香港建築師學會
The Hong Kong Institute of Architects

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Mr. LIU Chun San
Principle Assistant Secretary for Development
Works Branch
Development Bureau
18/F, West Wing
Central Government Offices
2 Tim Mei Avenue Tamar
Hong Kong

Dear Mr. Liu

Stage 1 Public Engagement Exercise for
Enhancing Land Supply Strategy by Reclamation outside Victoria Harbour and Rock Cavern Development

Thank you for delivering the briefing session on the captioned organized by the Development Bureau and Civil Engineering and Development Department to our members on 15 February 2012.

We are pleased to deliver our views and comments regarding the public engagement exercise. Please find enclosed our written submission for your consideration.

Thank you for your kind attention.

Yours sincerely

Dominic K K Lam *FHKIA RA*
President

c.c. Prof Hon Patrick Lau, Chairman, Panel on Development, Legislative Council
Mr LI Kam Sang, Chief Engineer / Port Works, Civil Engineering and Development Department

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Enhancing Land Supply Strategy

1. General

It is indisputable that, as a city, Hong Kong should further its sustainable development and strive for balance among social, environmental and economic needs. And in anticipation of the growing demand on land resource due to population growth, economic development and the residents' yearning for a better quality of life, an enhanced strategy for land supply is called for.

We support a strategy that provides steady and transparent land supply, one that can meet the demand on land as it arises from time to time. The strategy should be holistic and balanced, catering the various short-, mid- and long-term needs identified by comprehensive planning studies. It should also be flexible and encompass a range of land supply options, since different means of land supply are unique in their compatibility with different land uses.

In terms of economic development, apart from an increase in scale, Hong Kong is also aiming at an increase in the proportion of high-value-adding services industries, and the professionals of which usually look for a quality living environment. In addition, Hong Kong citizens are demanding a higher area of living space per person and infrastructure ratio. Hence, the projected demand on land resource should be based on a density lower than the current one, and the "shortage" of land resource in the coming decades should be reviewed accordingly, even if the estimated population is kept at 8.9 million by 2039 as projected.

2. Land Supply Options

We are in favour of a multi-prong and balanced approach to supply land. Apart from the two options of reclamation and rock cavern development, the other four, namely, rezoning land, redevelopment, land resumption, and re-use of ex-quarry sites are in fact suitable in particular situations and they should be fully explored, evaluated and pursued, instead of dismissed as limited and non-viable.

Furthermore, apart from the six options identified, there are other ways for supplying land that is worth exploring, as explained below.

A. Three-dimensional Multi-layer Uses

In general, roads and open spaces in Hong Kong are configured in two-dimensional single uses. Roads are mostly single-layered, and spaces above at-grade roads and beneath flyovers are seldom utilized other than for traffic. Open spaces are mostly at-grade with no basement. The following local and overseas examples, however, illustrate that spaces can be put to better three-dimensional multi-layer uses.

1. Car parks under roads and open spaces, common in European cities. For examples, see. http://www.simplynetworking.es/calida-3242-123-117-parking_in_cartagena_locations_and_heights_of_underground.html [Picture 1]

2. Commercial buildings over roads and flyovers, e.g. Gate Tower Building, Osaka, Japan (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gate_Tower_Building) [Picture 2], IFC Mall, HKCEC

3. A multifunctional complex weaving above, below and around roads, tramways and a metro station in Beursplein, Rotterdam (http://www.reconnectingamerica.org/assets/Uploads/bestpractice195.pdf) [Picture 3]

4. Mixed-use developments over Hong Kong's MTR stations

5. A whole commercial district built above the road and metro network at La Défense, Paris (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/La_Défense) [Picture 4]

6. The West Kowloon Cultural District to be built over the traffic network

Given the extensive road and railway networks in Hong Kong, three-dimensional multi-layer uses provide a viable option for supplying developable "land" readily connected to the transport networks, especially in low-density areas along, say, the MTR West Rail and Tung Chung Lines, and adjacent roads. While administrative hurdles need to be overcome in realizing this option, we reckon it worthwhile for further studies.

B. Northern New Territories

As more transport connections with Shenzhen and the mainland are planned and built, it is imperative to study whether there are more opportunities for rezoning or resumption of land in non-environmentally sensitive areas in northern New Territories, other than those already identified (e.g. Hung Shui Kiu, Kwu Tung North, Fanling North and Ping Che/Ta Kwu Ling, and Lok Ma Chau Loop Area), for residential, commercial and institutional uses. Moreover, it may be time to begin reviewing the policy for New Territories Exempted Houses, in order to make a more effective and environmentally responsible use of land resource for residential purpose.

C. Container Ports

Like the airport, relocating the container ports to outskirts like northwestern Lantau Island (identified in Hong Kong 2030 Study) can free up sizable developable land supported by existing infrastructure networks. At the same time it can relieve relatively central areas of the city from the traffic pressure in

connection with port operations.

As regards the obvious options of reclamation outside Victoria Harbour and rock cavern development, we have the following opinions.

D. Reclamation

We support further studies on reclamation outside Victoria Harbour. While the location and scale of reclamation should follow planning studies with land uses identified, environmental issues shall be duly addressed first and foremost. With the foregoing in mind, we propose the following priorities in site selection:

1. Preserve natural coasts
2. Repair environmentally damaged coasts & areas
3. Improve man-made coasts & areas
4. Link to existing infrastructure systems

The various sites for reclamation can thus be evaluated in accordance with the above criteria. Properly evaluated and carried out, reclamation upon disturbed and unsightly coastlines should be viewed as an opportunity to improve the appearance and environment of the waterfront.

E. Rock Cavern Development

We also support further studies on developing rock caverns. If lighting, ventilation and fire safety issues are catered for and corresponding infrastructure provided, rock caverns are suitable for accommodating various facilities, thus freeing up land for other purposes. Prior to forming caverns, however, their uses must be identified. Short-term cost-effectiveness and long-term sustainability also need to be justified, due to the higher cost of forming caverns and the higher energy use by additional building services.

3. Conclusion

A holistic and balanced strategy with multiple options for land supply is conducive to sustainable development. Essentially, land supply should go hand in hand with strategic and infrastructure planning. Before land is formed, therefore, the desirable use, size and location of land parcels to be provided, as well as the time of their provision, should be studied and established. The possible uses of land to be formed and the infrastructure serving such uses should be reviewed with the public. Finally, for land supply to be steady and transparent, road maps should be provided for the different options of land supply.

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[Picture 1]

Three-dimensional multi-layer uses
立體多層用途

[Picture 2]

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[Picture 3]

Three-dimensional multi-layer uses
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[Picture 4]

Three-dimensional multi-layer uses
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