

Mr. YIP Wing-shing,  
Chairman of C&W DC,  
c/o C&W DC Secretariat, 11/F, Harbour Building,  
38 Pier Road, Central, Hong Kong

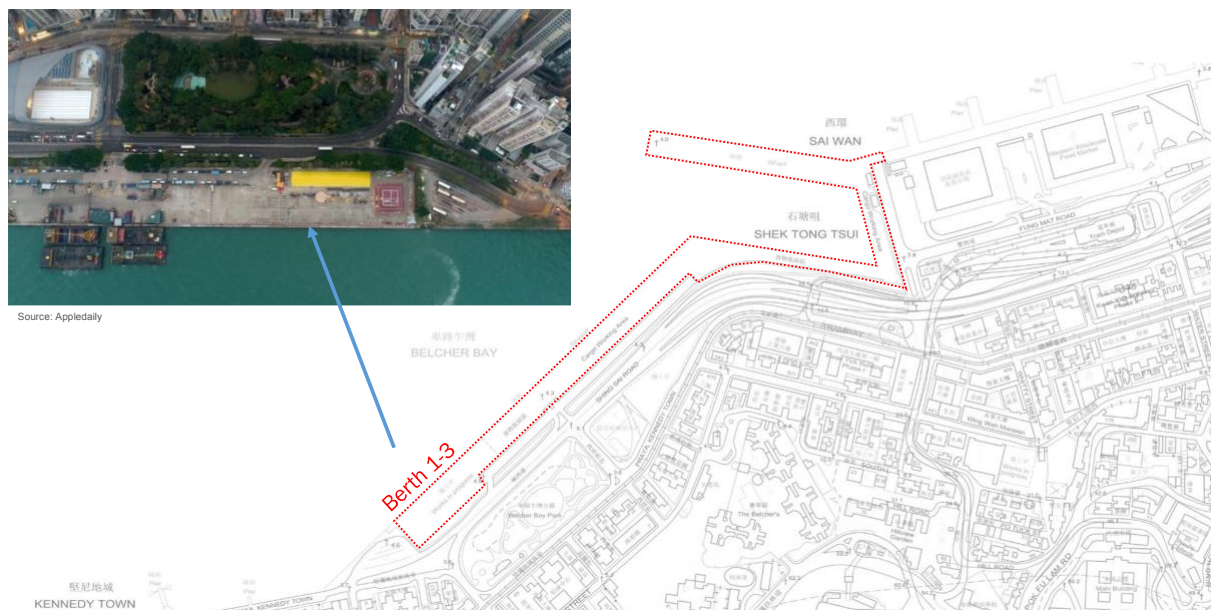
3<sup>rd</sup> January, 2018

Dear Mr. Yip:

**Re: Objection to turn Sai Wan Pier Berths 1-3 into community garden & outsourced management**

Happy New Year in 2018. We are writing to share our proposal re agenda item 13: Concern over the Government's plan to develop a community garden at the Western District Public Cargo Working Area ("Sai Wan Pier") in upcoming C&W DC meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> January, 2018 (Exhibit 1). We appreciate that you can circulate it to all members and relevant government officers re this subject. We would like to position this as an overview of our proposal. Since we have not got time to explain the details below and the presentation time in C&W DC meeting are very limited, please feel free to let us if you need to further meet with our organizations, so that we can go through our proposal in thorough manner. Thanks a lot for your kind attention.

Exhibit 1



**Summary of our requests**

- 1) Government needs to admit and respect that residents of Western District and other visitors currently have been using Sai Wan Pier vibrantly as public open space for the past 10 years or so. It is not an idle land, so that there is **no need** to put community garden there to "activate" or make the place "vibrant". Also, community garden

should be placed in other suitable locations within the community and nearby residential areas, so that win-win solution can be achieved.

- 2) Since Sai Wan Pier has currently been used by residents already, before holistic community consultation and engagement is done, government should keep Sai Wan Pier as is to let residents use it without interruption. This implies that the gate near Shing Sai Road bus stop on the west of Berths 1-3 and the gate near Shing Sai Road on the south of Berths 1-3 should be open for pedestrian access. Given the minimal design and infrastructure changes are required (see section below re **Basis of our requests**), outsourced management is **not** required. Relevant government department should be able to handle. Currently, the site is under DO's management. For the benefits of general public to continue enjoying the use of Sai Wan Pier, we request that Sai Wan Pier:
  - is allowed to be accessed by public all the time,
  - has clear criteria defined and publicised for letting out,
  - does not compromise the area of open space accessible by public if it is let out (i.e., only small fraction of the site to be let out rather than the Taoist event in Nov 2017 that almost the whole site let out for 3 weeks long)
  - has immediate supervision by DO to keep the site clean by tenants, and
  - has transparency re approval criteria by DO
- 3) Due to severe shortage of public open space in Western District, the whole area of Berths 1-3 should be used as public open space in the short, medium and long term.

### **Basis of our requests**

The aforementioned proposal is based on facts, genuine public opinions from the community being affected solicited via residents' petition and survey feedback, community engagement in various forums, street station, and social media:

- 1) Sai Wan Pier is vibrantly used (Exhibit 2) in such a way that it has gained award and acclamation (Exhibit 3) such as Outstanding Public Space Award, Instagram Pier, "Mirror of the Sky", etc. The uniqueness of this public space is its natural proximity to harborfront, free, spacious, highly accessible and multi-purpose open space. If government is concerning about releasing the space to public for use on a short-term basis, say in next 3 years or so before the long-term land use review by around 2021, leaving the place as is already a solution given it has been actively used by residents in the past 10 years.

Exhibit 2 illustrates examples of the current uses of Sai Wan Pier

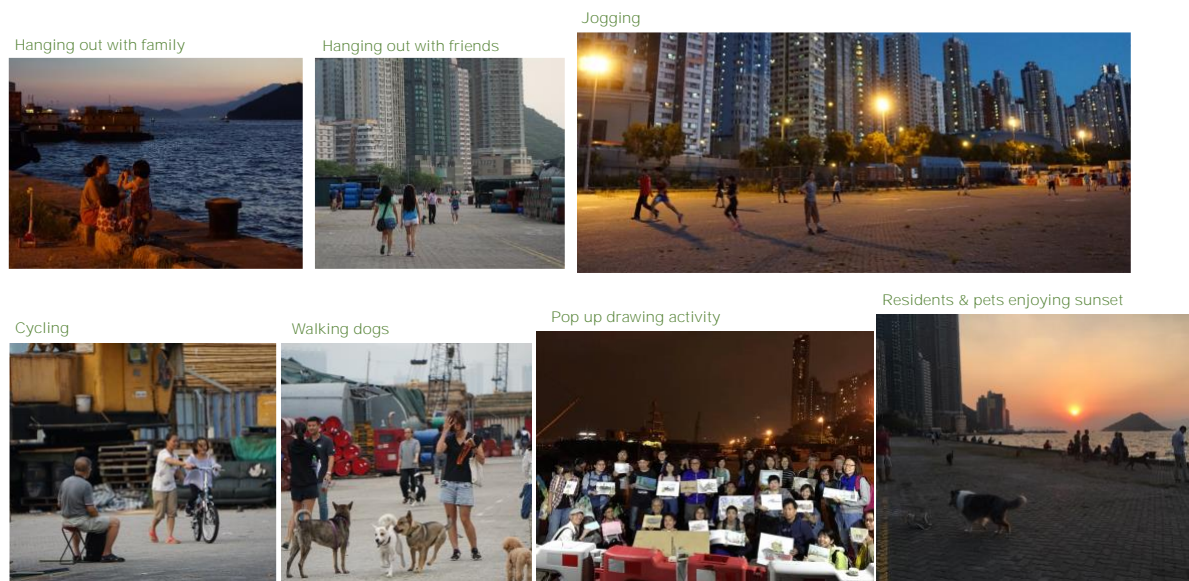
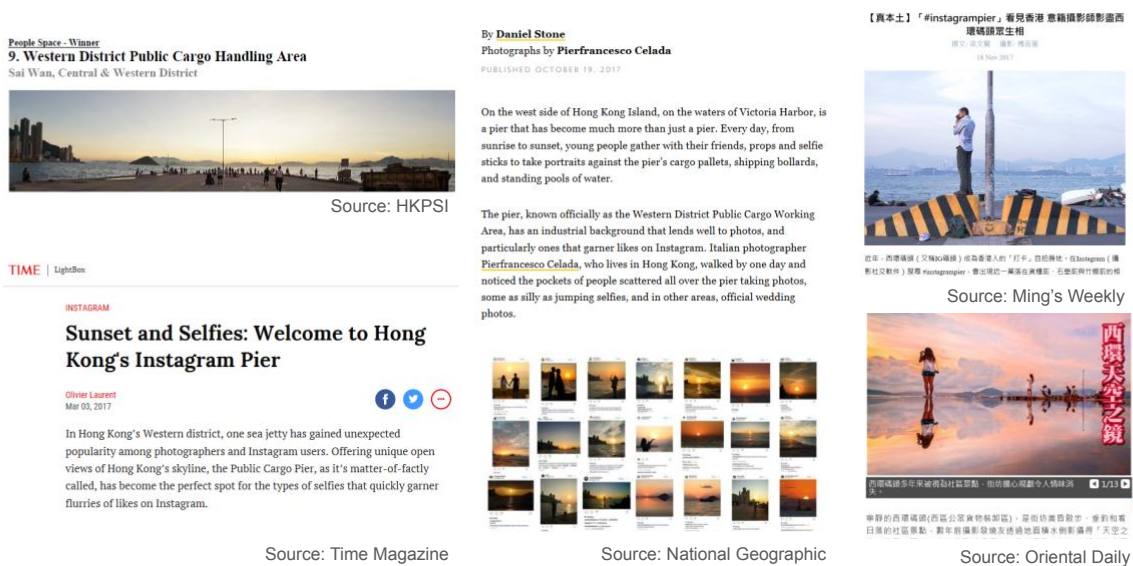


Exhibit 3 shows the acclamation that Sai Wan Pier has gained from the public



2) The current uses of Sai Wan Pier are also confirmed by the residents' survey conducted jointly by concern groups in various Western districts. This survey covers locations at Sai Wan Pier (berths from Shing Sai Road to Fung Mat Road) and places near residential areas at Shek Tong Tsui, Sai Wan, and Kennedy Town. Both frequent and occasional users of the pier were surveyed to ensure a balance of views. Online and offline petition and survey were conducted that around 3,900 residents signed the petition letters and around 550 surveys with more details were conducted by 1<sup>st</sup> Jan 2018. Number of respondents is increasing as the petition and survey are still

going on.

Based on the petition letters collected so far, here is the key messages from those several thousands of residents:

- Object turning the Western Cargo Working Area Berths 1-3 into community garden
- Currently, this area has been a favourite public harbourfront space for residents to visit, including various popular usage in terms of hanging out with friends and families, jogging, leisure walking, and dog walking, etc.
- If a community garden is constructed, 80% of the public space will be fenced and no more free public access under disguised privatisation.
- Even worse, the Central & Western District open space is already insufficient and significantly below Planning Guidelines (0.68sqm per person of local open space while the standard is 1 sqm)
- The government's proposal would further deprive our Central & Western District residents the right to truly and much needed open and accessible space.
- In addition, community garden should be located in the middle of the neighbourhood (eg, rooftop of buildings, nearby areas of residential buildings), while stay away from strong wind, strong prolonged sunlight and high salt air, so as to beautify the environment and purify the air with more urban greening, which is significantly lacking in Kennedy Town
- Government should find other appropriate locations to meet the needs of community garden
- Request the government to openly consult the public
- Discuss with residents about how to use this area to make it more openly and vibrantly used by the public

3) Below are some verbatim quotes from individual residents who participated in the aforementioned petition. Their points reinforce our proposal to keep the space as is.

- “保留現狀！”“維持不變！”“乜都唔好攞,唔該”“保持原狀給居民使用♥”。“請欣賞無為而治之美”
- “多年以來, 碼頭都市 中西區的休恬空間, 一直相安無事, 市民都樂見有一個, 自然, 沒有規劃, 可以自由自在的地方。”
- “完全不明白政府, 為何常常與民為敵, 不能讓市民有好日子, 過往往執意作出一些 不適當, 不需要的行為。”
- “堅城的特色, 為何要強行抹殺, 破壞。零諮詢, 屠殺市民大眾公眾空間, 還我們珍貴的海岸, 好過獨享花園。”
- “We need an open space for our activities. It is most disgusting when the gov't don't care about the real need of an empty space for the community. This is our only piece of place that has NOTHING in it. Having a totally empty space in HK is a rare thing. Why does the gov't always have to mess up things by "improving" it. We don't need improvement. We need to be left alone. We need a real space for the organic growth and joy of the community.”

- 4) Based on the survey, it revealed more specific activities that residents are doing, and want to do at Sai Wan Pier. The implication is that residents want to use Sai Wan Pier as a large, wide public open space with minimal infrastructure built, so as to accommodate more people and pets, enjoy the space freely for outdoor activities as they see fit, and enjoy the natural scenery along the harbourfront promenade. All these require Sai Wan Pier to be highly accessible public open space as it has been currently for years. Here is the details of the findings:

Question	Results	% of total respondents
A) Do residents want community garden at Sai Wan Pier location?	No Yes	93% 7%
B) Top 5 current uses of Sai Wan Pier	Hanging out with friends & family Jogging Photography Cycling Dog walking	63% 57% 51% 24% 22%
C) Top 5 facilities residents want to add at Sai Wan Pier	Drinking fountains Toilets Litter bins Seating More entrances	55% 49% 48% 46% 43%
D) Top 3 additional activities residents would like to do at Sai Wan Pier	Temporary art exhibitions Temp. outdoor cinema Neighbourhood parties	45% 43% 39%
E) Do residents say they want to change Sai Wan Pier?	- Sai Wan Pier is good and only some changes are required (see question C) - Sai Wan Pier is good and no change is required - Sai Wan Pier is not good and needs to change	67% 17% 15%

- 5) Based on the findings above, it will be no surprise to understand why there is such strong public opinion against community garden at Sai Wan Pier. Central & Western District is severely short of public open space for years. Particularly, Kennedy Town suffers the worst in terms of open space provision from both local and district open space perspectives:

- For Central and Western District, Local open space per person: 0.68 sqm, fall short of the standard 1sqm by 32%
- According to Kennedy Town & Mt. Davis District OZP S/H1/20, Local + District Open Space per person = 0.83 sqm, fall short of the standard 2sqm by 59% (also LO and DO are both below their respective standard of 1sqm)
- Berths 1-3 as public open space improves OZP's OS from 0.83sqm to 0.93sqm, i.e., a 12% improvement

Therefore, Sai Wan Pier is the only wide-open quality public open space that has such beautiful natural harbourfront scenery. This serves not only local residents in the community but also civilians from other parts of Hong Kong. During our survey, we found that 13% of people using Sai Wan Pier are from places outside Central &



Western Districts, incl. areas from Kowloon and even Shatin, etc. Development Bureau and District Council should take this unique opportunity to address the acute problem of open space shortage in Kennedy Town.

- 6) While we also respect the need for community garden, the site selection is important for community garden in order not to frustrate those users. Exhibit 4 illustrates the facts that Sai Wan Pier is not optimal for community garden and alternative site should be considered. Also, it will be relatively costly to make the environment good for farming and the variety of the species of plants is much reduced. All these factors will not be welcomed by the users of the community garden. As the area for farming will take away the current free open space no matter how big it is at the pier, it will be a lose-lose situation for all users.

#### Exhibit 4

Community garden can be in various forms with a common goal to deliver happiness for users

- Occupier-led / Owner-led
- Institutional community group
- Commercial enterprise
- Community social enterprise

Environmental constraints making community garden difficult and costly to be located at harbourfront

- Wind (Difficult to erect fence for certain plants)
- Salinity
- Strong sunlight and high evapotranspiration (Certain plants cannot grow)
- Sea wave (Potentially damaging the plants)

Community garden is better located at underutilized space

- Extra costs to put infrastructure to address the environmental constraints at pier make it less economical for the operator
- Roof top of GIC and underutilized land near residential areas are better locations (Kennedy Town Community Complex is already a good example)
- Residents esp. elders can conveniently access the garden to look after their plants



Prof. Pryor, Community Expert from HKU: "Community garden at Sai Wan Pier, absolutely not a good idea ... community garden is better put inside the community as urban farming is for happiness, and residents need to visit their plants regularly to take care of them. Esp. for elders, it is better for their health if the site can be closer to them that they can reach easily ... on the other hand, the open space at the pier is a common good for anyone to access anytime, rather than letting certain ones to own the place for their own farming ..."

#### Potential Edible Plants on Rooftop vs near Seafront

Bak Choi	Choi Sum	Small Mustard	Chinese Kale	Cabbage	Long Cabbage			
Broccoli	Cauliflower	Chinese Amaranth	Water Spinach	Ceylon Spinach				
Lettuce	Celtuce	Garland Chrysanthemum	Spinach	Celery	Chinese Celery			
Hot Pepper	Sweet Pepper	Tomato	Eggplant	Okra	Corn	String Bean		
Snow Bean	Green Bean	<b>Peanut</b>	Zucchini	Bottle Gourd	Mint	Cucumber		
Bitter Gorud	Angled Luffa	Hairy Gourd	Winter Gorud	Pumpkin	Chayote			
Summer Squash	White Turnip	Cherry Radish	Carrot	Beet	Sweet Potato			
Ginger	Chinese Chive	Shallot	Garlic	Onion	Basil	Parsley	Coriander	

Only plants in black text above are suitable at sea side, indicating the variety is limited if community garden is put at harbourfront

The criteria for community garden should be based on the community such as close to community, farming happiness and social cohesion, and not just a temporary service (please note the current DevB proposal for Sai Wan Pier is on a short-term tenancy basis, such that it is a temporary community garden only). Jointly working with professionals, our concern groups identified alternative locations that can provide 3,000 to 4,000 sqm for community garden in Kennedy Town, including sites at G/IC sites in Central & Western District, derelict area in Ui On Lane, empty plot by the side of Ladder Street and Circular Pathway, and within housing estates such as Sai Wan Estate and Kwun Long Lau at Kennedy Town. Government should study those sites and make the community garden relatively permanent for the community.

\* \* \*

In summary, we reiterate our proposal that the whole area of Sai Wan Pier Berths 1-3 should be used as public open space in the short, medium and long term. We object to

outsourced management for this site. Community garden should be placed in other locations within the community and nearby residential areas.

**Contact point:**

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**Proposed by organizations:**

Protect Kennedy Town Alliance

Sai Wan Concern Group

Island West Dynamic Movement

Central & Western District Concern Group