

Letter to the editor of SCMP (10 May)

I refer to the article headlined “Unease over reclamation” on April 29, and would like to provide information on the vision and overall planning in the proposals for reclamation outside the Victoria Harbour.

When identifying the five possible locations for reclamation, priority is given to near-shore reclamation that can be efficiently connected to existing roads and developed areas, and to man-made shorelines distant from existing communities, while avoiding ecologically sensitive areas.

Lung Kwu Tan is one such site that can be well integrated into existing transport infrastructure, providing area of economic growth and job opportunities. Ma Liu Shui is a location that can provide land for much-needed housing and community facilities, hence addressing the pressing housing demand. Close to the Sha Tin town centre, it can be easily linked with the existing railway. The site’s potential could be further enhanced by integrating with the land released by relocating the sewage treatment plant nearby into rock cavern.

The two sites on Lantau have the merit of connecting with major economic and tourist infrastructure (the airport, Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge, etc.), being in line with the HK2030 Study and the Revised Lantau Concept Plan to facilitate strategic economic development and supporting development of Tung Chung. On the other hand, Tsing Yi Southwest, with its easy access to existing transportation nodes, has the potential of becoming a regional logistics node.

The above demonstrates that there are strategic thoughts and planning underpinning the reclamation proposals. It must be emphasised that we did not start from ground zero, as much planning has been done in the past: the Lantau concept plan, various infrastructural planning, and the studies for the tourism and logistics industries. All these guide and back our recommendations.

The proposed artificial islands in the central waters between Lantau and the Hong Kong Island represent a different proposition. It is envisaged as a long-term option for new development areas. With less environmental constraints and high planning flexibility, it can become the urban extension if convenient and cost-effective transport system can be provided. We hope to receive public support for the next step on artificial islands: conducting studies on engineering feasibility, possible land uses and transport links, and carrying out assessment on the potential impact on the environment, marine ecology and traffic. It is a bold vision that we hope to discuss with the public and gain their support.

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