

Islands District Council

Paper IDC 30/2009

Revitalization of Tai O

Objective

This paper serves to brief members on the progress and proposals of the above project, including the draft Concept Plan for Revitalisation of Tai O and to seek members' views and support to the implementation of the proposals in this project.

Background

2. In June 2007, the Civil Engineering and Development Department commissioned a consultancy to undertake the "Improvement Works for Tai O Facelift – Feasibility Study". Public views collected through community forums and different channels during the study generally supported an early implementation of the "Revitalisation of Tai O" project. To facilitate the public to express their ideas and proposals more specifically, we held the "Design Competition for the Revitalisation of Tai O" in March 2008 to solicit different innovative inputs for an implementation strategy and plan to revitalise Tai O.

3. We collected opinions on the development of Tai O from across the society in the form of a design competition for the first time. It was very successful in terms of the responses to the competition and the quality of the entries. We received 105 entries (36 from Professional Group and 69 from Open Group), all at very high standard and showing a deep understanding on Tai O. The result was announced on 8 September 2008. The entries delivered a common message: while we enhance the environment of Tai O, we should conserve the natural habitat and its environment and preserve the cultural heritage at the same time.

4. On the other hand, a number of "Advance Improvement Works" are being implemented in response to the request of the Tai O Rural Committee to cater for the more imminent needs of the local community.

Concept Plan for Revitalisation of Tai O

5. The Tai O revitalisation concept is basically taken from the ideas in various entries of the design competition. In the course of consolidating and analyzing the entries, we fully considered the suggestions of the entries in the aspects of planning, landscape & urban design, constructability, environmental acceptability and sustainability. Furthermore, we thoroughly discussed and exchanged ideas with the winning participant individuals/groups to have a better understanding of the design concepts. The vision of the enhancement concept is **“Harmonious Enhancement of Tai O”** with a view to conserving the fishing village of Tai O with its unique heritage and character. The development proposals made in the Concept Plan are based on three principal enhancement themes namely **“Local Connectivity”**, **“Heritage/Culture”** and **“Nature”**. They aimed at preserving and revitalizing the character and tradition of Tai O, conserving the natural habitat and its environment, and improving the local connectivity in Tai O. It is hoped that with the improvement of the environment and the enhancement of facilities, the local economy can be boosted and all sorts of business can be revitalised, including the manufacturing of shrimp paste, markets and shops of water products and traditional local food. The layout of the Concept Plan is attached at Annex 1. The revitalisation concepts under different themes are listed below:

a. Local Connectivity

- LC1 – Entrance Plaza with new paving, tree planting and Tai O Experience Centre
- LC2 – Footbridges for improved circulation (Yim Tin to Sun Ki)
- LC3 – Coach parking area
- LC4 – Footbridges for improved circulation (Yeung Hau Temple to Sun Ki)
- LC5 – Promenade and garden for improved circulation and views
- LC6 – New / Improved jetties for boat tours
- LC7 – Improvement to helipad

b. Heritage / Culture

- HC1 – Yeung Hau Temple – temple garden upgrade
- HC2 – Inner Loop Heritage Trail
- HC3 – Kwan Tai Temple – temple garden upgrade
- HC4 – Hand-pulled Ferry / Footbridge
- HC5 – Events Space for Community and Cultural Events such as Chinese Opera
- HC6 – Stilted House Experience Centre
- HC7 – Salt-Panning Demonstration Area with viewing deck and information board
- HC8 – Old Tai O Police Station – Revitalisation to be undertaken by Non-Profit

Making Organization

c. Nature

- N1 – Wilderness Campsite
- N2 – New / Improved Trekking Route
- N3 – Outer Loop Nature Trail
- N4A – Introduction of boardwalk for improved access and views of Selected Mangrove Species
- N4B – Wetland Experience – Reedbed with boardwalks, viewing decks, Eco Trails and information boards
- N5 – Use of Tin Lee House as Youth Hostel to promote Eco-tour / tourism
- N6 – Bird and Wildlife Watching Hides

Recent Public Consultation

6. We have launched a series of public consultation on the Concept Plan for Revitalisation of Tai O. Parties consulted include:

- a. Organising Committee of the Design Competition for the Revitalisation of Tai O (meeting on 6 February 2009);
- b. Tai O Rural Committee (meeting on 11 March 2009);
- c. Focus Group comprising The Hong Kong Institute of Architects, Hong Kong Institute of Planners, The Hong Kong Institution of Engineers, The Hong Kong Institute of Landscape Architects and Hong Kong Institution of Surveyors (meeting on 13 March 2009);
- d. Tai O local residents and interested parties (2nd public forum on 21 March 2009).

7. During these public consultations, we collected a lot of comments and suggestions, in which the professional groups expressed their concerns on issues concerning overall planning and sustainability. We will work with the relevant departments for the necessary supplementary information and meet with the professional groups for further discussion and exchange of views. As regards the other comments on functional requirements and details of specific facilities, these will be considered during the detailed design stage. We will conduct further public consultation if considered necessary.

The Way Forward

8. Members are invited to support the Concept Plan for Revitalisation of Tai O in order to facilitate the completion of the feasibility study of the proposed items. We intend to commence the detailed design of the revitalisation project by the end of this year. The construction works will start in phases from 2010 onward. The whole project will be completed in 2013.

Hong Kong Island and Islands Development Office

Civil Engineering and Development Department

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