

LCQ4: Harbourfront enhancement

Following is a question by the Hon Yiu Si-wing and a reply by the Secretary for Development, Mr Michael Wong, in the Legislative Council today (July 4):

Question:

Given that the Victoria Harbour is an important leisure and tourist resource which is unique and beautiful, the Government has been actively promoting harbourfront enhancement in recent years, including the construction of uninterrupted world-class promenades to enable members of the public and tourists to appreciate the beautiful scenery of the two sides of the harbour at a close distance. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the respective details of the harbourfront enhancement projects that have been completed, are under construction and are under planning at present;

(2) whether it has formulated short, medium and long term work objectives and timetables for linking up various harbourfront enhancement projects; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(3) whether it will add leisure and consumption facilities to various harbourfront enhancement projects having regard to the latter's environmental characters, and develop promenades with characteristics under a public-private partnership approach; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

The Victoria Harbour is a very valuable natural asset for all the people of Hong Kong. As the Chief Executive has pointed out in her Policy Address of October 2017, we encourage the community to make better use of the harbourfront so that it will become more vibrant and more quality public space will be available for public enjoyment. In this connection, the Government will continue to work closely with the Harbourfront Commission (HC) to further improve the continuity of the waterfront promenade for public enjoyment, and enhance the harbourfront accessibility so as to link up our people with the harbour.

My reply to Hon Yiu Si-wing's question is as follows:

(1) and (2) Of the 73-kilometre (km) long waterfront areas on both sides of the Victoria Harbour, three km are natural coastline and about 32 km are land already developed with public facilities, private residential premises and commercial blocks etc.. Of the remaining 38 km, 19.6 km have been opened for public enjoyment, including a number of waterfront promenades that are

popular among locals and tourists, such as the promenade at the new Central harbourfront, the open space and pet garden constructed along both sides of Tamar Park, Quarry Bay Promenade, phases 1 and 2 of Kwun Tong Promenade, the promenade connecting Hung Hom to Tsim Sha Tsui, and Hoi Fai Road Promenade at Tai Kok Tsui.

To further strengthen harbourfront enhancement efforts, the Harbour Unit under the Development Bureau (DEVB) was reorganised into the multi-disciplinary Harbour Office (HO) on July 1. With the gradual completion of the planning for the harbourfront areas on both sides of the Victoria Harbour, the HO will focus its efforts on implementation of various harbourfront enhancement initiatives, and on setting the priorities of specific initiatives according to the finalised harbourfront planning and new proposals put forward by the HC.

In short to medium term, our work on harbourfront enhancement will focus on three areas. First, under the steer of the HC, the HO will use the dedicated funding of \$500 million to take forward harbourfront enhancement initiatives. These initiatives include implementing four works projects, namely an advance promenade from Central and Western District Promenade (Central Section) to the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre, an open space at Eastern Street North in Sai Ying Pun, an urban park in front of Hung Hom Ferry Pier, and enhancement of the Tsuen Wan waterfront, as well as studying the policy and design matters related to harbourfront development. Apart from projects under the aforesaid dedicated \$500 million funding, the HO will also continue to take forward other projects, including the Boardwalk initiative on Island East, as well as two harbourfront projects in Kennedy Town and Wan Chai Ferry Pier respectively.

Secondly, the Home Affairs Bureau is actively pursuing the Five-Year Plan for Sports and Recreation Facilities. Nine of the projects under the Plan are situated in the Kowloon harbourfront areas in Kwun Tong, Kai Tak, To Kwa Wan, Hung Hom, Tai Kok Tsui and Kwai Tsing. Feasibility studies to enhance the facilities at Tsuen Wan and Aldrich Bay promenades will also be conducted. The aforesaid projects are listed in the table at Annex.

Thirdly, the West Kowloon Cultural District Authority is actively developing the harbourfront facilities inside the West Kowloon Cultural District. The temporary Nursery Park and the first phase of the Art Park (including the adjoining promenade) have been opened for public enjoyment since July 2015 and early 2018 respectively, while the remaining part of the Art Park and the promenade in front of the M+ Museum will be completed and opened for use in phases starting from later this year.

Upon completion of the aforesaid works projects, there will be an addition of almost 50 hectares (ha) of open space at the harbourfront. The length of promenades on both sides of the Victoria Harbour will be further increased by approximately five km.

In the long run, the Government will strive to take forward the planning for three harbourfront areas, i.e. the Kai Tak Development Area, the Wan Chai North to North Point harbourfront and the new Central harbourfront, thereby

further developing promenades on both sides of the Victoria Harbour.

In this regard, almost one-third of the Kai Tak Development Area, i.e. around 100 ha, is zoned open space, including a continuous waterfront promenade of generally 20 to 35 metres wide. A number of major open space projects in the Development Area have also been included in the aforementioned Five-Year Plan for Sports and Recreation Facilities. These projects will be completed gradually in future.

As for Wan Chai north to North Point harbourfront, the Planning Department (PlanD) had conducted two stages of public engagement exercise for the Urban Design Study for the Wan Chai North and North Point Harbourfront Areas. The DEVB and the PlanD are now refining the harbourfront development proposals based on the comments received, including studying how to better develop and manage the harbourfront sites by capitalising on the strength of the business sector and the community. Before implementing the long term proposals, in order to allow the public to timely enjoy the harbourfront areas, we are developing two advance promenades, one connecting the Central and Western District Promenade (Central Section) to the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre and the other near the new Wan Chai Pier, providing additional open space which is close to one km in length and two ha in size.

As regards the new Central harbourfront, we are also gradually taking forward the long-term development of the key sites according to the recommendations of the Urban Design Study for the New Central Harbourfront.

As some of the harbourfront sites in the aforementioned three areas are being used or may be used in future for supporting infrastructure projects such as the Shatin to Central Link, the Central Kowloon Route and the North Hong Kong Island Line under planning, we will take into account the progress of the various projects, and implement the initiatives according to the long-term planning in a timely manner.

(3) We agree that having only the Government to develop public open spaces may not be able to address the diverse needs of the public in enjoying the harbourfront, especially when the Government has to follow the established system in their design, building and management. We should provide more opportunities for parties outside the Government, no matter they are business entities or non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and regardless of whether they are profit-making or not, to be directly involved in the development and management of and to bring vibrancy and diversity to the harbourfront areas. We are also prepared to explore a district-based approach in harbourfront enhancement, so as to integrate local characteristics into the design and day-to-day management of the harbourfront. There is no lack of examples in this regard. For instance, since 2014, we have let out the Central Harbourfront Event Space, which occupies an area of 3.6 ha, to a private operator for hosting activities of different nature, including international tourism events, international art fairs, the Hong Kong E-Prix, concerts and long distance runs etc.. More than five million participants have been attracted to these activities. As for the privately-operated Hong Kong Observation Wheel nearby, after its reopening in last December and with a substantial reduction in fares, about one million patrons have been recorded

within a half-year period.

Besides, we will make use of a harbourfront site in Kennedy Town to respond to the diverse needs of the community, including turning an area of about 5 900 square metres into a promenade and public open space, and letting out an adjacent area of about 2 000 square metres to an NGO or a social enterprise by way of short term tenancy for operating a community garden. The HO is vetting the proposals submitted, with a view to handing over the site to the operator in October this year.

As regards the proposed urban park in front of Hung Hom Ferry Pier, which is one of the initiatives under the aforementioned \$500 million dedicated funding, we are planning to invite external organisations to submit expressions of interest later this year on the specific facilities, types of activity, conceptual design and operation model. Depending on market response, we will consider the feasibility of inviting external organisations to participate in the development of the urban park.

In the long run, we hope that the valuable experience gained in the aforesaid cases will help us test and explore the implementation details of different development and management models, and provide further guidance for other harbourfront enhancement initiatives, thereby facilitating the development of a harbourfront which can better meet the diverse needs of tourists and the public.