

Summary of Minutes of Special Meeting of Islands District Council

Date : 13 July 2015 (Monday)

Time : 3:30 p.m.

Venue : Conference Room, Islands District Council, 14/F, Harbour Building,
38 Pier Road, Central, Hong Kong.

I. Planning, Engineering and Architectural Study for Topside Development at Hong Kong Boundary Crossing Facilities Island of Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge – Feasibility Study – Stage 1 Community Engagement

A representative of the Planning Department (PlanD) briefed on the objective of the planning, engineering and architectural study for topside development at Hong Kong Boundary Crossing Facilities (HKBCF) Island of Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge (HZMB) and the Stage 1 Community Engagement which lasted for two months. The Consultant's representative then explained with the aid of PowerPoint presentation the scope of study which included the development opportunities and constraints, planning goal, positioning consideration, initial development concept as well as the initial concept of external connectivity.

A member gave his views as follows:

- (a) According to the Paper, the HKBCF Island of HZMB, by initial estimate, would offer a gross floor area of 300 000 square metres for commercial development, e.g. offices, hotels, retail and conference facilities. He enquired whether a projection was made at the current stage of the number of jobs to be created by the whole project.
- (b) He cited an overseas case study of bridgehead economy development as an example. An iconic greenhouse was designed for the Changi Airport, Singapore to reinforce the state-city's image as a garden city. With greening becoming more important in our lives, he proposed greeneries and open space be provided in the topside development of the HKBCF Island apart from commercial use.

- (c) He enquired whether shopping facilities would be provided on the HKBCF Island for mainland travellers to buy daily necessities without having to go to Tung Chung Town Centre so that they would be spared of unpleasanties with the locals.
- (d) With the future development and population growth in Tung Chung, the demand for parking spaces would increase. He enquired whether the demand by boundary crossing users had been taken into account when the study was conducted.

A member gave his opinions as follows:

- (a) In the reply at the Legislative Council (LegCo) meeting in 2010, Acting Secretary for Transport and Housing Mr YAU Shing-mui said, “Since the HKBCF involves reclamation works, having regard to environmental protection and financial considerations, we should minimise the size of the reclamation (currently estimated to be about 130 hectares), and the main purpose of the land reclaimed should be to accommodate the boundary crossing and traffic and transportation facilities of the HZMB. Furthermore, as the HKBCF is located in the vicinity of the Hong Kong International Airport, its buildings need to comply with the Airport Height Restrictions (between 25 to 50 metres PD), and structures which are too bulky should be avoided as they might bring visual impact. Based on the above considerations, we do not recommend large-scale commercial developments on the HKBCF.” According to the initial conceptual plan in the Paper, the proposed commercial development would have a gross floor area of about 300 000-500 000 square metres. He enquired whether the current development direction was taken with regard to the considerations in the early years since the development constraints remained unresolved or were even more significant.
- (b) For retail facilities, while there would be abundant commercial development in the neighbouring regions, e.g. the Airport’s North Commercial District, the boundary shopping mall and the reclaimed land in Tung Chung for commercial development, was there any need for provision of retail or commercial facilities on HKBCF Island? He opined that the planning should not be formulated in isolation from surrounding developments, and consideration should also be given to the demand for such commercial facilities.

- (c) Besides bridgehead economy development, greening should be taken as one of the development themes for HKBCF Island. He was disappointed that there was no mention of green areas in the Paper. He was appreciative of the planning of Changi Airport in Singapore and hoped that more greening or conservation components would be incorporated in the plan for topside development of the HKBCF Island to mitigate the environmental impacts after the commissioning of the HZMB.
- (d) He was concerned about the transport links between the HKBCF Island and Tung Chung and hoped that environmentally-friendly vehicles such as electric vehicles would be used.

Another member gave her opinions as follows:

- (a) Compared with the East Lantau Metropolis (i.e. the artificial island in the central waters), the HKBCF Island project was more realistic. Reclamation works for the East Lantau Metropolis were in larger scale but little concrete information was provided. In contrast, there was more detailed information about the HKBCF Island project.
- (b) The proposed commercial development on the HKBCF Island involved a floor area of about 300 000 square metres including hotels and offices which were subject to a building height restriction. She enquired whether parts of the hotels would be built underground as the retail facilities.
- (c) For security, the HKBCF Island was primarily developed for customs clearance purpose involving a large amount of security check. If the clearance facilities were located at the same areas as the hotels, exhibition halls and entertainment facilities, proper planning should be made with considerations to reduce security risk.
- (d) On external linkage, she welcomed the Government's preliminary linkage proposal of connecting the HKBCF Island with the airport, Siu Ho Wan and Tung Chung. At present, North Lantau Highway and Tsing Ma Bridge were the sole corridors connecting the airport and if there was any accident causing road blockage, the traffic around the

airport would be affected. She shared the views of other members on the use of environmentally-friendly vehicles, such as monorail.

Another member gave his views as follows:

- (a) While discussing the HZMB project in 2009/10, members of the Islands District Council (IDC) requested the Government to establish an inter-departmental committee to discuss how to seize the opportunity to develop a bridgehead economy, and the District Council members and other stakeholders would be invited to sit on the committee. He was disappointed that the Government did not commence a feasibility study or consultation until five years later.
- (b) He enquired about the progress of HZMB, Tuen Mun-Chek Lap Kok Link and the connection of HKBCF Island and Siu Ho Wan Section as well as the Tung Chung New Town Extension Project. The above projects were interrelated and should not be planned separately.
- (c) For air quality, the data of the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) showed that Tung Chung topped other districts with the highest concentration of ozone. The Environment Bureau had set up three low emission zones. He enquired whether the Government would consider listing North Lantau as the fourth low emission zone so that only vehicles which met the emission standard were allowed to enter.
- (d) He disagreed to the views that the proposed floor area for commercial use on the HKBCF Island was excessive. The flow of people would increase substantially after the commissioning of HZMB, and if all visitors flocked to Tung Chung, it would be crowded with people, and the rent and also commodity prices would go up. He hoped the Airport's North Commercial District and HKBCF Island would ease the strains on Tung Chung.
- (e) It was not hard for Tung Chung residents to find work, but he understood that many youths wanted to start their own businesses. He hoped the Government would consider the development projects on HKBCF Island carefully to provide an opportunity for young entrepreneurs.

A member asked if railway would be considered as a means for linking the HKBCF Island. The hotels, entertainment and conference facilities would be the sources of attraction for visitors, and railway transport should be provided or the planning would not be comprehensive. For internal transport, he proposed the use of environmentally-friendly mass transit transport.

A member gave his opinions as follows:

- (a) He suggested that more elements should be added in the development of HKBCF Island which was not just a cross-border facility. He hoped the Government would make good use of the topside and provide leisure and entertainment facilities, e.g. an all-weather sky garden. Creativity areas might also be provided for Hong Kong's designers to develop their own brands.
- (b) Upon the completion of HZMB, the flow of people and goods would increase. He suggested the Government to explore measures for developing tourism in Tung Chung Town Centre, Lantau and Islands District.
- (c) Given that the commercial development on the HKBCF Island and the three runway system project in the airport would create abundant job opportunities, external transport infrastructure had to be provided for working people. With the existing high patronage on the Tung Chung Line, the carrying capacity would be under pressure if passengers increased.
- (d) He cited the travelling time of airport staff living in Tung Chung West and Tung Chung East to go to work to illustrate his point. If buses or electric vehicles were to be used for linking HKBCF Island and other parts of the territory, they might not be able to cope with the demand. He proposed the construction of a rapid and independent mass transit system to connect the island to the airport, airport cargo area and Tung Chung Town Centre and further to Tung Chung West and Tung Chung North to facilitate the movement of residents and tourists.

The Vice-chairlady gave her opinions as follows:

- (a) IDC supported the construction of HZMB in 2009 on condition that the Government would establish an inter-departmental committee to

promote and develop bridgehead economy. At that time the Transport and Housing Bureau (THB) just focused on transportation, without paying much attention to the topside development on the island. The Policy Address 2014 mentioned the initiatives for topside development of the HKBCF Island and funding was approved early this year for launching a feasibility study.

- (b) She supported the ideas about provision of creativity workshops to bring Hong Kong brands and local designer products to customers all over the world with a view to creating opportunities for young local designers.
- (c) It was not mentioned in the Paper about provision of parking facilities for vehicles travelling to HKBCF Island via HZMB. As the AsiaWorld-Expo had already set aside land for further development, she enquired whether the exhibition facilities on HKBCF Island would overlap with those of the AsiaWorld-Expo and she proposed other facilities, e.g. carpark.
- (d) She was concerned about the connection between the HKBCF Island and Tung Chung. Given that airport staff living in Yat Tung Estate already had to spend about an hour travelling to work, those working on HKBCF Island might be like travelling to another district if the future connecting point was far away from Tung Chung Town Centre.

The representative of CEDD responded as follows:

- (a) The primary concerns of THB were to ensure the timely completion of HZMB when it conducted the engineering planning in 2010. It intended to provide a little retail and dining services in the immigration complex to meet the basic needs of visitors.
- (b) The HZMB had proceeded to the construction stage. With the rapid economic growth in PRD region, the demand for commercial land was great. The HKBCF Island near to the airport would serve as a gateway for Hong Kong and the western PRD and take on great value as a bridgehead economy. It was time to consider developing commercial facilities on the HKBCF Island to generate synergy with the airport, Tung Chung and the surrounding areas.

- (c) No reclamation works were involved but the development projects were subject to the airport height restrictions.
- (d) On transport links, no option was proposed since the study was at an initial stage. The study team would discuss with the relevant departments on the feasibility of using railway to connect the HKBCF Island and North Lantau. The Government would also maintain close liaison with the Airport Authority to study the linkage option for HKBCF Island and airport island for public consultation at the next stage.
- (e) On parking facilities, the study team would devise an appropriate number of parking spaces to be provided according to the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines and also explore the feasibility of providing parking spaces for visitors in transit.
- (f) On the progress of the Tung Chung New Town Extension Study, an environmental impact assessment (EIA) was being conducted and the EIA report would be submitted to EPD within this year. An EIA would be carried out for topside development on the HKBCF Island, which also covered an investigation into the feasibility of an environmentally-friendly transport network.
- (g) Given the current progress of the works of HZMB, the HKBCF and Hong Kong Link Road would possibly not be completed by end of 2016. The Highways Department would review the projected date of completion.

A representative of the PlanD said that the study would examine in depth whether the various projects on North Lantau would have conflicts with the topside development of HKBCF Island and other economic activities. At the outset of the study, the Consultant had conducted relevant marketing studies to analyse development needs and evaluate whether synergy would be created among these commercial developments and other surrounding developments to capitalise on the potential of tourism, commercial and other economic activities on Lantau. The land use on topside development of HKBCF Island would also be considered.

The Consultant's representative responded as follows:

- (a) For the labour force and employment projections, since the commercial development with a proposed floor area of 300 000-500 000 square metres could accommodate a wide variety of uses and the demand for labour would be different with different land uses, no estimate was available for the time being.
- (b) The study team would consider the greening proposal of members.
- (c) Regarding members' concern over the pressure on retail facilities in urban areas with the arrival of visitors via HZMB, the HKBCF Island could help divert visitors with its commercial development.
- (d) She cited Asiaworld-Expo to illustrate that the HKBCF Island and the surrounding commercial developments complemented each other. While the Asiaworld-Expo provided venues for large-scale exhibition and entertainment activities, the HKBCF Island would provide venues for holding meetings or small-scale activities.
- (e) The study team would also explore the feasibility of underground space development, e.g. provision of parking or other facilities.
- (f) Members' views would be taken into consideration when the options for transport linkage on the HKBCF Island were examined.
- (g) The proposal for parking facilities would be followed up.
- (h) The Consultant would further study the initial concept regarding the startup proposal.

A member said that he had voiced his opinions on transport links when the Consultant consulted the Tung Chung Rural Committee on July 8 this year. As the traffic on HZMB would increase in future, there should be sufficient supply of hotels and parking facilities, etc. for stopover visitors or visitors in transit. The Government should also consider stimulus programmes for increasing tourist consumption.

Another member said that the primary role of the HKBCF Island as a boundary crossing point should not be undermined by the proposed topside development. Development options targeting short-term objectives would reach saturation quickly. The HKBCF Island should complement the airport to become a converging point of PRD region and the rest of the world. A good transport network should also be provided to connect the HKBCF Island and the urban areas.

A member said that IDC had discussed many infrastructure projects in the past two years, e.g. East Lantau Metropolis, the three-runway system of the airport and topside development of the HKBCF Island, etc. In the next 10 to 20 year, the demand for professionals in different disciplines, e.g. infrastructure, design, construction and reclamation work would increase drastically. She asked whether the Government would evaluate the overall demand and future positioning of Hong Kong, taking into account the increasing population, growth in inbound tourism and the development of the Mainland or global economy. She cited the experiences of Detroit to illustrate that if something was assessed individually without considering the overall situation, the result might fail to live up to expectations. The Government should consider whether Hong Kong had the capacity to support the tourism growth, commercial development and others.

A member said that if parking spaces were provided according to the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines, they might not be enough to cope with the demand of visitors. The parking spaces in the airport were always full during holidays, and he believed it would be common for mainland visitors to travel by car and park at the control point.

The Vice-Chairlady queried whether the roles of the Asiaworld-Expo and HKBCF Island would overlap. She urged the Consultant to consider long-term development plans to enhance Hong Kong's competitiveness and generate economic benefits.

The representative of CEDD responded as follows:

- (a) The topside development for HKBCF Island should be implemented under the principle that the daily operation of the boundary crossing point would not be affected. The proposed commercial use and other economic activities would be separated from the clearance facilities.

- (b) The study team would consider identifying sites for provision of park and ride car parks. Detailed analysis would be conducted at the next stage and members would be informed after the Department had reached a consensus with the Transport Department.
- (c) The Government would consider whether it had the capacity to cope with the demand for talents and the financing needs.

The Consultant's representative said that the planning of parking spaces would also take into consideration the difference in the situation between the HKBCF Island and the urban areas apart from drawing reference from the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines. Marketing analyses and studies had been conducted, including the future development of PRD, economic growth and working population of Hong Kong. The preliminary proposed floor area of 300 000-500 000 square metres for commercial development was just a conservative estimate. A development plan would be formulated upon the completion of a detailed technical feasibility study and an assessment of cost-effectiveness.

Islands District Council Secretariat
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