

Demand for Public Boat Storage

With a serious lack of berthing space, Hong Kong's boating industry is beginning to fall behind. Fortunately, Hong Kong does have the ability to fix this problem without harm to the environment and with benefit to the community.



The lack of available berths has led to many informal mooring strategies including: mooring in unprotected waters, tying boats to trees, or leaving many boats clustered together under bridges.

A study conducted by a research team from the Worcester Polytechnic Institute (U.S.) in January and February this year for the Harbour Business Forum and Designing Hong Kong recommended three methods to address the shortage of public boat storage facilities in Hong Kong:

- Regularize existing informal mooring and beach storage;
- Allocate land and provide dry rack storage systems;
- Allocate water areas for moorings.

The research under the title "Boating Left High and Dry: A feasibility study of publicly-accessible boat storage facilities in Hong Kong" found that Hong Kong has many beautiful waterways, but boat storage is unavailable to the community due to high mooring fees and lack of berths. The existing boat berths at private clubs, public mooring areas, and marine department private moorings are full. If any moorings at private clubs are available the boat owner cannot afford the membership and mooring fees.

To help lay the framework for solutions, the research team considered the feasibility of publicly-accessible boat storage facilities. The recommendations are based on extensive site visits, and interviews of boat owners and operators of water sports centres and marinas, as well as various stakeholders including the Marine Department.

The study concluded that the lack of available berths has led to many informal mooring strategies including: mooring in unprotected waters, tying boats to trees, or leaving many boats clustered together under bridges. Although these practices are not illegal, they are unsafe to both the boat and boat owner. The lack of berths is also

detering residents from investing in a boat, and it is causing the recreational boating industry to flounder. Moreover, boating equipment is unsuitable for public transport. Trailers behind private cars or storing at home are not options generally available for the Hong Kong community.

Comparisons with other countries also showed that there is a large untapped market for 16-25ft boats. This typical family sized boat is almost absent in Hong Kong as boating is out of reach for common families. Low cost public storage facilities aimed at this market would attract sampan owners as well as this largely untapped family leisure market.

The study specifically identified the need for new mooring and berthing facilities at Science Park and Sam Mun Tsai in Tolo Harbour, Causeway Bay-Wan Chai and Kwun Tong in Victoria Harbour and Junk Bay, and Tai Tam Harbour in Hong Kong Island South. The study also calls to regularize existing informal moorings at Wu Kai Sha (To Tau beach), Ma On Shan New Fishermen's Village, Tseung Kwan O Eastern Channel, Stanley, and similar informal mooring and berthing areas throughout Hong Kong's waters and beaches.

The full report and the PowerPoint Presentation are available for download on [our website](#).

Positive Planning for World-class Water Sports

by Stephen Bradley

The Town Planning Board (TPB) has a stated vision to make Victoria Harbour "a Harbour for the People and a Harbour of Life". Yet the realization of this vision is frustrated despite the valiant efforts of Development Bureau and the Harbourfront Commission, because of the inability of the Government to promote an integrated approach to waterfront development.



Victoria Harbour offers great opportunities for water sports.

A case in point is the regeneration of Kai Tak and Kowloon East; it presents a crucial opportunity for the enhancement of Victoria Harbour. Hong Kong claims to have aspirations to host an Asian Games - but an absolute prerequisite for a bid is to promise world-class water sports venues for rowing, canoe and kayak events. Because of its shelter and dimension, there are unique opportunities at Kai Tak for the development of a world-class, multi-use water sports centre.

A comprehensive presentation was made last month to the Town Planning Board by the National Sports Associations responsible for water sports in Hong Kong, asking for specific provision to be made in the Kai Tak Outline Zoning Plan to define sufficient space on land as well as water for staging major events. Such a centre could deliver real economic and community health benefits.

The Town Planning Board heard a range of circular arguments from Government departments explaining that they each need more technical input from the other before giving their backing to a water sports proposal; the TPB was left with no alternative but to conclude that merely an aspiration for water sports is to be noted in the OZP pending "further technical studies".

Without denying that due diligence is essential, how can this paralyzing loop of "consultation" be broken in order

to make the most of Hong Kong's assets and opportunities before construction of new infrastructure yet again compromises access to the precious asset of Victoria Harbour?

Who has responsibility for driving and coordinating the "further technical studies" that are required to promote such an opportunity? Is it the Planning Department, the Civil Engineering and Development Department, Home Affairs Bureau or the Leisure and Cultural Services Department?

It is surely urgent for a Harbour Authority to be constituted, with sufficient resources and empowerment to take on the role of strategic planning of Victoria Harbour in its entirety - before yet more irreparable damage is done and more opportunities are lost.

Will the incoming Administration make this an integral part of building a World City?



CONTACT US

To help us develop the newsletter further in the future, please send your feedback to: hbf@bec.org.hk

PRIVACY POLICY

<http://www.harbourbusinessforum.com/eng/policy.asp>

Copyright 2012 Harbour Business Forum. All Rights Reserved.

<http://www.harbourbusinessforum.com>