



8 July 2005

HEC Subcommittee on WDII Review
c/o Civil Engineering and Development Department
13/F, North Point Government Offices
333 Java Road, North Point
Hong Kong



Dear HEC Subcommittee on WDII Review,

24/10/05 HER

The Royal Hong Kong Yacht Club (RHKYC) values the concerted efforts of the HEC Subcommittee on the WDII Review to engage the public in the Harbour-front Enhancement Review – Wan Chai, Causeway Bay & Adjoining Areas (HER). The study has certainly set a fine model for the public consultation developments in Hong Kong.

We have eagerly taken this opportunity to participate in the charrettes and contribute our ideas to realise the mutual vision of a vibrant world-class Victoria Harbour and harbour-front. Allow me to stress that the RHKYC has no intention to expand its site on Kellett Island, nor does it derive commercial interest from the Wanchai Development Phase II (WDII) project.

In response to the HEC's invitation for public views, the RHKYC has brainstormed with and solicited ideas from various stakeholders over the past few months, including HER Collaborators such as the Wan Chai and Eastern District Councils, NGOs, sports associations and RHKYC members. Please find attached our submission article in which we have consolidated the ideas for the consideration of the Subcommittee.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should the HEC have any questions or suggestions. We wish the Subcommittee further success in its work over the Realisation and Detailed Planning Stages.

Yours sincerely



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Harbour-Front Enhancement Review – Wan Chai, Causeway Bay and Adjoining Areas

優化灣仔、銅鑼灣及鄰近地區海濱的研究

Envisioning Stage: Views Collection Form

構想階段：意見收集表格

Your Views

你的意見

Please see attached: Cover letter, Submission Booklet and three drawing boards of A0 size.

Please use separate sheets, if necessary.

如有需要，請使用其他紙張。

To facilitate future contacts, please complete the following:

為方便將來聯絡，請填寫以下資料。

English Name 英文姓名：

Chinese Name 中文姓名：

Organization 所屬機構：

Correspondence Address 通訊地址：

Tel 電話：

Fax 傳真：

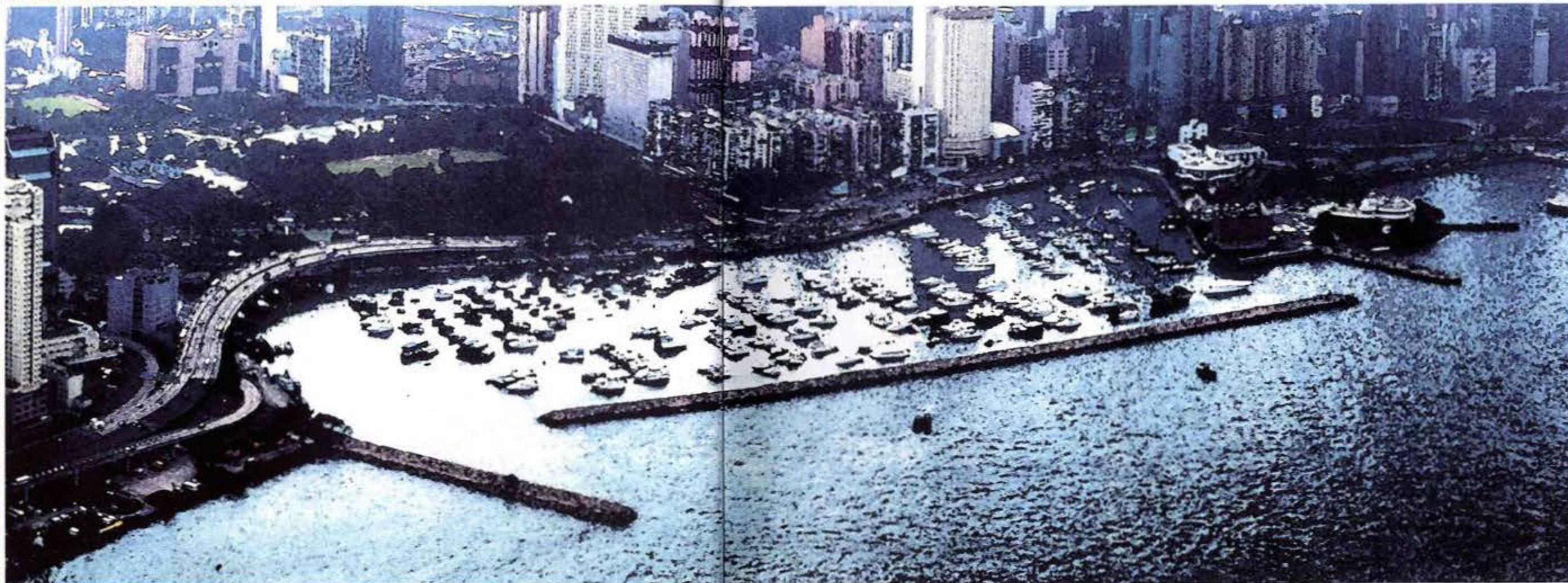
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Preserving the Vibrancy and Diversity of Victoria Harbour



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Visuals by:
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Introduction

The evolving of Victoria Harbour, a major public asset holds great promise for Hong Kong as a world-class city. Its development will be a milestone and ultimately, a test of the city's maturity and understanding of its people's needs and a symbol of its leading position in the region. If the public voice in Hong Kong has found new energy, it is because initiatives such as the Envisioning Stage of the Harbour-front Enhancement Review (HER) have made inspiring headway. The Royal Hong Kong Yacht Club (RHKYC) is grateful to be engaged in the study to help identify challenges and visions for the enhancement of Victoria Harbour.

As such, we brought forward our first submission to the Harbour-front Enhancement Committee (HEC) in January 2005, suggesting ways in which Hong Kong could develop a more vibrant Victoria Harbour by drawing examples from the variety of facilities and activities offered by other world-class harbours. We presented our ideas at the HEC's Subcommittee on Wan Chai Development Phase II Review meeting on February 7, 2005.

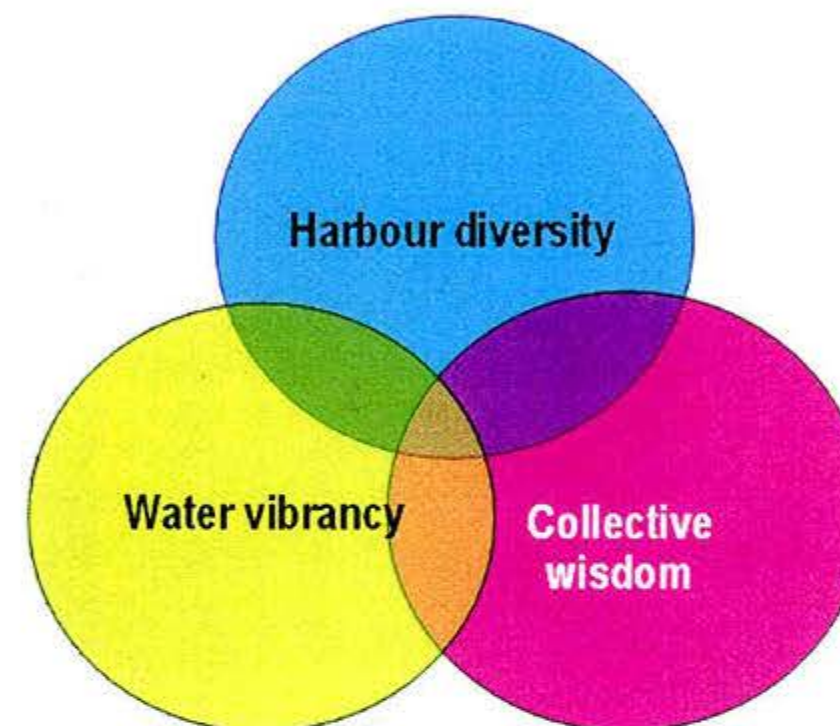
During the meeting, many members expressed their appreciation for the ideas and participation of the RHKYC in the HER. However, some attendees had reservations over the feasibility of the underground alignment for the Central-Wan Chai Bypass (CWB) which was implied in the submission paper. We hope to clarify that the RHKYC is open to whatever alignment serves the Overriding Public Need and befits the public's interest. The alignment in our first submission was posited only to indicate the possibility of a tunnel option for the CWB. From this point, we approached our main objective to brainstorm ideas for enhancing the vibrancy of Victoria Harbour. While we had no other alignment options to refer to in our January submission, the HEC has now provided a Deep Tunnel alignment in the HER Public Engagement Kit, and the RHKYC would be keen to offer its ideas for the consideration of all based on this alignment.



As an active member of the Wan Chai and Causeway Bay community and frequent user of the Victoria Harbour, RHKYC is whole-heartedly in support of the vision and purposes of the HER. At the suggestion of the Secretariat of HEC's Subcommittee on Wan Chai Development Phase II Review, we are happy to further communicate with the Subcommittee on our ideas for harbour-front enhancement. However, we would like to clarify that the RHKYC has no intention whatsoever to expand its site on Kellett Island, nor does it derive any commercial interest from the WDII project. Rather, we come forward as a voice in the community discussion, concerned with rectifying the real challenges in a harbour with a history and culture that must be preserved, and which should carry Hong Kong's social and aesthetic identity as a world-class city.



Our Vision for a World-Class Victoria Harbour



Drawing from our experience and history at the waterfront, we believe that there are three essential elements for developing a world-class harbour:

Harbour diversity:

The harbour should be equipped with modernized facilities while also preserving the cultural heritage of the community. A diversity of activities should be available for all with the presence of various "pockets of interests", i.e., different clusters of attractions to serve the community's range of interests.

Water Vibrancy:

Activities should not only be available on the shoreline but also within the harbour itself. Victoria Harbour is a valuable natural, social and economic asset of Hong Kong and should be fully utilized in a sustainable manner for public enjoyment.

Collective Wisdom:

The development of the harbour can only be achieved through the proactive participation of different stakeholder groups and holistic planning, in order that the interests of each can be addressed and balanced.

Unique Role in Promoting Sports Activities

Moved by this vision, RHKYC has reached out to various stakeholder groups to galvanise community spirit for developing a vibrant harbour with diverse activities for all. Having initiated and been in close contact with various sports associations, some of our collaborative efforts are listed below:

- We are in full support of the cross-harbour swimming competition in November 2005, which will be held in Victoria Harbour for the first time in 30 years. The competition, with over 1,000 competitors expected, will have its finishing line at the RHKYC.
- Engaging with the Hong Kong Dragon Boat Association, we have discussed the feasibility of holding dragon boat races in the Wan Chai water area, should the water quality of Wan Chai be improved. Thus far, we have received their enthusiastic support. Additionally, the Club has worked with the Dragon Boat Association and the Stanley Residents Association for over 10 years in providing equipment and staff for the practical operation of starting, finishing and ensuring safety and rescue services during the Stanley Dragon Boat Championship. In 2005, we had the largest event ever, with 166 international teams and over 4,000 participants.
- Hong Kong's annual canoeing marathon, with its starting line at the RHKYC, is a collaborative effort between the Hong Kong Canoe Union and the RHKYC. We hope to continue the excellent standard of this tradition.
- RHKYC has also held meetings with the Hong Kong Mandarin Sport Fishing Club, Hong Kong Canoe Union and Hong Kong China Rowing Association to discuss long-term local water sports development.
- The Club is a major contributor and organiser in the upcoming Harbour Day in November 2005 which coincides with our Round the Island Race. We form a vital link between government departments and NGOs on the water.



Engaging Stakeholders in Enhancing Harbour Vibrancy



In response to HEC's call for proactive participation in the HER, RHKYC has come up with a number of ideas for developing the Victoria Harbour-front, as indicated in the map. These reflect the RHKYC's role as an established sports group in Hong Kong, and as an active member of the Wan Chai and Causeway Bay District. Concerned about the cut-off between Hong Kong people and its waterfront, our vision promotes a thriving water sports culture in Hong Kong, and a diversity of recreational, leisure and dining facilities for the greatest benefit of the community.

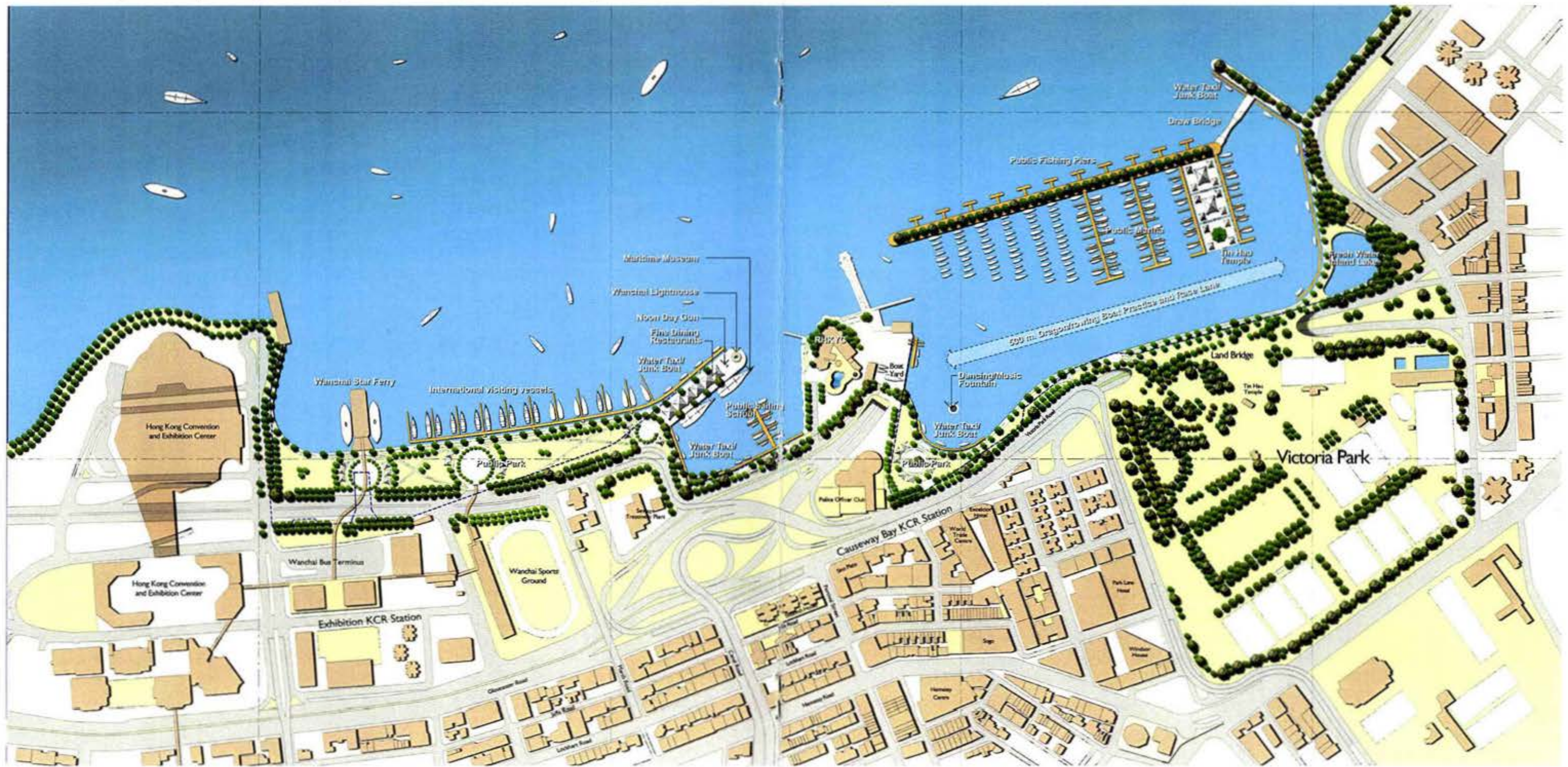
The current vista by contrast, is a disappointing one patched with unused, and in some cases, misused land as cargo handling areas, warehouses, docks and abandoned piers. We envisage an accessible waterfront for the public and it is our view that the government should re-develop these land areas for greater connectivity along the harbour-front. The imminent changes at Victoria Harbour will ask for major decisions – some will necessitate transformation and some will require the preservation of those elements that bear Hong Kong's historical identity as a harbour city.

If these decisions are to offer the most benefit to each and every member of Hong Kong, it will be important to acquire the collective wisdom of the community by engaging different stakeholder groups. In line with this principle, the RHKYC has proactively shared our ideas with various sporting associations, including the Hong Kong Mandarin Sport Fishing Club, Hong Kong Canoe Union, Hong Kong Dragon Boat Association, Hong Kong Sailing Federation, the Rowing Club of the University of Hong Kong and Hong Kong China Rowing Association. Our fellow counterparts have contributed enthusiastically by verifying the feasibility of our suggestions for sports activities, and suggesting improvements on our ideas.

Our efforts also extend to engaging the Wan Chai District Council and Eastern District Council, Collaborators for the HER, on our ideas and suggestions for the Victoria Harbour-front. Many members from both District Councils agreed that the tunnel option for the CWB would bring the greatest benefits to the community and to the public enjoyment of the Harbour and waterfront.

Dream or Reality?

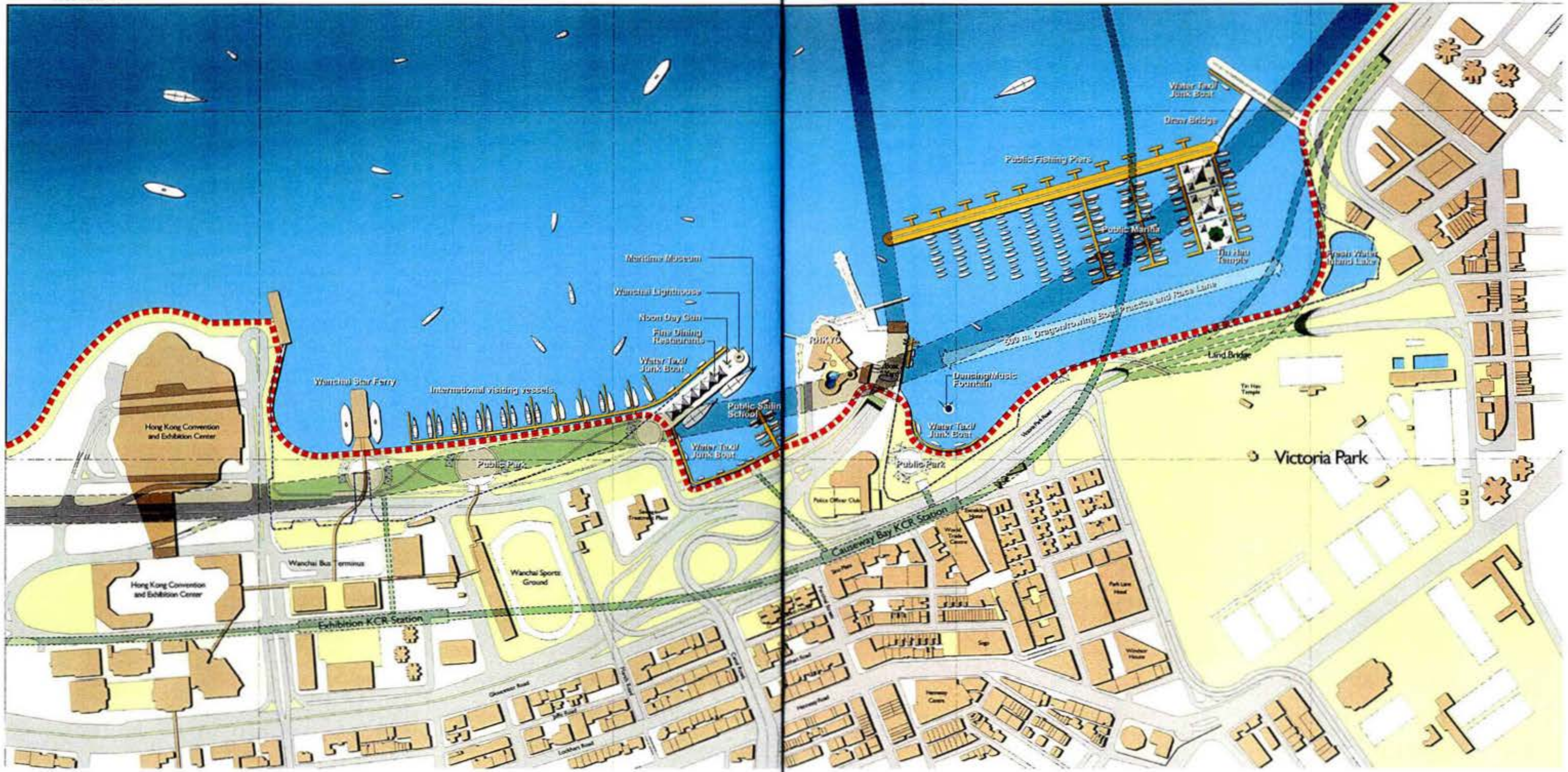
The following ideas were particularly welcomed by various members (Please refer to the map for the features):



WAN CHAI WATERFRONT MASTERPLAN

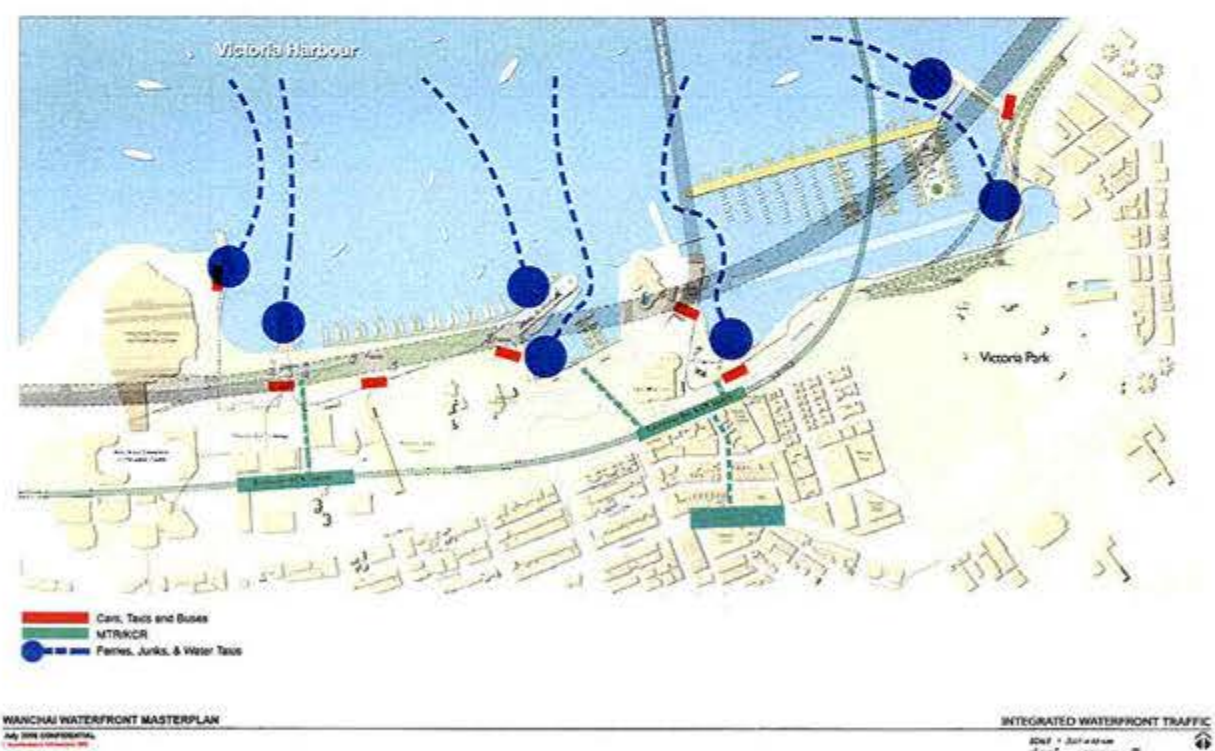
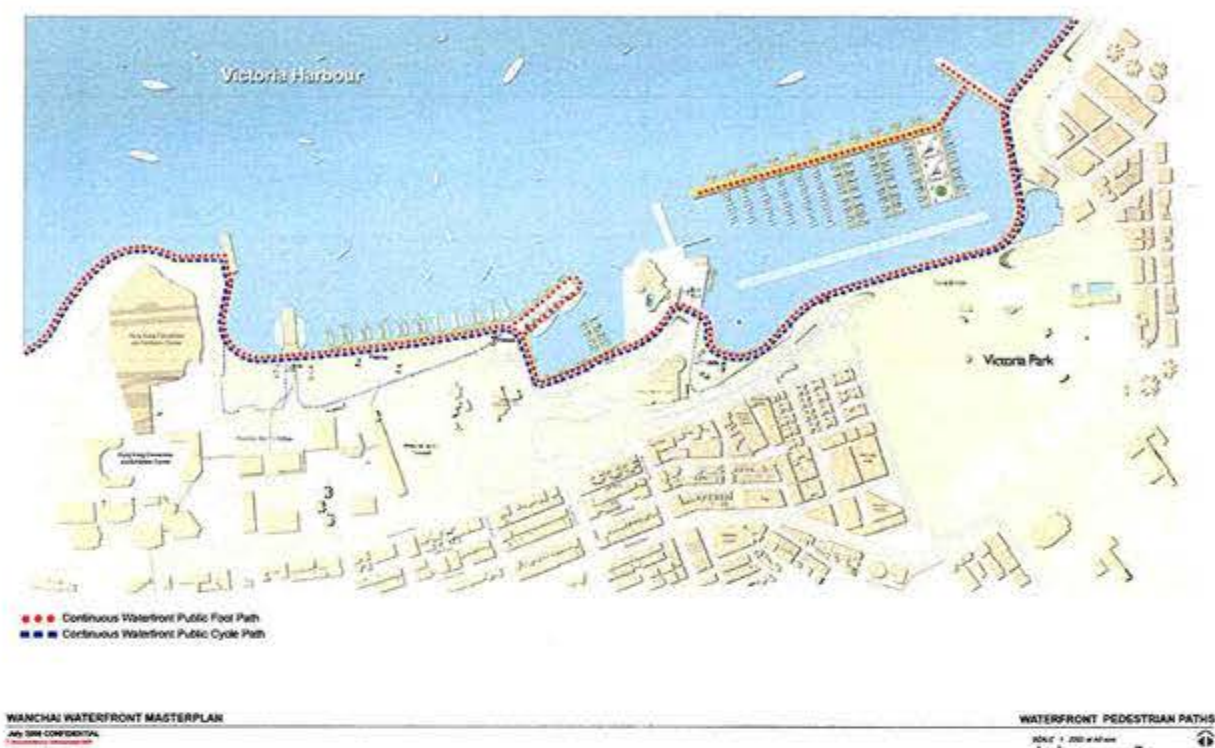
A Continuous Promenade

For greater connectivity, a cycling path (indicated with a red dotted line on the map) could be built along the waterfront stretching from the Convention and Exhibition Centre to Victoria Park, or possibly further. An eco-tram system could also be constructed for visitors to commute along the waterfront and among different "pockets of interests".

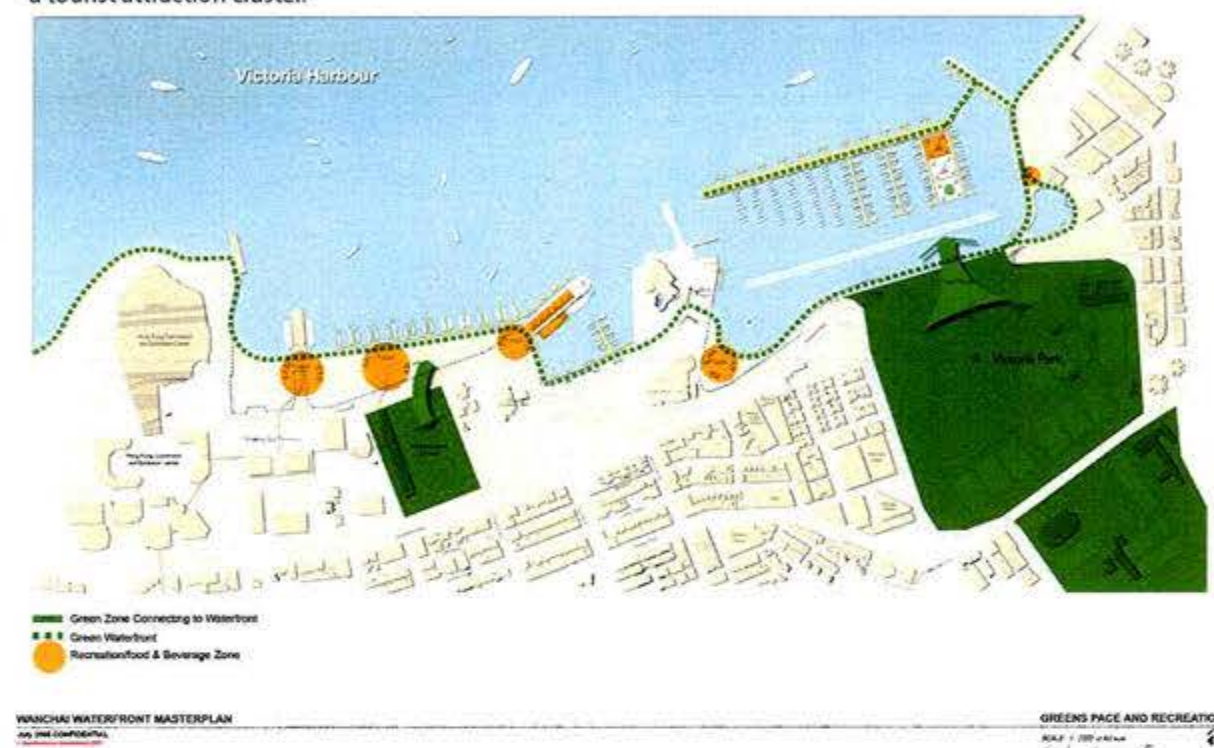


MASTER PLAN WITH DEEP TUNNEL ALIGNMENT

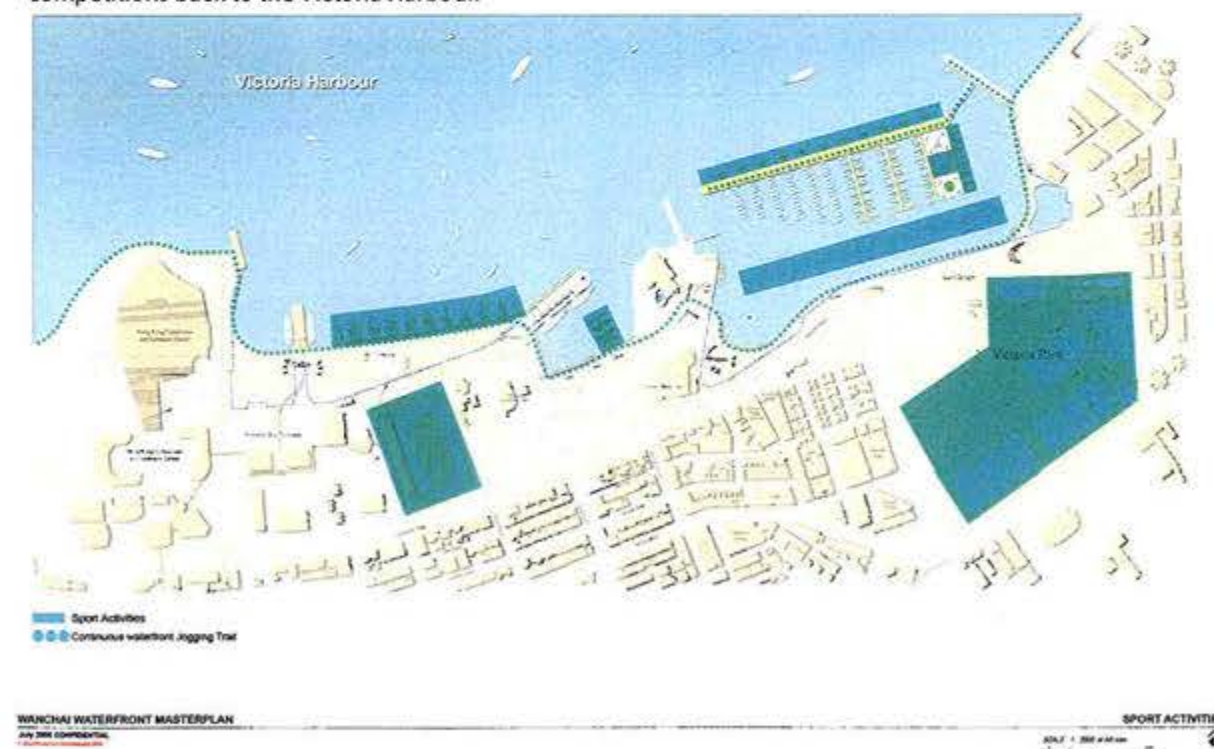
Fishing docks along the existing typhoon shelter breakwater and floating platforms under the Island Eastern Corridor could be built to provide a proper place for enthusiasts of this local activity. A suspension bridge could be built connecting the breakwater at the typhoon shelter and the one extended from the inland lake for egrets.



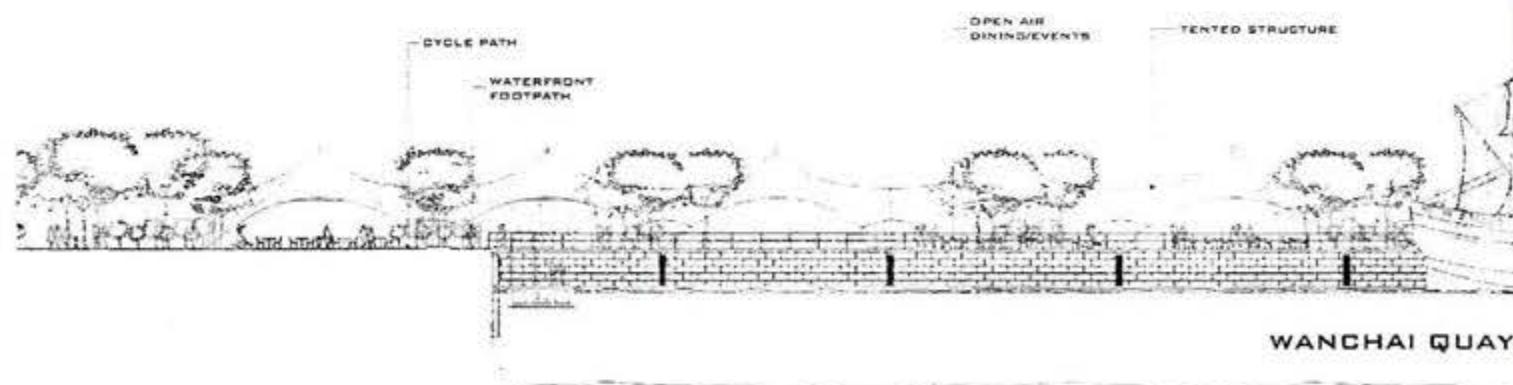
The recreational facilities would bring not only enjoyment for the public, but also generate significant economic benefits for Hong Kong. The harbour-front could become a hot spot for tourism with local food pavilions, bars and shops, which would boost the local economy of the Wan Chai and Causeway Bay districts. Local landmarks, such as a musical fountain, could also be added to complement existing ones such as the Noon Day Gun to form a tourist attraction cluster.



The cultural and historical character of Hong Kong could be distinguished with the establishment of a permanent dragon boat race course at the typhoon shelter area. The 550 metre-long, 100 metre-wide race course can accommodate up to ten dragon boat lanes at one time, sufficient to bring the traditional annual competitions back to the Victoria Harbour.



By no means exhaustive, these concepts proposed by RHKYC serve only to show what an integrated plan could do for a more prestigious Victoria Harbour. In addition to engaging stakeholder groups, we have also participated in the public forums and community charrettes of various districts and discussed with local communities on how the harbour can be further enhanced. Our engagement with the vast majority of these groups has found keen support and more importantly, has opened up exciting paths for alternative possibilities and community collaboration. Our experiences at the forums and charrettes have been extremely productive. These events have ascertained our belief that through extensive and rigorous discussion, through the consideration of different interests and needs, the community will eventually derive consensus for a creative and holistic harbour-front development plan for long-term and sustainable benefits to Hong Kong.



Conclusion

Our recent engagement with sporting associations and community groups has suggested that a tunnel option for the Central Wanchai Bypass would open up substantial opportunities for enhancing harbour vibrancy, and allow direct access by the public to the harbour-front. Nevertheless, in terms of communicating as an integrated society, we have much further to go. Should the results of the HEC's public consultation project ultimately acknowledge a missing road link in the current infrastructure, i.e., the Central Wan Chai Bypass needed to relieve traffic congestion on the northern shore of Hong Kong Island, the RHKYC would hope to assist the public objective on this basis and offer ideas for developing the harbour-front. We are confident that the HEC's consultation efforts will indeed reveal the best way to harmonise the economic, environmental and social needs of the Hong Kong community. We would be more than happy to continue to share our thoughts with the HEC and other stakeholders, contribute our ideas to the Study and engage in lively discussions within our society – ultimately, to develop a vibrant harbour for all.

