1. To begin with, we are very thankful for the extraordinary efforts that have been made by the various organisations and individuals in submitting their comments and expressing their views on the Stage 3 Study. Indeed, we have consulted the public on specific issues such as the key assumptions and the planning choices in this round of Study and many of the comments received are indeed very useful. Nevertheless, some of the comments received are more relevant to the study topics discussed under our earlier study stages, e.g. submissions concerning the key study areas with emphasis on the importance of strong governance, need for quality-focused immigration policy and human capital. Similar comments have already been raised and considered in the Stage 1 and 2 Consultation Reports.

2. Therefore, to move on to our next study stage, we have highlighted only the key comments that are particularly relevant to the formulation of the planning strategy and the preferred spatial pattern in this overview. Other comments, important though, will be separately indexed and summarised in the detailed comments under Section IV. Again, we will consider all these views and, as far as possible, incorporate them as inputs to the Study in the concluding stage.

3. In general, comments received in this round are mostly related to the broad planning directions, planning choices and the spatial development patterns. There are relatively fewer comments on the key assumptions (other than the population assumption) and the ‘what if’ scenarios. We guess, like the evaluation criteria, they are more technical and might be perceived as having less immediate relevance to the Study.

4. In terms of public consultation, we are happy to note that most commentaries appreciated that the HK2030 Study has done a lot of work in consulting the public. We have visited all the District Councils and involved the concerned parties / stakeholders in the focus meetings. It is rewarding to learn that the participants were supportive and offered very constructive ideas. Different experiences were shared and views were debated among the various stakeholders and the Government’s representatives. Similar to our earlier stages, the public consultation has provided views, which will be invaluable to the study process.
5. Most of the comments received concur with the three major planning directions and agree that attention should be given to improving the quality of the living environment. Many are keen to know how these aspired objectives can be achieved and have suggested that measures to enhance the living environment should be implemented as soon as possible.

6. Also, there is strong public support for strengthening our links with the Mainland to facilitate complementary growth and flow of trade, transport and people. Some urge that there should be more coordination and collaboration in cross-boundary planning work and due regards should be given to the development of the Pearl River Delta (PRD) Region when formulating the long-term planning strategies. Comments received also affirm that we should enhance our economic competitiveness, which will, in turn, enhance the development of the whole region.

7. Among the planning choices raised in the Consultation Booklet, future of the Frontier Closed Area (FCA) including possible development of the Lok Ma Chau (LMC) Loop, development density and development patterns are most widely commented. Views on the FCA and the LMC Loop are equally diverse. Most query the need for retaining the FCA and urge for its early uplifting. However, many commentators (mostly environmentalists) consider that the present state of the FCA should be retained or developed for eco-tourism. Regarding the development of the LMC Loop, those who have raised objection to the “trade expo” proposal are mostly concerned with the potential impacts on the environment and its cost-effectiveness. Those in support of development include some representatives of the Chambers of Commerce though their views on the future uses vary.

8. Most comments relating to development density consider prevailing levels generally acceptable. Many urge not to reduce densities for all sites across the board as high density is a key feature of Hong Kong’s development. However, some suggest that if lower plot ratios are to be introduced, selective sites in new development area, e.g. harbourfront sites, should be the target. In addition, more physical planning, layout and design work should be undertaken to minimise physical congestion and achieve a pleasant living environment.
9. Views on the development patterns are rather diverse, with supports received both for the Consolidation and Decentralisation Options. Those in support of the Consolidation Pattern consider that it is more cost-effective, requires fewer infrastructures and preserves more greenery in the N.T. Those opt for Decentralisation Pattern consider that it can relieve urban congestion and improve the living environment in the old districts. Irrespective of which options to be adopted, it is considered that there should be a clear indication on the timing for the previously announced New Development Areas (NDAs) (i.e. Hung Shui Kiu, Kwu Tung North and Fanling North).

10. There are far less comments received on other choices including new premier office centre, new employment node and university town as they are new concepts which are more abstract and require more visionary thinking. Other comments including concerns on the adverse ecological impacts of the possible port expansion at north-west Lantau and that due regards should be given to addressing environmental and ecological impacts in the planning process.

11. Lastly, comments both opposing and supporting Central Reclamation Phase III (CRIII) have been received. Irrespective of whether objecting or supporting, there is a predominant view urging the Government to minimise the limit even if reclamation is unavoidable and enhance public involvement in the planning process for harbourfront areas.

Key Comments and Our Responses

12. For easy reference, an overview of the major comments and our responses are highlighted below:

Quality Living Environment

13. Most, if not all, commentaries on this point agree that the provision of a quality living environment is a worth pursuing and right planning direction and the aspiration for a quality living environment is achievable through proper planning.

14. Most people are eager to know the details of a quality living environment and how it will be implemented by the Government, in particular through building height controls, better urban design and design of public space,
Section II  Overview of Key Comments

preserving the ridgelines in the urban area and protection of public views. Most commentators suggest that measures to enhance the living environment should be implemented as soon as possible, and not be deferred to the long term.

15. Most commentators support better conservation of our natural resources and cultural heritages. However, many request that proper and enhanced implementation mechanisms and a strategy be established by the Government.

Government’s Response

16. The Government is fully aware of the community’s desire to improve the quality of living environment including better building height control, better planning for the pedestrian environment, waterfront areas and other public space.

17. In terms of urban design, the Government has, in November 2003, promulgated, after thorough public consultation under the Study on the “Urban Design Guidelines for Hong Kong”, a set of urban design guidelines, including principles of building height control, protection of ridgelines, public space and streetscape design, breezeways and view corridors, etc., with a view to creating a high quality and sustainable built environment in Hong Kong. The Government is now following up this set of guidelines by translating the urban design principles into detailed plans, e.g. building height control in the Peak Area, harbourfront area and the Kwun Tong and Kowloon Bay business areas, etc.

18. In terms of better planning for pedestrian environment, we are now about at the end of the Study on Planning for Pedestrians. Upon completion of the Study, a pedestrian planning framework will be proposed and pedestrian plans for key action areas, including Central District and Causeway Bay, will be prepared. We will consult the public on these plans once available.

19. In addition, we have launched an Area Improvement Plan for Tsim Sha Tsui District (viz. Area Improvement for Tsim Sha Tsui – Feasibility Study) recently. The purpose of the Study is to recommend a framework of urban design and pedestrian circulation for the area and to give Tsim Sha Tsui a facelift. Similar studies for other areas will be launched upon availability of the necessary resources.
20. Sites of nature conservation and building heritage value have been designated with the relevant land-use zonings. However, we recognise that the zoning systems alone may not be sufficient from the preservation point of view, e.g. protection of the sites/buildings from damage, lack of incentives to induce owners’ cooperation in protecting the sites/buildings.

21. The Government recognises the importance of the need to better conserve our natural resources and cultural heritages. Home Affairs Bureau (HAB) is now reviewing its policy on built heritage with a view to formulating a holistic approach and better policies on heritage conservation in Hong Kong. A three-month public consultation exercise on broad policy issues ended in May 2004. HAB is studying the views collected and will formulate implementation proposals. The public will be consulted on these implementation proposals later. Similarly, Environment, Transport and Works Bureau launched in July 2003 a three-month public consultation exercise on the review of the nature conservation policy. The views collected will help the Government to map out a more comprehensive nature conservation policy for Hong Kong.

**Strengthening Links with the Mainland**

22. There is unanimous support for strengthening our links with the Mainland to facilitate the smooth flow of trade, traffic and people across the boundary.

23. Comments in this aspect are mostly enquiry in nature, particularly requesting information on whether our cross-boundary planning work has taken into account developments in South China, in particular the PRD Region. Some have expressed views on the need for adopting a regional planning perspective in formulating the long-term planning strategy.

**Government’s Response**

24. Our cross-boundary planning work has essentially covered the following key areas:

- (i) better understanding of past trends and current patterns through undertaking statistical analyses of data and surveys relating to cross-boundary passengers and vehicular travels (e.g. Statistical Reports on Cross-boundary Travel, Cross-boundary Travel Survey 2003, Thematic
Section II  Overview of Key Comments

Household Survey 2003 – Hong Kong Residents’ Experience of and Aspirations for Taking up Residence in the Mainland of China;

(ii) collect and collate information relating to planning of cities in the Mainland, particularly in the PRD Region (such as the 10th 5-Year Plans, Master Plans of cities in the PRD, alignments of key roads and railways, etc.);

(iii) liaison with our counterparts in the Mainland to exchange information relating to planning and development; and

(iv) on the basis of the information available, we will undertake assessments and run models to postulate projections for future development and strategic planning purposes.

25. The Government has all along worked closely with the Mainland authorities on various planning and development issues. In view of the importance of the work, the liaison mechanism will be upgraded under the Hong Kong / Guangdong Co-operation Joint Conference through the establishment of the Expert Group on Hong Kong / Guangdong Town Planning and Development.

Frontier Closed Area and Lok Ma Chau Loop

26. Most query the need for the FCA and considered that it should be opened up for development. In view of environmental and ecological considerations, majority of the commentators cast doubts on the cost effectiveness of developing the FCA and are of the view that the land in the FCA should more or less be maintained in the present state or developed for recreational / eco-tourism use for enjoyment of the public at large. However, villagers in the N.T., particularly those in the FCA, requested that development inside the FCA should be permitted. Priority should be given to the land under their ownership and not the ‘Loop’ as proposed in the HK2030 Consultation Booklet.

27. With respect to the proposed development of the LMC Loop for a ‘trade expo’, views are rather diverse. Many raise objection to the proposal in view of the environmental considerations, cost-effectiveness, lack of infrastructure and priority of development.

28. There are reservations to the suggestion of developing the LMC Loop as a ‘trade expo’. Various Chambers of Commerce have put forward other suggestions on the future use of the area including an industrial zone.
(subject to there being free import of Mainland labour and land being offered free or at a very low rate), research and development base (subject to importation of Mainland experts and labour being allowed), retail outlets and entertainment centres and institutions for education and science research. Separately, the Legislative Council has passed a motion requesting the early development of the LMC Loop for a border industrial zone with supportive measures and incentives.

29. On the other hand, most of the participants at the Focus Meeting, mainly the N.T. villagers who own land inside the FCA but outside the LMC Loop, representatives of the professional institutes, green groups and academics, raise objection to the development of the LMC Loop in view of the environmental considerations, cost-effectiveness, lack of infrastructure and priority of development.

30. There are few comments on the need for additional cross-boundary transport infrastructure, i.e. over the long-term in terms of whether we should enhance the existing cross-boundary facility at Sha Tau Kok or develop an ‘Eastern Corridor’ for better access to eastern Guangdong.

Government’s Response

31. The Government is reviewing the coverage of the FCA and will consult the public on the findings as soon as the review and the related work are completed.

32. Based on the previous comments received in the Stage 2 Public Consultation, i.e. FCA should be used for strategic uses requiring a frontier location, a preliminary planning study on the development potential of FCA was undertaken as part of HK2030 Study. It is found that there are a number of constraints which considerably limit the development potential of the FCA, e.g. hilly terrain, general lack of infrastructure, sites of ecological and conservation values, traditional villages and burial ground. Therefore, only three areas have been identified as having long-term development potential including LMC Loop, Heung Yuen Wai and Kong Nga Po. Nevertheless, we will bear in mind the comments that have been raised in further considering the development and future uses of the FCA. Views will also be taken into account in the future assessment of the FCA.
33. With respect to the LMC Loop, it is close to the Shenzhen Futian commercial area, which will be the administrative, cultural and commercial centre within the Central Urban Cluster under the Shenzhen Comprehensive Plan (1996 – 2010). Besides, the LMC Loop is near the existing Huanggang crossing and the proposed LMC Station of the LMC Spur Line. According to the study on FCA, LMC Loop has the potential of being considered for use as a ‘trade expo’ as an initial concept in view of its strategic location. At the meeting with the Shenzhen officials led by Mayor Li Hongzhong on 17 June 2004, the Chief Secretary for Administration and Mayor Li exchanged preliminary views on the development of the LMC Loop. As the development of the LMC Loop will involve a number of issues, including land-use rights, treatment of contaminated mud, environmental concerns, provision of supporting infrastructure and transport network as well as development costs, both sides agreed that further discussion and study need to be conducted. We will reconsider the future use(s) of the LMC Loop in the light of the comments received and the results of the joint study with the Mainland authorities.

Population Assumption

34. Most commentators on this subject ask why the population for 2030 assumed in the HK2030 Study is different from the population for 2030 projected by the Census and Statistics Department (C&SD). Even though most commentators accept our explanation for the difference, they still consider the HK2030 population assumption of 9.2 million for 2030 on the high side and should be critically reviewed, particularly to take into account possible higher percentage of ‘mobile’ people.

35. In the light of the ageing population situation, some people ask about the planning response, i.e. what has physical planning done to address the problem?

Government’s Response

36. The projected population of 8.7 million by 2030 provided by C&SD is compiled on the basis of current and imminent trends of the population development; and, where Government policies are involved, the existing policies are taken to continue to apply. However, the population of 9.2 million by 2030 is not a projected but an assumed figure, and reflects the relevant parameters adopted in the vision-based development scenario, on top of the population projections made by C&SD.
37. The population of 9.2 million by 2030 has assumed a greater number of incoming talents and skilled workers, a higher fertility rate and an increase in mobile residents as a result of increased activities between Hong Kong and the PRD by 2030 if Hong Kong is to be developed into a world city like Tokyo, London and New York. Nevertheless, this population assumption is being reviewed by taking into account the latest population projections of the C&SD (using mid-2003 population estimate as the base) and as the HK2030 Study proceeds to its Stage 4.

38. In the light of the comments received, we will review the scope for adjusting the population assumption whilst adhering to the vision-based parameters generally considered acceptable in the public consultation. Furthermore, we will also construct alternative scenarios for contingency planning.

39. The Government recognises the ageing population trend and will reserve sufficient land to accommodate facilities for the elderly. In addition, Planning Department will also, from time to time, review in association with relevant Government bureaux and departments the planning standards of the facilities for the elderly. As regards building design, concerned Government departments will also endeavour to cater for the needs of the elderly, including the concept of ‘life-long building design’.

**Development Density**

40. At the early stage of consultation, we note that there were some comments in support of lowering the existing development intensities in the urban area.

41. Subsequently, it has been revealed through written submissions and those attending the public forums and Focus Meetings (mainly representatives of professional institutes, academics, etc.) that there is, in fact, very little, if any, objection to the prevailing density levels. In their view, there is no direct relationship between plot ratios, densities and consequently the living environment. As a matter of fact, most of them consider that high density is a key feature of Hong Kong’s development, which has helped us become one of the most sustainable cities in the world in terms of land and energy utilisation, and cost-effectiveness of the transport system.
Section II Overview of Key Comments

42. Most of the commentators consider the main cause for excessive building bulk is due to the current plot ratios being applied to much larger sites planned for new development areas of today. The Government should apply the ‘large site reduction’ concept to new development sites to ensure the resultant net density will not be higher than that planned or intended.

43. Many urged not to reduce densities for all sites across the board. Intensification of development at ‘Government, Institution or Community’ (‘GIC’) sites and mixing of incompatible Government uses are however not supported.

44. It is considered that the existing development rights of landowners should be respected. However, if lower plot ratios should be introduced, new development sites, particularly those at sensitive locations, e.g. harbourfront, should be the targets. Also, to reduce congestion between buildings, more physical planning, layout and design work should be undertaken.

**Government’s Response**

45. The density issue involves a myriad of complex issues. There is a need to strike a balance between efficiency and optimisation of resources.

46. Noting the comments, the Government will consider, in the next stage of the Study, the need to:

   (i) adopting a flexible rather than a blanket approach in identifying suitable sites at sensitive locations for treatment;

   (ii) applying appropriate development controls, including building bulk and height control on ‘GIC’ sites, especially those at sensitive locations, to retain their original urban design function;

   (iii) reviewing whether and how a large site reduction factor can be applied to large redevelopment sites in the existing urban area and adopting a ‘net site’ concept in planning for new development areas; and

   (iv) integrating urban design and environmentally friendly concepts in planning layouts to reduce building congestion and provide better quality living environment.
Development Patterns

47. Views are rather diverse as to which Development Pattern (i.e. Consolidation Pattern or Decentralisation Pattern) should be adopted.

48. Some support (mostly the green groups and professional institutes) the Consolidation Pattern because in their view it is more cost-effective, requires less infrastructure, can shorten journey to work and preserves more land in the N.T. for leisure / recreational and future uses.

49. Those supporting the Decentralisation Pattern (mostly District Councilors and private individuals) consider that it can relieve urban congestion and improve the living environment in the old districts.

50. Nevertheless, most commentators felt that Government should give a clear indication as to the timing of the previously announced NDAs in the N.T. so as to avoid aggravating the current planning blight and unduly freezing land rights.

Government’s Response

51. It should be emphasised that the Government has at this stage no preference on which development pattern is better and should be adopted. After soliciting public’s views on the two patterns, we will reconsider their pros and cons as well as relevant policy initiatives for further consideration in the next stage of Study.

52. Future direction and priority of the NDAs will be examined in the Stage 4 Study.

Premier Office Space

53. Though a few have suggested that there are benefits to decentralising an office centre to the N.T., majority accept that it is impracticable.

54. A few commentators have suggested that the Government should take the lead to create a new Central Business District (CBD) by moving the Central Government Offices (CGO) to the waterfront of the ex-Kai Tak Airport site.

55. Many consider that the unlimited expansion of the existing CBD is the source of traffic congestion and should be undertaken.
Government’s Response

56. Most, if not all, of the district-based Government offices have already left the CBD in recent years. The CGO still remains in the Central District as they have functional needs and have frequent interactions with overseas embassies, representatives of the business sectors and community leaders, etc. whose offices are usually located in the CBD. The Government has undertaken studies over the past years to examine to what extent our jobs can be decentralised from the CBD to non-CBD areas. These studies revealed that office users intended not to move outside the CBD as they were concerned more about their connection with the customers rather than the rent level. The Government should be cautious in making a decision on the new location of the CGO and take into account its connection with the business sector and other key functions.

Port

57. Most of those who have commented on the ‘Port’ query the need for development of additional container terminals in the light of rapidly expanding port facilities and throughput in the PRD Region.

58. Those commenting on the possible location at north-west Lantau, mainly the green groups and environmentalists, warn about the potential adverse impacts on the habitats of Chinese White Dolphins and ask about the measures that Government intend to adopt to address the adverse impacts. Because a new port at north-west Lantau will require the development of new infrastructure, e.g. new strategic access, some commentators remind Government of the need to ensure that, when comparing the two possible locations at north-west Lantau and south-west Tsing Yi, the comparison will be on a comprehensive basis (i.e. the total development packages).

59. A few have commented that developing a new port alone (i.e. the physical infrastructure) cannot enhance our economic competitiveness. Rather, we should also have associated policies to enhance the overall competitiveness of the port, e.g. improvements of the transport network, agglomeration of facilities and provision of support to the port and transport industries.
Government’s Response

60. According to the on-going “Study on Hong Kong Port – Master Plan 2020” (“HKP2020 Study”), cargo pool of South China will continue to expand strongly in the coming years. It can sustain further port development in both Hong Kong and other cities in the PRD Region. Besides having highly efficient services and clear customs regulations, extensive coverage of liner services is also our competitive edge. Further port development helps to maintain the critical mass and Hong Kong’s position as the hub port in the region.

61. Port development has been a key economic engine of Hong Kong. Potential economic benefits of further port development are as follows:

(i) the ‘Trade and Logistics’ sectors accounted for about 26.5% of our Gross Domestic Product and employed some 24% of the workforce in 2002. The port sector provides employment opportunities to both skilled and semi-skilled workers in the territory, thus improving the income distribution;

(ii) performance of other related business activities such as communications, banking and finance, insurance, legal services are closely linked to the port. Increased port activities would also provide additional economic benefits to these sectors; and

(iii) development of new container terminals, with new design and standards (e.g. deeper water depth, longer berth length and new berth configuration), can satisfy the need of modern mega container vessels and enhance Hong Kong’s strength as the regional logistics centre.

62. In the “Port Development Strategy Review 2001” (“PDSR 2001”), four potential sites for container terminal development were identified for further assessment, one of which was located in north-west Lantau. To follow-up the recommendations of the PDSR 2001, the feasibility of these possible sites has been examined under the ongoing HKP2020 Study. After preliminary assessment, south-west Tsing Yi and north-west Lantau are selected for feasibility assessments, including possible environmental and ecological impacts as well as the necessary mitigation measures. However, further detailed study is recommended to determine the environmental acceptability of the proposed port development.
63. Indeed, the HKP2020 Study, inter alia, has assessed the planning, transport, environment, economic, engineering and marine feasibility of the two possible sites. In recommending the preferred location for future container terminal development, the transport infrastructure requirement would be considered as one of the key factors.

64. The HKP2020 Study, apart from identifying the more suitable location for future container terminals development, has also examined measures and policy initiatives to enhance the overall competitiveness of the port. The Study has been completed and the findings will be released to the public.

**Urban Renewal**

65. Noting that the Government in due course will consult the public on the Review of Urban Renewal Strategy (URS), it is fair to say that comments, in the absence of more concrete supporting information (e.g. what does rehabilitation mean and what respective roles will Government/private land owners play, etc.) could only be regarded as initial and preliminary.

66. With regard to whether or not the Urban Renewal Authority (URA) should undertake more urban redevelopment or more rehabilitation, the views/comments are rather divided. On one hand, some urge Government to encourage more rehabilitation through better building maintenance and management, area rehabilitation/improvement and consider redevelopment rather unsustainable. Most commentators holding this view are environmentalists and not necessarily affected by proposed redevelopment schemes. On the other hand, people who are affected by the proposed redevelopment schemes (i.e. redevelopment schemes which had been publicly announced by the former Land Development Corporation) urge for early implementation of the redevelopment projects by way of redevelopment.

**Government’s Response**

67. The URA has adopted a holistic approach to urban renewal, which comprises redevelopment, rehabilitation, revitalisation and preservation with a view to regenerating the old and dilapidated districts, improving the living condition of the residents therein and enhancing our urban landscape.
68. The Chief Executive has announced in his 2004 Policy Address that the Government will consider various practicable options and promote discussion on how to speed up urban renewal in the community. In this regard, the Government will commence a comprehensive review of the urban regeneration policy, covering:

(i) the review of the URS, which sets out the policy guidelines for the URA. The review will cover, amongst others, the relative emphasis of the different aspects of URA’s urban renewal work;
(ii) ways to facilitate private developers’ participation in urban renewal; and
(iii) how to promote proper building management and maintenance by property owners as a permanent solution to the building neglect and urban decay problems.

University Town

69. Comments received on this subject mainly deliberate on the need for and the purpose of developing a ‘University Town’ in Hong Kong. Some support the concept and offer useful pointers for taking it forward; others note the existence of ‘university towns’ in our neighbouring cities and suggest that we should review the need for developing such a facility in Hong Kong. Those who comment on the purpose will like to know whether the intention is to relocate existing universities for an entirely new development. Some discuss the implications in terms of financial and land resources, and comment on the possible locations.

Government’s Response

70. At this stage, the Government is open to the concept of ‘University Town’ and the planning parameters. The concept is raised in response to comments received during the Stage 2 Study that to enhance Hong Kong’s competitiveness as a knowledge-based economy, the Government should devote more effort in upgrading its ‘software’, particularly to improve the quality of education and training for local and overseas students. It is against this background that the concept of setting up a ‘University Town’ has been explored and presented for public views.

71. The Government will further develop the idea of setting up a ‘University Town’ in Hong Kong, consider the target group of students and the university facilities to be provided there as well as how the idea can be taken forward.
Old Industrial Areas

72. Very few have commented on the approach to restructuring existing old industrial areas raised in the HK2030 Consultation Booklet.

73. Those who have commented urge for further relaxation and flexibility in the use of industrial buildings, i.e. Government should enhance measures to facilitate better use of vacant industrial premises, and ask about the progress of the implementation of the ‘loft’ concept. Others express concern about the need to reserve / retain some industrial land to cater for those firms which are planning to return Hong Kong as a result of the Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement (CEPA).

Government’s Response

74. Indeed, over the past 20 years, the Government has relaxed the use of industrial premises significantly. Currently, almost all kinds of uses, except residential use, are either permitted or permissible in industrial buildings. That is to say, uses in industrial buildings are already very flexible.

75. The issue of permitting residential use in industrial buildings is a very complicated subject because it involves environmental problems and interfacing issues with other industrial activities in the vicinity. To explore a way forward, we had conducted and completed the “Study on Possible Conversion of Industrial Buildings for Loft Apartment” in mid-2002. The relevant papers are now available at the HK2030 website for reference of the public. We will, based on the comments received and the latest policy initiatives, consider the subject further in the next stage of the Study.

76. In Stage 3 Study, we have already undertaken an assessment on industrial land having regard to the latest changes in the market and the Government’s policy initiatives. The possible impact of CEPA has also been noted. However, the actual impact and extent of impact are still to be assessed before we can devise appropriate planning strategies and policies to cater for the changes.
Section II  Overview of Key Comments

Environment and Ecology

77. This is not a specific consultation topic under the HK2030 Study Stage 3 Public Consultation but at the request of members of the public, a Focus Meeting on this topic was undertaken. The Meeting has been attended predominantly by green groups.

78. Most of the commentators consider that due regard should be given to the environmental and ecological impacts before a planning decision is made. They also advocate the need to attribute an ‘environmental value’ even to vacant land.

79. The green groups, in particular, are concerned about the gradual depletion of the abundant ecological resources in Hong Kong and caution that careful consideration should be given to the environmental and ecological aspects before any planning decision is made. Besides, the cumulative impacts of individual developments should also be taken into account.

80. Two sessions of discussion have also been conducted at the Advisory Council on the Environment and its Environmental Impact Assessment Sub-committee. The discussions are mainly enquiry in nature, mostly about how the strategic environmental assessment on the development options is conducted. Nevertheless, concerns / comments are also raised on such issues as the long-standing open storage problem in the N.T., the land contamination issue at the LMC Loop and the future port development.

Government’s Response

81. The environmental and ecological aspects have always been an integral part of the study process and in the Stage 4 Study, a detailed Strategic Environmental Assessment will be carried out, which will take into account the factor of ‘cumulative impacts’.

Tourism

82. A few have asked whether the assumption on visitor arrivals in 2030 (i.e. 70 million) is realistic. Commentators on this subject mostly want to know the implications of the assumption on visitor arrivals on the planning and provision of tourism facilities in Hong Kong, including cross-boundary facilities, strategic transport infrastructure, hotel development and provision of tourist-related facilities.
Section II Overview of Key Comments

Government’s Response

83. The arrival of 70 million visitors by 2030 is postulated based on existing and emerging trends and is comparable to the forecast done by the World Tourism Organisation for 2020 when arrivals to Hong Kong could reach 56.6 million. Besides, the figure is also comparable to that of other big cities in the world. The figures would be regularly monitored and reviewed to take into account any new emerging trends and policy initiatives.

84. A broad-brush assessment has been made in the Study to examine the implications of the number of visitor arrivals on the tourism planning in Hong Kong. The relevant paper has been uploaded to the HK2030 website for reference of the public. Key areas identified in the assessment will be taken up by concerned Government departments in due course.

Harbour Reclamation

85. From the comments received, it seems that ‘Harbour Reclamation’ is a very controversial subject. Many commentators support the views and claim of the Society for the Protection of the Harbour and objected to harbour reclamation. They doubt the need for a new road and query whether alternatives have been considered.

86. Nevertheless, there are also some who support the construction of the Central-Wanchai Bypass (CWB) to ease the traffic congestion problem which is already apparent and urge that the current argument be resolved early so that construction can commence as soon as possible.

87. There is a predominant view which urge the Government to minimise the reclamation limit even if reclamation is unavoidable, discuss further and maintain dialogue with the community and enhance involvement of the public in the planning process for harbourfront areas.
Government’s Response

88. The Government fully understands the public sentiment and shares the view that any reclamation along the harbour should be strongly justified and minimised. The Court of Final Appeal’s (CFA’s) ruling is that the presumption against reclamation can only be rebutted by establishing an ‘overriding public need’ for reclamation under the Protection of the Harbour Ordinance and the Government will follow strictly the decision of the CFA.

89. On the CRIII, the Government had already undertaken a review in November 2003 and the results illustrated that CRIII can meet the three tests previously laid down by the High Court. The Government undertook a further review of CRIII after the CFA delivered its judgment on 9 January 2004 by applying the single test of ‘overriding public need’ laid down by the CFA. The Further Review demonstrates that the CRIII meets the ‘overriding public need test’. Independent experts also confirm that the extent of reclamation is minimum and comment that the other alternatives put forward are not reasonable alternatives. As regards the Wanchai North and South East Kowloon Development, the Government has undertaken to review the extent and appropriate land-uses for the two development areas in the light of the Court’s latest ruling. Other than these three areas, the Government has pledged that there will be no further reclamation in the Victoria Harbour in the future.

90. The Government will continue to explain to the community the need for reclamation in CRIII and the review for Wanchai North (commenced in March 2004), which will strictly follow the ruling of the CFA. The CWB is urgently required to ease the traffic congestion problem in the CBD. Though there are views in the community that Electronic Road Pricing (ERP) may substitute the construction of the Bypass, ERP alone cannot solve the traffic congestion problem.

91. The Government has established the Harbour-front Enhancement Committee, with members comprising representatives of relevant organisations, professional groups and district personalities as well as Government officials. The Committee, together with the subcommittees, is tasked to advise the Government on the review of the remaining two reclamation projects and consider innovative ideas to deliver harbourfront improvement projects in a sustainable manner.
Public Consultation

92. Most commentaries appreciated that the HK2030 Study has done a lot of work in consulting the public. However, many considered that there should be more community participation in the planning process, particularly in the Town Planning Board business and in district level planning matters.

Government’s Response

93. We are thankful for the support. We will continue our practice to consult the public as far as possible on all planning initiatives. However, under the existing Town Planning Ordinance, there are limitations on the provisions for public consultation in relation to s.16 applications and the plan-making process. Nevertheless, we have proposed amendments to the Town Planning Ordinance in the Town Planning (Amendment) Ordinance 2004 to enhance the transparency of the planning system by, inter alia, formalising the channel for public consultation. The Town Planning Board has also agreed to partially open up its meetings (except the deliberation part) to the public upon the enactment of the amendment ordinance.