

AGREEMENT NO. CE 54/2014 (TP)

URBAN DESIGN STUDY FOR THE WAN CHAI NORTH AND NORTH POINT HARBOURFRONT AREAS

Executive Summary



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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Study Objectives and Key Tasks

1.1.1 AECOM Asia Co. Ltd. was commissioned by the Planning Department (PlanD) to undertake the Urban Design Study for the Wan Chai North and North Point Harbourfront Areas – Feasibility Study (Agreement No. CE 54/2014 (TP) (herein referred as “the Study”). The overall objective of the Study is to work out a sustainable urban design framework (UDF) with harbourfront enhancement proposals (HEPs) to guide future implementation of the HEPs.

1.1.2 The Study has produced a refined Urban Design Framework Plan (UDFP), with HEPs for the five character precincts, namely the Celebration Precinct, the Pierside Precinct, the Water Sports and Recreation Precinct, the Revitalised Typhoon Shelter Precinct, and the East Coast Park Precinct. Broad assessment was carried out to establish the preliminary technical feasibility of the HEPs.

1.1.3 It should be highlighted that this study is by nature an urban design study. The study would provide an UDF to prepare for detailed design and engineering feasibility studies for individual works projects identified under the HEPs at implementation stage in future.

1.2 Study Area

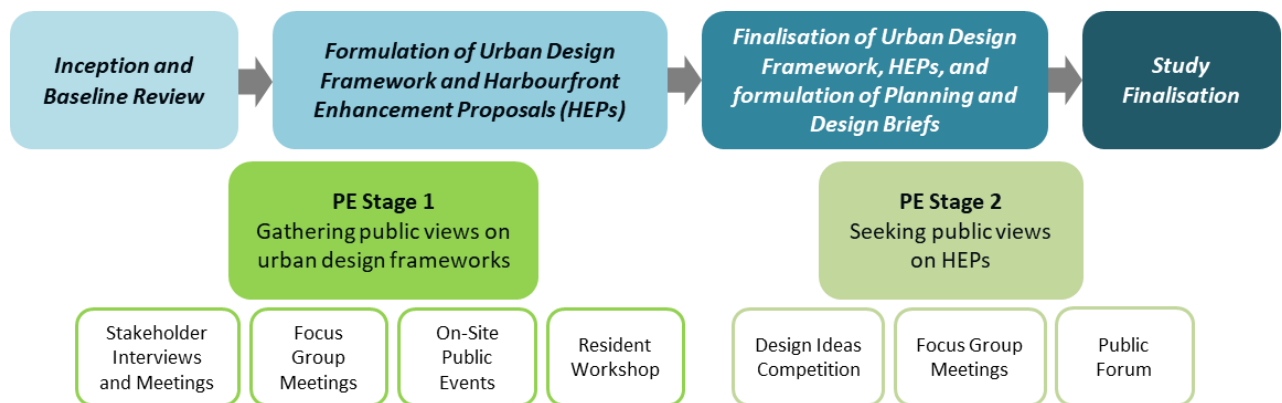
1.2.1 The Study Area is located at the northern shore of Hong Kong Island, with a total land area of about 19 ha and water space of about 22 ha. The boundaries of the Study Area and the Area of Influence (AOI) are shown in **Figure 1.1**.

1.2.2 Details on existing baseline conditions and the statutory planning context are further elaborated in the Final Report. In formulating the urban design framework and design proposals, they are formulated based on, and therefore conform to the planning intentions and development restrictions of the respective land use zonings of the prevailing Wan Chai North and North Point Outline Zoning Plans (OZPs).

2 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

2.1 Public Engagement Process

2.1.1 Public engagement (PE) was the backbone of this Study. Views and opinions from the public and relevant stakeholders were sought through a 2-staged public engagement exercise to identify their aspirations and key issues as the basis for formulation of the UDFP and HEPs. The following flow diagram illustrates the interrelationship between the study phases and the two stages of PE activities.



2.1.2 PE Stage 1 was conducted during the period between 15 June 2015 and 15 August 2015 to engage public on the UDF. During the two-month period, various PE events/activities including interviews with the major stakeholders, focus group meetings (FGMs), resident workshops, on-site public events were conducted and the Eastern and Wan Chai District Councils (DCs) were also consulted. The public generally supported the study's vision, the design themes of the five character precincts, and the UDF suggested by the Study.

2.1.3 PE Stage 2 was launched on 11 June 2016 and concluded on 20 August 2016, which aimed to engage public on the preliminary HEPs. During the PE2 period, various PE events/activities including design ideas competition, interviews with the major stakeholders, FGMs, public workshops, roving exhibition, on-site project display/exhibition, etc. were conducted and the Eastern and Wan Chai DCs were also consulted. The public had raised many comments and aspirations relating to the HEPs, such as provision of a continuous waterfront promenade, enhancement of the north-south connectivity, and providing more shading facilities, greenery and tree planting, continuous bicycle trail, pet facilities, etc.

- 2.1.4 The Harbourfront Commission (HC) has been closely engaged during the course of the Study. The HC's comments have been taken into consideration in formulating the UDF and HEPs. Apart from the HC, views and comments of different stakeholder groups such as professional institutes, green groups, water sports organisations and art groups were also sought during the public engagement.

3 REFINED URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK

3.1 Design Vision and Positioning

3.1.1 The Wan Chai North and North Point harbourfront presents a rare opportunity to re-connect people to the water, to re-define the harbourfront with new programs to offer a unified, continuous, walkable journey for pedestrians, as well as to create spaces that are not purely infrastructural and functional, but for people to enjoy and experience. The vision for the “New Wan Chai North Point Harbourfront” is to develop:

“an urban harbourfront re-connecting people to the water”

3.1.2 The proposed design vision and positioning were widely discussed and deliberated in the PE process with positive responses from the community and therefore the Study adopts the vision and positioning in finalising the UDFP and the HEPs.

3.2 Urban Design Principles

3.2.1 With reference to the overall positioning and vision, a set of refined urban design principles have been derived to guide the formulation of the UDF and design strategies:

- to create more distinct identity, character and stronger sense of place for the harbourfront;
- to enhance vibrancy and attractiveness along the harbourfront through diverse activities, programs and facilities for public enjoyment;
- to enhance pedestrian connectivity between the hinterland and waterfront, and to ensure that the waterfront/ public space is continuous and enjoyable;
- to ensure design flexibility in the design proposals and promote shared use design;
- to promote design that will make full use of the blue and green resources and opportunities to re-connect people with the water and promote water-friendly culture; and to foster a green harbourfront;
- to introduce smart, green and sustainable design elements; and
- to respect local cultural and heritage identity to re-connect people to the unique history of the harbourfront area and the district.

3.3 Refined Urban Design Framework Plan

3.3.1 Taking into account the above urban design principles and public views/comments received during the public engagement process, the refined UDFP is formulated (see **Figure 3.1**).

4 RECOMMENDED HARBOURFRONT ENHANCEMENT PROPOSALS

4.1 Master Layout Plan

4.1.1 Based on the refined UDFP and taking into account the views, comments, and ideas gathered from the public, HC and other stakeholders, the recommended HEPs have been formulated and incorporated into the latest Master Layout Plan (MLP) (see **Figure 4.1**). The following sections present the design concepts of the recommended HEPs by each character precinct. Details on the design proposals and key features of each character precinct are elaborated in detail in the Final Report.

4.2 Celebration Precinct

4.2.1 The HEPs of the Celebration Precinct are intended to give a facelift to enhance the area's identity, ceremonial significance and enjoyment by the public. The design objective is to enhance the area as a place that both the locals and visitors can easily access to enjoy panoramic harbour views and as a solemn venue for official celebration/ceremonial events.

4.2.2 The Celebration Precinct, with a total area of around 2 ha, comprises three feature plazas, namely the "Celebration Plaza", "City View Plaza" and "Sunset Plaza". These pedestrian plaza spaces will be designed to facilitate holding of different official celebration/ceremonial events, festive gatherings, outdoor events, exhibitions, etc. to activate the public realm and synergise with the Golden Bauhinia Square, Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre (HKCEC) and nearby arts and cultural facilities (i.e. Hong Kong Arts Centre and Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts).

4.3 Pierside Precinct

4.3.1 With a total area of around 4 ha, the Pierside Precinct will be one of the largest waterfront parks in Hong Kong. The design intention is to turn this piece of newly reclaimed land into an internationally-renowned harbourfront to showcase the vibrancy and dynamics of Hong Kong, and to offer diverse and round-the-clock experiences including outdoor performance, gourmet dining and other harbourfront events to the locals and visitors. The Harbour Performance Area and the Gourmet Dining Square are the major features in the Pierside Precinct.

4.3.2 Other key features of the precinct include flexible event space, thematic garden and interactive water features including dry music fountain and water play area for strengthening land-water interaction and contribute to a diverse landscape experience. In response to Wan Chai DC's request, a pet playground is proposed at the eastern part of Pierside Precinct.

4.4 Water Sports and Recreation Precinct

- 4.4.1 The design intention of the Water Sports and Recreation Precinct is to make full use of the water space offered by the Wan Chai ex-Public Cargo Working Area (ex-PCWA) to introduce water sports and recreational activities for public enjoyment near the harbour. The precinct, comprising a total land area of about 1.3 ha and water space of about 2.5 ha, is a public leisure ground setting around the Wan Chai ex-PCWA to showcase the new water play concepts and share use of various water-related activities, and to promote water-friendly culture to meet general public's recreation needs. The whole precinct will adopt a flexible design to facilitate the hosting of local and international water sports events.
- 4.4.2 Two supporting buildings known as Harbour Recreation Annex and Harbour Education Annex are proposed for the provision of ancillary and supporting facilities for holding local and international water sports events. Harbour Steps, i.e. the step-down water edge without railing, along the western and southern edge of the inner basin are proposed. Other supporting facilities include landing steps, floating pontoons, and other pedestrian facilities.
- 4.4.3 To resolve the major public concerns on water safety and water quality, suitable wave attenuator and measures to enhance the near shore water quality have been considered in the Study. It is recommended that the actual wave attenuation and water quality improvement measures should be further considered and undertaken at implementation stage.

4.5 Revitalised Typhoon Shelter Precinct

- 4.5.1 The design intention of this precinct is to revitalise the Causeway Bay Typhoon Shelter (CWBTs) and its promenade to echo with the presence of various cultural and historic elements (e.g. the typhoon shelter, Kellett Island, Noonday Gun, relocated Floating Tin Hau Temple, etc.) to optimise the use of the CWBTs for public enjoyment, and to make full use of the water space. The proposals also aim to enhance vibrancy of the precinct area. The harbourfront enhancement proposals will not affect the operation of the CWBTs.
- 4.5.2 Enhancement proposals at the Revitalised Typhoon Shelter Precinct mainly focus on improving the pedestrian environment of the existing promenade mainly through landscaping and streetscape enhancements to provide a pleasant promenade environment for public enjoyment. The Northern Breakwater is proposed to be enhanced by adding cantilevered viewing deck over the sloping section of the breakwater for public enjoyment of the panoramic view of the harbour from the typhoon shelter. Proper landing steps will be provided. Visitors could get access to the viewing deck using the sampan services.

4.6 East Coast Park Precinct

4.6.1 The East Coast Park Precinct, with an area of about 5 ha, will offer a diverse range of activities to citizens of all ages and interests to engage with their public space to promote concepts of “well-being” and “healthy-living”. This precinct comprises two major zones. The south-western portion on ground level will be developed into a community park, known as the “Community Park Zone”. The north-eastern portion, which is located on the roof of the Central-Wan Chai Bypass Tunnel Portal, namely “Roof-top Landscaped Park Zone”, will be developed into a landscaped park for public enjoyment. Continuous pedestrian walkway and leisure bicycle trail will be provided along the waterfront and will extend eastwards to integrate with the bicycle trail on the proposed boardwalk underneath Island Eastern Corridor.

4.7 Streetscape Enhancement Proposals

4.7.1 In order to foster a more attractive walking environment to guide visitors to the waterfront, streetscape enhancement works are proposed to be undertaken along five major entrance corridors including Expo Drive East, Tonnochy Road near Hung Hing Road, Hung Hing Road near the Royal Hong Kong Yacht Club, Watson Road and Oil Street.

4.8 Pedestrian Connectivity and Transport Arrangement

4.8.1 A Comprehensive Connectivity Plan has been developed to illustrate the network of major existing, planned, proposed at-grade, elevated and underground pedestrian connections.

4.8.2 In terms of transport arrangement, the public generally agrees that the New Wan Chai North Point Harbourfront should be accessed by public transport, noting that the Wan Chai to North Point harbourfront areas are well served by public transport including railway (the existing Island Line, the future Shatin to Central Link (SCL), etc.), buses, mini-buses, taxis, ferries, etc. Access by private vehicles should be discouraged through minimal parking provision to alleviate the traffic congestion problems.

4.8.3 Traffic measures in support of the HEPs include:

- a small amount of car parking space provision within the Harbour Education Annex in support of the future water sports events is found to be feasible subject to detailed design;
- laybys, loading/unloading and pick-up/drop-off facilities have been designated along Expo Drive East, Hung Hing Road, and Victoria Park Road to facilitate the daily pickup/ drop-off and loading/ unloading activities; and
- two new coach parks have been planned at Convention Avenue and Wan Shing Street, accommodating a total of about 24 no. and 8 no. of coach parking spaces respectively.

Bicycle Trail

- 4.8.4 In response to keen public aspirations for cycling activities within the harbourfront areas, it is the design intention to provide safe and comfortable cycling facilities and arrangements along the whole stretch of the Wan Chai to North Point harbourfront areas. Nevertheless, due to various site constraints such as insufficient width at certain parts of the existing harbourfront, provision of a continuous dedicated bicycle trail along the whole stretch of the harbourfront areas may not be feasible. The Study adopts a principle that wherever sufficient space along the harbourfront areas is available, a dedicated bicycle trail should be provided while share use arrangement should be adopted at the bottle-neck and congested pedestrian areas where all users including pedestrians and cyclists would need to share the waterfront space in a peaceful and mutual-respect manner.
- 4.8.5 Based on the above design principle, dedicated bicycle trails with a total length of about 1.6km will be designated. The shared use section is estimated to be around 1.8km long. It should be noted that the whole bicycle network along the harbourfront from Wan Chai to North Point is low speed and mainly for leisure purpose only.
- 4.8.6 To minimise the cyclists/pedestrians interface, suitable design measures (e.g. informative signage, suitable paving materials, etc.) should be provided to emphasise the “shared-use zone” to cyclists. Ancillary cycling facilities (e.g. bicycle racks and parking areas, rental facilities etc.) should be provided.

4.9 Marine Supporting Facilities

- 4.9.1 In order to achieve the Study’s vision to bring people closer to the water, various marine supporting facilities are proposed, such as Harbour Steps, landing steps, floating pontoons within the Water Sports and Recreation Precinct to facilitate land-water access and strengthen water-land interaction, as well as viewing decks over a breakwater within the Revitalised Typhoon Shelter Precinct to allow the public to get closer to the water.
- 4.9.2 Wave attenuation measures have been explored to address the wave issue within the Water Sports and Recreation Precinct to ensure water safety. Among various types of wave attenuation measures, floating modular wavebrake system is recommended, subject to further technical assessment and wave attenuation requirements pursuant to the specific activities to be carried out in the precinct at implementation stage.

4.10 Landscape Planning Framework and Proposals

4.10.1 A broad-brush tree survey has been conducted to evaluate the existing locations and species of the tree groups within the AOI.

4.10.2 Based on the broad-brush tree survey, initial landscape proposals covering softscape and hardscape palettes and provision of landscape features with distinct planting themes, recommended tree/ planting species, hard landscape materials such as paving design, street furniture, etc. have been formulated and incorporated in the MLP of each of the character precincts. The Study adopts a general principle that the existing trees would be retained as far as practicable, subject to future waterfront design. However, since the HEPs are subject to detailed design and technical feasibility studies, more detailed tree investigation/landscaping proposals should be carried out at the implementation stage.

4.11 Smart and Green City Design/Installations

4.11.1 Smart, green and sustainable elements are incorporated into the recommended HEPs to optimise energy efficiency, environmental friendliness and liveability in various aspects.

5 PLANNING AND DESIGN BRIEFS

5.1 Objectives of the Planning and Design Briefs

5.1.1 Based on the identified major urban design considerations, the refined UDFP and the recommended HEPs, a set of planning and design briefs has been formulated as the basis for the detailed design and engineering feasibility assessments of individual harbourfront enhancement projects at implementation stage, and to guide the future planning and implementation of the HEPs within the Wan Chai North and North Point harbourfront areas.

5.1.2 While the planning and design briefs are non-statutory, they have been formulated based on views and aspirations of the stakeholders and general public, and therefore, they should be observed by the implementation agents during the implementation stage. The Planning and Design Briefs conform to the development parameters as set out in the Approved Wan Chai North and North Point OZPs No. S/H25/4 and S/H8/26 respectively.

5.1.3 In order to allow sufficient design flexibility for detailed design at implementation stage, only broad and general planning and design requirements would be set out in the planning and design briefs.

5.2 Contents of the Planning and Design Briefs

5.2.1 A total of five planning and design briefs were prepared for the five respective character precincts. Content of the Planning and Design Brief for each precinct include:

- the background and planning context of the proposed Precinct and its surrounding (i.e. existing and planned land uses, accesses, connectivity, landscape planning framework, built form, air/visual corridors, etc.);
- the planning and urban design vision and objectives of the New Wan Chai North Point Harbourfront, as well as the urban design principles that provides for the foundation of the HEPs;
- the planning parameters and design requirements for the overall precinct and key features (i.e. building height and GFA restrictions, greening and shading ratio, connectivity, transport provision, air and view corridors, relevant facilities, utilities requirements, etc.); and
- a broad implementation framework and control mechanism of the relevant recommended HEPs.

6 IMPLEMENTATION

6.1 Implementation Modes and Long-Term Management

6.1.1 As revealed in the public comments received in the two-stage PE, the conventional implementation modes and long-term management mechanisms for the harbourfront areas by the public sector are sometime considered conservative, subject to different limitations (e.g. resources and regulations) and may not be adaptive to changes nor meeting public aspirations. Considerations should therefore be given to explore alternative and innovative implementation modes and long-term management mechanisms such as public-private partnership, participation by non-governmental organisations, etc. to leverage on their creativity and expertise. In order to attract their participation, an important consideration is whether there is a viable business case for the projects; in other words, an implementation mode/mechanism to make the implementation and long-term management of the harbourfront areas self-sustainable financially would be pivotal. To realise such intention, increase in financial incentives such as relaxation of gross floor area and building height restrictions, increase in commercial elements, etc. would need to be explored at implementation stage as appropriate.

6.2 Implementation Programme

6.2.1 The implementation programme of the recommended HEPs would hinge on the release of the various works sites or works areas after the completion of the ongoing and planned/proposed major infrastructural projects/developments, including the ongoing Wan Chai Development Phase II, SCL, and the proposed North Island Line, convention facilities above Exhibition Centre Station and Wan Chai Government Towers redevelopment.

6.2.2 Notwithstanding the above, noting that the public is looking forward to early implementation of the HEPs, construction of two quick-win projects comprising two sections of waterfront promenades, i.e. one to the west of the HKCEC and the other one around the New Wan Chai Ferry Pier, commenced in 2019 for public enjoyment.

6.3 Other Considerations

Technical Feasibility

6.3.1 Broad technical assessments have been conducted for the recommended HEPs, which demonstrates that implementation of the HEPs is prima-facie technically feasible. However, it should be emphasised that detailed design and engineering feasibility studies including environmental reviews will have to be undertaken for individual harbourfront enhancement projects taking into account the latest circumstances before implementation.

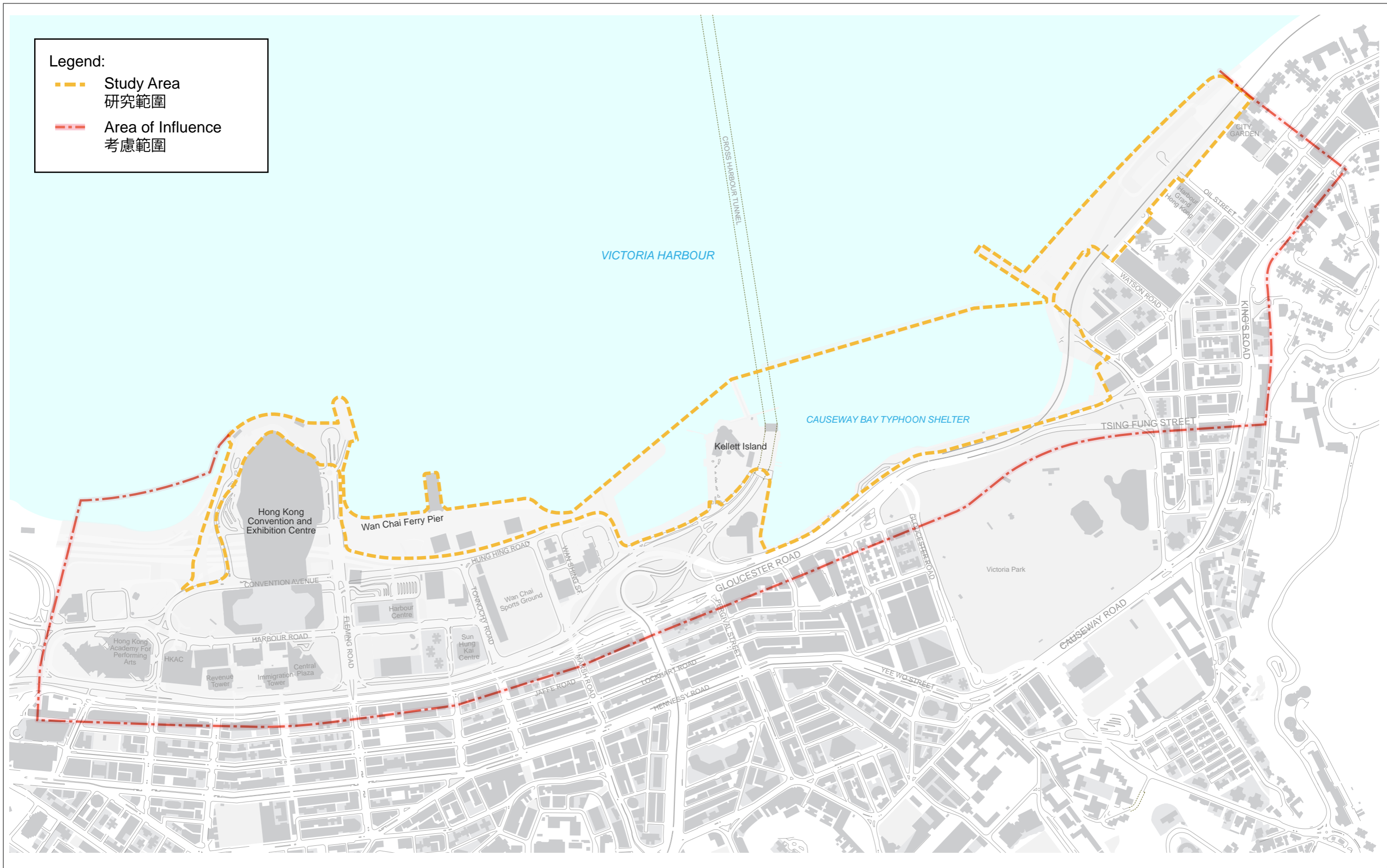
Protection of Harbour Ordinance

- 6.3.2 While the proposed harbourfront enhancements have avoided proposals with the Protection of Harbour Ordinance (PHO) implications, the proposed floating pontoon may have PHO implications. Besides, cantilevered boardwalk along the CWBTS promenade as advocated by many public members may also have implications for the PHO. Further study would be required in the detailed design and implementation stages to ensure compliance with the statutory requirements.

Water Quality

- 6.3.3 The degree of human contact with water, whether primary or secondary, will depend on the water quality. While the Government has ongoing initiatives, including the “*Further Enhancing Quality of The Coastal Waters of Victoria Harbour*” of the Environmental Protection Department to explore practical options to effectively reduce nearshore pollution and enhance the quality of coastal water of the Victoria Harbour, the future implementation agents should also carry out separate water quality assessment during the detailed design and implementation stages to protect public health.

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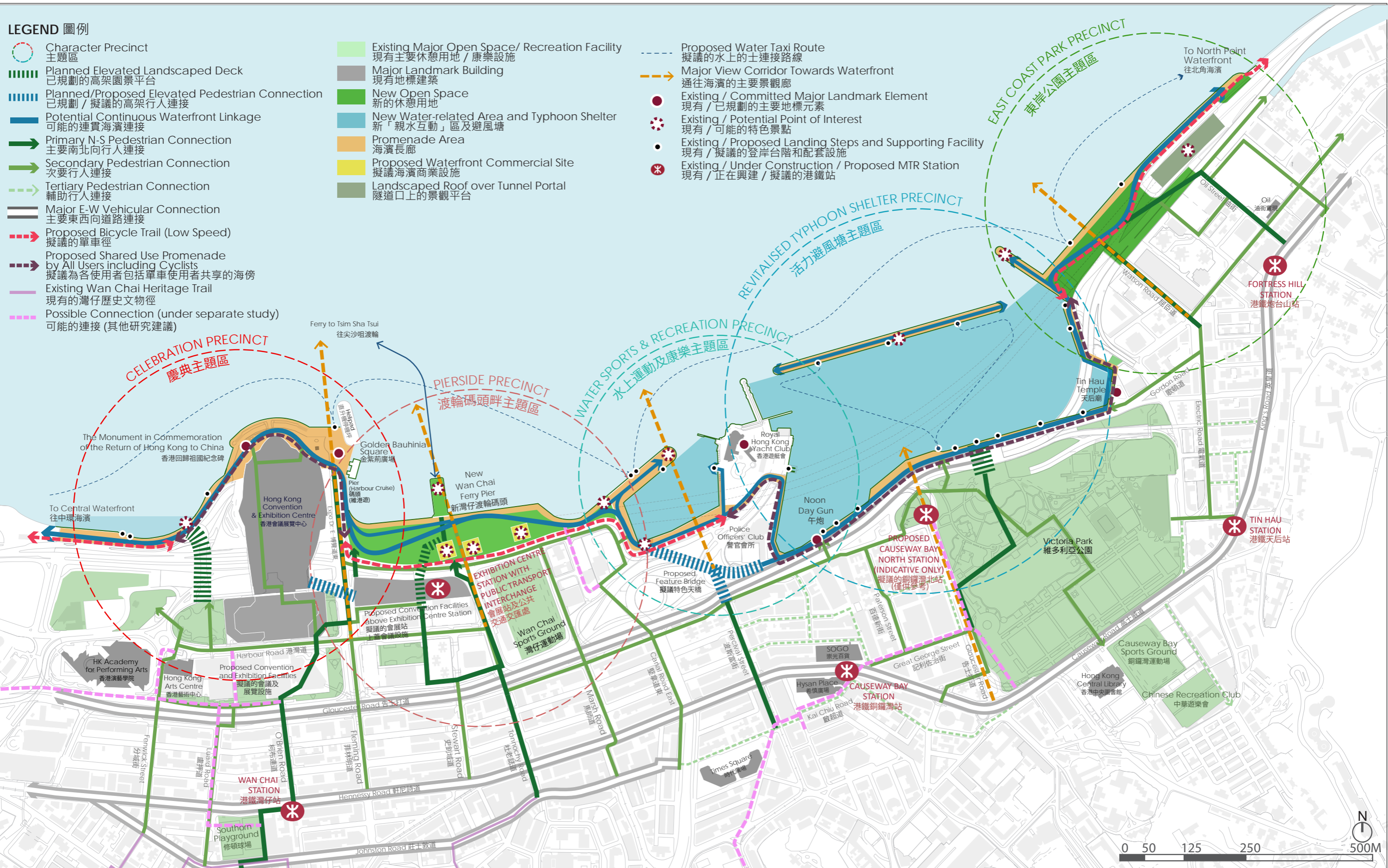


Project:
 Agreement No. CE 54/2014 (TP)
 Urban Design Study for the Wan Chai North and
 North Point Harbourfront Areas - Feasibility Study

Title:
Study Area
 研究範圍

Figure 圖 : 1.1
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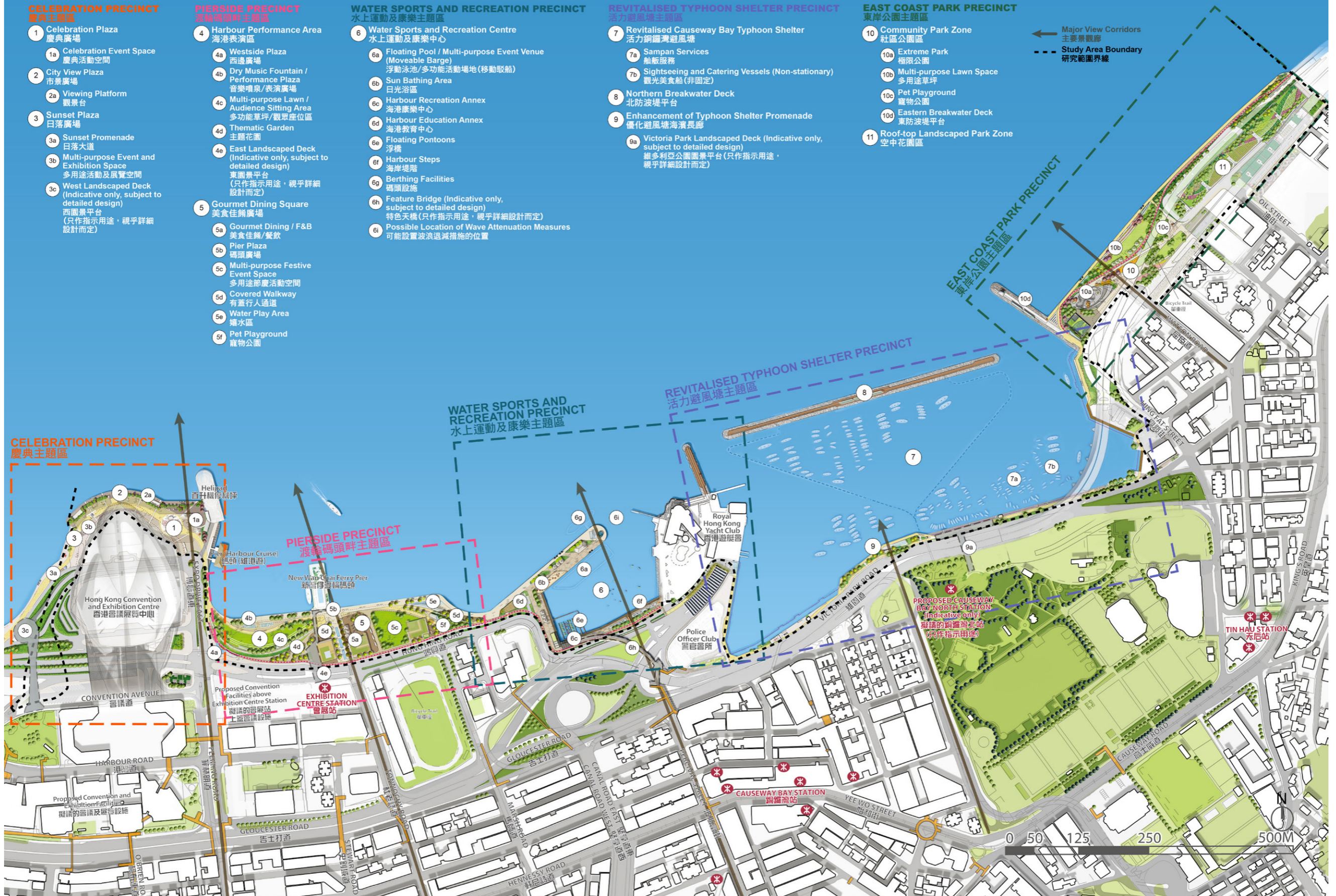
Project:
 Agreement No. CE 54/2014 (TP)
 Urban Design Study for the Wan Chai North and
 North Point Harbourfront Areas - Feasibility Study

Title:
Refined Urban Design Framework Plan
 優化後的城市設計大綱圖

Figure 圖 : 3.1
 Date: Oct. 2019
 Scale: N/A



WAN CHAI NORTH AND NORTH POINT HARBOURFRONT AREAS MASTER LAYOUT PLAN 灣仔北及北角海濱總綱發展藍圖



Project: Agreement No. CE 54/2014 (TP)
 Urban Design Study for the Wan Chai North and North Point Harbourfront Areas - Feasibility Study

Title: Recommended Master Layout Plan
 擬議的總綱發展藍圖

Figure 圖: 4.1
 Date: Oct. 2019
 Scale: N/A

