore are limited in function and inconvenient, especially for invalids and elderly.
- 4.20 A new approach is required to resolve the mobility and vibrancy. For Central and Wanchai, according to the present design of CRIII, there will be open space corridors – Statue Square Corridor, Civic Corridor and Arts and Entertainment Corridor - to bring pedestrians from the hinterland to the future waterfront. They will need to be tested for the above requirements.

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<sup>4</sup> Government in the 17 June statement to GML cited that in the construction of the Central – Wan Chai Bypass, other options have been examined, including the Western Harbour Crossing, extension of the MTR to Kennedy Town, provision of hillside escalators from Central to Mid-levels, provision of bus-bus interchanges at the fringe areas of Central, restricting loading and unloading times in Central and adoption of Electronic Road Pricing.

In GML's survey on the harbour district (see **Paper 3**), people were asked for their views on **access to the harbour and surrounding districts**. The following topics were voted as most 'important'

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|--|--------|
| • Ease of pedestrian access and mobility | 86.6 % |
| • Wide range of public transport links   | 80.8 % |

(% represents percentage of those surveyed who agreed)

4.21 Given the demand for greater mobility, the increase in residents and tourists accessing the Harbour and foreshore, and the absolute limitation on space, a complete revision of transport strategy and policy is needed, including a stronger 'pedestrian first' emphasis to answer the call for greater accessibility to the foreshore of the Harbour District.

4.22 Greater use of ferries, including a circular ferry system, and water taxis is recommended to improve the mobility of residents and tourists in the Harbour District.

4.23 Sustainable development of the foreshore will require an integrated review of transport strategy and policy, together land-use planning for the Harbour District, the foreshore and hinterland areas. Pedestrian movement along and to the foreshore should be included as an important part of such transport review.

## The Central Wanchai Bypass and P2

- Mobility is at the core of the transport debate along the Harbour foreshore. Much of the current road infrastructure has been part of the overall road network planned to link up Central Business District (CBD) to the rest of Hong Kong including the New Towns and the Kowloon district.
- Phase Three of the Central reclamation (CRIII) is one of the two remaining portions of the Central and Wan Chai reclamation. At present, east-west traffic on the north side of Hong Kong Island relies mainly on the Connaught Road Central/Harcourt Road/Gloucester Road corridor. Government findings show that this has reached its capacity, resulting in the current traffic congestion.
- The Comprehensive Transport Study 3 (CTS-3), Government's transport planning tool, proposes that there is a need for a new trunk road, that is, the Central-Wan Chai Bypass (CWB) to solve the congestion problem.
- According to the Environment, Transport and Works Bureau, the current peak hour vehicle/capacity (v/c) ratio of Gloucester Road is 1.1 to 1.2. As Connaught Road Central, Harcourt Road and Gloucester Road form a continuous corridor where traffic conditions of one will impact on the rest of the trunk route, CTS-3 has predicted v/c ratios of 1.3 and 1.4 in 2011 and 2016 respectively for the Corridor in the future if the CWB is not provided. Assuming that the CWB were in place, both the corridor and the CWB would have v/c ratios of 0.9 and 0.7 in 2011 and 2016 respectively.
- Additional surface road systems are required as slip roads for the CWB and to handle traffic from the 600-room Four Seasons Hotel and the 55-level Four Seasons Place, IFC Two, new commercial developments on CR III, new Central Government Offices at Tamar and an extension of the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre.
- The forecasted vehicular traffic arising from the proposed commercial developments on CR III alone is about 1,200 vehicle trips per hour during the peak periods. This traffic is predicted to use mainly the Road P2 network and can affect the v/c ratios of the trunk corridor and the CWB.
- In other words, whilst the case for transport infrastructure for CRIII meets the CTS-3 requirements of maintaining mobility in a sustainable manner (i.e. capacity, alignment, form, modal split, interconnection, financial, and environmental factors), it is critical to note that pedestrian access to the Harbour front, safeguarding space for public facilities and open public space, and access to the harbour itself to ensure an active harbour, are not considered. P2 road will be a major surface road in addition to the CWB submerged in a tunnel.
- The 'cost' of land used for surface and elevated roads and limitations on access are not equated in the design of roads around the Harbour. Broad public 'acceptability' proven during consultation is of limited value as such consultation is normally limited to presentations to transport related groups and there is currently limited sensitivity for Harbour front enhancement aspects among the public, LegCo members, transport advisory board, District councilors, and others.

Source: **Paper 4** (Chapter 4)

## Institutional Arrangements

4.24 From **Paper 4** (Ch. 5), the following institutional principles are proposed:

### **Institutional Principles**

- Planning concepts, proposals and decisions should be community-focused and evolve through a *process* underpinned by early and ongoing stakeholder engagement and consensus building
- More effective and efficient mechanisms as well as new mechanisms and structures are needed to promote collaboration among the different Government Departments and balance long-term quality of life benefits over cost control and expedience, particularly for infrastructure and public space and facilities
- A single authority is recommended to be responsible for transport, land-use, planning, environment and community engagement and should be guided by the principles of sustainable development (for the Harbour district foreshore)
- A statutory body is recommended to be responsible for managing the foreshore, hold executive and consultative powers, and decide upon funding and financing of projects
- Experts for reviews of transport and land-use plans should be appointed by independent bodies to ensure that such reviews are truly independent
- Communities, including businesses, must be invited at an early stage to participate in formulating (visual) strategic plans, developing planning briefs and reviewing proposed designs to build consensus, and ensure mature solutions reducing the potential for conflict.

4.25 There is wide agreement that enhancing the Harbour District requires a high level of coordination in its planning, design, and management. At present these responsibilities are shared between numerous Government Departments and agencies, and private sector organisations, each with different objectives and priorities. Stakeholders noted that this problem is exacerbated with a planning process where boundaries of planning responsibilities are often based on administrative convenience, hence reducing the functional coherence. The way forward must include an improved mechanism for coordination of the different Departments so that they can more easily fulfill their overall mission.

4.26 The public can express their views when Government organises public exhibitions and at the public meetings arranged by planners. Often, however, this comes in the advanced stages of development and lack alternative options to choose from. Members of the public have not had the chance to be involved, in both practical and psychological terms, in the earlier

conceptual design stages, briefing or strategic planning stages. Too little is spend on the promotion of consultation exercises and the strategic plans lack visual aids and clear choices. The bodies consulted in the planning process tend to be political and professional parties, or specific committees of LegCo and District Councils, which have a limited focus.

- 4.27 Opinions may filter through via District Councilors, but this relies on their community outreach network functioning adequately. Hence there appears to be limited scope for the grass root and business communities to participate in a meaningful manner during these early stages.
- 4.28 In the last year, legal proceedings regarding reclamations within the Harbour District have aroused much interest and stimulated awareness on the part of the public. In response to wide community concerns for integrated planning for the Harbour, the Government announced on 28 April 2004 the formation of the *Harbour-front Enhancement Committee* to provide a more transparent and wider public consultation forum for different sectors of the community.
- 4.29 What is recommended is a single authority at the highest level of Government responsible for both land-use and transport planning.
- 4.30 For the Harbour District it is recommended that a statutory body, a Harbour District Authority reporting into the single authority, is fully in charge of all policies, strategies, planning and transport and land-use management for the foreshore areas. It is imperative that a Harbour District Authority is and is seen to be represented at the highest level with executive powers over planning, transport, land-use and ongoing management within the Harbour District but, importantly, also has consultative obligations to ensure comprehensive public participation.
- 4.31 How such body is implanted in Hong Kong requires urgent research and debate. Agreement is needed on what powers to purchase, sell, develop and manage land, and to market harbour and foreshore related activities, are vested appropriately in a Harbour District Authority. Whether the Harbour District Authority has limited powers or separate Authorities are established for specific areas needs to be balanced with the overhaul of the legal, fiscal, land development and planning systems required in Hong Kong.
- 4.32 Alternatively the Town Planning Board could be the 'Harbour Authority'. First a Strategic Plan and then detailed plans similar to an Outline Zoning Plans are required for the 'Harbour District' or the 'Harbour and Foreshore Areas'. These can be prepared by the Planning Department in conjunction with the Harbour-front Enhancement Committee and major public consultation exercises. Once completed, the Town Planning Board would be charged with approval of all development plans within the area, INCLUDING transport infrastructure. This will require legislation to make the necessary amendments to the Protection of the Harbour and Town Planning Ordinances.

4.33 A clear process needs to be agreed for the testing of all reasonable development alternatives, including the appointment of Independent Experts required for such reviews. This will address the stakeholder concern that reviews are truly independent rather than a promotion, or justification of existing plans or prevailing views of the Departments involved.

4.34 Community wide participation, including the business community, is required for idea formulation, planning and implementation at an early stage to ensure that there is consensus on mature solutions, and that the potential for conflict is reduced. To accommodate changing public opinion during long-term projects such as reclamations and major roads, the community participation process needs to be a continuous one.

In GML's survey (see <b>Paper 3</b> ) on the Harbour District, people were asked for their views on <b>planning for the future</b> . The following five statements were rated as 'agree'	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visionary, long term and future thinking instead of cost- and transport led planning</li> <li>• An integrated harbour district master planning process is needed rather than a project by project approach</li> <li>• Public must be consulted with alternative planning choices together with clear cost and environmental implications</li> <li>• Quality of life planning, rather than an engineering-led process is needed</li> <li>• Clear analyses of public concerns and willingness to change is needed from planning authorities in the course of consultation</li> </ul>	<p>83.3%</p> <p>82.8%</p> <p>81.6%</p> <p>81.6%</p> <p>81.2%</p>
(% represents percentage of those surveyed who agreed)	

## Implementation Issues

4.35 From **Paper 4** (Ch. 6), the following implementation principles are proposed:

### Implementation Principles

- Decision-making regarding the planning of the Harbour District should adhere to sustainable development principles. The Harbour District should be a focal point for the community and itself evolve as a community
- Vibrancy of the Harbour and the foreshore must cater to the taste and affordability of different groups of people. A mixed usage development and varying types of commercial participation - not just high-end tourist facilities - are vital
- Vibrancy requires a review of licences and permits for stalls, vendors, entertainers and others on public land and facilities to ensure the availability of retail, food and beverages and other entertainment activities
- An active Harbour should be promoted through public marinas, boat clubs, shelters, launches, boat storage facilities, piers, moorings, and fishing berths so that the public can access the Harbour for marine activities
- Ongoing planning of the foreshore areas is as important as getting the management right, with a Harbour Authority responsible for allocating land for specified developments, attracting the appropriate tenants for venues, marketing Harbour activities and organizing promotional and marketing activities.
- Public and business involvement during implementation is crucial and Government should engage in formative and continuous dialogue with the communities including District Councils and commercial stakeholders to ensure buy-in, community backing and flexibility in the development and implementation of land-use and infrastructure plans
- Broad measures are needed to mitigate the impact of construction and development of the Harbour foreshore (including temporary land-use solutions, venues, art projects) and ongoing communication with all stakeholders to ensure transparency of the work in progress.

4.36 Currently, much of the Harbour front is dominated by high vertical sea walls. To achieve a vibrant, accessible and active Harbour, the public must be provided facilities for the development of water sports and other leisure activities on and around the Harbour, including piers and different types of partly or semi-enclosed water bodies for a range of functions, which establish a relationship between the foreshore and the central Harbour area.

- 4.37 Various 'price' levels of 'vibrancy' ("the cost of a cup of coffee") on the foreshore can be achieved with mixed ownership of the land and more liberal licencing policies for the establishment of commercial ventures on public land. Tourists will follow the residents (note Stanley, Temple Street, and Sai Kung Waterfront). Care must be given to ensure that development of the foreshore does not preclude free or affordable 'vibrancy'. Mixed usage – not just high-end tourist facilities is vital.
- 4.38 During construction, continuous public involvement during this process is a crucial to keep the foreshore of the Harbour district attractive for tourists and residents. Government should work closely with the District Councils, tourism organisations, business groups, and the public on the development of the Harbour District.
- 4.39 As Hong Kong enters into construction mode around the Harbour District, it is important to make the place lively. Interesting hoarding designs, temporary licences for markets and food outlets, and temporary venues are ways of keeping the area vibrant and attractive for tourists and residents while the work is in progress.

#### **Kowloon Canton Railway Corporation – the West Rail story**

The construction of West Rail by the KCRC provides many key lessons for Government on how to engage the public during this process. Continuous public involvement was stressed throughout and has helped to bring ownership of the project to the people - a crucial ingredient of success. Points to note are:

- Consultation of different sectors of the public throughout various stages of implementation of new projects, including the statutory consultation bodies and the general public;
- Anticipation of public concerns (e.g. Mei Foo residents would have strong views on the West Rail project because they had already been affected in the past by other works projects);
- Early consultation with the residents undertaken well before gazettal of proceedings;
- Provision of detailed designs, construction programme and other associated facilities to residents and stakeholders;
- Regular communication (e.g. newsletters were produced and mailed to each household in the locality of the project before and during the project);
- Two-way communication to avoid any misunderstandings; and
- A high degree of transparency (through the setting up of a project website, 24-hour hotline and real time web camera monitoring for the public).

Source: Presentation by KCRC, EnviroSeries Conference (3 May 2004)