

Sustained Actions for Sustainable Development **Policy Address Submission 2009**

The Conservancy Association



長春社 Since 1968

The Conservancy Association

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長春社對施政報告 2009 的建議 (摘要)

	建議
氣候變化及空氣污染	
- 氣候變化	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 制訂本地溫室氣體排放指標 - 推行碳排放交易 - 落實積極的補償方案，以環境零破壞為目標 - 對補償方案進行審核 - 制定應變策略 - 預備災難管理工作 - 改善城市規劃及設計，解決高能源消耗及高溫問題
- 能源政策	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 定下削減能源目標 - 為小業主提供協助
- 空氣污染	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 減少電廠、汽車和渡輪等污染源的廢氣排放量及因而導致的廢氣濃度 - 管制繁忙街道旁的樓宇佈局，提高廢氣的消散能力
- 單車政策	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 強化現行政策，把單車定為常規交通工具之一 - 首先在新市鎮完善現有單車設施、消除日常使用單車的所有障礙及監測和檢討單車活動，以便推廣至更大範圍 - 為單車徑制定富彈性的設計標準，同時亦能與自然環境互為

	<p>協調</p>
<p>自然、古蹟及資源保育</p>	
<p>- 樹木保育</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 設立樹木法 - 提供更多樹木工作指引，確保良好的執行、保養和監察樹木管理質素的工作 - 增加將來綠化及園境辦事處和樹木管理辦事處的工作透明度
<p>- 古蹟保育</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 容許公眾參與古蹟保育的工作 - 設立文物保育基金 - 提供更多協助予古蹟的業主
<p>- 自然保育</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 檢討新自然保育政策，確保受破壞威脅的保育地區得到保護
<p>- 廢物管理</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 儘速推行生產者產品責任條例下的工作 - 發展循環經濟，把廢物問題轉化成機遇
<p>- 非法傾倒</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 修訂廢物處置條例第 16A 條，引入在私人土地擺放廢物前要取得有關部門許可的規定 - 增加運載紀錄制度的監察工作 - 加強各部門間的協調及執法，有效打擊非法傾倒

CA Submission on Policy Address 2009 (Summary)

	Suggestions
Climate Change and Air Pollution	
- Climate Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Local greenhouse gas emission target - CO₂ emission trading scheme - Proactive compensation scheme – Zero damage to the environment - Offset program auditing - Response strategy - Disaster management - Improvement in urban planning and design to solve high energy demand and heat stress
- Energy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Set energy reduction target - Transfer knowledge to small private building owners
- Air Pollution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reduction in emission quantities and concentration - Building configuration along busy street to enhance pollutant dispersion
- Cycling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A policy with focus on cycling as a mode of regular transport - Cycling promotion in new towns by improving current cycling facilities, clearing hurdles to cycling and monitoring cycling activities - Flexible design standards on cycle track provisions harmonizing with the natural environment
Nature, Heritage and Resources Conservation	
- Tree Conservation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tree Ordinance - Release of various tree work guidelines for proper implementation, maintenance and monitor the quality of tree management work - Transparency of Greening and Landscape Office and Tree Management Office in future
- Heritage Conservation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Public engagement in heritage conservation - Heritage Conservation Trust - More assistance to owners of historical buildings
- Nature Conservation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review on New Nature Conservation Policy
- Waste	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Further progress on Product Eco-responsibility Bill - Circular economy to turn the waste issue from a problem to an opportunity
- Fly-tipping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Amendment on Section 16A of Waste Disposal Ordinance by introducing departmental authorization prior to deposit of waste on private land - Further monitoring works on trip-ticketing system - More inter-departmental co-ordination and enforcement

Introduction

1. The financial crisis broke out in the end of 2007 and persisted to reign in 2008. There are signs of recovery in 2009. The stock markets in both Hong Kong and the Mainland climbed back to high levels that were sufficient to clear the pessimistic mood of the investors in the third quarter of 2009. Both the public and private sectors start to push huge development projects with great hopes to scoop the cream in the much anticipated economic boom after the financial crisis. Just to name a few, these projects include the Hong Kong Zhuhai Macao Bridge (HKZMB), the Hong Kong and Shenzhen airports rail line, the Guangzhou Shenzhen Hong Kong Express Rail Line, the Heung Yuen Wai Crossing, the Central Kowloon Expressway, the West Kowloon Development, the South East Kowloon Development, the MTR Western extension, the MTR Southern extension and the further development of the Ocean Park.
2. All these developments are only component parts of the larger scale development in the Pearl River Delta Region in response to the policies laid down by the Central Government in the document entitled “PRD development framework policy” announced in December 2008. The main policy objective is to develop the PRD region into an affluent region in the world, comparable to that of Europe and the United States. Hong Kong and Guangzhou will be the main drivers of this anticipated economic boom pulling at the two ends of the PRD region.
3. Against this backdrop, both the natural and the cultural environments in the PRD region are under severe destruction threats although both the Guangdong and Hong Kong Governments have proclaimed their goal is to strike for a green living circle in the region. It is indeed an extreme challenging goal to achieve for both the governments and the genuine conservation groups in the region.
4. To this end, both the Guangdong and Hong Kong governments have laid down many policies with good intention especially in the area of cleaning the air. For example, the Guangdong government started to label the dirty vehicles and gradually restricted them from entering city centres and other sensitive areas; Hong Kong Government subsidises the phasing out of dirty vehicles. However, many of these policies appear to be “half-cooked” or sway from side to side. Governments must realize that persistence in policy formulation and implementation is crucial in achieving policy goals.

5. On the other hand, the Hong Kong community has shown consistence and persistence in acquiring a better living environment. The concept of sustainable development was nearly unheard of in the local community seventeen years ago when CA attended the first Earth Summit in 1992. CA's sustained and persistent efforts on sustainable development yielded a public and private sector delegation in the second Earth Summit in 2002. Subsequently, the governmental Council for Sustainable Development and the People's Council for Sustainable Development were formed in 2003 and 2004 respectively. Over the years, a series of events took place including the court cases over the reclamation of harbour, the harbour front design as well as the Star Ferry and the Queen Ferry piers fiascos. Government appears to have realized the importance of engagement process for major projects. With the concerted effort of Government and the civil society comprising the green groups and others, the SD concept has now been germinating in the local community and hopefully would form a good basis for future policy formulation.
6. CA strongly believes that Government should grasp the opportunity of public support and formulate "Sustained Actions for Sustainable Development".

PART I CLIMATE CHANGE AND AIR POLLUTION

Climate Change

7. This year, as world leaders gather in Poznan, Poland for the 14th Conference of Parties, to discuss a global plan to deal with the climate crisis, concerned citizens from around the world also gather on December 6th to demand global binding emission targets, equality between the developing and developed nations, and adaption funds to assist people in developing nations to deal with the consequences of climate change. In Nepal, more than 300 young people will gather on Saturday morning the 6th December to voice their concern of the inaction of our global leaders to tackle climate change.
8. Hong Kong as a cosmopolitan world city, should not shun its responsibility to cut GHG emissions for stabilizing climate change. Hong Kong should not hide behind Mainland China which is a developing country and does not have to set target to cut GHG emissions. Although the Chief Executive has committed in 2007/2008 Policy Address "We welcome the Asia-Pacific Economic

Co-operation (APEC) Leaders' Declaration on Climate Change, Energy Security and Clean Development recently adopted in Sydney. As an APEC member, Hong Kong will honour its pledge and seek to achieve a reduction in energy intensity of at least 25% by 2030 (with 2005 as the base year).” It is, however, far from adequate. The cutting of 25% energy intensity by 2030 does not cut GHG at all. On the contrary, GHG still increases ranging from 9% to 154% depending on the GDP growth rate.

9. Now, at Poznan, 186 Parties to the UNFCCC and representatives from business and industry, environmental organizations and research institutions are considering a GHG emission reduction range of minus 25 to minus 40 per cent over 1990 levels. At the minimum, Hong Kong should set a definite target of GHG emission at minus 25 per cent over 1990 levels.
10. CA urges the Chief Executive to commit to the following:

Local GHG emission target

Both our energy consumption and GHG emissions have been on the rise since 2000. Hong Kong should shoulder its responsibility to cut GHG emission to a minimum of 25 per cent over 1990 levels and adopt a “Kyoto-plus” policy. Since the Hong Kong SAR Administration and the Guangdong Provincial Government agreed to reduce four major pollutants by 2010, using 1997 as the base year, 1997 could also be used as the base year for GHG emissions reduction.

CO₂ Emission Trading Scheme

The latest IPCC report pointed out that “integrating air pollution abatement and climate change mitigation policies offers potentially large cost reductions compared to treating those policies in isolation.” Implementation of measures to reduce Green House Gas emissions will also reduce that of other air pollutants such as SO₂, NO_x and RSP, but not the other way round. As such, CA suggested including CO₂ emission in the Emission Trading Pilot Scheme for Thermal Power Plants in the Pearl River Delta Region.

It should be note that SO₂, though an air pollutant, contributes to a net cooling effect in the form of aerosol. Of course it is important to cut down SO₂ emission in the region, but if there is no provision to cap CO₂ at the same time, the problem of local warming will only exacerbate, as SO₂ promote cloud formation

which reflects heat, and because of its comparatively short lifetimes, the concentration in the atmosphere decreases much faster than that of CO₂.

Proactive Compensation Scheme – Zero Damage to the Environment

Avoidance of habitat damage and environmental degradation should be the guiding principle when planning infrastructure. But when it is not feasible, damage to the environment should be kept to minimum, preferably zero. Although the present Environmental Impact Assessment process includes evaluation of gaseous emission, it pertains more to air quality impact than GHG emissions. As large scale transport infrastructure such as highways and the logistic park will generate large amount of GHG, we suggest that a proactive compensation scheme such as tree planting should be implemented to offset the emissions.

Offset Programs Auditing

As “carbon offset” is becoming a lucrative business in many places, it is a matter of time when it will reach Hong Kong. We suggest that all offset programs must be duly audited by an independent and authorized agent.

Response Strategy

Besides developing mitigation policies to reduce greenhouse gases emissions, the Administration should also formulate a response strategy to prevent or reduce the degree of the adverse effect of climate change.

Disaster Management

It is expected that climate change and global warming will lead to more unstable and even chaotic climate. The rising sea level, higher possibility of sea surge, flooding and the potential of the visit of super-typhoon might increase the risk of natural disasters.

Preparation and coordination of related departments with the government during the disaster moment ought to be improved to cope with the warming world.

Improvement in Urban planning and Design

Warmer temperatures and higher humidity would result in greater use of air-conditioning and thus higher energy demand. An increase of the ambient temperature by 1°C would increase the electricity consumption by 9.02%, 3.13% and 2.64% in the domestic, commercial and industrial sectors respectively.

Moreover, higher annual temperatures could lead to an increased incidence and severity of warm temperature extremes, leading to increased occurrences of heat stress and discomfort, particularly among the elderly, the sick and those without access to air-conditioning.

Urban planning might take the issue of climate change into consideration. By increasing amount of greenery, lowering urban density, enhancing air ventilation in urban area, and promoting more efficient management of end-use of electricity would help to minimize the demand of energy.

Energy

11. Concomitant with the objective of reducing the local GHGs emission. A target should be set for energy saving which should take into account of the additional consumption due to the new infrastructure projects including those mentioned in paragraph 1. The Conservancy Association would like to see that the total energy consumption in 2010 should be at least 5% less than that of 2009.
12. In HK, 90% of the energy used is in buildings and the air conditioning plants in commercial buildings are the major users. Many of these chiller plants are more than 10 years old and their efficiencies are low in today's standard. The government should have means and incentive to help these building owners to replace their chiller plants. Once it is done, a 10% energy saving is easily achieved.
13. At the moment, the knowledge about how to achieve energy saving is within the professional groups and the big property management companies but not the small private building owners (OCs), there should be ways or bodies to transfer these technical knowhow to these OC people so that they can understand how to conduct energy audit and to carry out retrofit works

Air Pollution

14. Air pollution has been a growing concern across all sectors of the community. It is an issue with no boundary. With years of monitoring data and research, it is now clear that the general air quality in Hong Kong, as reflected by the monitoring data at the general air quality stations, is dominated by the polluting industries in the Pearl River Delta Region especially in the winter season when

the prevailing wind is northerly. However, in calm wind season and in the summer when easterly wind dominates, the local pollution sources, including the power plants and transportation systems, dominate. Further, road vehicles have been found to be solely responsible for the air quality at the roadside.

15. In tackling air pollution sources in the Mainland, Government signed an agreement with the Guangdong Government to cut pollutant emissions ranging from 20% to 55% based on the 1997 level. In tackling air pollution sources locally in Hong Kong, Government demanded the two power companies to use cleaner fuels; launched energy efficiency programme as well as various schemes to clean up vehicle emissions. For this, billions of Hong Kong dollars have been spent in the last decade. It is estimated that the emissions of regulated pollutants have been reduced significantly. However, the pollution levels (i.e., the concentrations of pollutants) measured at the air quality monitoring stations have not improved at all. As far as human health is concerned, it is the human exposure to pollution level that matters but not the pollutant emission quantity.
16. In the recent consultative document on Air Quality Objective Review, Government continues to put all its efforts to cut quantity of air pollutant emissions. Government claims 19 proposed measures are cost effective to reduce the quantities of pollution emissions. Nevertheless, no attention has been paid to reduce the human exposure to high concentrations of air pollutants. The phenomenon of the last decade may persist, i.e., the amount of emissions is estimated to be reduced significantly but the measured pollutant concentrations, especially at street level at human breathing zone, remain the same.
17. CA urges the CE to re-orientate Government's efforts to combat air pollution. While efforts are exerted to cut emission quantities, it is equally important to put efforts in reducing emission concentrations. As such, measures should be formulated to enhance the pollutant dispersion which is largely determined by the building configuration along busy streets.

Cycling

18. To clean up the air at street level, The Administration should expand its repertoire of policy options by including the promotion of non-motorized mode of transport. Cycling is strongly promoted worldwide as a clean transport mode

which also contributes to a healthy society. Hong Kong is constructing a New Territory-wide cycling track and a world class cycling race track. In the recent announced consultation document to clean the air in Hong Kong, promoting cycling is listed as one of the 19 strategies. It is no doubt that we are moving in the right direction in line with the conscious world community. We can however take a step further to make cycling a regular transport mode and design cycle tracks to blend in with the natural environment so as to position ourselves as a leading world responsible city.

19. This one step further will have to tackle two problems: one is to clear the hurdles hindering cycling to become a commuting transport mode and the other is to design and construct the cycling track in harmonizing with the natural environment.
20. Government and some part of the public have expressed road safety concerns for cycling as a regular transport mode. They worry that the fatality rate for cyclist may rise as they are the most vulnerable road users. In many world cities such as Amsterdam and London, this tragic phenomenon does happen. However, this logic is faulty. Albeit the fatality rate of cyclists may rise, the fatality rate per cycle- kilometer traveled (i.e., per usage) will never be higher than that of the private car. We have never banned the use of private car or any other vehicle type (e.g. motor cycle) on the road for reasons of their high fatality rate. The usual strategy is to adopt appropriate transport and traffic management measures to control the accident rate.
21. To allay this worry, perhaps, Government may consider carefully design and implementation of cycling as a regular transport mode by stage. Promoting cycling in new towns is a starting point
22. Currently cycling to a certain extent is being encouraged in new towns. The Planning Standard and Guidelines specifies the provision of cycling track to link housing estates to major transport interchanges, most noticeably, the railway stations. Parking spaces are provided at these spots. Subsequently, many do cycle and bicycles are parked everywhere, not limited to the designated parking spaces. A large number of bicycles are tied to the fences, street light posts and central barriers of busy roads. They become road blocks and eyesores. Obviously, people ride their bicycle not only to the major transport interchanges but to other centres of attractions such as schools, shopping centers and malls. In a sense, the

provision of cycle tracks in new towns has achieved its intended purpose. However, the provision of cycling infrastructure has not been updated to cater for the changing traveling behaviour in these new towns. The provisions of cycle parking facilities, the road sign and markings as well as cycle track connections are inadequate. Consequently, many cyclists have to compete the road spaces with other road users such as the vehicles and the pedestrians in order to go to places; thus, generate conflicts and accidents. Government has every responsibility to make improvements simply for the reason to reduce accidents.

23. The design of cycle track in Hong Kong is governed by rigid standards such as 5m wide concrete pavement. The application of this rigid standard can have devastating impacts on the natural environment when cycle tracks have to be constructed across rural areas and green sites. These impacts can best illustrated by the proposed cycle tracks linking Ma On Shan and Saikung. A large number of trees have to be felled and the natural landscape has to be scarred with a concrete ribbon.
24. Surely it is not always necessary to make sacrifice for a good cause. There are many good examples of cycle track designs elsewhere. These tracks can be narrower to avoid tree felling and on natural soft ground.
25. The Conservancy Association urges the Chief Executive to consider taking the following immediate actions:
 - a) to improve the current cycling facilities in new towns so as to recognize cycling as a regular mode of transport in these areas; the cycling infrastructure should observe the five principles, i.e., connectivity, directness, attractiveness, safety and comfort;
 - b) to monitor the implementation of cycling activities in these new towns with an intention to further promote cycling in other parts of the Territory;
 - c) to exercise flexible design standards on cycle track provisions so that these track can be blended in with the natural environment.
26. CA, with many stakeholders groups, organized a “Hong Kong on Bicycle” forum held at the Fringe Club on 23 May 2009. Opinions expressed in the forum are thought provoking. They can be found in Annex A.

PART TWO-NATURE, HERITAGE AND RESOURCES CONSERVATION

Tree Conservation

27. It is most unfortunate that a fatal tree accident took away a teen girl's life on 27th August 2008. This sad accident, in addition to many other urban tree failure cases last year, clearly showed that urban trees in Hong Kong received inadequate resources and care. Ordinance, policy and guideline are the skeleton to achieve quality tree management in the long term.
28. Henry Tong, Chief Secretary for Administration carried out a review on Tree Management and the report was released on June 2009. However, a Tree Ordinance, which CA and various community parties urged for several years, was not considered as a priority in this stage. "No trees being unnecessary felled or pruned" is the general policy for tree preservation in Hong Kong. However, without the comprehensive and specific legal backup, gaps of the existing tree preservation system will just result in ceaseless reports on poor tree caring, large scale tree removal for development and tree failure. Delaying the enactment of a tree law would result in poor greening quality in the long run, wasting public money and increasing the chance of tree failure.
29. Greening and Landscape Office and Tree Management Office will be set up for the planning, reviewing, coordinating and enhancing greening and tree management works. We suggest that various tree work guidelines should be released for proper implementation, maintenance and monitor the quality of tree management work.
30. The operation of the Greening and Landscape Office and Tree Management Office has to be transparent. The general public should have a channel for participating and monitoring tree management works in Hong Kong.

Heritage Conservation

31. While public sentiment for protecting our historical buildings remained high, the past one year is in fact a setback for heritage conservation: The Former Marine Police Headquarters has been retrofitted beyond recognition and converted to just another profiteering scheme; the first stage of Revitalising Historic Buildings through Partnership Scheme has degenerated into a worst case of favouritism;

the fate of the Queen's Pier has turned out to be a propaganda camouflaged as public engagement.

32. There is clearly a difference of views between the genuine public and the Administration on some if not all of the fundamental conservation principles. Currently there is no formal procedure for the public to submit an application to propose a historical structure as a declared monument or even as a graded building nor a way of appeal against downgraded building or to redress grievance. That is why the Conservation Association proposed in the past few years to remodel the Antiquities Advisory Board and the Antiquities and Monuments Office on the Town Planning Board. Public engagement in heritage conservation should be the norm and not an ad hoc exercise.
33. One thing that should not be left out in any decent conservation policy is of course a Heritage Trust. This is the ninth year the Conservancy Association proposed the idea of a Heritage or Conservation Trust in our policy submission. As institutional changes take years to accomplish, we do not expect the task could be completed next year. But the groundwork should be laid as soon as possible.
34. What the Administration can do immediately is to provide more assistance to owners of historical buildings. It is true that financial assistance is now available to owners of graded buildings, but owners need more than that. Advice on how to maintain the historical value of the building should also be given to them. Many buildings have been proposed to be downgraded in the assessment of 1440 historical buildings because they have been heavily renovated.

Nature Conservation

35. The Hong Kong SAR Government released its New Nature Conservation Policy in November 2004. Twelve sites on private lands were identified as having high conservation value. Two schemes were proposed to conserve these 12 sites. After nearly five years, only two sites have come under the Management Agreement scheme. One Public-Private Partnership scheme (PPP) is being developed at Sha Lo Tung. There were a few other proposed PPP schemes but none of them has got the green light. On the other hand, illegal activities such as fly-tipping continue to threaten some of these sites. Meanwhile, unauthorized development such as land filling and road development affect many of our natural habitats that

are outside the protected area systems of Hong Kong. The recent incident of Ma Shi Chau is a case in point. Clearly, the New Nature Conservation Policy is not adequate in protecting the 12 sites and the new challenges in recent years are increasingly eating up our natural treasures.

36. The Conservancy Association proposes that a review of the 2004 nature conservation policy is needed. As we had pointed out during the preparation of this 2004 nature conservation policy, the scope of the policy should cover all aspects of nature conservation rather than just looking at private lands. We reiterate that Hong Kong needs a comprehensive nature conservation policy which is aimed at the implementation of the Convention of Biodiversity.

Waste

37. We have witnessed the implementation of plastic bag levy on 7th July 2009, despite the prolonged legislative process. We appreciated the Administration finally remained firm to the determination that environmental protection is the responsibility of the entire civil society even during the period of economic downturn.
38. However, it was definitely not a great achievement on waste management and the Administration should take pride in it because such implementation proposed in 2007 came into effect in mid-2009. The stagnant status on Producer Responsibility Scheme (PRS) gave nothing but a real drag on introducing PRS to products specified in “A Policy Framework for the Management of Municipal Solid Waste” in 2004. Therefore, plastic bag levy should mark the step towards further progress on Product Eco-responsibility Bill covering the remaining five products.
39. In previous Policy Address submissions, we have already advocated to create a circular economy to turn the waste issue from a problem to an opportunity. In doing so, government initiative to stimulating both internal and external demand is vitally important. An industry chain should incorporate waste treatment, processing, product production and marketing, with further efforts on promoting practice of reduce, re-use and recycle. We sincerely hope that the concept of green industry would not become another empty talk without concrete action or Hong Kong would continue to sacrifice more social and environmental capital to solve the waste problem, a time bomb for the entire community.

Fly-tipping

40. Fly-tipping has become a “sustained action” tackled with no actions in rural area during these previous years. The scar of fly-tipping continued to spread in remote agricultural land, green belts and even adjacent to country parks and conservation areas; various departments continued to receive masses of complaints but without prosecutions; fly-tippers continued to escape from the scene easily. Clearly, such “sustained action” would not lead us to sustainable development.
41. We do notice some landowners take the advantage of the loophole of Waste Disposal Ordinance (WDO) to allow waste disposal on their own private land, but some others who have unwittingly received construction waste are also victims. To address such concerns, the Administration should introduce departmental authorization prior to deposit of waste in WDO which currently requires the consent of owner only to control waste disposal on private lands. Moreover, current fly-tipping case originated from government worksite reflected a need to further strengthen the monitoring works of trip-ticket system which intends to ensure proper construction waste disposal to designated disposal facility. These measures should be enforced simultaneously to make fly-tipping unsustainable.
42. Fed up with investigation, we should at last highlight that the key issue remain inter-departmental co-ordination and enforcement. We should not accept any land degradation in countryside again caused by shunning responsibility among various departments

Conclusion

43. While the theme of policy address concentrates on boosting six industries as new engines of economic growth this year, we hope that it will not draw away the attention of various environmental issues which have made small progress only. Our environmental pillars are as valuable as economic pillars in maintaining a sustainable Hong Kong. That is why sustained actions for the above environmental concerns should not be left with limited discussion.

Annex A

27 May 2009

Ms. Eva Cheng
Secretary for Transport and Housing
Transport and Housing Bureau

By Fax: 2523 9187

Dear Ms. Cheng,

Call for Cycling Action

Concluding the first conference on cycling in Hong Kong, the ‘Hong Kong on the Bicycle’ forum held 23 May 2009 at the Fringe Club, the participants (excluding Government officials) agreed that:

Facilitating cycling will improve the quality of the environment, reduce air pollution and Hong Kong’s carbon footprint, improve the health and safety of all citizens, improve transport efficiency and alleviate traffic congestion, reduce the demand on our limited land resources, and improve Hong Kong’s opportunities in all cycling sports.

By a show of hands, the forum participants (excluding Government officials) agreed to call on the Hong Kong Government to act as follows:

1. Plan and facilitate cycling as a mode of regular transport, a leisure activity and a participation sport;
2. Provide routes and facilities which are coherent, direct, safe, comfortable, attractive and environmentally sustainable;
3. Initially, prioritize the New Territories, islands and new urban zones such as Kai Tak as cycling districts which can then be extended to the entire Territory;
4. Cultivate the sharing of space by motorists, cyclists and pedestrians/hikers;
5. Create a Cycling Advisory Board with representatives from community, cycling concern, sports and professional bodies.
6. Require public transport companies to review/relax their current practices regarding carrying bikes on board so as to enhance making cycling an integral part of the whole transport system

The forum discussed specific planning measures:

- a. A renewed focus on implementing Hong Kong's existing Planning Standards and Guidelines regarding cycling;
- b. A process for continuous review and enhancement of the planning standards (HKPSG) and the transport planning and design standards (TPDM) regarding cycling;
- c. To specify cycling provisions (which currently default to 'always permit') in Outline Zoning Plans to ensure these are realized.

The forum welcomed the new cycling tracks while noting that:

- i. Cycle tracks will be used for all types of cycling, including utilitarian, leisure and sport;
- ii. The tracks should always be integrated with road and public transportation networks, since it is impossible to connect all residences, transport nodes and cycling facilities with cycling tracks, and the expectation that people will push or carry their bicycle at all times off the tracks is unreasonable;
- iii. Conflicts between cycle track standards and site constraints including undesirable impact on the environment limits the development of cycle track networks;
- iv. Research shows that severe and fatal accidents involving cyclists occur off the tracks and primarily in collisions with (high speed) motorists; any omission to plan for cycling on roads will prevent the development of safe cycling in Hong Kong; additional advisory road signs will help educate drivers and cyclists and reduce accidents;
- v. Sports cyclists require access to long sections of road (at certain times/locations) for training and competition;

In calling for a Cycling Advisory Board, the forum noted that:

- i. A Cycling Advisory Board can review standards or agree to waivers of standards where deemed applicable to enable expansion of the cycle route network beyond the planned cycle tracks;
- ii. A Cycling Advisory Board can assist with a renewed emphasis on learning and facilitating the safe sharing of space between cyclists, motorists and pedestrians.

In summary, this forum urged the Government to take heed of the increases in cycling and governmental support for cycling in cities and countries worldwide, and to act to encourage and enable cycling in Hong Kong, for the benefit of cyclists, would-be cyclists and non-cyclists alike.

Yours sincerely,

Hong Kong on the Bicycle Forum (co-signed by:)

The Fringe Club

The Conservancy Association

Designing Hong Kong Limited

Hong Kong Cycling Alliance

Hong Kong Mountain Bike Association

Hong Kong Cyclist Information Net

Interface for Cycling Expertise

Encl.

Letter from Timothy T.T. Fok