



THE HONG KONG INSTITUTE OF SURVEYORS



Our Ref: CKL/095/vs/04

27th August 2004

Planning Department
North Point Government Offices
333 Java Road
North Point
Hong Kong

Dear Sirs

Re: Pedestrian Plan for Causeway Bay - Public Consultation

We refer to your public consultation on the Pedestrian Plan for Causeway Bay.

We welcome the proposal in principle. It is encouraging noting that initiatives are proposed by the Government with the aim to improve the environment and shopping experience in the Causeway Bay area.

We would, however, like to express our concerns in the following areas:

- Vehicular accessibility to the area
- Private sector participation and protection of private sector rights
- Implementation of the proposed scheme

Vehicular Traffic

The more restricted vehicular accessibility to the core Causeway Bay would no doubt improve the environment and comfort to the pedestrian of the area but at the same time would have the following impacts:

- Shoppers would find it increasingly difficult to go in and/or get out of the core Causeway Bay area by private vehicles and/or taxis. In particular, this would discourage shoppers who intend to purchase bulk items and/or carrying large quantities of purchases and shoppers who are physically handicapped. This might adversely affect the shopping business of the area as a whole.
- The proposed closure of the car park at Hennessy Centre will result in a reduction of available car parking spaces in the core Causeway Bay. Shoppers who wish to drive to the area will be further discouraged by the increasing difficulty in finding convenient parking spaces in the area. This again would have adversely impact on the trade mix and character of the area in particular towards the high end consumer goods and services.

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Private Sector Participation and Protection of Private Sector Rights

- Most of the properties in the Causeway Bay area are in private ownership. The implementation of the proposal, including the provision for a below-grade connection between Sogo department store and Hennessy Centre requires private participation. However, we are not aware of any concrete proposal to facilitate such arrangement in terms of government policy for assessment and granting approvals of proposals and the land premium charged. These elements are critical to the successful participation of the private sector in the scheme.
- One of the key factors of the proposal is the necessary alterations and changes to Hennessy Centre which is privately owned. The changes include closure of car park, relocation of loading and unloading areas, creation of ground floor passageway and underground linkage to the Sogo department store. These initiatives, if implemented, would have significant impact on the economic performance of the building. We would urge the Planning Department, in implementing any such proposal, to make sure that private ownership rights would be properly addressed.

Implementation

We would like to see more disclosure of the details of the proposal by the Planning Department particularly on areas such as the following:

- The vehicular traffic management for the area and related studies including in particular the proposed PTI at the Caroline Hill Road and how that will impact onto the current road network linking Causeway Bay with other parts of the Island through the use of Leighton Road and the private vehicles and taxis.
- The handling of private sector initiatives in the area in terms of application and approval procedures and responsible authorities. For example, whether there would be published policy to entertain private initiatives to acquire land use rights on public land (say underground space of public roads) and the basis and methodology of assessment of land premium, where applicable.
- Given that previous experience would suggest a lack of coordination amongst the relevant Government Departments towards implementation of innovative proposals, it is also important for the various Government Departments, particularly the Lands Department, Buildings Department together with the Planning Department, to agree upon a coordinated approach towards implementation of the proposed scheme.

DESCRIPTION: PRESIDENT FILE/CORRESPONDENCE REF: TONY TSE DATE 1: 2004 DATE 2:



The above are our preliminary views and we would be most pleased to submit our further comment when further information of the proposal is available. Meanwhile should you have any queries, please feel free to contact us.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tony Tse', is written over a horizontal line. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial 'T'.

Tony Tse
President
The Hong Kong Institute of Surveyors