

**The Hong Kong Institute of Planners (HKIP)
Public Affairs Committee**

**Position Paper on Initial Findings in the Public Engagement Digest of
Kau Yi Chau Artificial Islands Feasibility Study (2023)**

Background

1. In March 2019, the Hong Kong Institute of Planners had issued a position paper on Lantau Tomorrow Vision (“LTV”) which was proposed in the Policy Address 2018. We support early commencement of the Feasibility Study (FS) for the LTV.
2. In view of the importance of the FS, we had urged the Government to take into account and address **strategic and regional planning** aspects including liveability, sustainability, climate change, smart city, resilience, housing, transportation, employment, social inclusion. The FS should not be a conventional one and simply produce a land use plan with engineering design and technical assessment, but the planning and implementation programme should be robust enough to meet changing circumstances in the decades to come, including but not limited to, the implications of the Greater Bay Area development. In order to achieve a successful planning and implementation of the project, the FS must go through a transparent planning procedure with meaningful public engagement.
3. The Government subsequently commenced the Kau Yi Chau Artificial Island Feasibility Study (the KYC AI FS), which was commissioned by the Civil Engineering and Development Department and the Planning Department in June 2021. The study mainly comprises a planning and engineering study on the KYC AI and a technical feasibility study on strategic road and rail connecting the artificial islands. The FS is targeted for completion by end 2024 and the environmental and planning procedures and actual reclamation will then follow. The Government has released and engaged the public on the initial findings of the FS recently in 2023.

4. In sum, we welcome the initial study findings issued by the Government on KYC AI and we have the following observations on the important issues to be covered in the next stage of FS. We look forward to receive further study findings addressing our observations and would like to continue to contribute our views and ideas in the process.

Highest Level Steer and Multi-disciplinary Approach Needed

5. The FS must adopt a genuine multi-disciplinary approach, with participation of experts and professionals in various aspects, including in particular demographics, economics, financial, climate change, and technological aspects. The conventional planning and engineering study approach would not be sufficient to tackle the multi-facet challenges and rising community aspirations in Hong Kong. A multi-disciplinary approach is to ensure the formulation of a holistic, innovative, comprehensive and practical plan and implementation programme. There is also an obvious need for HKSAR Chief Executive's personal steer in overseeing the FS to ensure that it is viable and implementable.

STRATEGIC AND REGIONAL PLANNING

Strategic Development Directions and Positioning

6. Given the importance of the KYC AI, which would play an important role in the strategic development of Hong Kong, the FS should adopt a holistic and innovative approach, and establish firstly the positioning of Hong Kong in the world and the wider region and the strategic functions of KYC AI for Hong Kong, with respect to **Greater Bay Area Development and Hong Kong 2030+ Territorial Development Strategy**, before doing the land use planning, and engineering and technical assessments. The current thinking of creating the third central business district (CBD) at KYC AI to consolidate Hong Kong's position as an international financial centre should be further substantiated and examined, particular in view of the development difficulties facing CBD2 at Kai Tak and the potential longer term commercial development at Hung Shui Kiu.

Key Trends of Regional Planning, Demographic, Economic and Employment Considerations

7. The FS must fully examine the emerging megatrends in regional planning, social, demographic, economic and employment dimensions, in order to define the positioning of KYC AI. The rapidly changing population profile, economic structure (with an emphasis on innovation and technology) and style of working (work from home becoming one of established modes) in Hong Kong have a significant bearing on the planning and implementation phasing of KYC AI. These

megatrends should be thoroughly assessed and the relevant findings should be taken as the basis for planning for the KYC AI.

TERRITORIAL PLANNING

Territorial Railway and Highway Networks

8. The FS must examine comprehensively the railway and highway networks of Hong Kong as a whole and with due regard to the regional connectivity in order to establish overall priorities, economic benefit and a realistic implementation timeframe for the major transport links. Recently, the Government has indicated that there are new railways and highways and under active planning, including those railways and major road schemes proposed by the Strategic Studies for Railways and Major Roads beyond 2030. The FS must take all other territorial strategic transport links into account in assessing the need, priority and targeted completion dates of the major transport links serving KYC AI. These transport links are the determining factor of the implementation programme of KYC AI, giving that KYC AI are islands and without any transport links at the moment.

Relation to Northern Metropolitan Area and Flexible Implementation Time Frame

9. We appreciate that the Government has proceeded speedily with the planning and implementation of Northern Metropolis (NM) and the NM will provide the main truck of land supply from mid 2020s to 2030s. Whilst we cannot be certain the land demand and supply situation in Hong Kong in the future 20 to 30 years. Despite that, now the KYC AI FS is underway and it should proceed in the normal course. The environmental impact assessment and town planning procedures should commence and completed in good times, hence providing a **land reserve in planning terms to allow for timely and flexible implementation**. The transport infrastructures and reclamation relating to KYC AI should proceed flexibly in a phased and well-programmed manner for cost control purpose, taking into account socio-economic, demographic and financial considerations. Caution must be exercised in taking a fast-tracked approach, in order to avoid high construction costs due to fast-track. Whilst we appreciate that the current thinking is that the first population intake in KYC AI would be in 2033 the earliest, however, the implementation timeframe should be monitored and reviewed continuously. **It seems that there may a flexibility of a few years in the implementation timeframe, taking into account the planned land supply situation in the second half of 2020s and early 2030s.** This is particularly relevant when we look at the time constraints in construction of strategic highways and railways serving KYC AI. One added advantage in a flexible

implementation programme is to provide for financial flexibility in the current context of economic slowdown and financial restraints resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic, which extended over three years from 2020 to 2022.

Relation to Urban Renewal – Thinning Out

10. The inner old urban areas need urgent improvement to its built environment, public space and walkability to cater for the fast ageing community of Hong Kong. The creation of new spaces can facilitate the thinning out process. However, the recent Yau Mong District Urban Renewal Study by the Urban Renewal Authority examined 3 options of urban renewal, one of the options (i.e. the “minus” option) is to thin out the development in the crowded inner urban areas of Yau Ma Tei and Mong Kok, in order to achieve a liveable and sustainable built environment. However, this option will have implications on development intensity and development cost. One possible solution is to transfer the development right out of Yau Mong districts to KYC AI, hence achieving a win-win solution. The FS should study the practicality and mechanisms for this innovative planning solution to achieve the planning benefit of facilitating sustainable urban renewal. If we pursue one-sided unlimited intensification of the inner urban areas, the result will be less than desirable quality of life in old areas, and lead to crowding out effect of the development planned in and affecting implement of KYC AI. That will be a lose-lose scenario.

SPECIFIC ON KAU YI CHAU ARTIFICIAL ISLAND

Reclamation Extent and Configuration and Climate Change

11. The FS must examine in details various options of reclamation extent/configuration and phasing for the 1,000 ha reclamation to arrive at an optimal solution. We appreciate that the waterflow and quality and marine aspects have been initially considered in delineating the three proposed artificial islands. However, more in-depth assessment of waterflow and ecological implications and the effects of global warming, including related extreme weather, rise of sea level, typhoon surge, severe rainstorm, strong gust, should be done before finalizing the reclamation boundaries.

Planning and Design Details

12. We understand that land use plan and urban design are only preliminary at this juncture, there are many aspects, including the housing mix in particular housing to attract talents, the internal transport and cycling network, quality and vibrancy of the public spaces, etc., need to be explored further.

Innovative Approach, New Technology and New Standards/Regulations

13. The KYC AI is a brand new extension area of Hong Kong Metropolis. As such, there is a golden opportunity for the planning and development of KYC AI to adopt innovation approaches, new technologies and new standards/regulations to achieve liveability, sustainability, inclusiveness, smartness, green and resilience. The FS should clearly demonstrate inclusion of such elements in the planning for KYC AI. At this juncture, the preliminary planning and urban design do not give much information on the innovative aspects, particularly in view of the buildings of KYC AI would only be completed within 10 to 30 years' time.

Extensive Public Engagement and Consensus Building

14. Extensive public engagement is necessary throughout various study stages to engage the public and listen to their aspirations and concerns. Whilst the latest stage of public engagement ended in March 2023, it is appreciated that the engagement process is an on-going one and this will surely contribute to build social consensus and support for the KYC AI project. The FS has to examine and assess in depth the strategic issues raised. The HKIP will be more than willing to participate in the whole process both by way of direct involvement in the study process and providing professional advice in the course of the study.



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