

**Legislative Council Panel on Economic Development
Development of a Piazza in Tsim Sha Tsui**

Purpose

This paper reports on the progress of the "Development of a Piazza in Tsim Sha Tsui" (hereafter "the Project"), and seeks Members' views on the proposed development parameters.

Background

2. In June 2005, the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council approved funding for the construction of a "Transport Link in Tsim Sha Tsui East", which included a new public transport interchange (PTI) with a podium garden on the site of the former Wing On Plaza Garden to replace the existing PTI outside the Tsim Sha Tsui (TST) Star Ferry Pier, with a view to releasing the waterfront site for development into a piazza. The new PTI in TST East has commenced operation since August 2007, and bus routes using the TST Star Ferry Pier bus terminus are being relocated to the new PTI in phases.

3. The main objective of the Project is to provide a new public open space for use by locals and visitors alike. As the piazza under planning is strategically located amongst various popular tourist attractions, including the Avenue of Stars, Hong Kong Cultural Centre, Star Ferry, TST Clock Tower and major shopping malls, it will leverage these attractions as well as enhance their linkages, providing a natural focus for both locals and visitors. Coupled with the magnificent harbour view, the piazza has tremendous potential to become another key tourist attraction. The location of the proposed piazza is shown on the plan at **Appendix I**.

Public Engagement

4. To ensure that the proposed piazza would serve the needs of both locals and visitors, we have gauged public views through different channels and actively explored options on the possible uses and modes of development and management of the piazza. On 30 May 2007, the Tourism Commission organized a workshop

inviting relevant stakeholders and professional bodies to express their views on the uses and development and management modes of the proposed piazza. Participants included business operators in the neighbourhood, developers, public transport operators (i.e. Star Ferry Company, Kowloon Motor Bus Company, Mass Transit Railway Corporation and the then Kowloon-Canton Railway Company), representatives of the tourism and hotel industries, and members of the Yau Tsim Mong District Council. Views and suggestions collected at the Workshop were consolidated by an independent consultant into a workshop report, which was uploaded onto the Tourism Commission's website for a 3-month community engagement exercise. In parallel, we have approached various key stakeholders and relevant professional bodies (**Appendix II**) to obtain their feedback and suggestions for the Project.

5. The majority of views collected supported the development of the piazza, notably the Yau Tsim Mong District Council which gave strong support and urged the Government to take forth the project as soon as possible. In addition, the tourism sector, including the Hong Kong Tourism Board, Travel Industry Council of Hong Kong, Hong Kong Association of Travel Agents, Hong Kong Association of Registered Tour Co-ordinators Limited, Hong Kong Professional Tourist Guides General Union, The Federation of Hong Kong Hotel Owners, and Hong Kong Hotels Association appealed to the Government for early implementation of the initiative, which would help promote the development of tourism and the economy of Hong Kong.

6. A gist of the suggestions on the development of the piazza as compiled by the independent consultant is as follows -

- (a) a holistic design should be adopted so that the piazza could blend in with its vicinity both visually and functionally;
- (b) a themed design should be adopted for the piazza to enhance its attractiveness. Possible themes could be related to the history of the area or Hong Kong's culture, etc.;
- (c) the piazza should provide a venue which serves multiple purposes, ranging from passive enjoyment of green open space to staging of vibrant events;
- (d) the Government should fund the design and construction of the piazza, and engage the private sector for these tasks;
- (e) the private sector could fund and take up the management and operation of the piazza; and

- (f) there should be continuous public engagement to ensure that the community's needs and aspirations are adequately taken into account.

The consultant's report has been uploaded onto the Tourism Commission's website at "http://www.tourism.gov.hk/english/current/current_piazzatst.html". A summary of the report findings is at **Appendix III**.

Planning Principles for the Project

7. Based on community feedback previously received, we had proposed some planning principles for the Project prior to public consultation, as follows, which were well received by the public, including the Yau Tsim Mong District Council and the tourism sector etc. in the course of our public engagement -

- (a) the existing TST Star Ferry Pier, the TST Clock Tower and the five flag-posts should not be affected;
- (b) suitable arrangements should be put in place to facilitate locals and visitors to take buses or taxis to and from TST Star Ferry Pier (i.e. provision of adequate bus stops and taxi stand as close to the TST Star Ferry Pier as possible); and
- (c) irrespective of whether the project is to be implemented by the Government or the private sector, a mechanism should be established to select private partners through open tender and engage the public effectively in the implementation and monitoring process.

Also, in pursuit of the project, we would endeavour to avoid creating any additional traffic and transport burden in the vicinity of TST Star Ferry Pier.

Proposed Development Parameters

8. Having regard to the consultant's report and the preliminary views of relevant departments on the feasibility of the suggestions, we propose the following development parameters for the Project -

A. Design

- (a) The proposed piazza will be developed into a district open space where, according to the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines, building site coverage shall not be more than 10% of the site area.
- (b) The site is subject to a building height restriction of 15 metres above Principal Datum, or that of the existing building, whichever is the greater.
- (c) The development will take due consideration of the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines, the Harbour Planning Principles and Harbour Planning Guidelines developed by the Harbour-front Enhancement Committee, and the Town Planning Board's Vision Statement and Objective in Harbour Planning, and observe all prevailing planning requirements and land use zoning restrictions.
- (d) Pedestrian accessibility to the waterfront will be maintained for locals and visitors. In addition, there shall be emergency, maintenance and operational vehicular access for the Hong Kong Cultural Centre in the adjacent site.
- (e) A holistic design will be adopted to enable the piazza to be integrated in harmony with the surrounding environment both visually and functionally.
- (f) A suitable theme of design may be considered to enhance the uniqueness and attractiveness of the piazza, it shall be related to the history of the piazza and its vicinity (e.g. Victoria Harbour, transport hub, etc.)

B. Functions and uses

- (a) There will be landscaping with trees, greenery, lawn areas and seating for passive enjoyment.
- (b) Open space will be provided to cater for a multitude of public activities ranging from cultural and art performances, mini concerts and art exhibitions, to outdoor carnivals and New Year countdown, etc.
- (c) Provision of outside seating accommodation which operates on a make-shift basis for alfresco dining, and facilities which are ancillary and incidental to the piazza including souvenir / food kiosks and a visitor information centre may be considered.

- (d) Provision of shelters and covered walkways, which shall not obstruct the "openness" of the piazza, could be considered to better facilitate locals and visitors in travelling to and from the TST Star Ferry Pier.

Although some of the views collected favour the provision of underground facilities, these have not been included in the proposed development parameters for the Project due to technical constraints.

C. Development mode

We propose that Government should provide funding for the design and construction of the piazza, and invite the private sector to take up the design and construction works. This can be implemented in two stages -

- (a) Design of the piazza

To allow greater scope for creativity, we propose to conduct an open design competition. We envisage that the earliest date to start the design competition will be early 2009.

- (b) Construction of the piazza

We propose to conduct an open tender to select and appoint a contractor to construct the piazza based on the winning design.

D. Management mode

Public views collected generally favour the private sector to operate and to finance the operation of the proposed piazza. However, having regard to the possible impact of the piazza's final design on its future facilities and commercial viability, we recommend to consider the management mode of the piazza and put up a more concrete proposal after the design for the Project is confirmed.

The development parameters above constitute our preliminary proposal for the Project, and may be fine-tuned subject to more detailed assessment on technical feasibility, planning restrictions, traffic impact assessment, cost analysis, etc.

Related Traffic and Transport Arrangements

9. To facilitate locals and visitors in travelling to and from the TST Star Ferry Pier and the TST waterfront, and to maintain smooth traffic flow in the area, the Transport Department (TD) plans to build a new turnaround at Salisbury Road outside the Hong Kong Cultural Centre to complement the development of the piazza. TD will also complete the phased relocation of bus routes from the TST Star Ferry Pier PTI before works of the piazza commence. In addition, in the course of public engagement, we have received views on the vehicular and pedestrian traffic arrangements in the area. To address these views, TD has proposed relevant traffic and transport arrangements, as summarized in **Appendix IV**. These have been presented to the concerned District Councils, tourism trade and relevant professional bodies at separate consultation sessions, and have gained the support of these parties. The design of the new turnaround is at **Appendix V**. Construction of the new turnaround will commence in 2009 for completion by 2010 the earliest, before the PTI at TST Star Ferry Pier is closed to make way for the development of the proposed piazza.

Views Sought

10. Members' views are invited on the development parameters for the piazza proposed in paragraph 8 above.

Location Plan of the Proposed Piazza in Tsim Sha Tsui



**List of Key Stakeholders and Professional Bodies
Consulted / Invited to Offer Views**

1. Hong Kong Association of Registered Tour Co-ordinators Ltd.
2. Hong Kong Association of Travel Agents Ltd.
3. Hong Kong Hotels Association
4. Hong Kong Institute of Architects*
5. Hong Kong Professional Tourist Guides General Union
6. Hong Kong Tourism Board*
7. Hong Kong Institute of Landscape Architects #
8. Hong Kong Institute of Planners #
9. Sports Federation & Olympic Committee of Hong Kong, China
10. Harbour-front Enhancement Committee:
 - a) Sub-committee on Harbour Plan Review*; and
 - b) Task group on Management Model for the Harbourfront*
11. The Federation of Hong Kong Hotel Owners
12. Tourism Strategy Group*
13. Travel Industry Council of Hong Kong*
14. Yau Tsim Mong District Council*
15. Hong Kong Institution of Engineers @
16. Hong Kong Institute of Surveyors @

* Consultation session conducted

A joint consultation session with the Hong Kong Institute of Landscape Architects and the Hong Kong Institute of Planners (HKIP) was conducted. HKIP also made a separate written submission of views.

@ The Hong Kong Institution of Engineers had no comments on the project while the Hong Kong Institute of Surveys' views had not yet been received by May 2008.

Public Engagement on the Proposed Development of a Piazza in Tsim Sha Tsui

Summary of findings of the consultancy report

Background

This community engagement exercise aimed at soliciting views from members of the public as well as key stakeholders of the tourism trade and community, and professional bodies on the uses, and the development and management modes of the future piazza. The views and suggestions collected in this exercise as well as from the workshop of May 2007 will form the basis for TC to draw up the development parameters and concrete proposal for the Project.

The report summarises and analyses the views collected during this public engagement exercise. A total of 61 submissions of views were received through the Internet or by fax or post. A further 17 submissions, including notes of discussion and minutes of consultation sessions and letters, were received from relevant organizations and their members.

The majority of views collected in this exercise support the piazza project (e.g. the tourism sector, the Yau Tsim Mong District Council, etc.), although there are concerns mainly about vehicular and pedestrian traffic arrangements in the area.

Uses of the Piazza

Among the many ideas collected, the most popular ideas on the uses of the piazza in terms of facilities are: trees and greenery / lawn areas, open space for public activities, access to MTR station(s), underground car parks (possibly multi-storey), seating areas, and alfresco café. For uses in terms of activities, the most popular ideas are: outdoor carnivals or cultural / art performances (eg. street performances, mini concerts, magic shows, etc.), and outdoor exhibitions / displays of visual arts. For modes of development and management, the majority of views are for the Government to fund the design and construction of the piazza, with the private sector funding and managing the operation. These findings (see *Section 4.2* of the report for details) are in general consistent with those collected from the workshop in May 2007.

Table 1: Suggested Facilities of the Piazza

Facilities	
1. Trees and greenery / lawn areas (30)	16. Tourist information center (2)
2. Open space for public activities (16)	17. Terries wheel (2)
3. Access to MTR station(s) (12)	18. Pavilion (2)
4. Underground car parks, possibly multi-storey (12)	19. Sculptures (2)
5. Seating areas (11)	20. Clock tower of former Central Star Ferry Pier (1)
6. Alfresco Café (10)	21. Outdoor performance venue (1)
7. Souvenir / food kiosks (7)	22. Temporary exhibition boards (1)
8. Outdoor exhibition (6)	23. Public toilets (1)
9. Covered walkway / travelator (6)	24. Lighting and audio facilities (1)
10. Taxi stands / vehicle pick-up/drop-off points / loading/unloading areas (6)	25. A landmark feature (1)
11. Sheltered areas (4)	26. Paving and street furniture (1)
12. Keep part or the whole of the existing bus terminal (4)	27. Footbridge connecting TST and TSTE (1)
13. Artistic bilingual signposts (3)	28. Underground commercial developments (1)
14. Fountain (3)	29. Use Star Ferry roof as observation deck or for alfresco dining (1)
15. Performance space with seating (3)	

Table 2: Suggested Activities of the Piazza

Activities
1. Outdoor carnivals or cultural / art group performances (eg. street performances, mini concerts, magic shows) (10)
2. Outdoor exhibitions of visual arts (5)
3. Resting (3)
4. Christmas and new year count-down activities (2)
5. Weekend market (1)
6. Harbour watching (1)

Modes of Development and Management of the piazza

Relatively fewer respondents offered comments on the development and management modes. For those responded, the most popular choices were for Government to fund the design and construction of the piazza, private sector to manage these tasks, and the private sector to fund and manage the facility operation. These choices are similar to those popular choices from the brainstorming workshop.

Recommended Development Principles

The majority of the views collected in this exercise support the piazza project (e.g. the tourism sector, the Yau Tsim Mong District Council, etc.), although there are some concerns (see Section 4.4 in the report) mainly on vehicular and pedestrian traffic arrangements in the area. Taking into account the results of this exercise and the ideas solicited from the workshop of May 2007, five general principles are recommended for taking forward the piazza project:

1. A holistic design: the piazza should blend in well with its vicinity visually and functionally;
2. A themed piazza: a suitable theme can be considered for enhancing the piazza's attractiveness;
3. Public-private partnership mode: the Government to fund the design and construction of the piazza, private sector to manage these tasks, and the private sector to fund and manage the facility operation;
4. Multi-purpose uses: the piazza should be able to accommodate activities ranging from passive enjoyment of green open space to vibrant events; and
5. Public engagement: there should be further public engagement in finalizing the piazza's design.

**Development of a Piazza in Tsim Sha Tsui
Related Traffic and Transport Arrangements**

To ensure smooth traffic flow with the development of the proposed piazza, a number of traffic and transport arrangements are being implemented by the Transport Department (TD) in parallel, as set out in the paragraphs below.

Bus Relocation by Phases

2. TD has been working closely with the bus company and departments concerned on the phased relocation of bus routes from the public transport interchange (PTI) adjacent to the Tsim Sha Tsui (TST) Star Ferry Pier prior to the commencement of construction works of the proposed piazza. At present, the terminal stops of two bus routes, namely No. 28 and No. 234X, are already relocated to the TST (Mody Road) Bus Terminus. The bus relocation is expected to be completed by 2010.

New Bus stops and Taxi Stand

3. To maintain smooth traffic flow, a new turnaround at Salisbury Road outside the Hong Kong Cultural Centre (HKCC) will be built before the final closure of the PTI outside TST Star Ferry Pier. Construction of the new turnaround will be carried out in stages, and is expected to commence in 2009 for completion by 2010 at the earliest. Upon its completion, a total of 8 clearly demarcated bus stops, comprising 6 for boarding and 2 for alighting, will be provided at the turnaround. To facilitate taxi operation, a taxi stand for 16 taxis and a drop-off area for 4 taxis will be provided at the centre of the turnaround.

Coach Lay-by

4. To facilitate the operation of tourist coaches, a new coach lay-by accommodating up to 4 coaches will be provided outside the front entrance of the HKCC.

Pick-up / Drop-off Points for Passengers of Private Vehicles

5. Private vehicles may continue to drop-off or pick up passengers at the lay-by on Canton Road outside the Marco Polo Hong Kong Hotel, and also along the driveway outside HKCC. In future, they can also pick up and drop off passengers at the additional traffic lane on Canton Road outside the former Marine Police Headquarters. The pick-up and drop-off area is about 30 metres away from the junction with Salisbury Road.

6. Apart from the above new arrangements, TD has conducted traffic impact assessment on the relocation of the PTI outside the TST Star Ferry Pier. Results of the assessment indicate that the traffic in TST will operate satisfactorily after the completion of the MTRC Kowloon Southern Link and other major road works in the area by 2009/2010. Also, the road capacity of Nathan Road, Salisbury Road, Kowloon Park Drive and other nearby junctions would be sufficient to accommodate the future traffic flows. To ensure smooth traffic flow, TD will continue to monitor the traffic conditions in the area and make adjustments whenever necessary.

