



## **Civic Party**

### **Position Paper on**

### **Urban Design Study for the New Central Harbourfront**

#### **General**

The Civic Party considers that the Urban Design Study should not be constrained by the existing two-dimensional Outline Zoning Plan. On the contrary, a proper planning process should be conducted the other way round that an Urban Design Study should precede the drafting of an Outline Zoning Plan.

#### **Road P2**

The harbourfront should be prioritized for pedestrians.

The Civic Party noted that the total development density has been reduced by 25% since the Public Engagement in Stage 1, while the width of the surface road P2 has however not been reduced. We consider that the width of P2 measuring 40-metres is not justified and should be narrowed. While the Harbour Planning Principles state that “*Land required for and the impact from infrastructure developments, utility installations and land uses incompatible with the harbour planning principles should be minimized*”, quite on the contrary, the Road P2 is unnecessarily diminishing the accessibility from the hinterland to the harbourfront and has taken up valuable harbourfront land for public enjoyment uses.

#### **Re-assembling Queen’s Pier and Reconstruction the Old Star Ferry Clock Tower**

To create a harbourfront with its own identity is to embrace the city’s cultural heritage. The Harbour Planning Guidelines clearly states that “*buildings/structures, areas or places within the Harbour or along the harbourfront, which are of historic interest or cultural values in relation to the Victoria Harbour...are encouraged to be preserved by various means.*”

The demolished Queen’s Pier used to be an inseparable whole together with the City Hall and Edinburgh Place, being an invaluable heritage of the city. The Civic Party

believes that it was technically feasible to be preserved in its original location and demolition was entirely unnecessary.

It must be emphasized that the value of Queen's Pier is not functional, but historical.

It is unfortunate that the Queen's Pier was demolished and that re-assembling back to its original location remains to be the only option. Re-assembling the Queen's Pier in any other location will diminish its heritage value and destroying the spatial quality of the Edinburgh Place and City Hall, where many historic events took place. The new proposed location for the Queen's Pier between the new Piers will significantly reduce the overall berthing capacity. The QP location would require an operation zone which would infringe on the other piers. QP's functional contribution as a pier will only be at best a gestural one.

### **Statue Square Corridor (Site 3)**

The Civic Party welcomes the further reduction of building density for Site 3 and breaking up the 400m long groundscraper into separate buildings to improve visual permeability and air ventilation of the harbourfront.

The Civic Party opines that a smaller podium is preferable to provide a choice of ground level access from the Statue Square toward the harbourfront. This would also enhance the visual corridor between the Statue Square and the harbourfront such that views toward the harbourfront from ground level would not be obstructed.

### **Arts and Cultural Precinct (Sites 5 and 6)**

The design quality of Site 5 and 6 and its adjoining areas is still far from satisfactory. The Open Space at the East of Site 5 and at the South of Site 6 is separated from Site 5 and Site 6 (The Waterfront Promenade) by unnecessarily wide roads rendering it being detached and highly inaccessible. This clearly reflects the unnecessary constraints imposed by the Outline Zoning Plan.

The Civic Party opines that the entire area (including Site 5, Site 6, the roads and Open Space) should be designed in an integrated manners to provide much better building forms and open space that is well connected with the waterfront.

The Civic Party further suggests that the area should be developed into a Civic Centre where facilities for the NGO could be located.

### **The Waterfront Promenade (Site 7)**

It is acknowledged that the Study has provided a continuous waterfront promenade with extensive greenery, however whether the aim “to provide a diversity of attractions to create an all-time and all-season waterfront” is still in doubt. The provisions such as bayside walk, harbour walk, pier walk, ferry plaza, featured piazza, waterfront event plaza, amphitheatre, outdoor theatre, viewing platform etc. could just remain as different names for an empty space and cannot guarantee vibrancy, should there be of no active use.

The disposition and design of small scale shopping and entertainment buildings along the promenade should be open-air, small scale and numerous and be integrated into the new pedestrian walkway network as part of the park’s landscape design. Internalized air-conditioned circulation paths and multiple storey designs would defeat the purpose of creating a bayside walk, and create localized mini-wall effects that would infringe on the open air nature, views and ventilation on sections of the park where these buildings would be located. More details and guidelines should be disclosed as to the specific green strategies to be implemented for this group of smaller buildings.

A bustling waterfront should consist of street markets, bars, café, ball courts, as well as land-water interface activities such as fishing, sailing and boating. We therefore suggest that these activities should be designed integrally with the public open space along the harbourfront.

While we noted that the PLA berth would be open for public access when it is not in military use, more information on the detail design of the berth and its connection with the PLA Headquarter should be provided.

### **Execution of the Master Layout Plan**

The Civic Party is concerned about future execution of the development parcels would be departed from the intention of the Master Layout Plan. It is recommended that strict development parameters including the total gross floor area, number of



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storeys, building heights, width of breezeways and non-building areas should be included in the conditions of sales. The Master Layout Plan as a result of this Urban Design Study should form part of the conditions and any deviation must obtain approval by the Town Planning Board.

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