



URBP7004 Strategic Planning Studio
The University of Hong Kong 2020-2021 Semester II
Submitted to DUPAD, Faculty of Architecture, HKU



Final Report

Strategic Solutions for Tourism Development Planning in Hong Kong

— A Smart Plan for Resilient Tourism Development

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List of Abbreviations

AFCD	Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department
AGR	Agriculture (Zoning)
C&SD	Census and Statistics Department
CA	Conservation Areas
CEDB	Commerce and Economic Development Bureau
CDWPA	Comprehensive Development and Wetland Protection Area
CDW	Comprehensive Development and Wetland Enhancement Area
CDWRA	Comprehensive Development to include Wetland Restoration Area
CP	Country Park (Zoning)
CPA	Coastal Protection Areas
CPO	Country Parks Ordinance
DB	Development Bureau
GB	Green Belt (Zoning)
GDP	Gross domestic product
HKAA	Hong Kong Airport Authority
HKTB	Hong Kong Tourism Board

HKTDC	Hong Kong Trade Development Council
HKZMB	Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge
LCSD	Leisure and Cultural Services Department
MPO	Marine Parks Ordinance
NA	Nature Area
O	Open Space (Zoning)
OU	Other Specified Uses
OZP	Outline Zoning Plan
PPP	Public-private Partnership
PlanD	Planning Department
REC	Recreation
RU	Rural Use
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest
TC	Tourism Commission
TIC	The Travel Industry Council of Hong Kong
TPO	Town Planning Ordinance
V	Village Type Development (Zoning)

WAPO	Wild Animals Protection Ordinance
WKCD	West Kowloon Cultural District
XRL	Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link

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Executive Summary

The tourism industry has been undergoing immense pressure since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, suffering from significant changes, leaving critical questions of how the industry should move forward. In this report the industry's current condition has been reviewed in identifying how Hong Kong should position as one of the leading tourism destinations under the pandemic and under the impact of various rapidly changing trends and growing opportunities and concerns. The need for promoting resilience within the tourism industry has been highlighted as the vision of future strategic planning for tourism development.

The current resources, policies and plan of the tourism industry have been evaluated under the resilient framework, highlighting the major missing gaps in reaching a resilient system, including:

- 1. Undiversified tourism activities with low competitiveness facing regional competitors**
- 2. Centralized tourism location with insufficient spatial connection among new attractions**
- 3. Limited carrying capacity in existing tourists attractions resulted in environmental degradation and social discontent**

Three strategies have been formulated after the case studies review and stakeholder engagement in response to the above identified problems, further developed into strategic recommendations and the spatial framework, which encompass four critical zones.

The three recommended strategies directions include:

- 1. Cultural Tourism**
- 2. Nature-based Tourism**
- 3. Transportation and linkage**

The regional collaboration strategies and key considerations have been proposed in furthering the vision.

Introduction

**HONG
KONG**
ASIA'S WORLD CITY



1. Introduction

1.1 Background

The tourism industry as one of the major economic pillars of Hong Kong has suffered significant impacts from the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. During this period, different opportunities and challenges for the tourism industry have been highlighted. From the rising regional collaboration opportunities from the Greater Bay Area and the growing smart technology industry; to the ascending concern towards social and natural carrying capacity from domestic tourism during the lock-down period. In the midst of countering the effects of the pandemic, this pandemic has catalyzed the rethinking of Hong Kong's tourism development trajectory, proposing a need to reach for a resilient tourism system. This report aims to investigate the missing gaps between the current tourism development and a resilient tourism system and propose a potential solution in reimagining the future of Hong Kong's tourism industry.

1.2 Study Goals and Objectives - Resilient

Study goal

The goal of the current study is to propose a comprehensive list of strategies in promoting resilience within Hong Kong's tourism industry, building elasticity within the tourism system towards unforeseen future challenges while promoting local residents' needs and beautifying the city.

Objectives

The following objectives have been set to achieve the purpose of the study systematically:

1. Understand and analyse the current conditions and trends of the tourism industry for the pre- COVID and under- COVID period.
2. Evaluate current tourism resources, policies and plans undergoing or proposed in assessing the current condition of the tourism industry.
3. Review the successful destination cites examples in terms of development of a resilient tourism industry, smart tourism and regional position of tourism.
4. Conduct stakeholder interviews and incorporate industry consideration in formulation of recommendation.
5. Generate strategic recommendations and a spatial framework aiming to promote tourism resilience in Hong Kong.

1.3 Study Process

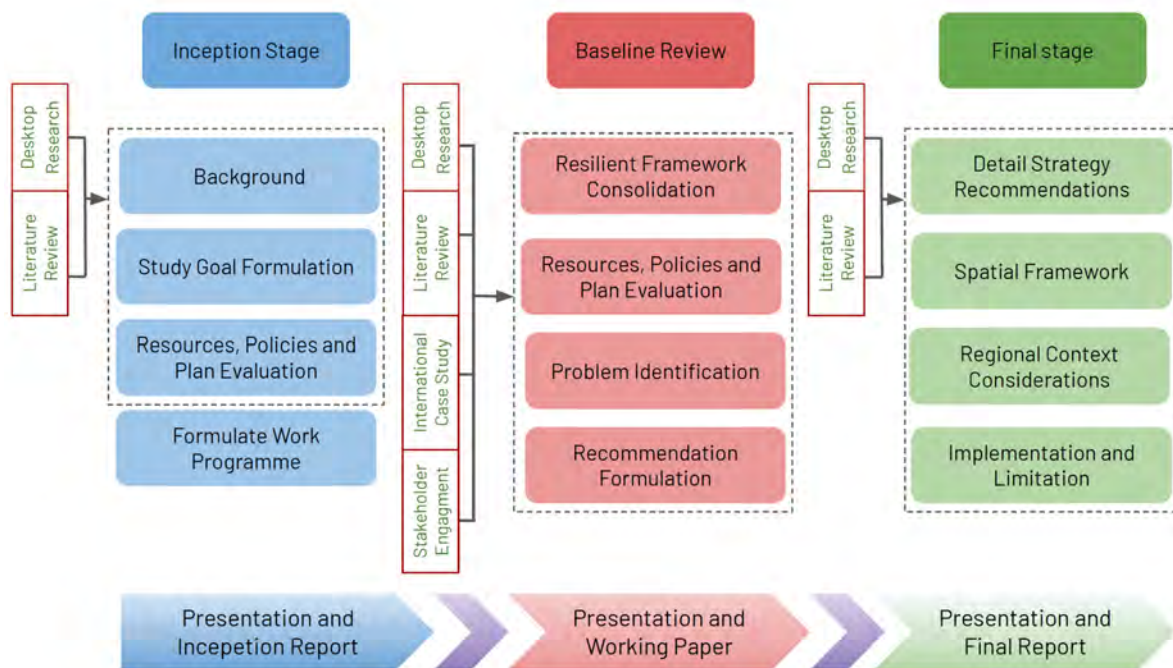


Figure 1. Study process and methodology

1.3.1 Stakeholder interview

To gain a comprehensive understanding of the tourism industry, primary data from stakeholders was collected regarding the pre- and post-pandemic tourism development, approach, process and practice of Hong Kong's spatial planning. The interview questions were set based on the 3 identified issues and the data collected are used to examine the preliminary thoughts of possible directions. Their opinions and recommendations are incorporated in the 6 strategies and validate the proposed framework.

As the tourism industry has diverse coverage, 6 sectors were identified to form a multiple perspective thinking: (1) Scholar, (2) Senior Practitioner, (3) Policy advocator, (4) Conservationist and (5) Local councillor. In light of the COVID problem, most interviews were conducted online while some interviewees replied via email. Appendix I presents the interviewees in corresponding to the strategies and the gist of interviews.

1.3.2 International case study

Several international case studies are taken to highlight the global trends and international planning practices. The purpose is to draw the insights of good tourism practice and apply to the designated location. A wide range of cities and countries were chosen as (1) Japan, (2) Tokyo, (3) Amsterdam, (4) Taiwan, (5) Sydney and (6) Australia. The case study analysis and findings would be mentioned in corresponding strategies.

1.4 Key Concepts and Scope of Study

1.4.1 Key Concepts

Why resilience

The pandemic reflects the potential damage and impacts that unexpected events could bring to the tourism industry. In lowering the risks and susceptibility to possible future events while continuing to promote tourism development with consideration of the local people's usage and beautification of the city, the promotion of resilience in tourism will be critical in fulfilling the above requirements.

Resilient tourism definition

There are various definitions for resilience, in considering the theme of this working paper, the working definition of resilience will be a combination of considerations from both of the following definitions due to the compatibility of focuses towards strategic planning of the tourism industry.

In regional studies, it is "the ability of a region to anticipate, prepare for, respond to and recover from a disturbance" (Foster, 2012).

In economics, resilience is the capacity to reduce "the vulnerability of economies to crises and strengthen their capacity to absorb and overcome severe shocks while supporting strong growth" (OECD, 2015).

In summarization of the above definitions, the resilience of tourism focuses on the ability of the tourism industry system "to anticipate, prepare for, respond to and recover from a disturbance (crisis or unforeseen events)" "while supporting strong growth".

How to reach resilience with the resilient framework

Given the nature of resilience, the promotion of resilience increases the adaptability and flexibility within the tourism industry in facing uncertainties. The resilient tourism framework is a resilience planning tool adopted and edited from the community capital framework, which specializes in conducting resilient planning, with adjustments in further catering towards tourism planning. Tourism resources and policies were sorted into six different assets to provide a holistic assessment of the current condition. Upon evaluation of the assets, the condition and policies regarding tourism were systematically reviewed and the missing gaps between the existing system and a resilient tourism system were identified. In combination with the adoption of smart tourism planning and the consideration of ongoing tourism plans, these highlighted missing gaps were further addressed in solution recommendations in promoting overall resilience within the tourism system.

1.4.2 Resilient Tourism Framework

Natural assets

Natural assets focus on the complete stock of natural resources within the city, also including the consideration of ecosystem services and the support it provides to the industry. Enhancing natural assets focuses on bettering the management towards existing resources and maximizing the benefits provided by the natural assets without degrading its functional integrity.

Physical assets

Physical assets refers to the physical infrastructure that ensures the reaching of needs for both the tourists and the community members such as accommodation, transport routes and access to basic needs. It also creates an opportunity for people to be productive by providing stocks of material resources such as roads, buildings, linkages and other infrastructures which enable an efficient, accessible flow of conducting productions and transfers. Improving physical assets includes focusing on planning for public facilities; accessible efficient transportation; adequate infrastructure, and telecommunications such as ICT facilities.

Economic assets

Economic assets refers to the availability of resources towards the industry and the health and promotion of the economy. To improve economic assets, these two distinct types of resources, financial and business should be well-balanced.

Human assets

Human assets refers to the “knowledge, skills, competencies and other attributes embodied in individuals that facilitate the creation of personal, social and economic well-being” (Roseland, 2012). The quality and quantity of personals and labours both should be taken into account under human assets. Improvement in human assets focuses on expanding knowledge and skills through training and education while promoting a holistic labour market.

Social assets

Social assets focus on the community aspects of the tourism system. It includes consideration of the relationship between community and tourism industry and destination, such as the level of the community involvement towards destination building and the cohesion or conflict between tourists and local communities. The character of the community and the authenticity of destinations is also reflected in social assets. Social asset enhancement focuses on the promotion and protection of elements constituting citizenship such as the sense of belonging or community engagement; as well as the promotion of social carrying capacity in local areas.

Cultural assets

Cultural capital refers to stocks that regard the identity, history and values within the system. Resources that influence the building or preservation of these elements will be taken into account. Such as heritage preservation, art and creativity, identity and cultural values. Cultural capital often works alongside social capital in promoting the story and self-expression of a destination while encouraging cultural exchange between communities and visitors. Enhancing cultural capital focuses on the preservation of diverse expression of culture within the tourism system, be it through arts, heritage, practices, language, etc, aiming to encourage interaction between cultures while safeguarding the values of local communities.

Smart Cities and Smart Tourism

The concept of smart tourism is associated with the concept of smart cities, which refer to a better way of using and managing the resources in the cities with the development and application of information technology to provide a better living for people. (Harrison. et al, 2010 p.1:1) For smart tourism, the objectives of using technology are to provide a better travel experience to the tourists, which could increase the attraction of the city as a tourism destination. Similar to the smart cities concept, smart tourism also concerns a better way of distributing and using tourism resources to manage tourism and balance the benefit of tourists and residents. (Gretzel, Zhong &Koo, 2016; Gretzel, Sigala, Xiang & Koo, 2015, p.179)

However, the application of information technology is not sufficient to achieve smart tourism. Smart tourism requires the integration of both “soft-smartness” and “hard-smartness”. (Gretzel, Zhong &Koo, 2016, pp.3-4) “Hard-smartness” refers to the infrastructure. “Soft-smartness” refers to the administration, political system, decision making, as well as the talents of people and services. Moreover, the smart infrastructure and system should also integrate with traditional facilities and infrastructures. (Gretzel, Sigala, Xiang & Koo, 2015, pp.180-181) Therefore, a smart tourism solution should not only limit the application of technology. Indeed, it should also be a comprehensive plan in both “software”, “hardware” and “network” of the city (Gretzel, Zhong &Koo, 2016, p.4) to achieve more effective management in resources to increase the sustainability and attraction of the tourism industry in a city.

1.4.3 Scope of Study

In this report, mass tourism and experiential tourism would be the major focus of evaluation due to their significance in regards to the types of tourism in Hong Kong .

Both inbound tourism and domestic tourism would be considered within the two major types of tourism listed. With inbound tourism which comprises the activities of a non-resident visitor within the country of reference on an inbound tourism trip (UNWTO, 2010), and domestic tourism, which comprises the activities of a resident

visitor within the country of reference either as part of a domestic tourism trip or part of an outbound tourism trip (UNWTO, 2010).

The following definition of mass tourism and experiential tourism has been adopted throughout the report:

Mass tourism: The movement of a large number of organized tourists to popular holiday destinations for recreational purposes. It is a phenomenon which is characterized by the use of standardized package products and mass consumption. (Naumov & Green, 2016)

Experiential tourism: Rather than simply consuming goods or spectating performances, participants in experiential tourism help create events and experiences that can activate their own feelings and even trigger a change in identity (Du, 2015).

1.5 Report Structure

- Section 1 provides a structure for the subsequent report as well as introducing the key concept of resilience in tourism.
- Section 2 reviews the current condition of Hong Kong's tourism industry with the resilient tourism framework.
- Section 3 explains the three identified problems which will be addressed by the subsequent solution recommendations.
- Section 4 illustrates the rebranding of the tourism industry derived from the proposed industry vision.
- Section 5 - 7 detailed three strategic recommendations and implementation strategies.
- Section 8 provides a spatial framework and linkages for the proposed recommendations.
- Section 9 outlines the regional positioning of the Hong Kong tourism industry within the GBA area.
- Section 10 illustrates the expected changes on 6 assets from the proposed recommendations and key considerations.



Baseline Review

2. Baseline Review

The performance of the Hong Kong Tourism industry will be evaluated under the framework of six assets in this part. In the beginning of the section, the current tourism trend of Hong Kong before and during the period of pandemic will be reviewed to illustrate the current situation of the tourism industry in Hong Kong. In part 2.2, the degree of resilience of the tourism industry in Hong Kong with the six assets framework will be evaluated. After that, the focus of current plans in tourism development with their impact on the six assets of tourism development in Hong Kong will be summarized. In the last part of this section, a summary table will be generated from the previous parts to integrate the issues of the tourism industry under the lens of resilient tourism development to provide us with a clearer picture of the problems in achieving resilient tourism in Hong Kong.

2.1 Review of Current Tourism Trends

2.1.1 Sector Overview

Tourism industry is one of the four pillar industries of Hong Kong. It contributed HK\$98.3 billion of value added in the year of 2018 (Figure 2) . It accounted for 6.35% of value added(Figure 2) and 3.64% of GDP of the four pillar industries. (C&SD, 2020a) A growing trend has been shown on the propositions of the tourism industry in value added from 2000 to 2018.

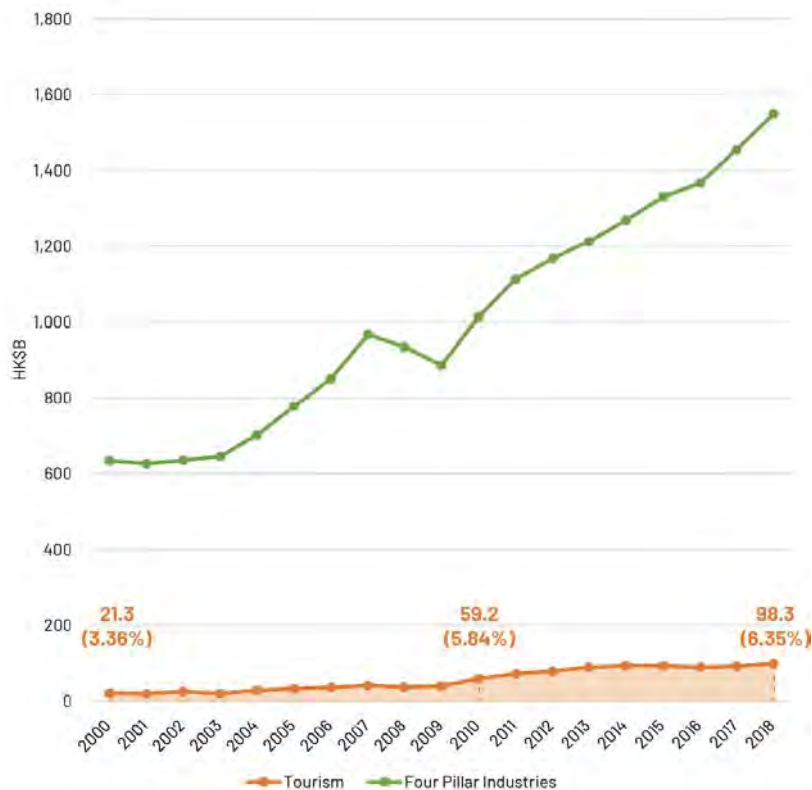


Figure 2. Value added of Tourism and total of the Four Pillar Industries from 2000 to 2018 (C&SD, 2020a)

In 2018, tourism provided 225,300 (Figure 3) jobs which was 5.83% of total employment, and it included 100,200 for retail trade, 37,100 for accommodation services, and 49,900 for food and beverage services (C&SD, 2020a), indicating the importance of tourism for local employment.

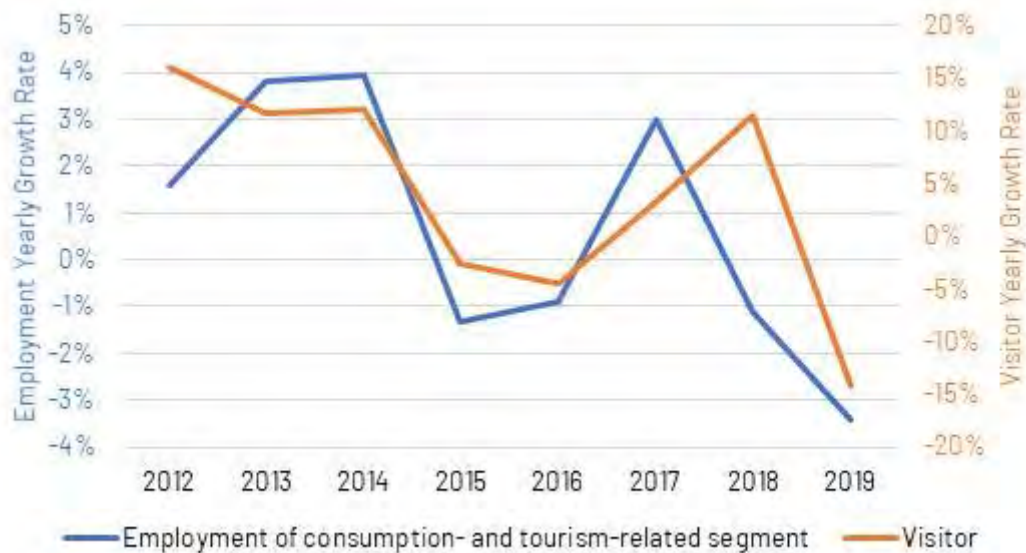


Figure 3. Growth rate of employment of consumption- and tourism-related segment and visitor number from 2012 to 2019 (C&SD, 2021a; C&SD, 2021b)

2.1.2 Visitor Profile

From 2000 to 2018, the total annual tourist arrivals have increased by almost 400% from 13 million in 2000 to 65 million in 2018 (Figure 4)(HKTB, 2019). The change in total visitor number has been mainly dominated by visitor numbers from Mainland China. It contributed to 78.3% of all visitor arrivals in 2018 (Figure 4)(HKTB, 2019), which was the major market area for the tourism industry in Hong Kong.

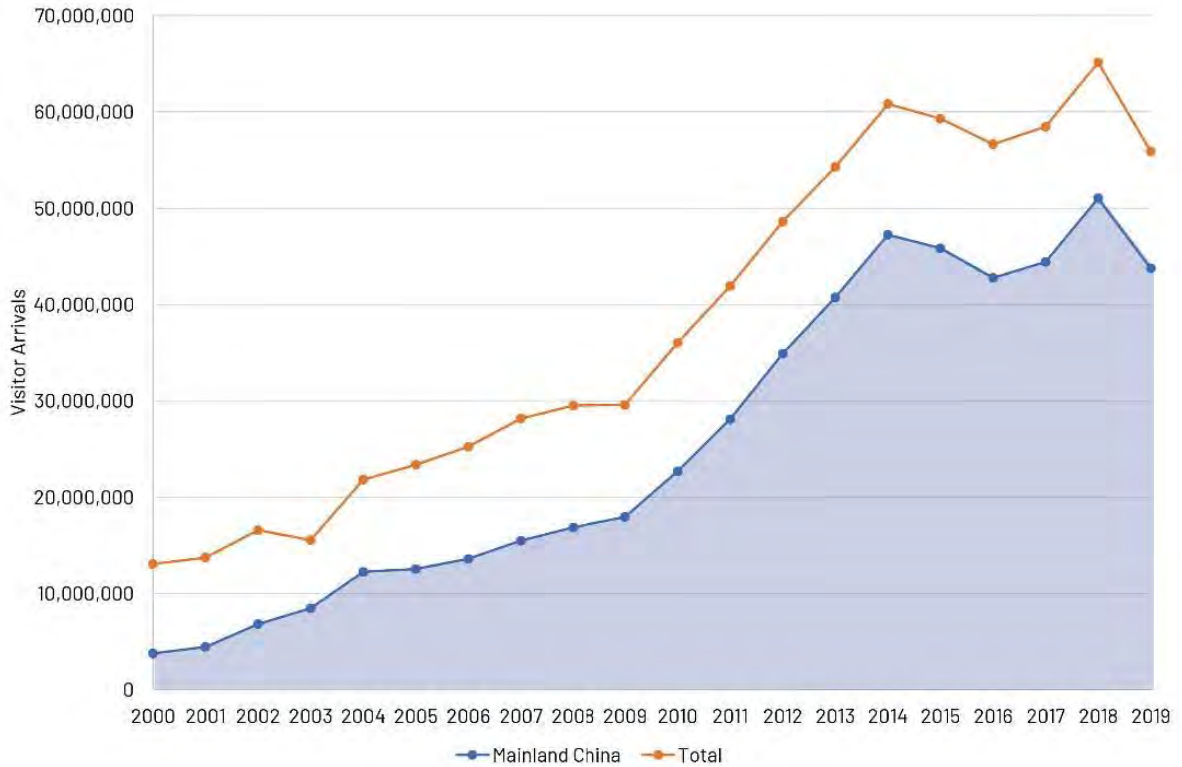


Figure 4. Visitor arrivals from Mainland China from 2000 to 2019 (HKTB,2019)

The tourism expenditure associated with inbound tourism was HK\$328 billion in 2018. (HKTB, 2019) Mainland tourists accounted for 72% of the expenditure, followed by South and Southeast Asia (9%) (Figure 5). The variation in expenditure by tourist origins is largely attributed to the largest share of Mainland visitors.

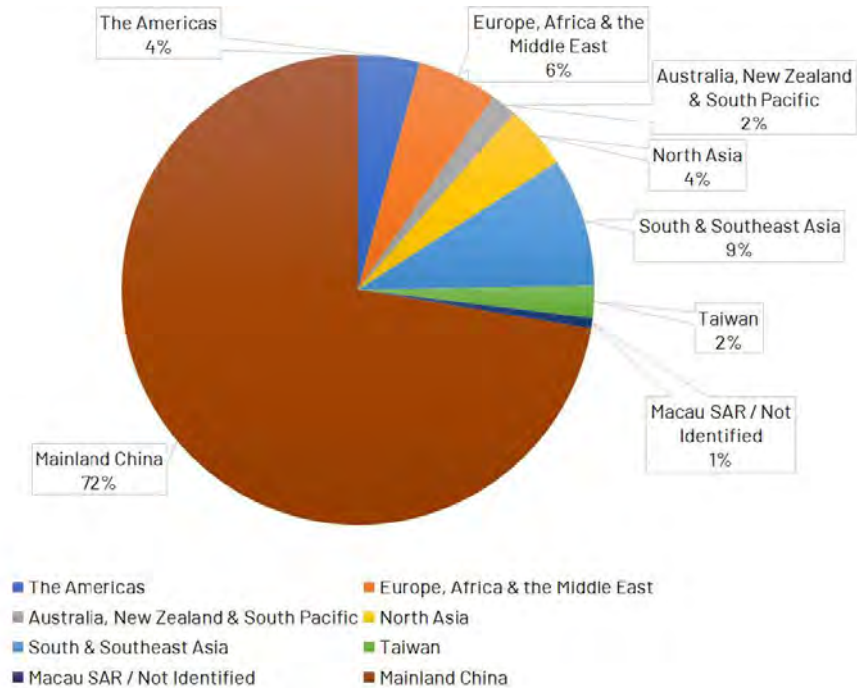


Figure 5. Total Overnight Visitor Spending by Major Market Areas in 2018 (HKTB, 2019)

The tourist expenditures were mainly concentrated in shopping and hotels, accounting for 51% and 22% respectively in 2018 (Figure 6)(HKTB, 2019). This implies that retail and hospitality are the two sectors that benefited the most from tourist spending. The lack of diversity in income sources indicates a highly correlated relationship between retail and tourism.

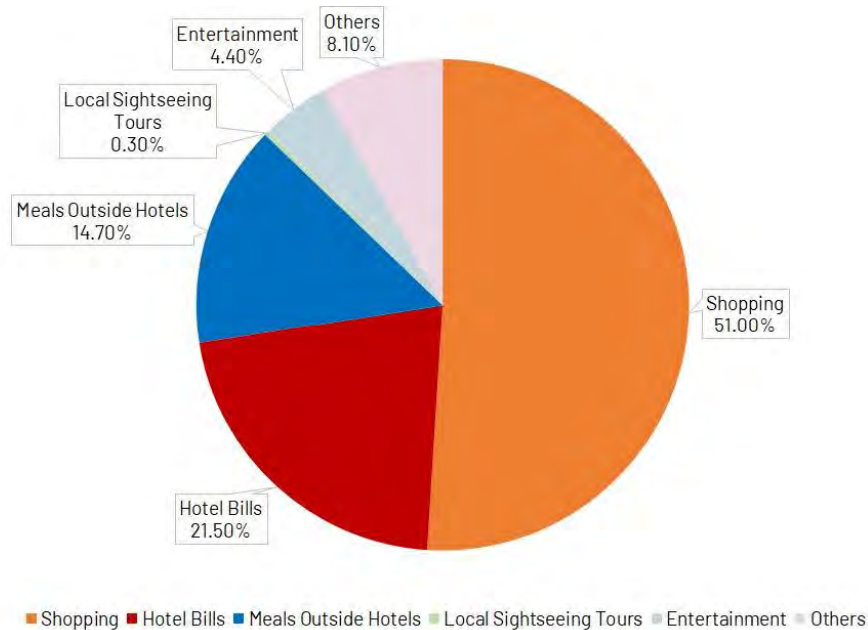


Figure 6. Overnight visitor spending pattern in 2018 (HKTB, 2019)

Similar to the expenditure pattern, the major activity taken by tourists is also shopping, which accounted for 80% of the total tourist activities as shown in Figure 7. The highly reliant nature of Hong Kong’s tourism on shopping and the visitors profiles indicates the tourism industry of Hong Kong rely on mass tourism, a need for diversification of tourism activities to different types of attractions.

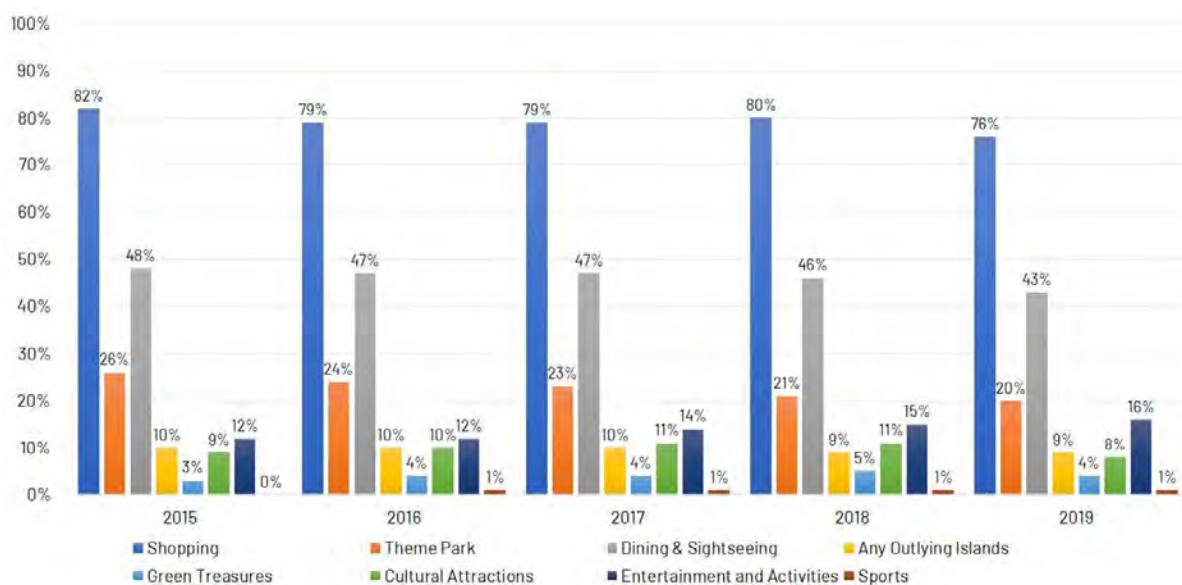


Figure 7. Percentage of tourist activities from 2015-2018 (HKTB, 2019)

2.1.3 Impact of COVID-19

After the COVID-19 pandemic starting from 2020, the number of visitors dropped by 93.8% from January to February 2020 (C&CD, 2021a) following the closure of immigration control points as well as travel restrictions(Figure 8).



Figure 8. Visitor number by month in 2019 and 2020 (C&SD, 2021a)

The employment number of the consumption- and tourism-related segment also dropped. Comparing January to March 2019 and the same period in 2020, the employment number fell by 15.9%. In July to September 2020, the number of unemployed persons whose previous jobs are of the consumption- and tourism-related segment reached a peak of 66,500, which was 25.6% (Figure 9) of the total unemployment in Hong Kong (C&SD, 2021b). This indicates that the sudden shock brought by the pandemic has significant impacts on both economic growth and employment rate in Hong Kong. (C&SD, 2021b)

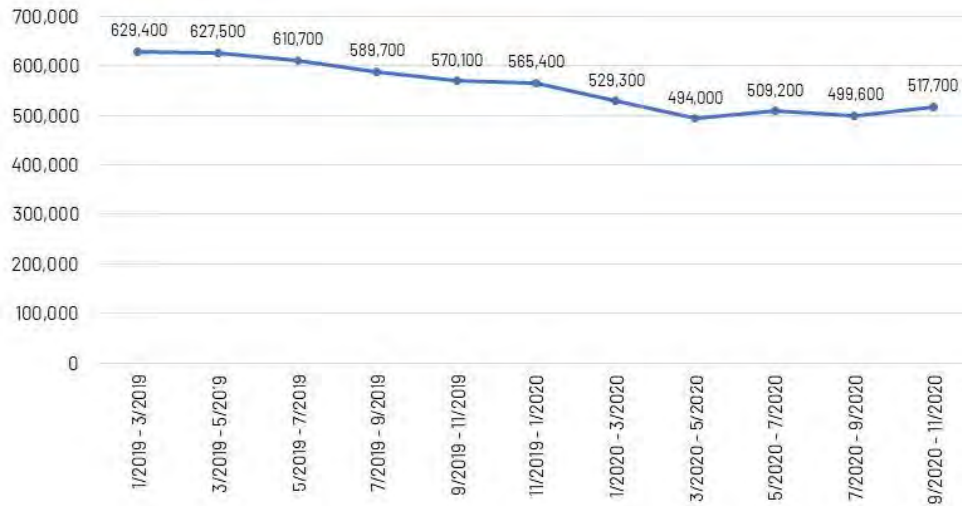


Figure 9. Employment number of consumption- and tourism-related segment in 2019 and 2020 (C&SD, 2021b)

Retail performance in Hong Kong is sensitive to tourist spending, which is correlated to tourist numbers (Figure 10). With the ongoing travel restrictions and mandatory quarantine, consumption sentiment remains weak. Tourist-oriented goods have experienced a great hit – sales of watch and jewelry, and medicine and cosmetics have dropped by 55.1% and 50.7% over the first eleven months in 2020 (Figure 10) (CBRE, 2021).

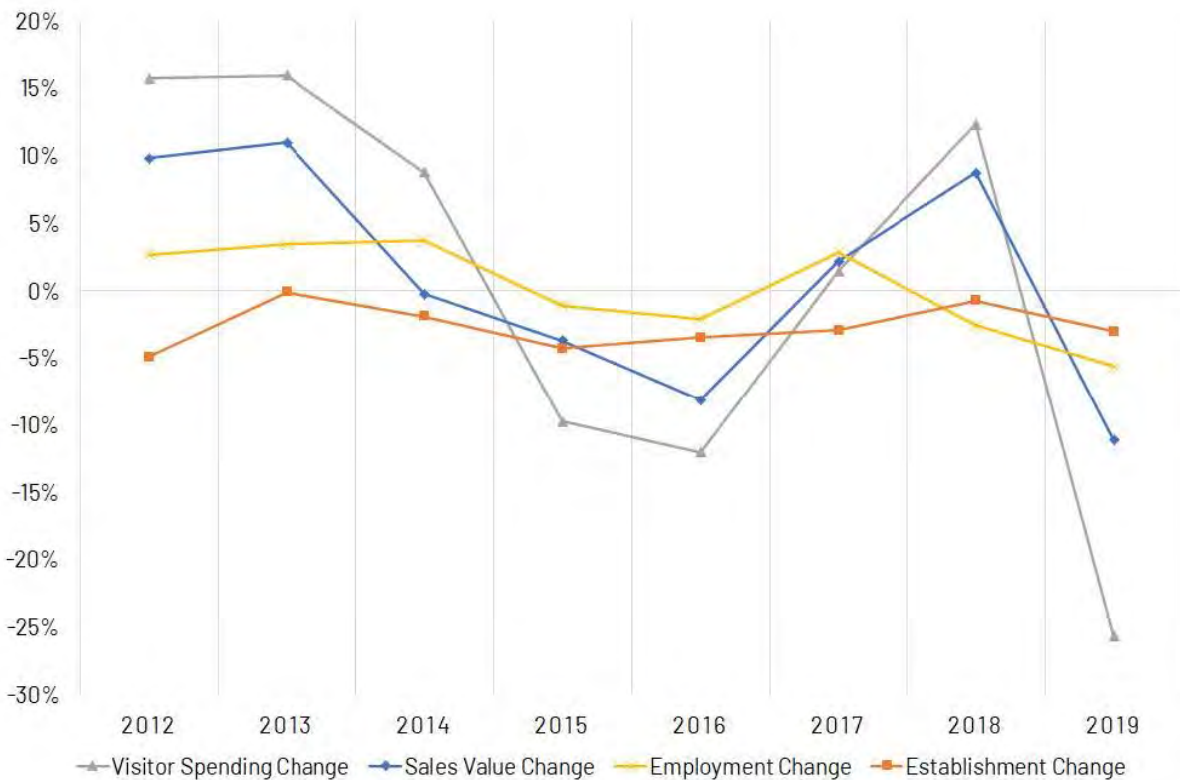


Figure 10. Relationship between retail establishments, sales values, employment change and visitor spending from 2012 to 2019 (C&SD ,2021a; C&SD, 2021c)

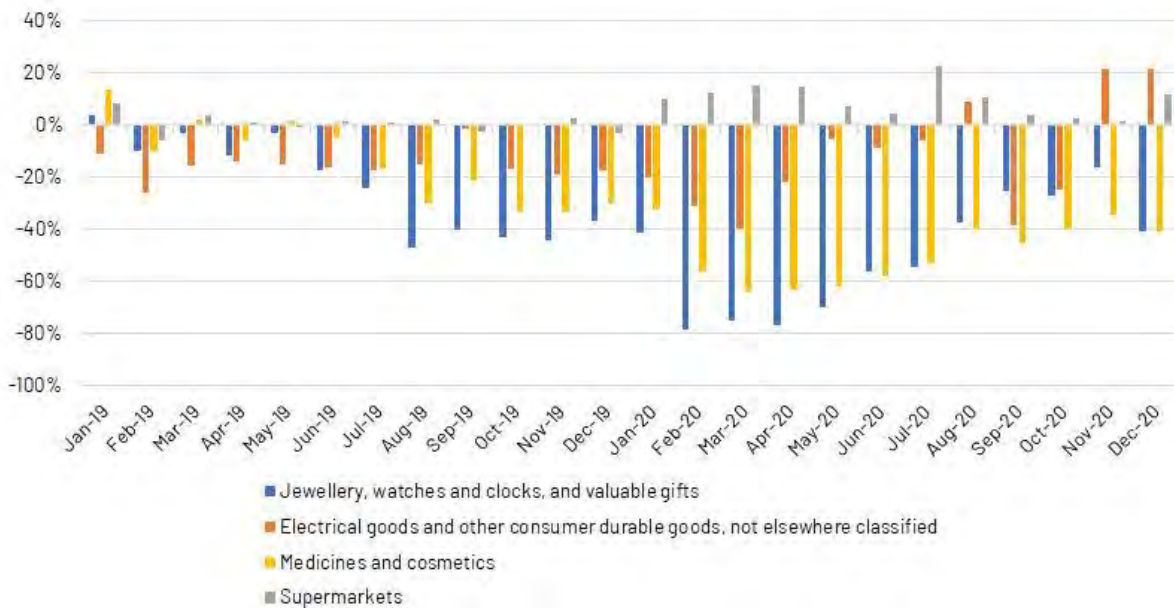


Figure 10. Growth rate of value index of selected retail outlets (C&SD, 2021c; CBRE, 2021)

Given the lowered consumer demand, high street shops in Causeway Bay, Central, Mong Kok and Tsim Sha showed a rising vacancy rate, overall reaching over 15% in Q3 2020 (CBRE, 2021), with Causeway Bay hitting 23%. While more than 20 foreign retailers have retracted including luxury brands, the city welcomed the openings of over 50 new overseas brands, led by Japanese retailers, in the second half of 2019 which capitalized on the lower rents with larger space. Retailers offering daily necessities such as supermarkets (Figure 10) and social services are supported by solid domestic consumption, thus are expected to expand in neighbourhood spaces and prime locations in future with lower rents.

2.1.4 Untapped Resources

Beside the tourism industry that target on the foreign visitors, there are some important trend and information about the usage and data of different assets that could be included in the resilient tourism plans as major consideration of developing the strategies.

Visitors of Country Park

Country parks are one of the important natural resources that attract local visitors connected with the natural environment. From the year of 2010 to the year of 2020, the visitors of country parks were in a stable manner, floating between 11 million to 13.4

million (Figure 11). It implies that the country parks in Hong Kong have a certain degree of attraction to the local residents.



Figure 11. Number of Visitors in Country Park from 2010 to 2020 (AFCD, 2020)

Overseas Expenditures

The foreign visitors dropped for 93.8% because of the pandemic. In the meanwhile, it is also difficult for the local residents to conduct their overseas trip. In 2017, Hong Kong residents spent 26.4 billion US dollars in total for their overseas travels. (World Bank, 2020) It implies a potential for developing the domestic tourism market, especially in the period of sudden shock that foreign visitors find it difficult to visit Hong Kong.

Over-concentrated Hotels

The distribution of hotel rooms is concentrated in Hong Kong Island and Kowloon, contributing to about 32% and 43% of the total supply respectively in December 2020. In these two areas, the supply was also focused on a few districts, amongst which Yau Tsim Mong district reached 70% (HKTb, 2019; HKTb, 2021a). Apart from implying an uneven supply of hotels at both area and district levels, these patterns also raised a concern about whether the carrying capacity of hotels can afford future expansions in visitor numbers when the tourism industry recovers and continues to grow.

	% of Hotels	% of Rooms	Average Occupancy Rate (2018)
Hong Kong Island	42.8%*	32.0%	/
Central & Western	41.4%**	33.9%	90%
Wan Chai	40.6%	38.6%	92%
Kowloon	42.4%	42.1%	/
Yau Tsim Mong	79.5%	70.0%	93% (Tsim Sha Tsui); 95% (Yau Ma Tei/ Mong Kok)
New Territories	10.3%	18.5%	93%
Islands	4.5%	7.4%	83%

*% of overall supply in HK

**% of supply in area

Table 1: Supply of hotels and occupancy rate in selected districts (HKTB, 2019; HKTB, 2021a)

2.2 Assets and policies evaluation

After a summary of the current policies related to tourism development, we will evaluate the situation of Hong Kong's tourism industry before COVID-19 under each asset in the resilient framework to understand the weakness and strengths of the resilience of the industry. In this part, the major focuses are the capital and assets we have mentioned in the inception report instead of the development policy that the government proposed for the future development.

2.2.1 Economy

For the economic asset, the good business environment and free trade policy create a good condition for the city developing the tourism industry focusing on the retail and consumption experience, which successfully shapes the image of Hong Kong as a "Shopping and Food Paradise".

However, this feature of the tourism industry also creates the weakness of the industry. The retail tourism relies on the imported products, which cause a relatively little contribution to the economic growth of the tourism industry apart from service and retail industries. There is insufficient high-value added visitors to create more

contribution toward economic growth from the industry. When there is a sudden shock, the industry can not react quickly to respond to it, which we can observe the similar situation in the pandemic.

2.2.2 Social

The low crime rate and high standard of living provide a good social environment for a safe and stable tourism destination. However, the tourism development plans did not consider the social cohesion between the local community and tourists, and the destination management to monitor, advise and respond to real-life situations. These situations have created a lot of conflict between the local community and tourists. Moreover, there is lack of support for community planning, consultation and organisation of small-scale local tours, which could embrace the social capital in the community as a resource of tourism development. The benefits to neighbourhoods and people apart from the economic aspect is lack of account.

2.2.3 Physical

For the physical asset, the nine cross borders facilities are adequate for the visitors. The capacity of mass-transit service and quality of roads, ports, and railroad in urban areas are satisfactory for tourist demands. These assets provide a good quality of accommodation in the urban core, with which the tourists could access the urban core from cross border facilities very easily.

On the other hand, the transport capacity and infrastructure connecting the urban core with the rural attractions or newly developed cultural areas are not inadequate. This causes the result that tourists are concentrated in the urban areas. On the one hand, the tourism resources in the non-urban core area are underutilized, on the other hand, the concentration of tourism has brought a negative impact to the lives of local residents in the traditional tourism spots.

2.2.4 Natural

More than 43000 hectare of land in Hong Kong has been designated as country parks (AFCD, 2017), with 4 marine parks, 24 country parks and diverse habitats such as forest, grassland, wetland, and rocky shore etc. (AFCD, n.d. quoted in PlanD, 2016a). Therefore, natural sites could be found all around Hong Kong. The country park policy protects the ecosystem and nature in Hong Kong well. Therefore, Hong Kong has a pristine nature with rich biodiversity, encompassing a variety of different landscapes. All these natural assets could potentially provide different types of experience for both Hong Kong residents and tourists.

Although our natural area has rich potential for tourism development, nature itself is still fragile and a cautious tourism development is needed to embrace the potential of

our natural environment, at the same time, protect the ecosystem. For the current situation, the facilities and promotion for eco destinations and tours is insufficient for protecting the natural environment and promoting ecotourism at the same time.

2.2.5 Cultural

The cultural assets related to tourism in Hong Kong are concentrated in the city core. We have a well-planned cultural destination in the city centre such as the West Kowloon Cultural District (WKCD, 2021). The harbourfront tourism destinations are also attractive and popular. For both urban and rural areas, there is high cultural and historical potential for further development, the Lai Chi Wo Village and Ex-sham Shui Po Service Reservoir are examples of them.

However, the major cultural destination developments are centralized in the urban core. For the other cultural destinations, there is insufficient connection infrastructure and supporting amenities. For the intangible culture, the heritage of them are insufficiently incorporated in current destinations. Therefore, the rich cultural and historical assets, especially for the assets in the rural area, are insufficiently utilized.

For the historic assets, although the Antiquities and Monuments Ordinance (Cap. 53) (A&M Ordinance) prohibits any demolition, alteration and interference on the declared monuments, no statutory protection is provided by the graded building system. For this situation, some privately-owned graded heritages possessing high social and cultural values, for example, Ho Tung Garden and Bruce Lee's former residence, were demolished, despite the negotiation efforts between the government and private owners. The opportunity of turning these valuable heritages into tourist assets was also missed.

2.2.6 Human

As the vibrant development of the service industry in tourism is vibrant, there is sufficient and affordable training for practitioners in the service industry to ensure superb customer service. For tourism management, there are quality tertiary education in tourism, cultural and heritage management that are provided by different universities in Hong Kong.

However, most of the frontline staff in the industry are unskilled-workers. There is a lack of qualification in most related industries. The benefits and income for workers are unstable. Therefore, the unemployment rate could be high during the economic downturn and sudden crisis such as pandemic (C & SD, 2021). Moreover, as the industry relies on the retail and hotel industry, there is insufficient training for skilled-workers in eco- and cultural tourism to handle the development of new aspects in the tourism industry.

2.3 Review of Current Tourism-related Plans

In this part, we summarize the policies focused from the major policy document related to tourism development in Hong Kong. As there are several documents published, which included a large number of policies developed and planned by different departments and divisions in the public sector, this part will not go through one by one of these policies, but conduct a comprehensive summary to illustrate the direction of the current and future plans of tourism development in Hong Kong. The related policy documents included:

1. Development Blueprint for Hong Kong's Tourism Industry published by Commerce and Economic Development Bureau (2017)
2. Hong Kong 2030+: Towards a Planning Vision and Strategy Transcending 2030 developed by the Development Bureau and the Planning Department (2017)
3. The Annual Report of Hong Kong Tourism Board (2020)
4. The Chief Executive's 2020 Policy Address (2020)

2.3.1 Plans Foci

There are five major policy foci summarized from the current tourism plans that affect the future development of the tourism industry. Some of the foci are directly related to the future development of the tourism industry, nevertheless, the broader strategic plans and policy address have also taken significant roles in affecting opportunities, challenges and assets of the industry.

2.3.2 Diversify Visitor Profile and Explore Alternative Tourism Products

The main purpose of diversification is to decentralize tourists from the traditional attractions and utilize the untapped tourism resources in the fringe areas. The invigorating Island South is one of the examples under this policy focus. The plan encourages the visitors to enjoy the atmosphere, natural environment, culture and history of the Southern Hong Kong Island (Office of the Chief Executive, 2020).

This could help the tourism industry in Hong Kong utilize and create cultural and natural assets that have potential to provide alternative tourism experience. However, the limited carrying capacity of these new attractions also create challenges on the conservation of these natural and cultural assets, as well as the capacity of social assets. The physical assets need to be improved to create a comprehensive connection and carrying capacity of them. Although the Hong Kong Government has been aware of the importance of diversification tourism, there is not a unified vision and plans considering the actual spatial planning, cooperation within Hong Kong and impact to both the natural and social environment in the future, especially after the recovery of sudden shock.

2.3.3 Capture High-spending Visitors with Consolidation of HK's role as MICE center

There are a large number of infrastructure and policies to support the vibrant development of the MICE industry in Hong Kong. With the close connection with both Mainland China and the Western world, the Hong Kong government has a plan to accelerate regional collaboration and take advantage of the window of opportunity in the Greater Bay Area and the Belt and Road Initiative (CEDB, 2017). On the other hand, the Hong Kong government strives to substantiate its position as a global tourism city with the well developed aviation network. (CEDB, 2017)

The policy on developing MICE and international tourism aims to capture high value added visitors that are expected to spend more in the time we stay in Hong Kong. (CEDB, 2017) It reinforces the development of the MICE industry as one of the economic assets. On the other hand, new infrastructures and tourism spots such as the exhibition centres will function as physical assets, which will provide capacity for the MICE tourism. The Skycity Project is an example of developing tourism spots and destinations that focus on commercial activities, MICE and entertainment focal points for the high value added visitors (HKAA, 2019).

2.3.4 Highlight the Importance of Smart Technology and Talents

The development of information technology provides a good chance for the government to improve the efficiency of governance and policy making with smart infrastructure such as smart lampposts ("Multi-Functional Smart Lampposts" Pilot Scheme, 2021) and big data collection. The government has proposed the Eastern Knowledge and Technology Corridor in the Hong Kong 2030+ (DB & PlanD, 2017) which aims to draw on prospective high technology industries and tertiary institutions to grow information technology talents in the city. The tourism experience could potentially be enhanced by incorporating smart and innovative technology, which could also achieve better tourism management (CEDB, 2017). This implies that different tourism assets such as natural resources, cultural attractions and infrastructure could be managed better to balance the need for diverse tourism development, as well as the carrying capacity of different assets. refore, smart technology provides opportunities for tourism development.

2.3.5 Compact Development and Spatial Planning

The railway network has taken a significant role as one of the physical assets in the past and future development in Hong Kong as a transport-oriented and compact development. The future development of Hong Kong reminds us of the strategy of taking advantage of the railway network to increase the interconnection of different areas and districts (DB & PlanD, 2017).

Moverover, development plans such as “Walk In Hong Kong” (2021) facilitate the planning of socialising and walkable cities to promote a better living experience in the urban area, which improve the living quality and promote the local culture. All these plans could potentially promote the visitors' experience of travelling in the urban area of the city. It provides potential to improve the cultural and social assets in the tourism development in Hong Kong.

For the natural assets, the Hong Kong 2030+ introduces the plan of a “Green and Blue Space Conceptual Framework” (PlanD, 2016) to embrace the rich “naturalistic elements” of the city, and link the countryside to the harbourfront promenade. This framework provides potential for leveraging on the ecological endowment and developing leisure cum tourism attractions. On the other hand, the importance of land and space allocation for tourism and the related industries is underscored. For example, the New Development Areas (DB & PlanD, 2017) planned could become an opportunity to generate more carrying capacity to welcome tourists inflow in the future, which could potentially intergrade with the first policy focus on diversification of tourism products.

2.3.6 Recovery Strategy: Embracing challenges

The last policy focuses on the response to the sudden shock of pandemic, which focuses on embracing the upcoming challenges and difficulties. For example, the Hong Kong Tourism Board plans adaptive events and promotions, as well as hosts mega events such as continually whenever circumstances allow with downsized scale (HKTB, 2020). The Chief Executive's 2020 Policy Address also provides an “Anti-epidemic Fund” to financially subsidize the tourism related business to survive through the COVID-19 (Office of the Chief Executive, 2020; The Hong Kong Government, 2021).

However, these recovery strategies are mostly short term policies. Although the objective of utilizing the cultural and natural assets to expand the tourists profiles and diversify the tourism experience have been set as one of the main strategies to revitalize the tourism industry after COVID-9 in the Policy Address (2020), the long term strategic plan in responding the sudden shock and future trend of tourism after the pandemic still not being drawn clearly.

2.4 Major Takeaways from Baseline Review

From the evaluation of six assets in resilient framework, we have identified the insufficiency in resilience of the tourism industry in Hong Kong as follows:

Assets	Insufficiency in resilience
Economic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Industry structure concentrate on service industry - Not responsive to the sudden shock
Physical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inadequate transport capacity in rural attractions - Underutilized tourism resources in the non-urban core areas
Natural	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Insufficient facilities and promotion for nature-based destinations and tours - Insufficient facilities and promotion for protection of the natural environment with nature-based tourism
Cultural	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Over-centralized cultural destination developments in the urban core - Insufficient heritage on tangible culture - Insufficiently utilized cultural and historical assets outside urban core
Human	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Over-concentrated in training on retail and hotel service - Insufficient training for skilled-workers in eco- and cultural tourism
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack destination management to monitor, advise and respond to real-life situations - Lack support to community planning, consultation and organisation of small-scale local tours - Lack account on the benefits to neighbourhoods and people apart from the economic aspect

Table 2: Summary table of the six assets

From the table, we have identified three major insufficiencies in resilience of tourism industry in Hong Kong:

1. Concentration on retail-related tourism
2. Spatially centralized destination in urban core
3. Insufficient carrying capacity for the natural site and community level

Some current tourism related plans and their foci aim to manage some of these insufficiencies. The diversification of visitor profile and tourism products, as well as reinforcing the strength of the MICE industry aims to develop other forms of tourism besides retail-related tourism that attract the high-spending visitors. On the other hand, the strategic spatial planning of Hong Kong 2030+ creates potentials for utilizing

the untapped natural and cultural assets as new tourism resources. It decentralizes the tourism destination from urban core to the new developed area and rural area as well.

We share the same objective with the Hong Kong Government mentioned in the policy address that the natural and cultural assets are important in the recovery of the tourism industry after the pandemic. However, with the efforts the current tourism plan has made in enhancing mass tourism and developing new cultural and green tourism products to revitalize the industry from the pandemic, we also propose a resilience framework incorporated to embrace these new plans on tourism development. The resilience framework strengthens the resilience of the tourism industry in Hong Kong from the future crisis. It develops the separated tourism strategies into comprehensive plans that utilize and connect the potential of these tourism resources to manage the major issues in the resilience of the tourism industry and provide solutions for them.

A photograph of a city skyline at sunset. The sky is filled with soft, orange and pink clouds, with the sun low on the horizon. The city buildings are silhouetted against the bright sky. A semi-transparent grey rectangular box is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing the text "Problem Identification" in white.

Problem Identification

3. Problem Identification

3.1 Issue 1 - Undiversified tourism activities with low competitiveness facing regional competitors

3.1.1 Internal Weaknesses

Taking advantage of geographical location, Hong Kong acts as an important transportation hub to capture both overseas tourists and en-route inbound mainland tourists. However, the escalated price level undermines the competitive edge as 'Shopping and Food Paradise'. Besides, the shortage of innovative and high quality tourist spots make the tourist industry more vulnerable. The steadily declining number of long-haul tourists reflect the fact that the people are spending less time in understanding Hong Kong. More captivating activities and competitive services are needed to support Hong Kong as a cutting-edge destination of various choices. It is found that the tourist industry is tackling the problem with integrated promotion and marketing, still, more action should be taken by advocating both mass and niche tourism.

3.1.2 External Threats

In the past decade, the Guangdong Province has undergone continuous transformation towards tourism development. The infrastructural improvement and high-end hotel facilities increase its competitiveness with surged visitors. Rapid tourism development is also found in the adjacent cities. Take examples from Tokyo and Taiwan, they promote immersive travel that focuses on experiencing the city. Repeated visits of returning visitors proved that experiential tourism, which encourages cultural and natural tourism, successfully changed the nature of tourism into a cultural exportation. Moreover, the unique branding and market create a distinctive image of 'polite' and 'clean' to visitors. The strong competitiveness from the regional cities dropped hints for Hong Kong to make a change.

3.2 Issue 2 - Centralized tourism location with insufficient spatial connection among new attractions

3.2.1 Over-centralized Development

In terms of spatial scope, the uneven exposure and promotion subsequently led to uneven distribution of tourist flow. The over investment in particular tourism spots hid the development potential of new attractions. Tourism oriented retail and accommodation services are highly concentrated near the CBD and town centres. The traditional tourist spots along Victoria Harbour are not capable of further developing high value added tourism. In addition, over-centered planning undermines the development potential of urban and rural landscapes. Places like indigenous villages

and urban-rural interface should be expanded for experiential planning and promote unique local culture.

3.2.2 Insufficient Spatial Connection between Sites

Although Hong Kong has a comprehensive public transport network, there is inadequate connection between natural and cultural assets. Accurate and compatible transportation networks should be established to connect potential tourist spots. Furthermore, the planning should not be limited to traditional modes of transport like trains and cars, water transport and cycling should also be promoted.

3.3 Issue 3 - Limited carrying capacity in existing tourists attractions resulted in environmental degradation and social discontent

3.3.1 Environmental Degradation

Without comprehensive tourism management, the overflow of visitors in popular country parks and ecological important sites causes degradation of the natural environment. The existing development did not fully consider the carrying capacity of natural resources and seriously polluted the natural habitat. Post-pandemic tourism would further promote ecotourism with conservation and local job creation. The tourism industry should take actions in mitigating the constraints from limited carrying capacity by seeking more potential sites.

3.3.2 Social Discontent

As mentioned in the physical and social asset, the insufficient tourism planning resulted in serious social discontent towards the tourism development. The influx of parallel traders and daka tourists is causing a public nuisance. The conflicts between tourists and residents reflect the insufficient local study to improve the cohesion between the community and tourists. The existing tourism development in old urban districts cannot minimize nuisance to residence and encourage community participation. The low carrying capacity of traditional tourism districts, such as Mong Kok, deserve proper planning.

3.4 Implications

The three major problems imply the need to provide diversity activities, decentralize the tourism spots with innovative ideas and adopt better resources management. The challenges are more severe under the sudden shock and the consideration is no longer within the context of Hong Kong, but the potential development of the regional and worldwide tourism industry. The planning context should include but not limited to the spatial connection, branding and marketing promotion, socially beneficial activities and effective utilization of natural and cultural resources. Appropriate strategies and

policies should be applied to increase the competitiveness of Hong Kong and achieve resilient development among 6 assets.



Project Approach

4. Project Approach

4.1 Planning Framework

The study formulates a new direction which covers both the mass and experiential tourism. The insufficiency of existing mass tourism would be improved and combined with the experiential tourism. 3 major aspects of cultural, natural tourism and transport connection are formulated under the new approach. It is used to supplement the insufficiency of mass tourism and give more choices for tourists. Regional collaboration is another focus to make the vision of resilient tourism more

"INFINITY HONG KONG 香港. 無限"
One step to a different world; One step to infinite experience

comprehensive. In the following, the possible solutions would be discussed.

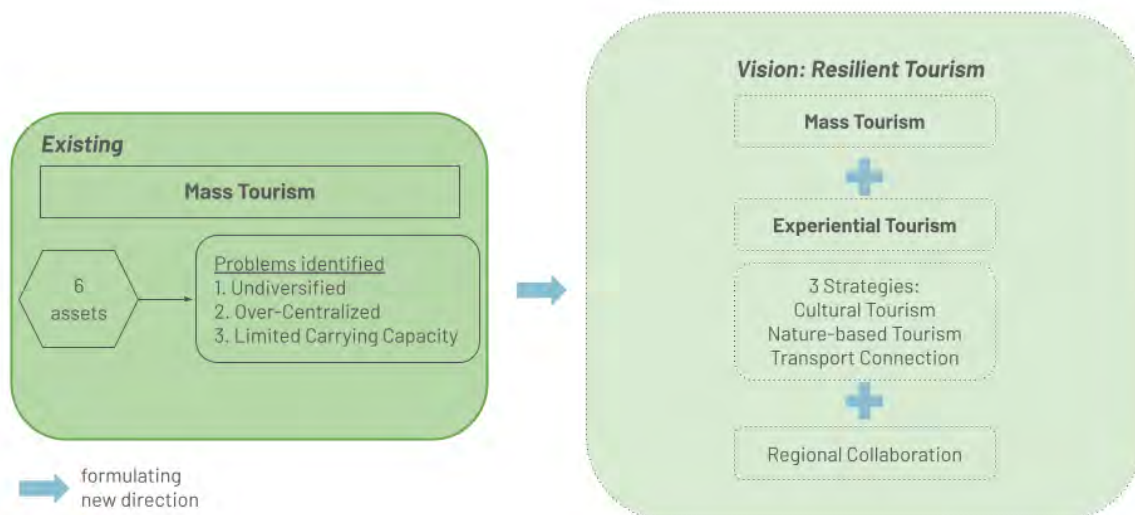


Figure 12. Planning Framework

4.2 Vision - Rebranding

4.2.1 Rebranding Rationale

While mass tourism development should continue to be supported, promoting experiential tourism would be the focus in furthering the goal to reach resilient tourism. The following rebranding of tourism sector was proposed together with the three strategies:

Infinity Hong Kong 香港. 無限
One step to a different world; One step to infinite experience

One step to a different world: Hong Kong should stress its proximity to urban rural

interface within Hong Kong, closeness between conventional and newly proposed tourist activities, and also good regional connections under the one-hour living circle. Hong Kong should highlight its unique role as a dual gateway to bridge international and mainland tourists

One step to infinite experience: Hong Kong has strived to diversify its tourism offerings apart from the conventional image of solely being a shoppers paradise. To make Hong Kong distinguishable from being a typical metropolis, more attention should be given to the cultural and ecological assets which shape a more authentic and conspicuous experience of traveling in Hong Kong. With reference to experiential tourism, tourists can have different experiences even when they visit HK repeatedly, while having different interpretations and takeaways from each other.

Apart from incorporating the notion of experiential tourism into our development framework, the contribution from our traditional tourism attractions will not be overlooked. Statistically, mass tourism still remains as one of the conventional driving forces of the tourism industry, which contributes a significant portion to our retail, food and beverages and entertainment sector. To ensure a sustainable and resilient development of our mass tourism and to maintain our reputation as the shopper's paradise in the world, we emphasized on improving our existing infrastructure, transportation network to cater to the demand. Not only would our visitors enjoy a more relaxed and convenient travel experience, it also alimerorates the side effect of what tourism industry brings to the local neighbourhood, achieving a win-win situation.



Strategy 1: Cultural Tourism

5. Cultural Tourism

Definition

According to UNWTO (2017), cultural tourism is a type of tourism that motivates tourists to travel to learn, discover and experience tangible or intangible cultural attractions and products. These attractions and products usually involve unique elements of the local society, including art, architecture, history, cultural heritage, literature, cooking and religious beliefs, as well as the lifestyle of the locals, etc. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Heritage Centre also stipulated the guiding principle for cities and countries to develop cultural tourism in a sustainable manner. UNESCO concluded that cultural tourism is a development model “which respects both local people and the traveller, cultural heritage and the environment.” (UNESCO, 2010)

Our cultural assets can be further classified into two categories which jointly embodies the rich history of Hong Kong. Not only do they resembles our past and educate our future generations, with appropriate policy interventions and preservations, we could rejuvenate these once obsolete structures and strengthen our stock of cultural assets:

Tangible heritage: It includes buildings and historic places, monuments, artifacts which are considered worthy of preservation for the future or shared strong emotional bondings with the local community. The structures usually embody archaeological, architectural and social significance.

Intangible heritage: It refers to traditions or living expressions that usually do not have a physical presence, which are inherited from our ancestors and passed on to our descendants, such as oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, rituals, festive events. (UNESCO, 2003).

Current Situations

The protection of tangible heritage in Hong Kong is regulated by the Antiquities and Monuments Ordinance (Cap. 53) (A&M Ordinance), implemented by the Antiquities and Monuments Office (AMO). The two pieces of legislation that protects buildings or sites with historical significance are as follows:

1. On an administrative level, Grading of Historical Buildings is overseen by the Antiquities Advisory Board (The board), which has selected 1444 buildings to be preserved based on six criteria: historical interest, architectural merit, group value, social value and local interest, authenticity, and rarity. The selected buildings are then being graded according to their attributes on the six criteria. However, even for grade 1 buildings which are regarded as “Buildings of outstanding merit, which every effort should be made to preserve if possible”,

they are not subject to statutory protection. Owners are entitled to demolish those properties.

2. The higher degree of protection of historical buildings is the Declaration of monuments under the Antiquities and Monuments Ordinance. Historical buildings are safeguarded when the Secretary for Development declares the properties as monuments under the Ordinance. Nonetheless, the ordinance has not been significantly amended since its enactment in 1976. As the ordinance allows the owner or lawful occupiers to object to the declaration, this poses a threat as they could challenge the government's decision based on private interest. In fact, the owners of Ho Tung Gardens exercised their right to fight against the declaration of their property as a declared monument, and they succeeded in making the government withdraw.

Together with the Development Bureau, they are the key government authorities that take charge of heritage conservation. The Urban Renewal Authority (URA) and Antiquities Advisory Board are other important statutory bodies in the conservation processes. The main approaches for heritage conservation include public-private partnership in the "Revitalizing Historic Buildings through Partnership Scheme" for government-owned historic buildings, and adaptive re-use which transforms historic buildings into innovative use.

5.1 Tangible Heritage Conservation

Objectives

Cultural significance, together with historical, architecture, aesthetic and social values, are the essence of heritage – legacy from the past. Reflecting lives and cultures of people across time, these tangible structures have repeatedly transformed the urban landscape of Hong Kong, resulting in the present unique cityscape. Tangible cultural heritage conservation is closely linked with tourism and local development, with aims to:

1. Allow heritage to serve as unique tourism assets that attract visitors who look for local history and culture;
2. Generate local revenue which in turn supports their maintenance, improvement works and other costs;
3. Reinforce the sense of identity of local residents by retaining the historic remains; and
4. Improve the overall physical environment.

With rich cultures embedded in the urban fabric, the overall soft power of Hong Kong can also be enhanced. Hence, this report emphasizes that tangible heritage is one of

the important pillars of developing experiential tourism and resilience. Based on the above, this section suggests ways to facilitate heritage conservation with considerations of the existing policy framework and stakeholders involved.

5.1.1 Area-based Conservation

Insights from Shanghai

Shanghai adopted the “point-line-plane” concept when planning her historic-feature areas. These three components respectively refer to the historic buildings, streets and the feature areas. Under the Regulations of Shanghai Municipality on the Protection of Historical-feature Areas and Excellent Historical Buildings (the Regulations) (Shanghai Municipal People’s Government, 2020), the planning, design and construction should be compatible with the historical and cultural features within the Areas. After identifying the points, lines, and planes, master layout plans would be produced, followed by local-scale planning and lastly the protection of the historic features (to be further elaborated in section 5.1.2).

Insights from Singapore

The conservation areas in Singapore are classified into four groups based on their establishment periods and locations. Each group has different conservation plans, planning parameters and restoration guidelines (Urban Redevelopment Authority, n.d.). A comprehensive list of items to be considered is available, including floors, airwells and staircase. For areas surrounding the conserved heritage, provision of public facilities, greenery, transportation and more aspects are enhanced, therefore gaining support from local communities and commercial users (Lee, as cited in Yip, 2012).

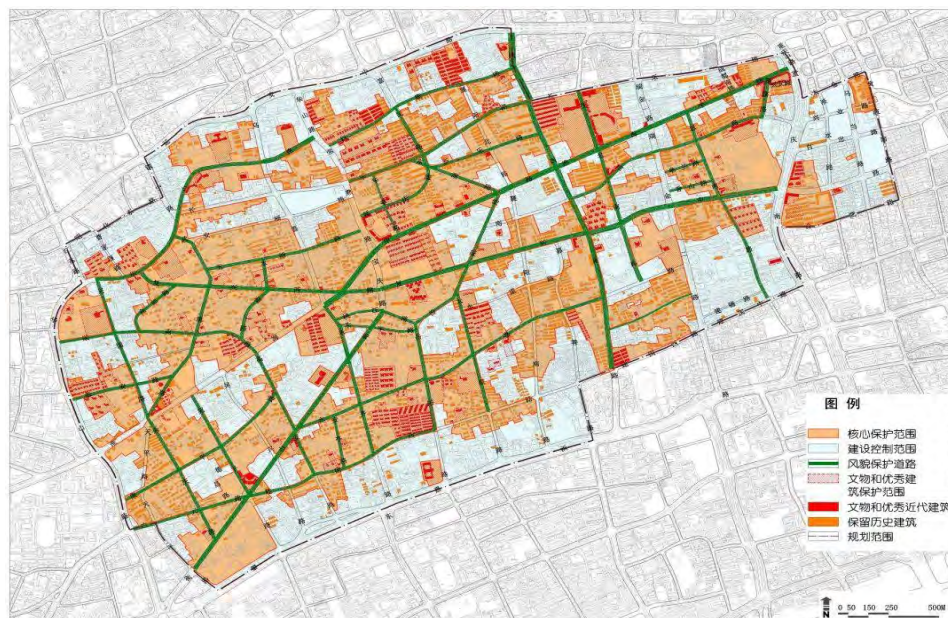


Figure 13. Hengshan-Fuxing Historical-feature Area in Shanghai, with different levels of protection at urban-scale (Planning and Land Resources Administration of Shanghai Municipality, 2020)

Recommendations

Heritage conservation in Hong Kong should move from focusing on individual items to area-based at the urban scale. By setting scopes of protection that require different levels of conservation within one designated area, spatial relationships among historic buildings, structures and sites are portrayed, with historic landmarks being the focal points. Ties between heritage and the neighbourhoods can be maintained to give a comprehensive picture of people's living in the past and urban transformations taken place. With the inclusion of streets and urban furniture, a cohesive experience of historical and cultural exploration would be delivered to the users. After linking up the points, lines, and planes, synergy would be created which revolves around the remarkable history and culture of the area. It is deemed a more effective way to retain local character than piecemeal conservation, through creating greater visual contrast and upgrading the dilapidated physical status of extensive areas.

With a clear planning intention to conserve heritage formulated at an early stage, it would be easier for plans of smaller-scale to align with this goal to preserve the urban landscape of the designated area. Old and new structures can coexist in a more compatible manner. This would alleviate the insufficiency of current practice of planning and conservation being fragmented, or putting the latter at a lower priority in case of conflicts with other plans. Conservation should be more integrated with urban planning to allow conservation to be one of the core principles in developing conservation areas or areas with special heritage interests. While urban planning acts as a tool for heritage conservation, conservation areas in turn help enhance the compatibility of different plans.

Implementation and Feasibility

To incorporate heritage conservation into our land use planning system, a unique set of conservation guidelines should be prepared by PlanD, the AMO and AAB including the requirements on the development parameters and restoration guidelines. In implementation, there should be a standard buffer area designated around specific monuments and historical buildings. Developments that fall within the buffer area are subject to the approval of the TPB and professionals from the AMO and AAB based on the compatibility of the design and layout of the development to the monuments and historical buildings.

A new land use zoning dedicated for tangible cultural heritage conservation can be established in places with a cluster of historic buildings. Currently there are no statutory town plans for heritage conservation, with the closest zones being "Village Type Development" or "Conservation Area" zones which refer to a wider use and nature conservation respectively. For "Other Specified Uses" or "Comprehensive Redevelopment Area" zones that include historic buildings and sites, they are recorded only when adaptive reuse projects are anticipated. To facilitate comprehensive

planning of conservation areas with the provision of clear, statutory planning guidelines, the possibility of setting up a new land use zoning should be explored.

5.1.2 Revamping The Conservation Policies

Insights from Shanghai

The Shanghai government exerts strict control on heritage conservation through the Regulations, which are applied to both public and privately owned buildings. There are separate sections dedicated to “Determination of the Targets of Protection”, “Protection of Historical-feature Areas” and “Protection of Excellent Historical Buildings”. Excellent buildings and where these buildings are concentrated in, including areas, neighbourhoods, streets and river ways, are all subject to protection at different levels according to their conditions and significance. For instance, four categories of protection requirements are enacted on the excellent buildings, with variations in the aspects of “façade, structural system, plane layout and internal decoration” (SMPG, 2020). By following a set of clear, systematic and statutory regulations, the determination of the Shanghai government to conserve historic buildings and the overall cityscape is well-demonstrated.

Recommendations

More systematic, well-defined standards should be employed in determining the targets of protection, which are not confined to buildings but include other forms such as masonry walls and factory structures. Clearer requirements for protection should be formulated and suit varying building conditions and historical, cultural, scientific and aesthetic values. As heritage conservation is claimed to favour public interests, these guidelines and regulations should be more transparent to inform locals of the on-going and future development plans.

To avoid demolition or damages of privately owned buildings before receiving statutory protection, heritage assessments should be conducted by the AAB more efficiently. It can be done through prioritizing buildings with urgent needs of protection under circumstances such as chances to be demolished and decaying conditions.

To offer greater protection to graded buildings, the grading system provided by A&MO should possess statutory power instead of being solely administrative. The ways of protection again should depend on their conditions and relative significance. This recommendation depends largely on the determination of the government in heritage conservation since many privately owned buildings would be subject to protection and restricted development opportunities. It may thus counteract the core economic principle of “big market, small government” of Hong Kong. Nonetheless, it would be effective in closing the loophole of demolition of heritages, which may occur even with

government intervention to negotiate with private owners by turning the heritages into proposed monuments.

Indeed, the setting up of a statutory grading system has been suggested in the “Report on the Policy Review on Conservation of Built Heritage” by the AAB in 2014. However, feasibility study and details of implementation are yet to be seen. In view of the increasing cases of heritages facing demolition or reconstruction, the government should protect the valuable assets with a big move against rapid redevelopment.

5.1.3 Economic Incentives

Recommendations

Financial consideration has always been a crucial factor that discourages private owners from conserving heritages due to huge maintenance costs, in contrast to enormous potential gains from redevelopment. While there are controversies about direct acquisition and resumption of heritages by the government, and also the appropriate amount of public money injected, provision of economic incentives remains a preferred way (AAB, 2014). The government is advised to make the conservation pathway more appealing to private owners through offering stronger incentives, including proactive communication regarding financial budget and assistance, relaxation of plot ratio and land exchange.

Transfer of development rights (TDR) could have a wider applicability to have more success cases of conservation. It allows the transferral of unused development rights from sites that wish to be protected to another site where higher development density is permitted (Chan, et al. 2018). By taking over the management of the heritage, the government can ensure that it is protected from alterations by their former owners. A “win-win” situation is therefore achieved. Although uncertainties are incurred such as the will of heritage land owners and impacts of the additional development to its surroundings, this institutional innovation, making conservation possible without using public funds, is worth more attempts.

Implementation and Feasibility

The TDR scheme can be implemented in a similar manner as The Gross Floor Area (GFA) Concession Scheme, which is also a type of planning incentive. The policy rewards the developers who provide public amenities to circumvent certain planning restrictions or give bonus floor areas in exchange. In this way, the government saves pecuniary cost while improving the urban environment and the developers also receive extra profits. The scheme should also begin as a voluntary scheme for pilot testing and allow developers to get used to the scheme. Given the limited amount of land provision each year, the fixed supply of land will make transferring of GFA to other profitable sites attractive to developers. To offer greater incentive to preserve our heritage, TDR of

floor on a 1 to 1 ratio will not be lucrative enough. Therefore, the authorities have to figure out a scale of extra floor area to be transferred based on the significance of the preserved site. Nonetheless, negotiations have to be made with developers on the specific details over the site selection of executing TDR and whether a premium is required in the process.

5.2 Destination Building

With the aims of decentralising the skewed tourist distributions and beautifying the cityscape, destination building enhances the sense of place through community-based placemaking. By involving the community in making streets and public spaces more representative of the districts' characters, the unique qualities of different neighbourhoods can be highlighted. Harnessing the vibrant and rich socio-cultural fabrics of the city as tourism resources can offer the more sought after experiential travel, boosting both domestic and inbound tourism. Through these bottom-up beautification and community placemaking efforts in creating authentic destinations, more diverse tourism experiences can be offered to both locals and visitors. These new 'places' could attract and divert visitors who are looking for more local and authentic adventures from the overcrowded 'mainstream' tourist attractions. The following solutions in decreasing spatial scale illustrate the strategy of destination building to promote cultural tourism.

5.2.1 District-based Branding and Placemaking

Under the current Hong Kong Planning Standard and Guidelines (HKPSG), Chapter 11 Urban Design Guidelines, it suggested the provision of high quality street furniture to enhance the pedestrian walking experience. The recommendations emphasized the functionality and practicality of street furniture. For instance, the road signs are suggested to align in a way to avoid clutter that causes confusion. The aesthetic value of street furniture is overlooked in the HKPSG. Roadside benches, lampposts or even manholes should serve their original functions while also celebrating local cultural elements. Our government should delegate the power to district councils and local administrations to design their street amenities in accordance with their sense of place and traditions.

In addition to the Chapter 11 Urban Design Guidelines (November 2015 Edition) of HKPSG, the latest Urban Design Guidelines (UDG) for Hong Kong was published in November 2002. Although in the UDG it was mentioned that specific district characters should be retained and enhanced through various urban design elements such as height profile, scale and preservation of cultural activities, more district-specific placemaking urban design guidelines can be incorporated into the guidelines.

Insights from Japan: Prefectural branding

The depopulation in rural peripheries in Japan has led to a place-branding boom to revitalize rural regions. Due to outward migration of young people, the shift away from primary industries and fiscal deficits, place-branding projects have proliferated to boost tourism in different regions. Branding-based initiatives were carried out with the aim to either strengthen or reconstruct the identity of a place, which were accelerated by mutual competitions among local governments (Jones et al., 2009). The example of Nagano prefecture demonstrates the establishment of an individual brand by the local government, followed by application of various branding strategies to all sectors and attractions in the prefecture can successfully foster the branding process of a region.

With the aim of marketing the regional strengths to the tourism market, place-branding campaigns were held by prefectures and city governments to build the place's identity through projection of that image in local products and services.

Recommendations

The government can initiate district-based branding by adopting area-specific plans to highlight the unique local cultures in each district. By involving the local community in the planning stage, the embedded localness and authenticity of the place can promote diversified tourism experiences. A prime example of this being done is the master planning of the Kai Tak Development (KTD) Area, where community-based participation in the early stages of planning, design, management and programming allowed the neighbourhood's responses to tourists activities to be considered and regularly reviewed. The Kai Tak Development Urban Design Guidelines and Manual (UDGM) demonstrates how a coherent overall design of an area can be achieved with a set of recommended urban design parameters, ensuring the district's planning vision and branding could be highlighted. With area-specific urban design guidelines and a bottom-up planning approach, this new development area has successfully transformed from one of the busiest airports to a vibrant focal point for both residents and visitors.

An example of the implementation of district-based branding in other districts would be the recent 'Invigorating Island South' initiative announced in the 2020 Policy Address. Through public engagement of residents, local organisations and district councillors, place-specific knowledge and cultures could be extracted and embedded in the district's plans. In the early planning stage, the government can reserve community co-creation spaces in the district as part of the revitalisation project to encourage area-based placemaking. For example, in carrying out a key proposal to enhance the cultural and leisure facilities in Aberdeen and Wong Chuk Hang to enable eco-tourism in the area, residents' views could be collected and incorporated to reflect the users' needs in the design of facilities. Referencing the case of KTD, establishing an urban design guidelines and manual for Southern District can ensure the beautification

of public space and facilities enhancement could not only accommodate the residents' needs, but also reflect the area's unique traditions and cultures. Involving the local community in the area-based placemaking can enhance the sense of identity of locals as well as highlight the district's ambience of a fishing village. Following this direction, new developments or redevelopment projects in the districts shall be encouraged to match with the local characteristics in the precinct to enhance the sense of place within the neighbourhood.

However, a foreseeable limitation would be possible conflicts between the community co-creation spaces with privately owned spaces or public spaces originally designated for community use. As the government has limited control over private spaces due to multiple and mixed ownership. To solve this problem, the government can initiate early consultation with the stakeholders in devising a mutually beneficial spatial plan to achieve a win-win situation. Flexible use of space can be encouraged in face of limited space.

5.2.2 Pedestrianised Streets as Tourist Attractions

A walkable city should not be only limited as a buzzword in urban planning. Developing walkable neighborhoods that strategically link up various tourist attractions and transportation hubs would allow locals and tourists to enjoy the scenery and experience the local cultural fabrics along the walk. Currently, credited to the two pilot studies launched by the transport department to seek initiatives to enhance the walkability of the city, primarily approaches have been identified. Apart from conventional strategies to promote urban walkability, such as introducing temporary or permanent pedestrianized streets, the authority has explored alternatives three-dimensionally to offer a diverse walking experience through the use of footbridges and subways, connecting interesting and accessible spots in the city. We encourage the plans to be put into practice and foster a walkable neighbourhood for both locals and visitors.

Insights from New York

Given the existing tight streets and sideways in New York City, one of the epicenters of the COVID-19 pandemic, it fails to comply with the incumbent social distancing protocols. The city government has decided to dedicate several streets as open spaces that are exclusively for pedestrians in order to provide more public space for the citizens while keeping appropriate distance to curb virus transmissions. The program "Open Streets" was launched in spring 2020 and opened up an estimate of 6000 miles of streets in New York. Given the success and appeal of the program, it is expected that the project will continue to expand into more city blocks.

Recommendations

Taking advantage of the “Pilot Study on Underground Space Development in Selected Strategic Urban Areas” launched by the CEDD and PlanD in 2015, it is suggested the development of the cavernous malls in the Tsim Sha Tsui Area can boost the cultural tourism in the West Kowloon Area. As one of the selected strategic urban areas in the study, Tsim Sha Tsui is a well established focal point of HK’s tourism development which agglomerates commercial, food and beverage and leisure activities that appeal to tourists of different backgrounds. The area is strategically located at the heart of Hong Kong’s transit network with high accessibility provided by 5 local MTR stations (Jordan/ Tsim Sha Tsui/ East Tsim Sha Tsui/ Austin/ Kowloon Station and the West Kowloon Terminus connecting to Futian, Shenzhen and Guangdong). Moreover, the existing subway connections between East Tsim Sha Tsui and Tsim Sha Tsui station set a good foundation to develop underground shopping arcades between the stations and to inject impetus to the area. The cavernous malls can also reach out to the harbourfront and the WKCD via Austin Station to develop a comprehensive underground network. Not only would the proposal alleviate the congested traffic and pedestrian situation above ground, but also offer an alternative and comfortable experience in rainy seasons.

In connecting the subway network from Tsim Sha Tsui station towards the WKCD, the identity of West Kowloon as a creative cluster can be emphasized. It is proposed that the underground shopping street should be planned to accommodate cultural-themed local businesses and other shops supporting the local creative industries. Instead of the traditional commercial chain stores of international brands, the cavernous mall can house workshops and stalls selling handicrafts or other locally produced arts.

5.2.3 Themed Streetscape Designs

Insights from Japan: Artistic manhole covers

The municipal governments are allowed to design their own sewage covers given they fulfilled the structural and safety requirements as stipulated by the construction ministry. Hence, it resulted in an inter-city competition of manhole cover designs which carries the local identity and to boost their appeal. Common designs are natural landscapes, native flora and fauna and landmark architecture.



Figure 14. Artistic manhole covers in Japan (Thisiscolossal, n.d.)

Recommendations

Apart from manhole covers, many urban furniture are actually potential tourist attractions when given the appropriate design and planning. The beautification of these amenities should not only serve as a tool to welcome tourists but by doing so, the local residents should also benefit from the enhanced urban living environment. A notable example is the popular “Please Be Seated” public art piece which will make its debut in Hong Kong (Figure 15). The artwork was designed by British designer Paul Cockside under the British Land’s commissions for the next London Design Festival. The installation is planned to find its permanent home in Taikoo park and welcome the visitors to enjoy it however they wish to. It demonstrates that urban furniture can integrate with creative designs and to synergize a specular for both the locals and visitors.



Figure 15. Public art to be installed in Hong Kong (Inexhibit, 2019)

Echoing the aforementioned objective of promoting local characters, initiatives similar to the above can be applied to the local context by inviting local artists to design

streetscape furniture such as public arts, railings or street lamps to beautify the streetscape and reflect local cultures. The government or local administrations can task the local designers or organisations in the community to create themed designs that highlight the neighbourhood's characters. Local competitions can be held to select the appropriate and representative designs for the district. Community participation in this form can not only boost local identity, extract local knowledge, but also celebrate local characters and traditions through tangible and visible means.

5.3 Interactive and Immersive Activities

Objectives

In Hong Kong, community planning is a relatively new approach (HKIP, 2016). Appreciation to community opinions is yet an important way for planning authorities to respond to local daily needs amidst rapid tourism growth. In recent years, local concern groups have emerged in recent years which aim to convey and safeguard community interests. Planners should seize the opportunity to integrate their opinions in the planning stage, and welcome direct involvement in designing and delivering tourism products, to bring overall benefits to both tourists and local residents. By offering authentic, immersive and customized experiences, visitors would resonate with community traditions and values more easily, contributing to forming emotional connections between the host and guests. These serve as the basis of experiential tourism – enriching the experiences and memories of tourists to attract longer stay and repeat visitation.

Community support influences the sustainability of tourism development in terms of host-guest cohesion and social growth as a whole. We emphasise that local interests and tourism development are not mutually exclusive. Instead, the two can complement each other in terms of the improvement in provision of public facilities, infrastructural planning, and more. While community participation takes various forms and levels, we suggest regarding it as one of the tourism development strategies to seek local support and understanding towards tourism development.

5.3.1 Themed Tours

There is arguably no better way than walking for visitors to experience the city's sights, sounds, scents, and scenery first-hand. Currently, despite some piecemeal and temporary efforts from NGOs, we have identified the absence of a comprehensive plan to organize and design themed trails for different districts which celebrate local characters. Thus, in order to shape a conspicuous and distinguishable character among the districts, we encourage the authority to systematically develop plans on themed walks to reflect the authentic culture, history and local identity of its precincts. PPP is believed to be feasible as an existing institution that has recorded past success over the years. The government should also seize the opportunity to empower local NGOs

through providing subsidies and to facilitate community engagement with the neighborhood and design the trails where their collective memories are embedded.

Diverging from conventional responsible tours led by tourism agencies, partnership tours (Mann, 2000) should be encouraged which are operated between local communities and external partners including NGOs and tour operators. While the locals take charge of organizing community resources and designing tourism products, their partners share the duty of controlling tourism impacts and marketing and business promotions. This type of tour allows tourists to gain in-depth cultural insights with efficient and effective management, which support the sustainable development of experiential tourism. Such collaborations with external partners would be better supported, managed and monitored by local community organizations, which can facilitate a more systematic and efficient development of local themed tours.



Figure 16a. Planning of themed tours in Tung Chung

The above plan depicts an example of developing theme tours in Hong Kong. Here we used Tung Chung as an example. We build on the existing amenities and the master planning of the Tung Chung New Town Extension and try to link up the attractive elements in the site to provide a multi-dimensional experience along the walk.

1. The trail begins at the Tung Chung MTR Station, an accessible spot with proximity to the clusters of shopping outlets and other transit options.
2. Visitors can first travel along the promenade that will be further extended to connect with the Tung Chung Battery Trail.
3. The quality, including the paving materials and the width of the Battery Trail should be enhanced. The Battery can serve as a photo taking spot.

4. Along the way to The Tung Chung Bastion, there are multiple seafood restaurants for the visitors to take a short break.
5. Coming to the end of the walking trail, the junction of the Tung O Ancient Trail and the Ngong Ping Cable Car Trail will be developed into a view deck for tourists to enjoy the sunset.
6. Tourists can also take the cable car to visit the Big Buddha first and enjoy the trail the other way round.

5.3.2 Community Organisations

Apart from supporting the development of local tours, local organisations as well act as a bridge between local residents and public authorities to provide insights for local tourism, and help obtain funding support if adopted. From the planning perspective, collaborating with these organizations can lower the time and monetary costs required to understand local customs, cultures and the ever changing social conditions. The pathways of holding community workshops and consultation sessions such as focus groups and interviews to evaluate locals' feedback, would be greatly eased by partnering with organisations rooted in extensive social networks. By supporting the growth of community organisations, frequent communications between community stakeholders are encouraged, which foster a sense of belonging among members. The groups can then play a crucial role in times of external shocks, through developing responsive measures by gathering support and managing resources from the community.

5.3.3 Model Village

Insights from Tokyo

Tokyo has organized the "Mori no Nigiwai" (the Festival of Sacred Wood) since 1981. Started with the aim to showcase diminishing performing arts and rituals of the local communities, it has now become a large-scale event for nurturing and promoting local cultures. It represents the government's efforts in positioning the tourism industry as a driver of revitalization of rural areas. Under PPP, the event allows visitors to discover hidden local treasures through performances and local farm products and handicrafts. A communication zone is dedicated to foster interactions between tourists, performers and the locals. Three aspects of sustainability have been achieved through tourism: 1) culturally, by helping locals regain local pride while creating new values from traditions, 2) socially, by boosting intergenerational communications and passing down cultural legacy, and 3) economically, by generating income from developing local businesses, sales of products and other business opportunities. This serves as a sound example of putting focus on fostering communications between locals and tourists, and appropriately opening up areas remote from city centres to induce local growth.

Recommendations

By encouraging communications between the two in innovative means and “organic, interactive and pragmatic” (HKIP, 2016) settings, mutual learning and understanding are to be achieved, thus enlarging the social carrying capacity of local tourism development. Developing a model village, an tourism accommodation with rich cultural setting that enables the visitors to immerse in the community and traditional life of the locals.

To facilitate the implementation of a model village, places along the Harbour Metropolis Belt and Urban and Rural Belt with higher carrying capacity should be encouraged to develop tourist activities based on their local values and traditions (further elaborated in section 8.). Aspects of unique assets may range from culture to history, architecture and products. Policy incentives such as PPP can be employed to gain community support on preservation of local culture while developing destination products for economic benefits. These products include local businesses, festivals, performances, workshops and art events.

In this way, tourists are expected to be attracted from conventional tourist destinations to other sites for new experiences. Through diverse, site-specific activities, tourists can immerse themselves into the authenticity of local lives and cultures, whereas local communities enjoy larger employment opportunities and economic gains from these activities. When the local cultural legacy is preserved and promoted with innovative elements, which further attract visitors, such mutual host-guest benefits contribute to the long-term economic and community development. Three aspects of sustainability – cultural, social and economic, can hence be reached.

5.3.4 Cultural Mapping

Cultural mapping can be used as an innovative tool to directly engage with the community throughout Hong Kong. Mutual understanding on developing district- or neighbourhood-based characteristics can be achieved through genuine dialogues between citizens and planners, while aiming to minimize negative impacts on the community. Information obtained from local communities can become useful planning considerations which cover cultural elements in wide-ranging subjects or disciplines. Local participation should be encouraged through the provision of various data collection and mapping methods. High flexibility, user-friendliness and interactive exchanges can attract more input from the locals. From this initiative, authenticity, diverse cultures and a sense of identity are wished to be upheld in the planning processes, which are crucial to the social sustainability of the city’s development. The branding effects of districts or neighbourhoods can also raise their distinctiveness, attract more cultural tourists and thus support the diversification of tourism.

Implementation

With reference to one of our interviews with scholars in tourism management, financial feasibility and sustainability are the prominent challenges in developing community based tourism. Regardless of how ambitious the visions and objectives are, tourism destinations are still a commercial product and should be economically viable and self-sustained.

Operation of community funds

Similar to the implementation of maintenance funds of residents, the authorities should impose a tax on the activities carried in the destinations with historical significance, be it accommodation, food, etc. The tax received will be invested into the community fund and operates with prudence. The community should collaborate with NGOs or agencies that possess the necessary knowledge to manage the fund and avoid bribery.

Meanwhile, An appropriate amount of taxation will be generally accepted by visitors as long as they understand the meaning behind setting up the fund and what would the fund contribute to the community and cultural preservation. A portion of the fund should be dedicated to the reinvestment of the local settings. On one hand, the capital investment can be allocated for the maintenance work of the cultural heritage on a regular basis. In addition, it can also subsidize the locals to attend some language courses and train them as professional tour guides. It is expected the fund would enhance the overall living environment of the community and encourage the locals to appreciate their cultural lineage and foster a deeper social bonding.

5.4 Smart Applications to Support Cultural Tourism

Discover Hong Kong

When we try to diversify and decentralize our tourism products, marketing and publicity are crucial to promote our new itineraries to the visitors, or else they will remain unnoticed. The travel app should offer trending activities and popular spots to help visitors explore the infinite facets of Hong Kong and diverge them from the traditional tourist spots. Through the provision of intriguing information on landmarks, history and stories of tourism spots, which help tourists to understand and appreciate the diversity of our city. There should also be regular notifications on the events related to our intangible heritages, such as art exhibitions and traditional handicraft workshops. The app can even integrate with social media platforms and allows users to post relevant travel experiences and recommendations for them to spread Hong Kong's attractiveness through word of mouth.

VR experience of Hong Kong's history

Since a number of historical buildings are being demolished and plenty of areas of our Victoria Harbour have been reclaimed due to urban development, it is challenging for the visitors to experience Hong Kong's history without any visual stimulation. The Chinese University of Hong Kong has initiated a 3D digital surveillance on the historical buildings in Hong Kong. The internal structure, facade and its predecessors have been recorded and transcribed into a set of 360° pictures and videos. Barcodes handling the 3D information can be placed along our themed walking trails, sites with historical significance and the harbour front. Tourists interested in Hong Kong's past can scan the barcode and receive a set of interactive images and compare the present and the past.

Hong Kong Infinite Pass

It is quite common for the tourism industry to offer bundled products at a discount as a promotion strategy. As we are promoting a multidimensional experience with plenty of destinations, it would be difficult for the first time visitors to know what is the best for them. Therefore, a travel pass that offers discount travel packages at designated spots, as well as providing mass transit fare discount and tourists attraction pass will be convenient. Besides, users can order e-tickets online and enjoy discounts and save time from queueing for tickets. The pass can be ordered online from the official website and visitors should be able to purchase them at local convenience stores.

A panoramic view of a city, likely Hong Kong, seen from a high vantage point on a rocky cliffside. The city is densely packed with high-rise buildings and residential blocks, extending to the water's edge. The sky is filled with dramatic, layered clouds, with the sun setting behind them, creating a warm, golden glow. The foreground shows the rugged texture of the rock face and some sparse vegetation. The overall atmosphere is serene and majestic.

Strategy 2: Nature-based Tourism

6. Nature-based Tourism

Definition

Nature-based tourism refers to the type of tourism that “relies primarily on the natural environment for its attractions and settings” (TIES, 2006 quoted in Chan and Zhang, 2016, p. 39). Natural attractions, such as ecological features, geological features, landscapes and sceneries etc., together with cultural attractions like rural villages and historical relics that are occasionally dispersed in the countryside, are unique in a particular area and difficult to be reproduced elsewhere, hence establishing a distinct sense of place and identity in these destinations.

Nature-based tourism is expected to have a value of USD 100 billion (HK\$776 billion) per year (World Tourism Organization and United Nations Development Programme, 2018), and around 2% of tourist spending is represented by it (PlanD, 2007). Ecotourism, as a type of experiential tourism, particularly emphasizes low-impact, low-density and smaller scale tourism activities (Müller, 2000), and the objectives to conserve the environment, maintain the wellbeing of local communities and promote interpretation and education on the natural environment to both local people and tourists (TIES, n.d.).

There are, however, overlapping needs between mass tourism and ecotourism. For instance, ecological sites that are attractive to an ecotourist for educational, scientific and adventure experiences, are also places for conventional travellers’ recreational activities; and while the shops and restaurants satisfy the basic needs of an ecotourist, they are also the primary destination for a conventional tourist who focuses on consumption-based experiences.

Therefore, rather than focusing on a particular type of tourist, the positioning of a nature-based tourist destination lies within the spectrum between mass tourism and ecotourism.

Current Situation and Potential

As mentioned in Chapter 2, Hong Kong has a variety of natural landscapes and species that are highly attractive (see appendices II and III) as seen from the number of visitors to country parks per year. The majority of the population resides within a 3 km distance from a country park (PlanD, 2016b) (Figure 16b.), which is a unique strength of Hong Kong for its rural-urban proximity. The largely available and accessible natural landscapes, dispersed in different districts but proximal to urban areas, provide a good opportunity to decentralize tourist destinations from the congested urban area (Chan and Zhang, 2016), accommodating the expected growing tourist number, as natural landscapes take up more than 65% of land in Hong Kong (PlanD, n.d.).

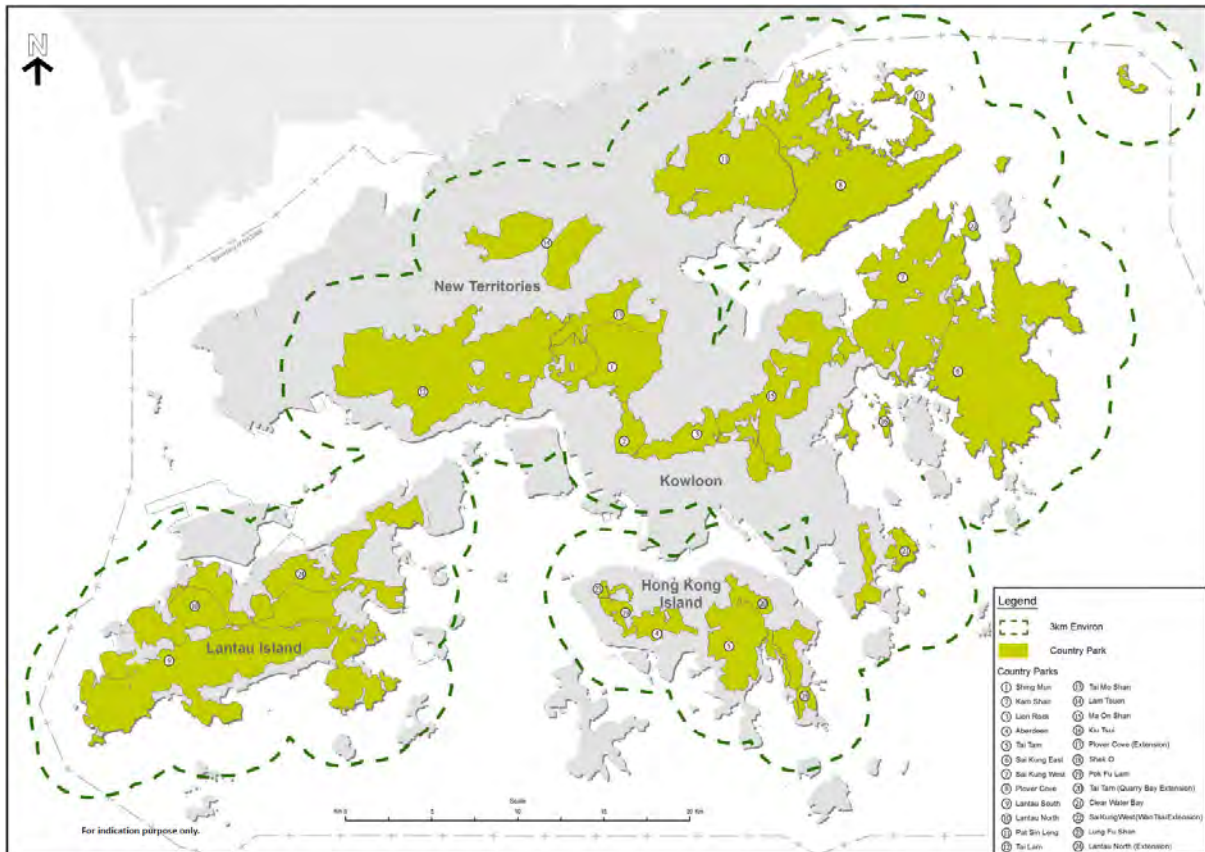


Figure 16b. The 3 km Environs of Country Parks (PlanD, n.d.)

CPs, Special Areas, Marine Parks, Marine Reserve and restricted areas are designated under the Country Parks Ordinance (CPO) (Cap. 208), Marine Parks Ordinance (MPO) (Cap. 476) and Wild Animals Protection Ordinance (WAPO) (Cap. 170) managed by AFCD (Figure 17), while Town Planning Ordinance (TPO) (Cap. 131) prevents unsuitable development by zoning, such as Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Conservation Area (CA), and Coastal Protection Area (CPA) (Figure 18). Statutory control has been playing a successful role in maintaining the natural habitats and biodiversity in Hong Kong. AFCD provides recreation and education facilities such as visitor centres, barbecue sites in country parks and maintains the natural condition by measures such as tree planting, attracting more than 10 million of visitors per year (AFCD, n.d.).

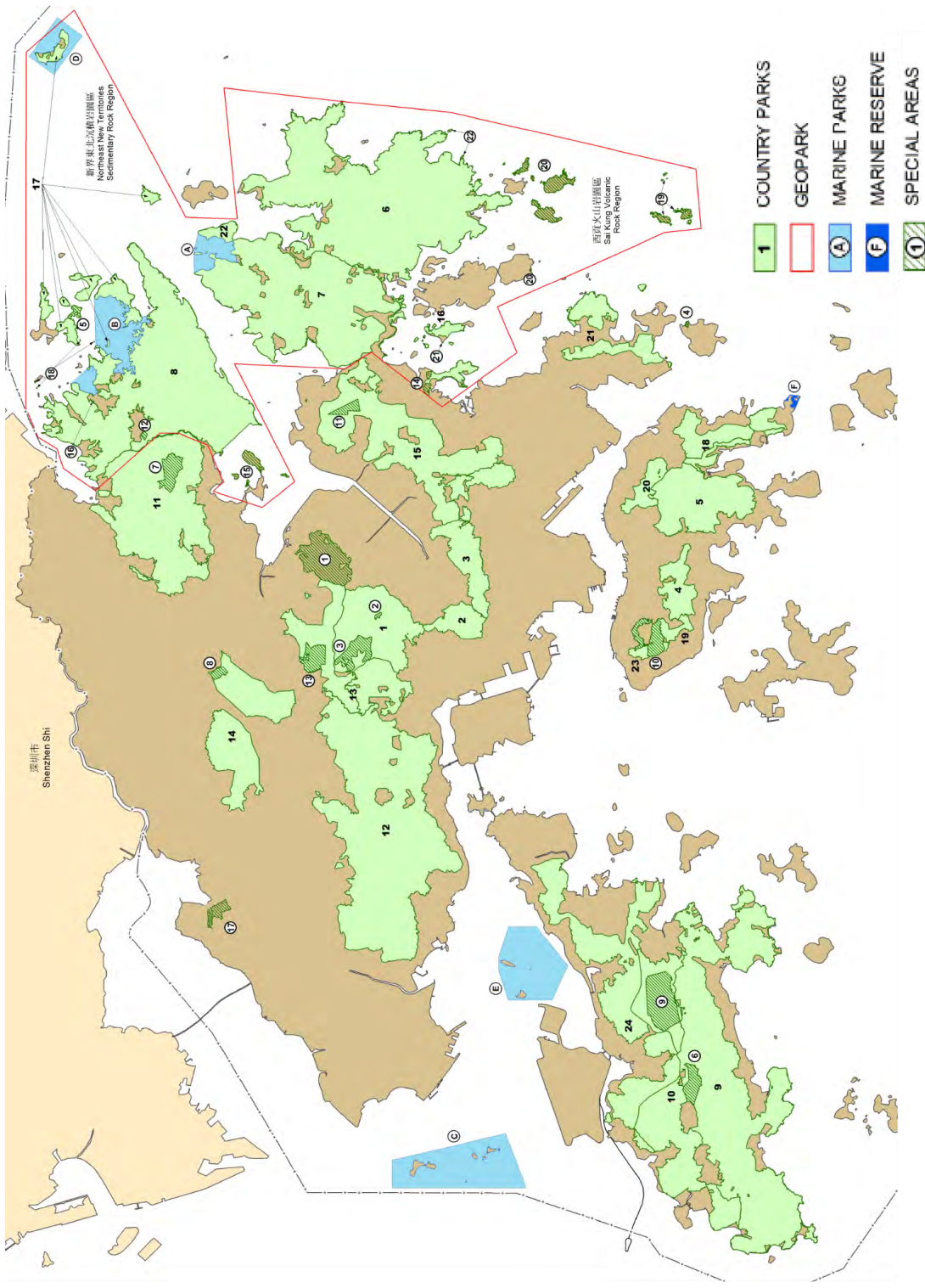
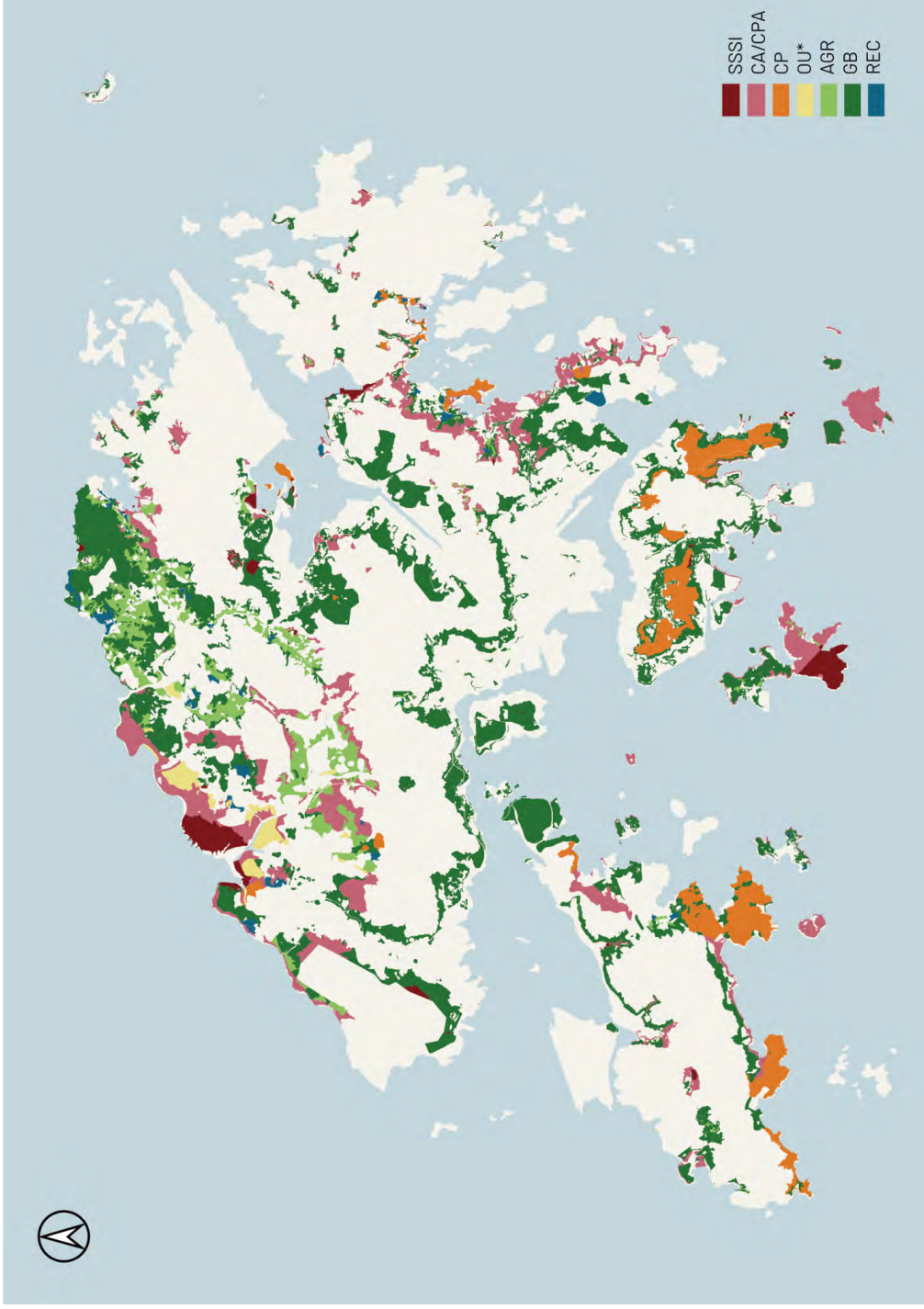


Figure 17. Country Parks, Special Areas, Geopark, Marine Parks & Marine Reserve, modified from AFCD, 2019



*(OU) includes Nature Park, Comprehensive Development and Wetland Enhancement Area (CDWEA), Comprehensive Development to include Wetland Restoration Area (CDWRA), Comprehensive Development and Wetland Protection Area (CDWPA), and Eco-lodge

Figure 18. TPO controlled natural areas (CP is under CPO control)

However, the roles of some ecological sites under TPO control are unclear, not relating nature-based tourism activities with their conservation significance. For example, SSSI is supposed to be the most sensitive area and human activities should be minimized, but land uses such as picnic area and visitor centre are listed under the Column 2 of OZP, which are also the land uses permitted in some CAs and CPAs, blurring the boundaries of acceptable development. Unlike country parks, these locations are only subject to development control without a formal management system and planned facilities, thus are not ready as nature-based tourism destinations.

The urban fringe areas as well as the surrounding areas outside country parks and sites with ecological interests, which are less ecologically sensitive, are underutilized. These areas are mostly under TPO control with zonings like Green Belt (GB) and Agriculture (AGR), which may be grassland, abandoned farmlands, fish ponds or brownfield lands. These places contain a certain amount of green and blue elements, maintained by zoning control, but they are neither managed by AFCD nor Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD), becoming “unofficial” open space (Chow, 2018). Without adequate ancillary facilities (recreational facilities, institutions, movement structures), these places are not attractive enough for visitors despite being potentially an pleasant outdoor setting.

As a result, attractions and services are not spatially and thematically linked, separated by the urban fringe area with dispersed attractions, where tourists have to travel for a certain distance from their accommodation facilities in town centres or CBDs to the natural attractions. Destinations become monotonous and do not create diverse experiences for visitors (Figure 19).

If the urban fringe areas and peripheries of natural attractions are utilized properly as an interface to connect different attractions, not only can the total area of outdoor recreation space be increased, but nature-based destinations can also be brought up to another level, combined into a single tourist destination with diverse experiences offered to visitors, given the current effective conservation efforts. There is especially higher potential for NDAs because there are more continuous flat lands available and it is possible for planning tourism facilities strategically from the beginning.



Figure 19. Monotonous and scattered components of nature-based tourism products

Objective

The main objective of promoting nature-based tourism is to enhance the overall quality of natural landscapes such that these areas can be more comfortable and enjoyable for both local residents and tourists. A sustainable nature-based tourism destination is designed to utilize natural settings, including both ecological sensitive and non-sensitive ones, to accommodate different types of visitors and activities, in an appropriate manner such that environmental sustainability is maintained. The rationale of this strategy is to tackle the three identified problems by:

- (1) Decentralizing tourists' activities from CBDs and town centres to the urban fringe areas and countryside by transforming existing natural resources into comprehensive nature-based tourism products consisting of attractions, facilities and services;
- (2) Diversifying tourists' activities, shifting from mass tourism towards experiential tourism by creating multifunctional nature-based tourist destinations to accommodate a variety of activities including consumption, leisure, recreation, learning and interpretation, providing unique experience for different users;
- (3) Proper visitor management in different areas based on their ecological features, geological features and sensitivity to human activities to prevent degradation of the natural environment and loss of biodiversity.

6.1 Creation of Nature-based Destinations

Nature-based destinations can be classified into 2 types: Nature Area (NA) and urban fringe park. NA involves the sustainable utilization of natural resources with scientific interests and unique landscapes, while urban fringe park is the transformation of greenbelts and other non-sensitive natural and outdoor areas into managed parklands. They serve as better, larger and continuous outdoor recreation space, improving local living quality and social well-being, at the same time strengthening the

competitiveness of tourist destinations, hence diverting visitors from traditional urban attractions as well as popular country parks, relieving their pressure.

Urban fringe park can provide additional outdoor recreation space with natural landscape as an alternative to more ecological sensitive areas like country parks, diverting visitors from them and increasing the overall carrying capacity of natural environment, allowing the city to prepare for the possible increase of demand in outdoor recreational space after the COVID-19 pandemic from both tourists and local residents. Compared to NA, urban fringe parks focus more on the direct connection with urban areas, allowing visitors to experience natural settings immediately next to urban experience, reducing the pressure of urban open space and accommodating visitors whose main activities are in urban areas.

6.1.1 Zoning Management of NA

Insights from Taiwan and Australia

In Taiwan, balance of conservation, recreation, and research and education is maintained by classifying locations within a national park according to their conservation significance, cultural significance and landscape, which clearly stipulate the types of tourist activities and development permitted within each area (Table 3) (Ministry of Justice, n.d.):

Area	Property
Ecological Protection Area	Strict protection of ecological communities and habitats, with restricted access
Special Landscape Area	Unique natural landscapes that cannot be recreated artificially, strict limits on development
Historical Preservation Area	Preservation of historic buildings, monuments, settlements, sites, ruins, cultural landscapes and ancient objects as well as indigenous cultures and customs
Recreation Area	Suitable for outdoor recreational activities, limited recreational facilities permissible
General Area	Other zones allowed to maintain original land and water use, including existing villages

Table 3: Main areas in a national park in Taiwan (Ministry of Justice, n.d.)

With clear classification of different areas (Figure 20), national parks are able to be developed into diversified tourists' destinations with different services and facilities. Figures 21 to 23 demonstrate different areas within a distance of 2 km in the same national park, located within walking distance or short road trip, catering the needs of different types of tourists, and designation of "Traditional General Area" can enable incorporation of local character in developments. The case of Taiwan shows that economic activities, leisure and conservation are compatible with a proper zoning system.



Figure 20. Part of the zoning plan of the Kenting area in the Kenting National Park, green areas are Special Landscape Areas; red areas are Recreation Areas (Ministry of the Interior, n.d.)



Figure 21.: Special landscape area (TravelKing, n.d.)



Figure 22. Hotel development within a Recreation Area
(Chateau Co.,Ltd, n.d.)



Figure 23. Shopping street near and within a Recreation Area
(UUKT, n.d.)

According to Department of National Parks, Sport and Racing (2015), in Queensland, the Landscape classification system for visitor management assesses the naturalness of a natural site systematically based on the biophysical, social, and managerial criteria to provide implications on suitable activities and the way to monitor the sites with increasing visitation. 9 levels are classified, ranging from totally natural, very natural, somewhat natural to not natural. Nature and scale of an ecotourism operation depends on factors such as size, layout and lands required for facilities, visitation number, activity type and experience to be offered, impacts on natural settings and capability of movement structures to support access and connection.

Recommendation

By establishing a zoning management system specific for nature-based destinations, lands with natural landscapes under different land use control systems are combined into a single system (Figure 24) which can facilitate master planning in these areas to strategically locate development and activity types around natural attractions,

generating optimal tourism products to accommodate different types of tourists and activities while protecting important natural environment.

Countryside sites with special ecological, geological or landscape features, and other sites with special scientific interests are designated as Nature Area (NA) together with surrounding areas that are less sensitive or non-sensitive to human activities. NAs can take different forms according to their unique primary feature and function, such as Country Park, Marine Park, Marine Reserve, Wetland Park, Geopark, Nature Park etc.

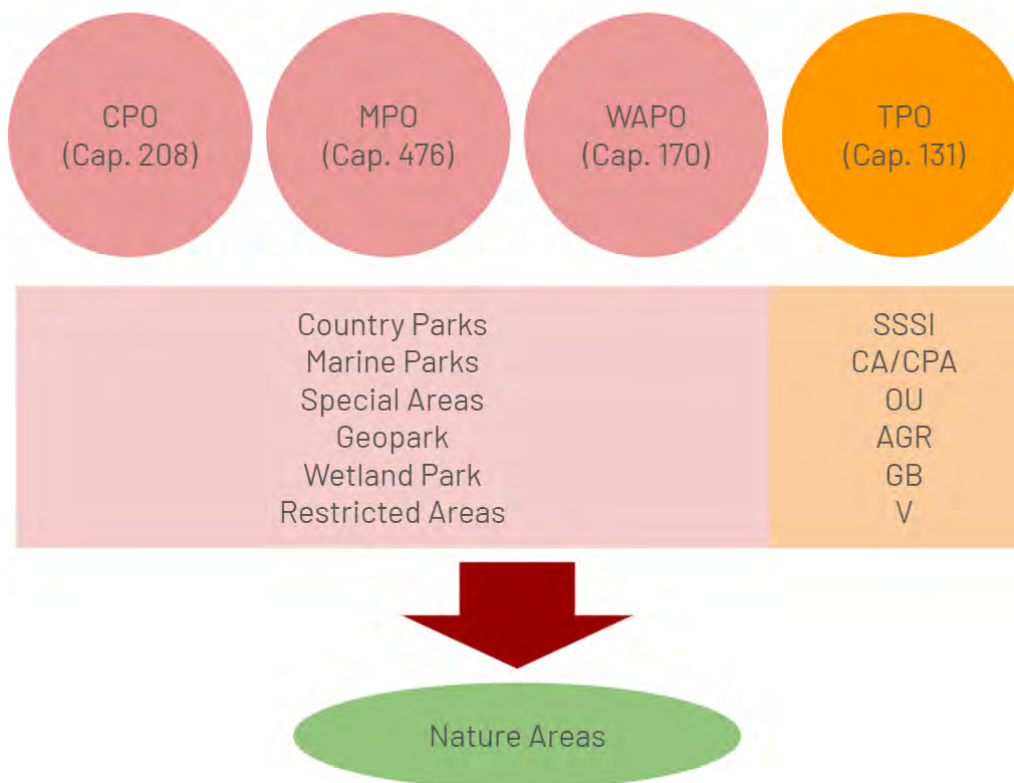


Figure 24. Include lands necessary for a comprehensive tourism product in the same system

With reference to the strategies of Taiwan (Ministry of Justice, n.d.) and Australia (Department of National Parks, Sport and Racing, 2015), lands and water bodies within an NA are divided into different zones according to their conservation significance, boundaries of acceptable development and usage are defined based on ecological significance at natural attractions and surrounding areas (Bulatović, 2017):

a. Conservation Zone

Habitats of rare or special species, and landscapes or waterbodies with distinct ecological or geological features are present here, which possess huge scientific importance. There shall be no visitor impacts on the natural condition.

No artificial structures shall be installed unless they are essential to support conservation, maintaining the existing habitats, or for educational and research purposes. Access to this zone is restricted, and visitors shall be guided by personnel who possess specific knowledge on the site. Examples of such locations are Mai Po Inner Deep Bay Ramsar Site and columnar jointings at Sharp Island.

b. Special Landscape Zone

Landscapes and biodiversity here are unique and difficult to restore under impacts, but are less vulnerable to human activities compared to Conservation Zone. Similar to the Conservation Zone, only necessary structures shall be installed, but more nature trails (Figure 25) can be provided within this zone with high level mimicry of the surrounding environment to minimize disturbance towards the surrounding ecosystem.. While local habitats and fauna behaviour are unaffected, impacts along walking trails are acceptable, and low-impact activities such as diving and picnicking are permitted. Locations suitable for this zone are lands under control of CPO and MPO, as well as SSSI, CA, and CPA lands.



Figure 25. Forest road with high degree of natural mimicry (IUCN, n.d.)

c. Recreation Zone

This zone serves as natural habitats and natural greening, but with a lower conservation importance, therefore is suitable for accommodating most of the outdoor recreation activities, with a function of buffer between higher human activities and important ecologies. Physical and visual environment is dominated by natural elements but vegetation and native fauna are expected to be altered. Small-scale recreation facilities and institutions can be installed here and activities that require additional equipment such as vessels and tents are permitted. Remaining lands under control of CPO and MPO, as well as CA and CPA lands that are not designated as Special Landscape Zone constitute this zone. In addition, various OU lands dedicated to comprehensive development involving wetland are also suitable.

d. General Zone

This zone concentrates the most intense human activities and is dedicated to provide services to visitors, such as retail, accommodation, entertainment and outside connection, serving as the entrance of NAs as well as the transition area between urban and rural. This zone consists of built-up areas and managed parkland with a combination of hard and soft landscaping. Lands that have undergone irreversible environmental degradation and composed by artificial landscapes can be designated as this zone, including abandoned farmlands, fish ponds, brownfield sites and villages. OU lands dedicated to comprehensive development, if not designated as Recreation Zone, can form part of this zone. Other landscapes, such as green areas in GB, farmlands and fish ponds of low conservation significance, can be converted into recreation space such as managed parklands, study farms, or botanic gardens.

e. Other Zones

Cultural elements such as rural villages and historical relics are often dispersed throughout the countryside, hence other types of zones can be designated for promoting cultural tourism and conservation with specific development standards and visitor control.

Subject to geographical constraints, suitability as a tourist destination, accessibility and conservation significance, not all zones are necessary to be present in an NA. For example, for a natural site expected to have relatively low visitor numbers or inadequate surrounding lands, the General Zone may not be designated. The overall framework of the zoning management system of an NA is summarized in Figure 26.

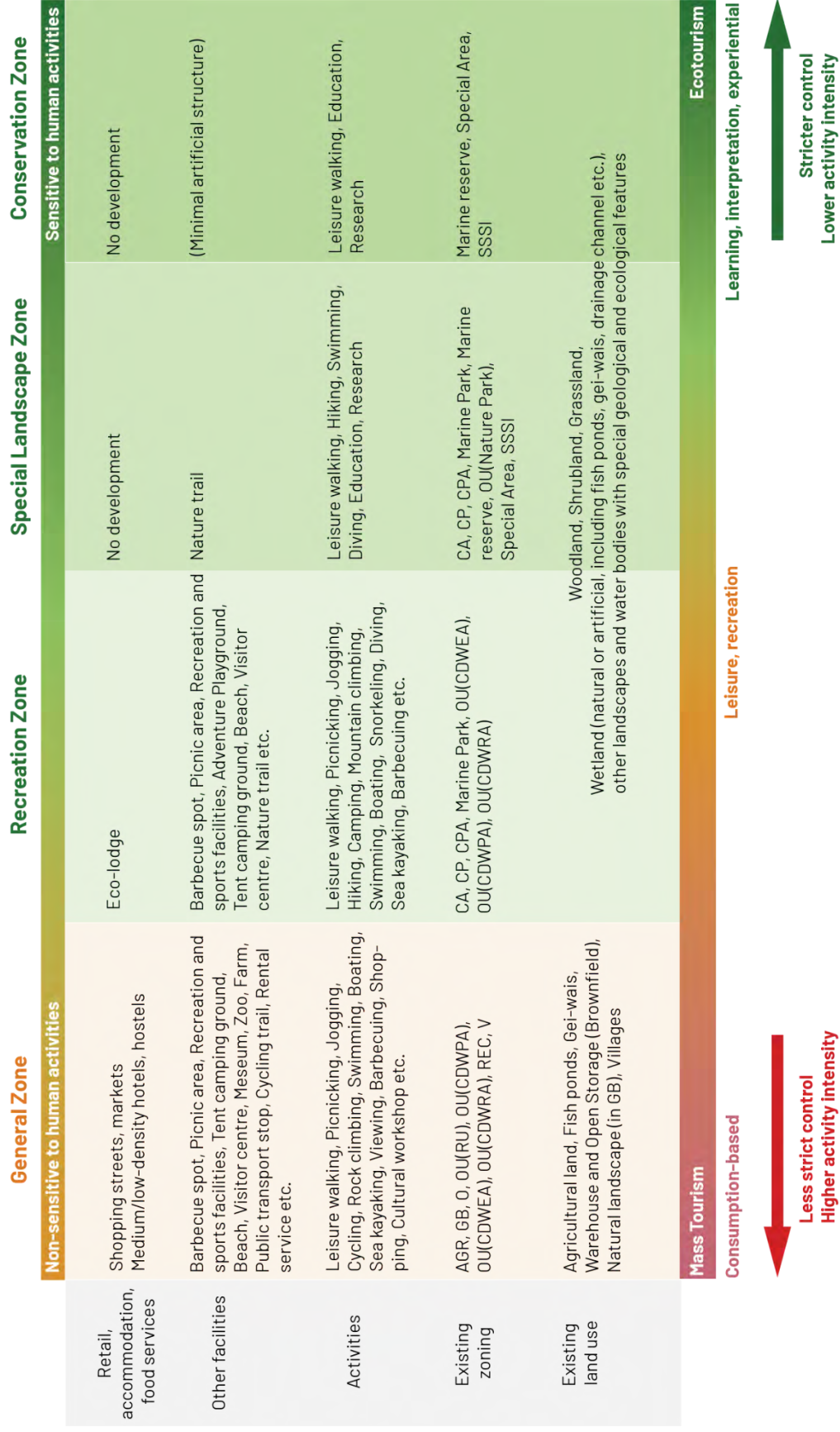


Figure 26. Proposed zoning management system for an NA

Implementation

Statutory and administrative control

The existing CPO and MPO can be extended to cover the lands necessary for General Zone and other ecological sites currently controlled by TPO, and these lands will be degazetted from OZP to from part of NA together with lands under CPO, MPO and WAPO, providing the statutory framework for AFCD to plan and manage NA as AFCD has deep experience of managing country parks, biodiversity and natural habitats. Apart from nature conservation and parkland management, a planning division can be set up under AFCD to carry out master planning of tourism facilities and public consultations, with development proposals accessed and approved by the Country and Marine Parks Board and the Country and Marine Parks Authority.

Remaining ecological sites not suitable for tourism development, such as those with poor accessibility, being small and scattered in remote areas, can be kept intact under the original TPO control system.

Land ownership

By designating development area or direct land sales by auction or open tender in General Zone, land owners and developers can develop tourism facilities here in the form of comprehensive development, with specific requirements of embracing the surrounding natural and cultural characteristics as well as minimum impacts on the natural settings, accessed and approved by relevant boards and authorities. Income can be used to support Management Agreement schemes and PPP to conserve natural resources in private lands and open them to public visitation, as an alternative to direct land acquisition. Under these schemes, local farmers can provide agricultural knowledge both for conservation and learning of visitors, getting involved in tourism development as well as gaining economic benefits, while degraded agricultural lands due to decline of the agriculture industry can be revitalized. Successful example of such cooperation is Long Valley, which resulted in an increased number of bird species from 228 to 299 (The Conservancy Association, n.d.).

Environmental monitoring

An evaluation system should be set up to constantly monitor the environment under possible impacts by visitors. Biodiversity, vegetation cover, amount of garbage etc. are possible parameters to evaluate the human impacts. Inspection should be carried out frequently to prevent inappropriate visitor behaviour, and limited access or even restriction should be imposed should there be any area found to have activities beyond its environmental carrying capacity.

Limitation

Brownfield lands present in the General Zone are hard to be relocated, as some require large open areas, like open storage. It is suggested that they should be located in areas that are dedicated to the logistics industry, such as those in Hung Shui Kiu NDA, which are not close to natural attractions, such that lands more valuable near ecological sites can be released for tourism usage.

6.1.2 Urban fringe park

Recommendation

Existing lands of GB and AGR, etc. located within 15 minutes of walking distance from urban areas, if not suitable as a part of NA, can be converted into urban fringe parks, serving as the “backyards” for both local residents and tourists. Due to their lower ecological sensitivity, it is possible for establishment of more low-scale artificial structures. Adopting similar measures in the General Zone, facilities such as gardens, plazas, multi-purpose lawn area, museums, study farms and outdoor recreational spaces can be provided (Wat, 2007), and there is also a higher possibility of mixing hard and soft landscaping, with reference to Metropolitan Park in Taiwan (Figure 27). All these can enhance the areas’ aesthetic attractiveness and provide recreation spaces for a variety of activities as a tourist destination, while maintaining the areas’ function of natural greening and buffering from urban areas, which is the original planning intention of GB.



Figure 27. Weiwuying Metropolitan Park in Taiwan, mix of artificial and natural features (Ministry of the Interior, n.d.)

As many GB lands contain hilly landscapes, viewing platforms can be provided for admiring the cityscape, emphasizing urban-rural proximity. Furthermore, historical remains such as military ruins can be found there, which can be combined with museums as cultural attractions. Hong Kong Park (Figure 28) and Hong Kong Museum of Coastal Defence can provide a concept of urban fringe park design.



Figure 28. Hong Kong Park
(Wikipedia user WiNG, n.d.)

Implementation and Feasibility

Locations suitable for urban fringe parks can be zoned as Open Space (O) under the existing planning system. As the role of urban fringe park is more related to leisure and recreation use, often accompanied by cultural heritage, it is suggested to be managed by LCSD, taking Hong Kong Park as a reference.

Land ownership issues involving private lands, mostly farmlands, can be tackled similarly as section 6.1.1, such as PPP or cooperation with NGOs to provide recreation facilities to visitors. It is possible to convert them into learning and recreation facilities like study farms, zoos and botanic gardens, taking Kadoorie Farm and Botanic Garden as an example, which may generate additional income to landowners and farmers.

Many of GB lands involve hilly terrain and steep slopes, which poses challenges for good accessibility. Additional footpaths, steps, seating areas, escalators and elevators may be necessary to provide good access for kids, elderly and disabled (Wat, 2007). However, such artificial facilities, although not objectionable in the perspective of nature conservation due to lower ecological significance, may affect visitors' experience and visual quality in the natural settings. Therefore, adequate studies and consultation should be carried out in order to strike a balance between users' expectations and convenient access.

6.2 Natural Tourism Products

Coherent experience is required to be delivered to visitors by satisfying their different needs. Attractions like natural and cultural assets, recreational facilities and institutions are physical components to house activities, while retail, accommodation,

transportation facilities provide necessary services to cater visitors' consumption needs and accessibility (MedPAN, 2021), which can also become tourist attractions themselves.

6.2.1 Collocation of Facilities and Services

Retail, accommodation services, institutions and recreational facilities are encouraged to be decentralized in different districts with natural attractions (i.e. NAs and urban fringe parks) as the focal points, connected to urban areas with good walkability and transportation network (details in section 7), forming a cluster of attractions as a single tourism product. They are strategically located to offer the best experiences to visitors, which is facilitated especially in NAs with master planning as stated in section 6.1.1.

Gradual increase of development density from the periphery of natural attractions to urban areas is adopted for compatibility with natural environment and villages, and as a passive control mechanism on visitor numbers (Figure 29).



Figure 29. Gradual change in development density across different areas

a. Recreation Zone of NA

Only eco-lodge is allowed with the form of a cabin to protect natural scenery and minimize impacts. Special design considerations such as natural, local and recycled materials are required to blend in the surroundings (Bulatović, 2017). Figure 30 demonstrates the exterior of an ecolodge compatible to the natural settings with comfortable interior design.



Figure 30. Scenic Rim Trail in Queensland (Tourism & Events Queensland, n.d.)

b. General Zone of NA and urban fringe area

Many local villages are present in these areas, so it is possible to provide hostels, shops, eating places, recreation and institutional services (such as museums) by revitalization of old buildings (Figure 31), as well as model villages mentioned in section 5.3.3. Ground level shops and services can also be provided by small houses owned by indigenous villagers in Village Type Development (V) lands. Hence, the development density here is generally low with 3 stories at most, consistent with small houses.

For locations closer to the boundary of NA and other urban fringe areas, higher and larger-scale development is possible, such as hotels with around 10-story high (Figure 32). Shopping streets can be provided by mixed-use residential and hotel development with at-grade active frontages.

Natural and cultural elements can be incorporated into retail, accommodation, and food services, such as souvenirs and local cuisines, as illustrated in Figure 33. Besides, cultural elements such as farming tours, handcraft workshops are possible with the involvement of local communities. Recreation services like equipment renting and coaching for outdoor activities can be provided here.



Figure 31. Buildings with village culture (Hong Kong UNESCO Global Geopark, n.d.)



Figure 32. Resort-like accommodation in a National Park in Taiwan (Chateau Co.,Ltd, n.d.)

Geolicious Menu Factsheet





Drink				
Dish Name	Dish Description	Geo Park Feature	Picture	Geo description
Seaside Hexagon	Mocktail	 Hexagonal Columnar Rock		Spectacular hexagonal columnar rock covers the whole Sai Kung area, they are the products of volcanic activities.
Choco Rocks	Cocktail	 Sharp Island		Continuous sun and rain lead to the exterior of boulders on sharp Island splitting into pieces.

Figure 33. Creative idea of geological features mixed with food services (Hong Kong Geopark, n.d.)

c. Urban area

Hotels of higher density can be integrated with shopping centres near transportation hubs in existing town centres and NDAs. However, since town centres are also where local residents' activities take place, the density of residential population within that area should be taken into account when planning this kind of accommodation.

Implementation and Feasibility

As mentioned in section 6.1.1, subject to approval by relevant authorities, design considerations are necessary. In addition to Environment Impact Assessment, sustainable designs such as efficient energy and water usage, as well as compatible exterior design that incorporates surrounding natural and cultural characteristics, should be a basic requirement for any development proposal. In more sensitive areas, designs that can enhance the natural habitats should be required, such as bird-friendly designs and re-provision of wetlands, ensuring a no-net-loss of natural habitats with committed long-term habitat management, similar to the current planning intention of OU (CDWEA).

The current policy to support local villagers to apply for license under the Hotel and Guesthouse Accommodation Ordinance (Cap. 349) should be further promoted to provide more inexpensive accommodation options with cultural experience, as well as benefiting local communities with sustainable economic activities.

Over-commercialization may occur with more developments and visitors around natural attractions. Expectations and needs of local residents and tourists may be different or even conflicting regarding the scale, type and number of facilities (Zhang, Chan, Liu & Zhu, 2020). Detailed studies on visitors' consumption behaviour, expectations, spatial needs and projected visitor flow as well as adequate consultations are necessary to determine the optimal scale, type and intensity of facilities to be put near natural attractions.

6.2.2 Eco-guide Accreditation

The diversity of natural resources in Hong Kong offers a variety of opportunities for tourists to explore the countless adventures and immerse themselves within the pristine sub-tropical habitat. The eco-guides accreditation program aims to offer specific skills set training for eco-guides to facilitate environmental interpretation of visitors, promoting a diverse range of activities and experiences.

Eco-guided experience in recreation zones

Recreation zones allow a higher flexibility in usage, accommodating great opportunities in promoting outdoor nature-based recreational activities. Packaged experiential tours with themes such as outdoor living or cave exploration led by eco-guides could offer

unique experiences to tourists while involving activities that are normally inaccessible without professional guidance such as snorkeling and rock-climbing. Rental facilities and related services (see section 6.2.1) should be offered around the visitor centre within recreation zones in supplying necessary support for these activities.

PPP Accreditation program

There is currently no official accreditation program for eco-tour guides focusing in Hong Kong at the moment. Sufficient skilled and experienced personae specialized in the unique natural destinations promotes nature-based tourism in previously overlooked potential spots by enhancing the interaction between tourists and the natural resources. Meanwhile supporting facilities in assisting eco-guides' performance is equally important, in the following the suggested supporting facilities were divided according to the previously proposed NA zoning.

Implementation and Feasibility

Eco-guides accreditation programs could be held in a form of public private partnership. There are few eco-tourism related courses currently available as reimbursable courses, offered by the Hong Kong Ecotourism and Travels Professional Training Centre. Yet the accreditation was offered by Ecotourism Australia, in which the locality and uniqueness of Hong Kong's natural assets are insufficiently embraced during eco-guide training. The collaboration between the government and the centre could foster the creation of a localized eco-guide accreditation program with training and skills building specific to the local context.

6.2.3 Smart Technology

Smart habitat management

Habitat management is a crucial part in protecting the longevity of nature-based tourism destinations. The quality of natural habitat deteriorates if the visiting population consistently exceeds the carrying capacity. In order to maintain a balance between destination building and nature conservation, smart technology could be utilized in aiding habitat management. The biodiversity toolkit (Figure 34) (Maezawa, Hatakeyama, Saito & Hirota, 2014) should be adopted in the Conservation Zone and Special Landscape Zone in monitoring the health of ecosystems in destination points. With the vast natural resources available in Hong Kong, nature-based destinations are suggested to separate into various areas, allowing sensitive areas to recover in rotation by limiting the access of tourists according to the habitat condition.

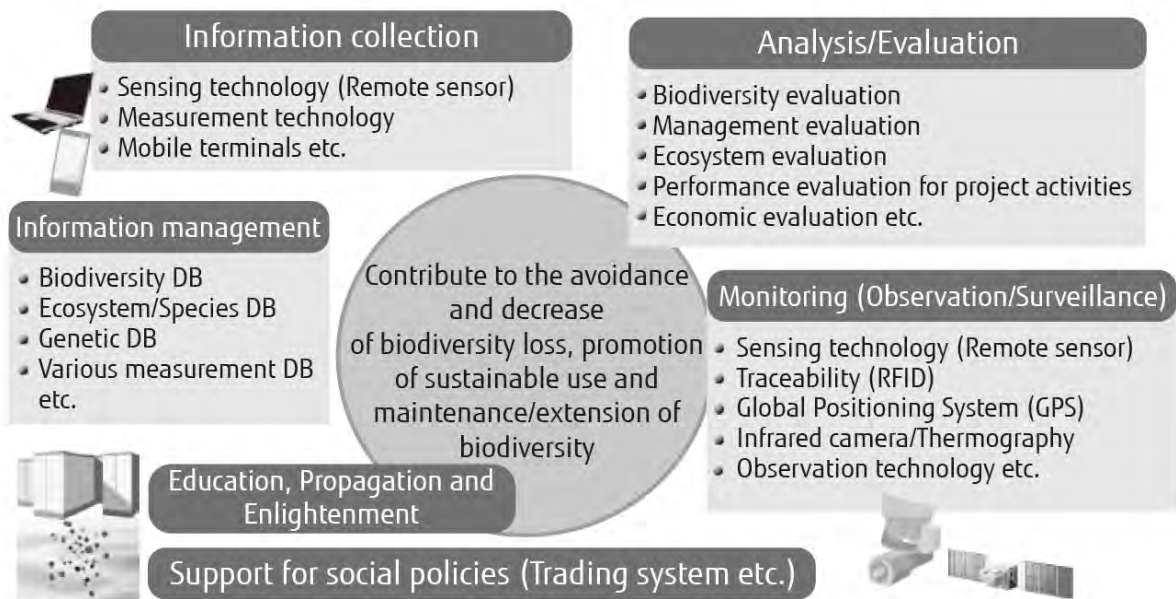


Figure 34. Biodiversity toolkit (Maezawa, Hatakeyama, Saito & Hirota, 2014).

Smart Interactive Facilities

Interactive activities allow tourists to further engage and explore nature-based destinations. Smart facilities reduce the environmental impacts placed on the environment while offering interactive experience. Smart interactive facilities design should align with the specific destination. Destinations with higher sensitivity towards artificial impact should focus on the following facilities: Small scale, information-based facilities which interaction mainly conducted through online platforms. This requirement was set to ensure an overall low-impact towards the surrounding environment. For example the Fish Doorbell (Figure 35) is a website in which passers-by could ring the doorbell if they saw fish waiting in front of the live camera. This allows interaction with nature habitat through a controlled and limited platform. Meanwhile, areas which are less sensitive towards artificial installments have the flexibility to adopt the most appropriate facilities according to their nature.



Door de grote belangstelling kan zijn het zijn dat de livestream soms wat hapert. Probeer dan even je browser te refreshen, of kom gerust op een ander moment terug!

Weet je misschien ook welke vis dit is?



Figure 35 Low-impact interactive facilities (Fish Doorbell, 2021)

Real-time tourists counting and tracking system

To ensure our natural tourism can operate in a sustainable manner, there should be stringent control and regulations on the number of visitors visiting sensitive areas with ecological significance. However, it would be unfeasible to monitor visitor flow with simple human resources given their extensive area and presence of multiple entrances. Instead, remote sensing infrastructure should be installed in environmentally sensitive areas and popular tourism attractions (e.g. country parks) to facilitate visitor control. Besides, there should be an integration of the remote sensing infrastructure with GPS and GIS systems to keep track and project future tourists inflow to facilitate future site planning and optimize the capacity of our natural attractions. Besides, remote sensing is also a typical way to picture and record the amount and condition of the natural habitats. Periodic evaluation and auditing of the size and quality of our natural attractions by comparing the satellite images should be carried out to ensure the tourism activities are performed in a sustainable way that respects nature.

Implementation

In order for the monitoring system to function, a number of sensors and GPS locators have to be placed in the natural attractions. However, the installation of artificial structures may harm the serenity of the natural ambience (Figure 36), which has received negative comments from the public before. Apart from harming the natural scenery, surveillance of public activities has been a political taboo in Hong Kong. It will

be controversial to provoke politically sensitive issues regarding surveillance of public activities and handling of those data. To mitigate the potential public backlash, careful design of the infrastructure such that they are durable and can blend into the natural environment; The authorities should also acknowledge the importance of transparency of the tourists' data obtained and allow public access to ease potential concerns.



Figure 36: Installation of artificial infrastructure in country park (Mingpao, 2021)

6.3 Overall Framework

The overall framework of a nature-based destination is shown in Figure 37, showing the interaction between different tourism product components.

By establishing spatial and thematic linkage with natural and cultural attractions, retail, accommodation, and food services can generate a unique sense of place and identity and diverse activity options, hence the experience in different locations is irreplaceable instead of the monotonous, consumption-oriented urban experience. The retail, accommodation, and food services industries can then be supported by local visitors under low tourist numbers, with consumption activities induced when they visit these attractions given their high consumption power and interest in the natural environment, as mentioned in section 2.1.4. Better facility support attracts ecotourists, who have higher income and education (Müller, 2000), to learn and experience here, staying longer and visiting again.

In addition, recreation, entertainment, eco-guide and touring services generate additional income and job opportunities that are decentralized around the territory, boosting the local economy and diversifying the tourism industry. Such income can also be used to support conservation. By revitalization of villages and agricultural lands for consumption services, recreation services and conservation, cultural tourism can be synergized and local communities who possess specific cultural knowledge can be involved in tourism development, strengthening inclusiveness.

Furthermore, as visitors can access their main destinations conveniently from accommodation facilities, their main activities and basic consumption needs can be kept outside of residential areas, reducing the unnecessary trips between urban areas and natural attractions, hence reducing conflicts with daily activities of local residents.

San Tin / Lok Ma Chau Development Node, as a possible location to apply this framework, will be explored in section 8.2.

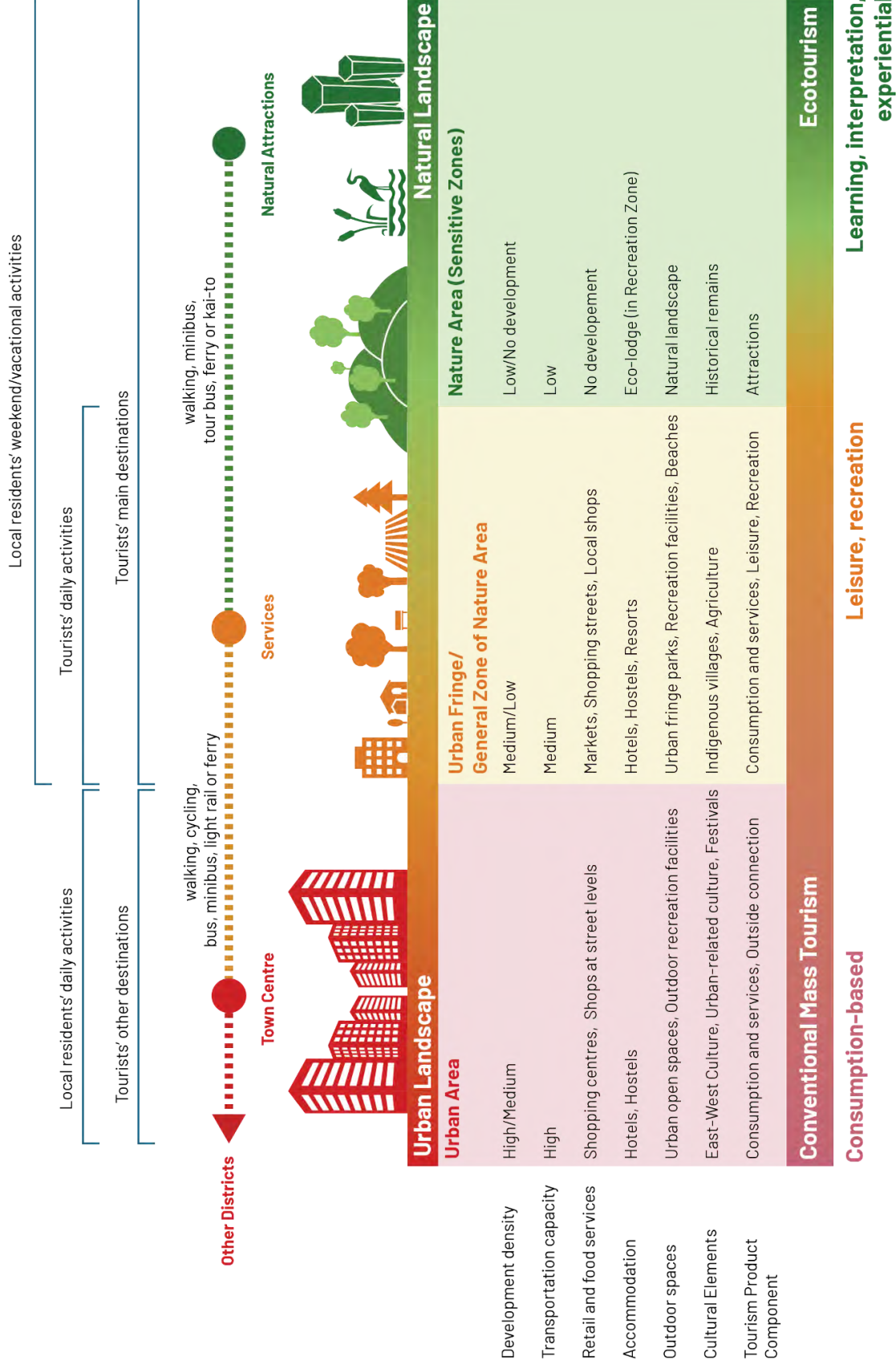


Figure 37. A framework of nature-based tourism destination

Strategy 3: Transport Connection



7 Transport Connection

Objective

A comprehensive infrastructural connection acts as an assistance to the cultural and natural tourism development. The rationale of this strategy is tackling the three identified problems by:

- (1) Increase the carrying capacity of the transport network in accommodating the local residents and tourists needs. The solution gives a good implication to the design of New Development Area
- (2) Prepare physical linkage in catering the future diversified tourism activities, which is beneficial to connect the underutilized infrastructure and create synergy effects among tourist spots.
- (3) Explore the possible transportation mode in achieving decentralization out of traditional tourist attractions. The new routes could enrich tourist experience with well connected land transport, sea and air travel.

7.1 Land Transport

Objective

A well connected land transport would facilitate the tourism experience to access different tourist spots. The purpose of improving land transport is to further increase the walkability of the urban area towards various tourist spots. In order to ease the hosts-guests conflicts, the alleviation of crowded streets with proposed new pedestrian network and bike lanes could help to diversify the pedestrian flow.

7.1.1 Pedestrian traffic coordination and walkability enhancement

The pedestrian coordination covers both the street improvement and waterfront connections in enhancing walkability.

Pedestrian Improvement

It is observed that the conflicts between hosts and guests always happen in the busy streets. The overcrowded streets would not be able to cater the needs of locals and visitors. Besides, some of the pedestrian roads are separated by highways, dark subways and footbridges which brings an unpleasant walking experience.

A complex and longer commuting time would affect the walking experience and make tourists easily get lost. Two possible solutions of route planning and landscape deck application are suggested in urban areas.

Along with the suggested placemaking and destination building in cultural aspects, the proposed new routes are suggested to attract tourists in choosing alternative routes towards the destination. For example, the Hong Kong Tourism Board proposed the 'Hong Kong Neighbourhoods – Sham Shui Po' campaign to explore the hidden gems. It introduces several tourist spots along Fuk Wing Street and Apliu Street but lacks concrete suggested routes for tourists. It is suggested to form connected routes and incorporate them in tourism-related apps. For the second approach, it is recommended to connect the old and new area through the landscape deck with pocket space. For instance, there could be an extended green deck from Kowloon Station towards WKCD. The deck could act as a synergy with the green open space and lead tourists to the relaxing promenade.

Harbourfront Connection

Most working and social life located along both sides of the Victoria Harbour and the Harbourfront Commission are conducting comprehensive studies to build a connected Harbourfront along Hong Kong. It is suggested that the ongoing project could also cover the Kowloon sites, especially highlighting the residential and tourist needs of western and eastern Kowloon. The existing Star Avenue is a good extension of tourism spots from the inner Tsim Sha Tsui shopping centers to the waterfront through ground and underground development. Considering the Western side with the ongoing WKCD development, it is advised to establish an extension to the Art Park and waterfront promenade which increase the accessibility of the Cultural District. For the Eastern Part, there should be a connection from Whampoa to To Kwa Wan and extend to Kai Tak Area. The future Kai Tak district is envisioned to have close connection with Kwun Tong. The proposed linkage would both serve the local residents and tourists having an enjoyable waterfront walking experience across the Kowloon promenade facing the stunning island view. Regarding the physical constraints of the existing factories buildings or highways, the boardwalk construction, which applied in North Point could be adopted to tackle the land use conflict.

7.1.2 Improvement on cycling networks

The cycling networks covered both the existing and newly proposed routes. The existing routes are located in low lying areas which should have a suitable terrain for cycling. Align with the proposed cultural and natural attractions, for the sites not accessible with cars could use cycling as a tool to reach the heritages. For example, the potential cycling network could be established acrossing San Tin, Ha Tsuen and Yuen Long so as to facilitate cultural tourism and let visitors have an in-depth understanding of the real indigenous culture. For local residents, the proposed bike lane could serve

as a new connecting route for daily uses and a safe buffer from traffic. From tourists perspective, it increases permeability and accessibility to destinations which facilitate them to explore the new tourism attractions.

7.1.3 Implementation and Feasibility

Statutory Planning

Taking the example from the Green Deck Project by the Hong Kong Polytechnic University, it is zoned in the Other Specified Uses of the area which under the category of 'Multi-storey Carpark to Include Garages for Maintenance and Servicing of Motor Vehicle and Petrol Filling Station. As there is no specified zoning for Green Deck or Landscape Deck in OZP, this project could be a reference for further implementation. It is similar to the harbourfront connection whereas the initiative is still new to the public. The boardwalk construction may be against the Protection of the Harbour Ordinance with the consideration of overriding public need for reclamation. The current study of Boardwalk underneath the Island Eastern Corridor could be a reference for the other construction that both solve the physical constraints and justify the public interest.

The provision of more bike lanes or related facilities are under the management of several government departments. The previous shared bike trend implied the difficulties in managing the parking space. It is proposed to install bike parking at the MTR stations or next to the cycle track during the design stage so as to cater the needs of shared bikes. Besides, a clear management body towards the bicycle parking, bike lane maintenance and track design should be formed in order to show cohesive regulations.

Environmental Impact

The construction of Green deck would necessarily take a long time and require the demolition of the existing structure. However, the increase of green landscape features and the pocket spaces could provide more urban greenery. The shading effect would mitigate the urban heat island effects and tackle the street side pollution. For boardwalk construction without hard reclamation measures would avoid the permanent harmful effects. Bike-friendly environment to reduce the carbon emission would also improve the air quality.

Economic feasibility

The high construction fee of the green deck is concerning, but the economic benefits generated from the commercial activities along the deck and the increased land value are in favour of the private sectors. Similar to the boardwalk and bicycle lane, more economic opportunities are generated in the harbourfront front and the remote cultural heritages, it can facilitate the economic activities in the new tourist spots.

7.2 Water Transport

Objective

Through the introduction of new pier infrastructure, new ferry routes and the promotion of water sports, existing overcrowding situation in coastal destinations can be decentralized and alleviated; equipment rental, coaching services, packaged tours and F&B/hospitality businesses would generate significant revenue for the industry; new ferry routes, subject to evaluation of financial viability, would serve as a useful alternative to land transport for both tourists and local residents.

7.2.1 Flexible Ferry Service in Unserved Areas

Ferry service with varying capacity level, positioning and geographical location can be introduced in currently unserved waters.

A number of popular tourist attractions are located close to the waterfront. These locations are subject to chronic traffic congestion and overloading of public transport service during holidays or weekends due to their limited land transport capacity, particularly during the pandemic when the demand for local tourism is high. Some of these locations include Sai Kung, Island South (Repulse Bay, Stanley), Tai Mei Tuk, which are all endowed with scenic sea views that enhanced their recreational value, yet their remoteness from urban areas and terrain constraints limit the feasibility of road widening works, let alone the construction of additional access roads. Alternatively, the external connection of these areas can be fostered by ferry services.

Current ferry service in Hong Kong ranges from franchised ferry routes, Regular Kaito Ferry Services, Kaito Ferry Services Subject to Demand and Sampans, in descending order of passenger capacity (TD, 2021). The existing ferry route network to outlying islands from Central, and the on-demand kaito ferry service between Sai Kung Town and islands in the Sai Kung Inlet, for example, are rather well developed; such mode of transport can be further expanded to cover areas that are currently unserved or underserved by ferry routes, such as Tolo Harbour, Clear Water Bay and Southern Hong Kong Island.

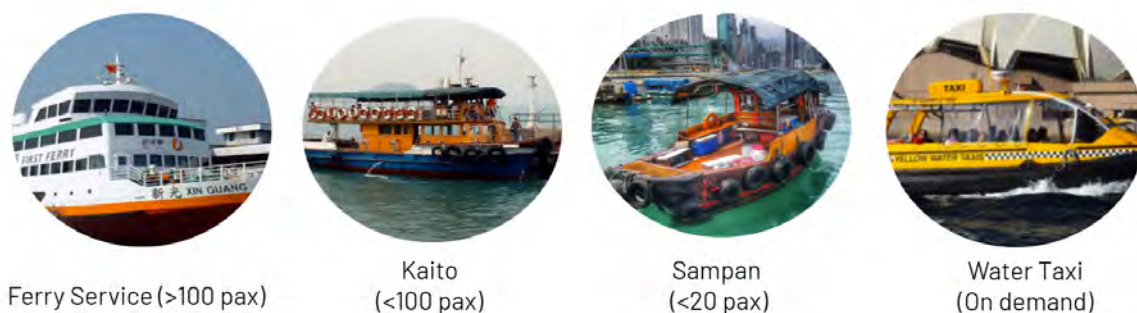


Figure 38. A variety of water transport to be provided

Service levels can be adjusted corresponding to the ridership level with the flexibility of using vessels of different sizes. Besides, on-demand “water taxi”, which takes passengers to designated piers at their disposal through a streamlined booking system, would be a favourable means of navigation for tourists as they can enjoy the scenic harbour view along their journey while avoiding traffic congestion.

The expansion of ferry service would serve as an alternative mode of transport; it also offers more opportunities for tourists to experience the city’s maritime landscape while appreciating the uniqueness of Hong Kong’s diverse ferry service, which could be an attraction per se. This initiative would increase the carrying capacity of waterfront attractions and enhance the city’s tourism asset.

7.2.2 Active Water Sport and Transport

Some territorial waters and coastal locations have high recreation potential with their convenient location and good views. For example, the Island South waters provide opportunities for kayaking, windsurfing and sailing; rocky shores there are well-known for challenging climbs. Some water sports can even double as an alternative transport mode between attractions.

To facilitate water sports, infrastructure such as kiosks for equipment rentals and F&B can be provided near landings or piers. Areas for motorized or non-motorized water sports can be designated according to their ecological sensitivity and volume of marine traffic.

Opportunities are ample for capturing the economic return of water sports. Hydroflight and motorboat rentals, for instance, are high-end activities that could cost several thousand Hong Kong dollars per head. Coaching services and packaged tours would also generate employment opportunities and extra revenue for the industry.



Figure 39. Hydroflight and motorboat activities (Jet Pack America, n.d.)

7.2.3 Pier Improvement Program+

To facilitate the expansion and promotion of water transport and water sports, the accessibility, capacity and quality of current piers and landings need to be upgraded.

For existing public piers and landings, expansion works can be carried out, if necessary, to allow the berthing of larger vessels; weather-proof canopies should be installed not only on landings, but also along thoroughfares to major transport hubs, town centres and attractions whenever possible; kiosks and equipment rentals can be additionally provided to allow a one-stop experience for tourists.

New piers and landings should be comprehensive hubs of a wide spectrum of utilities including public transport, ferry routes, water sports and F&B. The current Pier Improvement Program commissioned by CEDD covers 23 existing landings and piers in rural areas and outlying islands; the scope can be expanded to cover unserved waters such as the Island South.

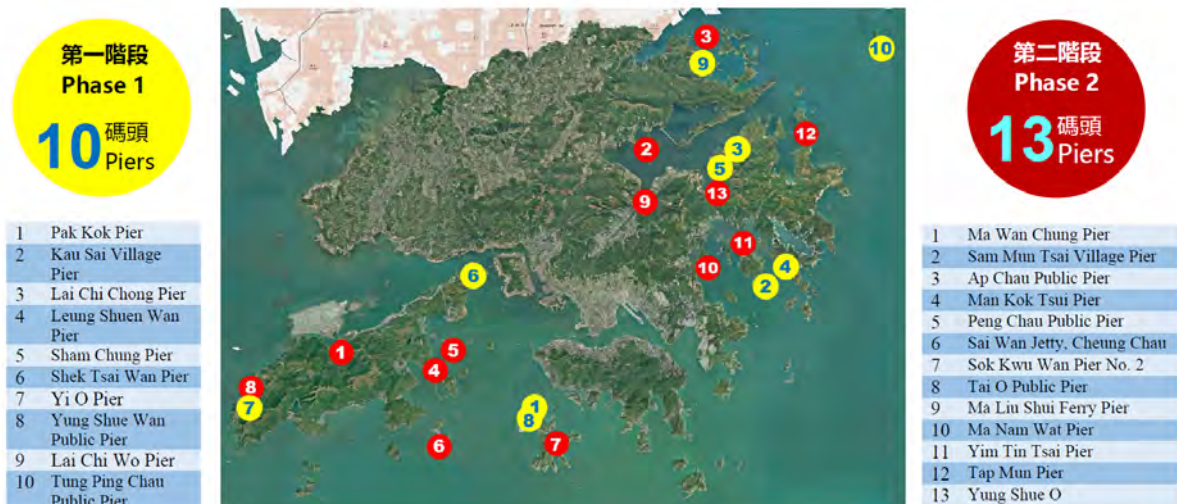


Figure 40. Current Pier Improvement Program (CEDD, n.d.)

New piers should be strategically located around unserved waters and close to urban centres or open spaces at convenient locations. Pedestrian trails or hiking trails can be extended to these piers to allow a one-stop experience for sports tourists who seek a diverse adventure. To allow more flexibility, pontoon piers can be established to avoid the environmental damage caused by reclamation and locational immobility of conventional piers.



Figure 41. Floating Pontoon Pier (KKCL, n.d.)

7.2.4 Implementation and Feasibility

Statutory Planning

Public piers and landings are often zoned as “Other Uses” (OU) in the OZP. The addition of kiosks for F&B and rentals would be possible under current provisions in planning control level, as seen in the example of Stanley Public Pier where “Kiosks not greater than 10 sqm each in area and not more than 10 in number for uses as shop and services are considered as ancillary to “Pier” use” is specified in the Remarks section of Schedule of Uses (TPB, 2021).

Environmental Impact

New floating pontoon piers, as a type of temporary structure, would reduce the need for large-scale construction and reclamation, making it environmentally-feasible under the current legislations such as the Protection of the Harbour Ordinance.

Economic Feasibility

To ensure the financial viability of ferry operation, a detailed study should be carried out to identify the origins and destinations that have a secure, stable demand for water transport services. Collaboration with digital trip-planning platforms would allow ferry operators to adjust the scheduling and manpower requirements that might change spontaneously due to incremental weather conditions.

7.3 Air Transport

For places not accessible through land and sea transport, the helicopter tour could provide experiential travelling from a monumental perspective. Flying across the soaring skyscrapers and seeing the alluring geology beyond the bustling city, helicopter services as an existing luxurious travel way could also be ameliorated to facilitate the traveling in Hong Kong. Strict control under the Civil Aviation Department is required for the relevant permit in operating domestic commercial helicopter service, cross boundary commercial service and other interested private operators.

7.3.1 'Charter Scenic' tour

The existing helicopter tours are mainly operated by private industry. For example, the Heliservices HK Ltd provides top-class helicopters for scenic flights to experience Hong Kong by 18-minutes, 30-minutes or 45-minutes flight. The current flight services covered (1) the Hong Kong Island view with Victoria Harbour; (2) scene of Kowloon with Lion Rock and the magnificence of Tsing Ma Bridge; (3) Tranquility of Sai Kung and Geopark and (4) Big Buddha on Lantau Island. Most likely, the luxurious round trip services are provided by private companies and depart from the rooftop of the hotel. Seldom did the domestic commercial helicopter service land on the island. According to the Civil Aviation Department, there are around 170 helipads in Hong Kong and most of them are located in remote areas. It is suggested that the landing pads in Islands District like Lung Kwu Chau and Peng Chau could be new landings for tourism usage, especially places not accessible by hiking. The helicopter tour should not be limited to sightseeing but also provide opportunities in interacting with the natural landscape.

7.3.2 Cross border helicopter services

The existing cross border helicopter services are mainly connecting Hong Kong and Macau. It is observed that the future development of GBA could potentially increase the business trips between Hong Kong and mainland cities. New routes covering Hong Kong and Zhuhai are proposed for business and tourism which only takes 30 minutes. It is estimated that the future demand for quick and safe helicopter service would increase and extend to other GBA cities.

7.3.3 Implementation and Feasibility

Safety concern is the utmost consideration for the new routes planning. With the advanced technology and the previous experience of helicopter tours, Hong Kong could probably provide a diverse flying experience to inbound and local tourists.

7.4 Smart Transport Tourism

Traffic advisory program

Our all in one travel app should provide all the necessary information on traffic, road accidents and incidents that may affect their travel map. A comprehensive and interactive map that encompasses all the traffic information for tourists can be launched in the travel app. Given the existing efforts from the Transport Department, the traffic information of Hong Kong can be transplanted from the eMobility App. Not only can the function alert tourists about potential traffic congestion or overcrowding of attractions to help them plan their trip ahead and save time, it can also monitor visitor numbers in different attractions and help assess the carry capacity of the respective sites. Based on the real-time data, the app is also going to recommend different modes of transit that are optimal to the user's travel plan. For instance, if the users have a higher budget, the app can recommend them to travel via air by using our helicopter services which bypasses all the road traffic and enjoy Hong Kong's specular skyline in a luxurious manner.

Safety Assistant

Our visitors may not know how to respond under an emergency due to the presence of language barriers, different regulations and social norms. As a post-covid measure that provides alert notifications that warns the users about ad hoc events, such as extreme weather and other emergencies and the relevant organization to seek help. The function is supposed to provide timely notice and updates, including traffic information, special events and arrangements, weather, warnings and notifications that help visitors travel safely.

Implementation

To support the real-time traffic and visitor monitoring, it necessitates the development of innovative infrastructure. The plan resonates with the existing pilot scheme of "Multi-functional Smart Lamppost" commenced in 2019. The lamp posts will serve as free WiFi hotspots and track tourists based on the detection of Wi-Fi signals received by their smartphones. Through using thermal and LiDAR detectors, it can provide real-time surveillance of road traffic and enhance the efficiency of traffic management to reduce traffic congestion.



Spatial Framework

8. Spatial Framework

The above mentioned strategies and solutions are visualized in the spatial dimension with the Spatial Framework that consists of 3 Belts and 1 Area, namely the Urban and Rural Belt, Harbour Metropolis Belt, Active Recreation Belt and Ecological Oasis Areas. Tourism nodes in each of these focus areas are categorised by their characteristics in tourism assets, urban environment, potential for capacity creation, as well as spatial proximity and linkage to one another.



Figure 42. Conceptual Spatial Framework

To integrate with the holistic strategic planning framework in Hong Kong, the proposed tourism spatial framework is compatible with, and is complementary to the initiatives in Hong Kong 2030+. The physical linkages of proposed tourism belts are based on existing and proposed transport infrastructure in HK2030+; numerous NDAs suggested in HK2030+ are enriched with tourism-compatible development concepts; the Western Economic Corridor initiative in HK2030+ is reinforced by the synergistic growth brought by the Urban and Rural Tourism Belt; lastly, HK2030+ collaboration strategies with the GBA serve as a basis for extending the tourism belts to neighbouring regions.

In the following sections, the development principles and relevant strategies applied on each of the belts would be introduced, followed by a detailed implementation plan for one of the action areas along the belt. For the assets on each belt, please refer to the respective tables in Appendix IV.

8.1 Harbour Metropolis Belt



Figure 43. Harbour Metropolis Belt

The Harbour Metropolis Belt is a strategic corridor along the “Greater” Victoria Harbour, from Lantau Island across the Central Waters and the Victoria Harbour to the southeastern side of Hong Kong Island, forming a loop with the Active Recreation Belt. The development principle is to coordinate the new and old, East and West cultural and urban landscape on both sides of Victoria Harbour, with the proposed strategy of expanding the branding of Victoria Harbour. Given that Victoria Harbour has been one of the most valuable assets and symbols of Hong Kong, The expansion of the “harbour concept” beyond the current statutory scope of Green Island to Lei Yu Mun would help harness and enhance the maritime prestige of the city in promoting tourism, and decentralize currently concentrated tourism areas around Causeway Bay and Tsim Sha Tsui.

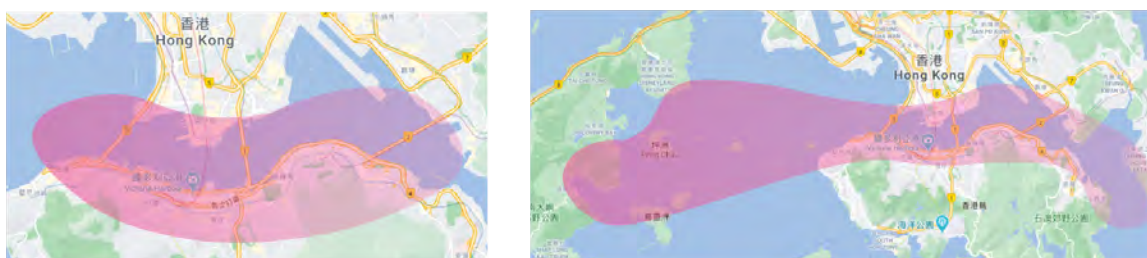


Figure 44. Victoria Harbour Concept before (left) and after (right) expansion of harbour branding

The Harbour Metropolis Belt would mainly cater to first-time travellers who would like to experience the signature metropolitan lifestyle of Hong Kong and enjoy prestigious shopping, F&B and hospitality services. The close proximity of CBDs and MICE venues also makes the belt a competitive destination for business travellers.

8.1.1 Development Concept

As many harbourfront areas have been major tourist attractions while inland urban areas are increasingly explored by local and incoming tourists for their special charm of

local culture, a Two-tier Development Approach is adopted to channel the appropriate amount of visitor volume and activities corresponding to individual urban areas' carrying capacity and local fabrics.

	Tier 1	Tier 2
Attributes	1. Existing Popular tourist destinations that are geared towards tourism in infrastructural and economic conditions 2. New NDAs or CBDs that have ample room for tourism-compatible planning implications	Urban areas with rich local cultural fabrics and limited level of tourism infrastructure such as hospitality service, coach bus parking, pavement space
Examples of Areas	West Kowloon Reclamation Area and WKCD Kai Tak East Lantau Metropolis Tseung KWan O Area 137	Sham Shui Po Mong Kok Kowloon City Kwun Tong
Assets	Prominent harbourfront landscape, integrated transport, shopping and accommodation hubs, high-end hospitality Cultural Area and Cruise Terminal	Urban landscape with rich local culture legacy and community fabric
Target	All general tourists visiting the tourism belt	Tourists who are interested in the specific area
Strategy	1. Foster the pedestrian connection between new and old areas (Section 7.1.1) 2. Improve walkability and placemaking in waterfront areas and urban streets (Section 5.2) 3. Explore the integration of water transport as a strategy to circumvent traffic congestion (Section 7.2)	

Table 4: Two-tier Approach

To demonstrate how the proposed strategies in Section 5, 6 and 7 are manifested into spatial action at locations along this belt, the West Kowloon Action Area Plan introduced below provides a detailed implementation scheme.

8.1.2 Detailed Implementation Plan: West Kowloon Action Area

With the rich local culture of the old urban core areas of Sham Shui Po and Mong Kok, as well as the upcoming completion of WKCD, ample opportunities exist for the improvement of connections in between the new and old areas.

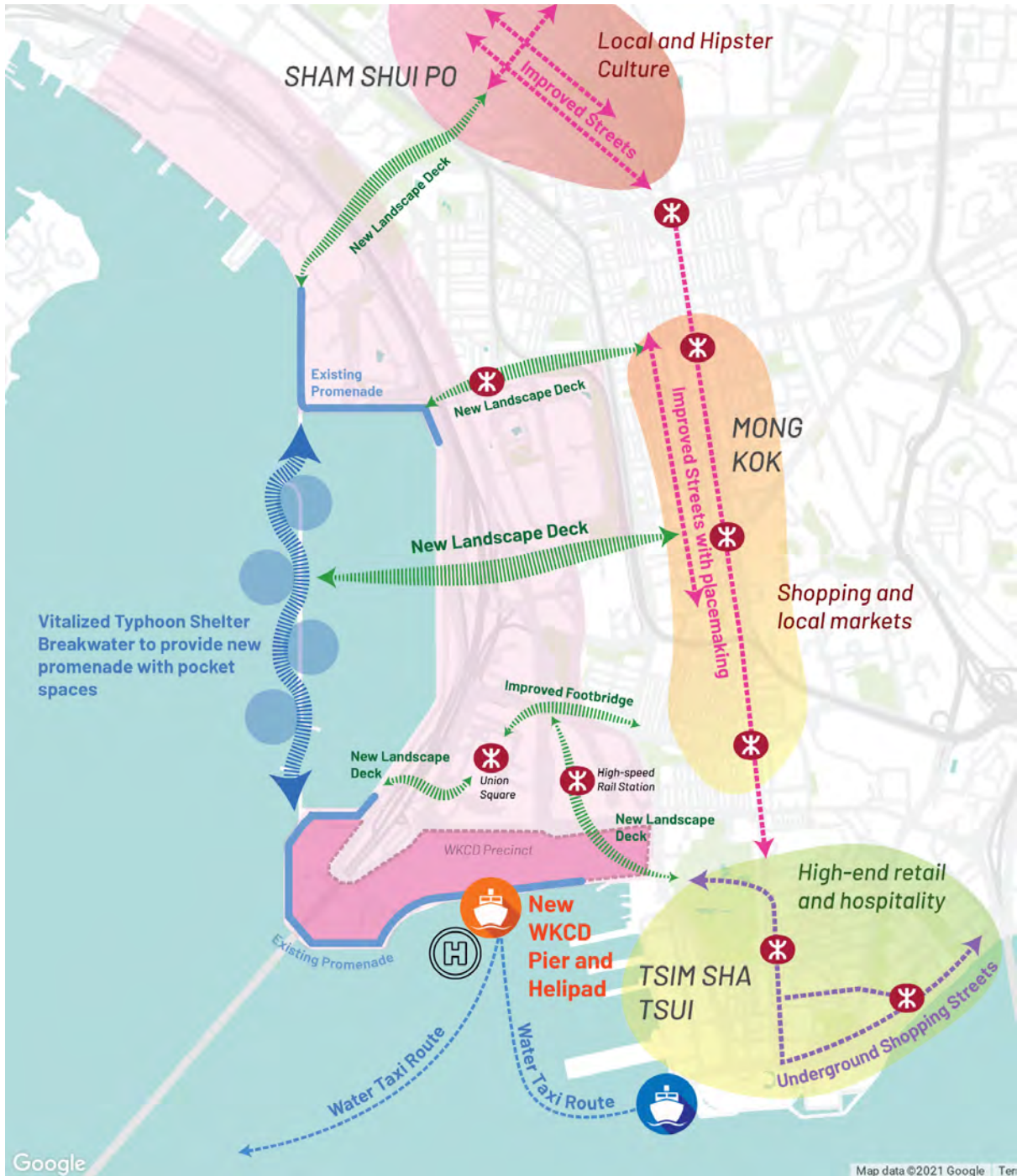


Figure 45. West Kowloon Action Area

Pedestrian Connection

Facilitating a pedestrian pathway between new reclamation areas and old urban core areas is a prerequisite to coordinating the land uses and pedestrian traffic between areas designed for higher and lower tourism capacity.

The West Kowloon Reclamation Area is largely separated from Mong Kok and Sham Shui Po by arterial roads such as West Kowloon Corridor, Ferry Street Flyover and West Kowloon Highway. Existing subways and footbridges across these roads provide a basic level of connectivity, but are lacking in visual quality and attractiveness. Landscaped decks, with their extensive greening and wide space for various activities, is an alternative to conventional footbridges. The installation of landscaped decks above flyovers and highways would facilitate a pleasant, seamless journey from MTR stations along Nathan Road to West Kowloon attractions including the WKCD, High speed Railway Station and the waterfront.

Harbourfront Connection

The Public Cargo Handling Area at Yau Ma Tei Typhoon Shelter, an important logistical facility for commercial activities in Kowloon, closes off a significant length of waterfront from public use. While opening up the space for shared use might be possible, the past experience of opening up the Western District Cargo Handling Area suggested the potential safety and management issues of such semi-open informal public spaces. In fact, the promenade along the Yau Ma Tei Coast can be connected using the breakwater of the typhoon shelter. The breakwater can be expanded with floating decks to provide activity space; pontoon bridges can be adopted to provide pedestrian connection between the breakwater and existing promenade sections while allowing vessels to enter or leave the typhoon shelter when necessary.

Water Transport

Targeting the high spending tourists, a new pier at WKCD could provide water taxi service to major attractions such as Tsim Sha Tsui, Central and Kai Tak Cruise Terminal, allowing passengers to enjoy an exclusive experience while avoiding traffic congestion in urban areas.

Air Transport

The proposed new helipad, located next to the new West Kowloon Water Taxi Pier, can serve cross-border or harbour tour passengers, and provide helicopter service to more remote destinations. Situated next to prime retail areas such as the Union Square and High-speed Railway Station, the helipad would offer a one-stop luxurious experience for high-spending tourists.

Streetscape

With the rich local cultural context of the urban core, streetscapes can be improved with placemaking strategies. The distinctive characteristics of streets, like Tai Nam

Street, Nathan Road and Reclamation Street, can be strengthened by distinctive widened pavements with unique street furnitures in thematic scheme to create place-making

Underground Space

Hong Kong's ample and diverse underground structures offer opportunities for commercial development below ground level. The current pedestrian subway network between Tsim Sha Tsui and East Tsim Sha Tsui Stations can be visualized as underground shopping streets; furthermore, the air raid tunnels below Kowloon Park can also be revamped to connect with the underground shopping street in Tsim Sha Tsui, providing a streamlined access from Hung Hom and Tsim Sha Tsui to West Kowloon via footbridges, revamped underground tunnels and landscape decks .

8.2 Urban And Rural Belt



Figure 46. Urban and Rural Belt

The Urban And Rural Belt is a strategic corridor along the western and northern part of Hong Kong. The development principle is to create carrying capacity in upcoming new development areas by fostering tourism-compatible design in New Development Areas (NDAs) at the planning stage, such that impacts to existing residents would be minimal, infrastructural planning would face less obstacle, and decentralizing effect can be achieved.

The urban and rural belt would mainly cater to returning tourists who would like to explore the rural landscape, cultural heritage and everyday life of locals for an alternative tourism experience beyond the conventional metropolitan cityscape.

Destinations along the belt share certain key attributes which allow the application of similar policies and planning initiatives. Most destinations are close to border checkpoints; the proposed NDAs are mostly located in the low-lying flat land in Yuen Long Plain and Sheung Shui Plain; cultural and natural attractions are located at the fringe of NDAs. These shared attributes imply the high potential of creating tourism infrastructure in these areas with the proximity to tourists and human resources from across the border; the peripheral locations of assets suggest the need to strengthen the capacity level, transport connection and land use transition across the fringe and centres of NDAs; the flat land landscape provides an ideal basis for convenient, barrier-free non-motorized circulation means (i.e. cycling and walking) within NDAs.

8.2.1 Development Concept

The Radial Development Concept is adopted in the creation of tourism capacity in NDAs. Under the Radial Development Concept, the town centre would be the hub of shopping facilities and public transport for both local residents and tourists; high-density hospitality service could be incorporated as an integral part of the planning of the town centre. From the centre to the fringe of town, convenient pedestrian, bicycle and public transport access should be provided so that peripheral areas can be reached in 15 minutes. Along major thoroughfares, small-scale, low density accommodation services such as Airbnb can be provided for a more diversified hospitality experience. Such a development concept not only facilitates the integration of assets along the belt into the tourism market, but also boosts synergetic growth across the town centre and the fringe areas.

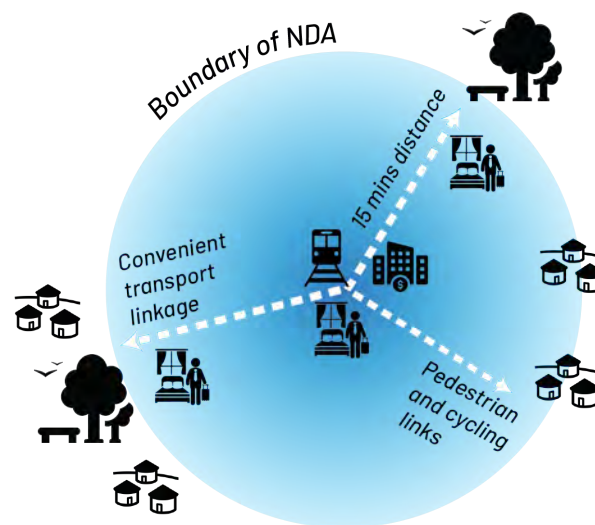


Figure 47. Radial Development Concept of the Urban Rural Belt

Tourism assets along the belt include villages, monuments, traditional markets and natural landscapes. Strategies targeting destinations along the belt include heritage conservation, immersive cultural experience, zoning management, urban fringe parks, and the expansion of cycling infrastructure, as detailed in Sections 5.1, 5.3, 6.1.1, 6.1.2 and 7.1.1 respectively.

To demonstrate how the proposed strategies in Section 5, 6 and 7 are manifested into spatial action at locations along this belt, the San Tin Action Area Plan introduced below provides a detailed implementation scheme.

8.2.2 Detailed Implementation Plan: San Tin Action Area

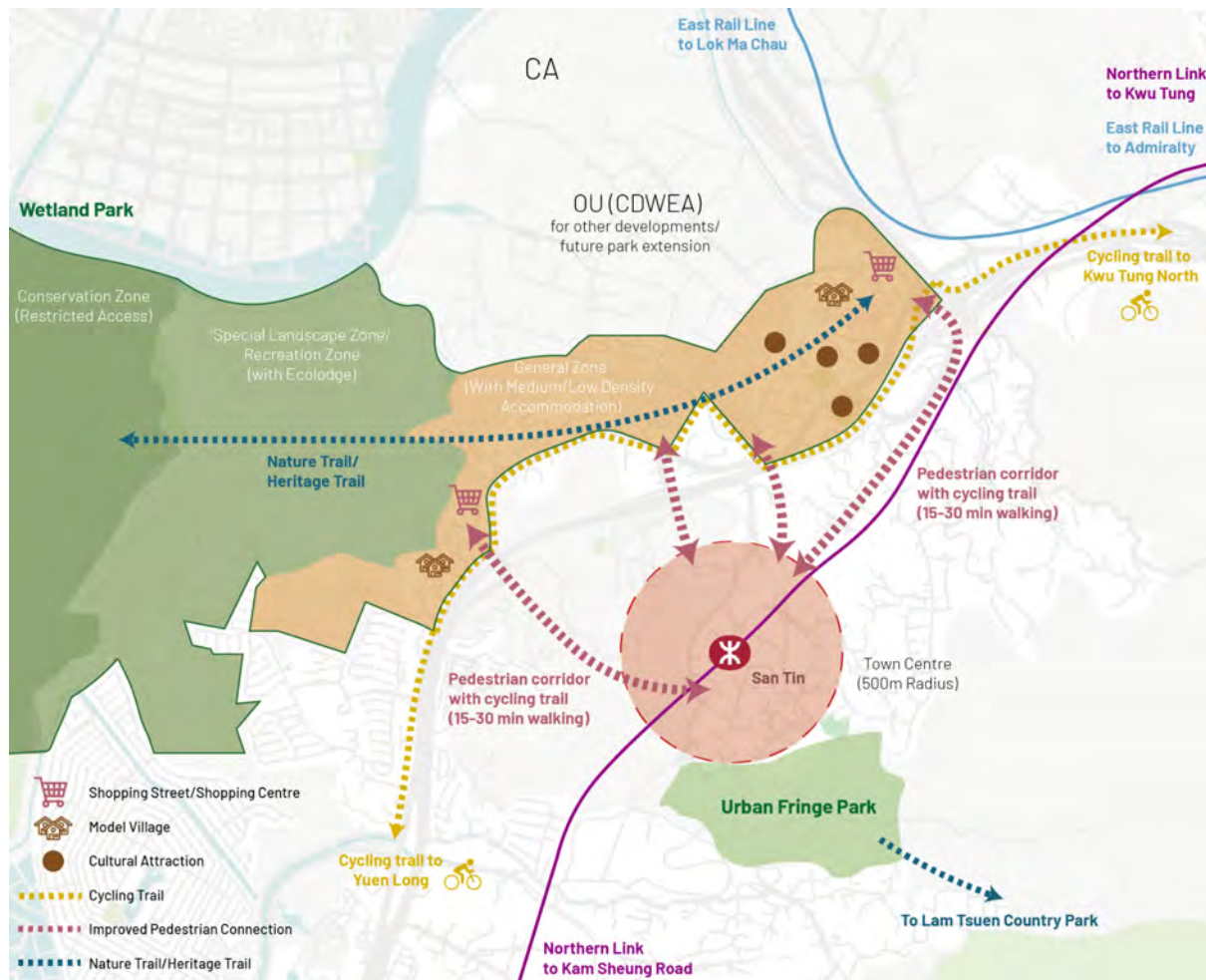


Figure 48. San Tin Action Area

Radial Development

As attractions such as wetland areas, villages and parks are located at the fringe, shared corridors exclusively for non-motorized transport i.e. cycling and pedestrians allow direct access to these areas.

Immersive Cultural Experience

Walled villages in San Tin can serve as “Model Villages” in which performance, art ritual, festivals and workshops are organized by incumbent villagers to promote the local culture and traditions in the area. Cultural attractions like Man Tin Cheung Park and Man Lun Fung Ancestral Hall with rich indigenous culture are dispersed in the Wetland Park.

Urban Fringe Park

The slopes at Ngau Tam Shan, to the south of the NDA, would be designated as an Urban Fringe Park where recreational facilities would be provided; the park would also provide access to nearby mountains in Lam Tsuen Country Park.

Zoning Management

A gradual gradient of zoning, from General Zone around villages, Special Landscape Zone in Ho Hok Wai to Conservation Zone in the Mai Po Inner Deep Bay Ramsar Site offers a smooth transition of activities allowed, visitor volume and protection measures corresponding to ecological sensitivity .

8.3 Active Recreation Belt



Figure 49. Active Recreation Belt

The Active Recreation Belt is a strategic corridor along the eastern and southern part of Hong Kong, forming a loop with the Harbour Metropolis Belt at Island South. The development principle is to connect the existing and planned recreation resources along the belt. The urban and rural belt would mainly cater to returning tourists who are sports enthusiasts and nature lovers.

8.3.1 Development Concept

Multimodal connections would be developed to not only facilitate the efficient travel of tourists, but also provide different recreational experiences such that the “connections” themselves are attractions. Situated on a sizable portion of the New Territories Cycling Trail Trunk and at the proximity of water bodies and country parks, the Active Recreation Belt can be explored by a wide range of means.

The recreational value of Hong Kong’s maritime landscape can be fully harnessed through multimodal blue linkage, especially in the scenic Tolo Harbour and Island South waters. At the crossroads of transition and reorganization lies the valuable opportunity for Ocean Park to transform into an integrated land and water recreation hub that connects multiple destinations in Island South through ferry, recreational sailing or kayaking. Strategies proposed for destinations along the belt include the active use of water transport, promotion of water sport, active multimodal connection and enhanced access to natural areas, as well as impact mitigation measures for certain recreational activities, as described in Section 7.2 .

To demonstrate how the proposed strategies in Section 6 and 7 are manifested into spatial action at locations along this belt, the Tolo Harbour Action Area Plan introduced below provides a detailed implementation scheme.

8.3.2 Tolo Harbour Action Area



Figure 50. Tolo Harbour Action Area

Flexible Ferry Routes

New ferry routes are proposed to serve Ma Liu Shui, Science Park, Tai Po, Ma On Shan and Tai Mei Tuk, the latter five of which are currently unserved by any regular ferry routes. Subject to actual demand, ferries of different sizes, including Franchised Ferry, Kaito Ferry and Sampans can be designated for each route. Additionally, the water channels of Lam Tsuen River and Shing Mun River could be served by sampan services for feeder transit to town centres or other transport.

Water Sports

Tolo Harbour would be designated as a water sport precinct, allowing water sports with varying impact levels subject to individual area's ecological sensitivity. Motorized water sport, like hydroflight, yachting and motorboating are allowed in the deep water area in Tolo Harbour where waters around ecologically-sensitive mudflats in Plover Cove and Ma Shi Chau are designated as Low Impact Areas in which only non-motorized sports like kayaking and scuba diving is permitted.

Pier Infrastructure

Existing Piers around Tolo Harbour will be enhanced with additional amenities as detailed in Section 7.2.3.

A new pontoon pier at Tai Po would be established. The new pier, located close to the town centre at Tai Po Waterfront Park, would be a hub of diverse activities and multimodal connections; ferry, kaito and sampan services would be available for reaching different destinations; water sports rentals, shopping and F&B would be available at kiosks at the pier; bus stops and MTR station are within walking distance; the New Territories Cycling Trail Trunk Route as well as hiking routes to Cloudy Hill and Pat Sin Leng would pass by and originate from the pier, providing numerous alternatives for recreational activities.

8.4 Ecological Oasis

The Ecological Oasis is a conceptual area that covers the country parks, GeoPark, natural reserves and other areas with high ecological value. The development principle is to conserve the natural heritage and harness its environmental and educational value with minimal infrastructural enhancement. The Ecological Oasis would mainly cater to ecological tourism, nature-based tourism and In-depth tourism.



Figure 51. Distribution of Ecological Oasis Areas

Under the COVID-19 Pandemic, global border closures have hindered both inbound and outbound travel, leading to a sharp increase in local tourist traffic in country parks and rural destinations during weekends and holidays. In face of the environmental and ecological impact resulted by this situation, differentiation and segmentation of tourists across the other three belts would help divert some recreational tourists to less ecologically-sensitive destinations such as urban fringe parks, while Ecological Oasis would cater to in-depth ecological tourism, justifying the minimal infrastructural intervention.

8.5 Strategic Junctions between Belts

At the junctions of the tourism belts, enhancements and assets are proposed for tourists to enjoy two different experiences at once, providing gateways for multifaceted tourism experience.

Nodes	Intersecting Belts	Experience
Tung Chung/Airport	Urban & Rural Harbour Metropolis	Integrating the Community Sports (展能運動村) with nearby villages and fishing ponds and old military relics by improving cycling/hiking facilities
Kai Tak	Harbour Metropolis Active Recreation	Integrating cruise tourism with the sports tourist clientele High-end Water Sports at Victoria Harbour in the new Kai Tak Sports Park
Kwu Tung North	Active Recreation Urban & Rural	Streamline connection between the Citygate/Airport Terminal area and proposed Marina at Tung Chung North with nearby villages

Table 5: Experience on different intersecting nodes

8.6 Integration with the GBA

The four experiential-based focal concepts can be integrated with the GBA and Greater China through utilizing existing cross-border transport and establishing thematic linkage, forming conceptual belts and areas that cover the regional realm (Figure X). We envision Hong Kong as an international gateway for long-stay tourists who would like to further explore the diverse experiences in the region.



Figure 52. Belt Positioning in GBA

Belts/Areas	Experiences	Transport Linkages
Urban & Rural	Cultural tourism in cities like Macau, Shunde, Chaozhou	Border Checkpoints at Heung Yuen Wai, Lok Ma Chau, HZMB etc.
Harbour Metropolis	Metropolitan experience in Major cities e.g. Shanghai, Guangzhou, Shenzhen	HZMB Airport High-speed railway
Active Recreation & Ecological Oasis	Eco-tourism experience in Provincial Green Linkages (綠道), Country Parks in neighbouring cities	East Rail Line Lok Ma Chau Station Possible biker and pedestrian friendly border crossing facilities

Table 6: GBA connection with different belts and area



Regional Collaboration

9. Regional Collaboration

9.1 Introduction of GBA

The Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (Greater Bay Area) includes the two special administrative regions of Hong Kong and Macau, and the nine cities with a total area of approximately 56,000 square kilometers. The (9+2) GBA cities have been further classified into the four Core Cities (Hong Kong, Shenzhen, Guangzhou and Macau) and Seven Node Cities (Dongguan, Foshan, Zhongshan, Zhuhai, Huizhou, Zhaoqing and Jiangmen) that support the broader national economic growth and development. At the end of 2019, the total population exceeded 72 million, the regional GDP reached 1,679.5 billion U.S. dollars, and the per capita GDP was 23,371 U.S. dollars, compared to the national per capita GDP of 10,261.68 USD (Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau, 2018).

In 2017, the National Development and Reform Commission and the governments of Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao signed the Framework Agreement on Deepening Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Cooperation in the Development of the Greater Bay Area and set out the goals and development framework of the region. The overarching development objectives of GBA are to leverage on the different comparative advantages among Hong Kong, Macau and Guangdong, and to foster interaction and deepen cooperation among the cities. To leverage on the advantage of the unlimited opportunities of regional integration, key objectives have been identified:

1. Promulgation of a clear regional tourism master plan
2. Collective efforts in developing MICE products to seize high-value added tourists
3. Full utilization of the regional transit connection.

9.2 Develop a Clear Vision and Masterplan

According to our interviews with stakeholders and experienced practitioners in the tourism industry, even though they held an optimistic view regarding the joint development in the region, they still showed concerns regarding the positioning and role of Hong Kong and the coordination with other GBA cities. Hence, we suggest that Hong Kong should establish a more distinguishable market position, given its competitive geographical advantages and diversified tourism products, which corresponds with our motto "One step to a different world; One step to infinite experience".

As part of an initiative to offer more diversified tourism experiences, the Hong Kong government can capitalize on the close proximity to the GBA cities in developing experiential travel with the GBA region. Drawing upon the existing strategies in the cultural and tourism development plan of the GBA, two main themes, namely a) cultural tourism, b) ecological tourism in the GBA have been identified for regional branding of

Hong Kong. By tapping into the rich cultural and geographical resources in the region and the high connectivity provided by well-developed infrastructure, a multifaceted GBA tourism package can serve as extensions to our proposed belts. The following illustrates how strategic planning can help to achieve the three experiential tourism products.

Non-local example

Acknowledging the growing economic importance of the tourism industry, the Association of Southeast Asia Nations (ASEAN) has put forward the ASEAN Tourism Strategic Plan 2016-2025 to stipulate the guideline principles and objectives for its members to jointly embark on future challenges and maintain the region as a quality tourism destination. Alongside with the ten-year strategic plan, the ASEAN National Tourism Organization (NTO) also holds regular meetings and conventions to publicise the edge of the region as a world class travel destination.

Gaining from the collaborative efforts from ASEAN countries, Hong Kong and other GBA cities can mimic their success and promulgate a regional tourism strategic plan that helps the members to coordinate according to their comparative strength and weakness. Through better division of labor and acknowledging the mutual benefits of regional collaboration, the GBA cities can cooperate and develop the region as a multi-dimensional destination with a clear vision.



Figure 53. ASEAN Tourism Strategic Plan (NTO, 2015)

9.2.1 Cultural Tourism in GBA

Unlimited possibilities lie in the development of cultural tourism in the GBA due to the diverse cultural fabrics of different cities in the region. In view of the existing infrastructures and cultural assets available, four detailed actions under cultural

tourism and their respective planning implications are summarised in Table 7. The main strategy in promoting cultural tourism with other GBA cities is to align the identified tourism assets into the Urban & Rural Belt proposed in our spatial framework. Tourism under these four sub-themes can be incorporated as a coherent extension from Hong Kong to other major cities along the belt in the GBA region. Visitors can experience a multi-cities and multi-cultural tour in this package with the well-developed infrastructures in the region.

Actions	Planning implications
<p>Creative clusters Agglomeration of creative and design institutes encapsulate international insights and oriental elements in GBA</p>	<p>Facilitate the development of new cultural venues in the NDAs along the Urban & Rural Belt. A more detailed breakdown of the guidelines to provision of “G/IC” facilities can be devised to ensure adequate provision of such uses in the planning stage.</p>
<p>Historical archives Museum tourism can be promoted to provide a coherent experience of cultural heritage in GBA cities</p>	<p>Enhance the tourism experience to museums forming spatial clusters and providing adequate amenities to these clusters. Improve infrastructures and transport facilities to improve the accessibility of the existing museums and cultural venues.</p>
<p>Delicacy tours Unique dining experience can be provided with authentic delicacies offered in GBA cities and global gourmet from Hong Kong</p>	<p>Facilitate the preservation of intangible local cultures and strengthen local identity by advocating the inclusion of a certain proportion of local restaurants and shops in each district.</p> <p>Ensure there is adequate provision of catering facilities in each district with appropriate accessibility even in rural areas and suburbs.</p>
<p>Village culture fabrics Traditional walled villages can be preserved and branded as experiential tourism products</p>	<p>Encourage preservation by allowing flexibility in adaptive reuse of traditional structures to enhance the cultural and heritage values of heritage buildings, especially in the NDAs along the Urban & Rural Belt such as San Tin and Hung Shui Kiu.</p> <p>For example, more resources can be allocated to heritage preservation along with provision of guidelines in licensing eligible village houses that are structurally safe to become alternative accommodations such as hostels.</p>

Table 7 : Planning implications of developing cultural tourism in GBA

9.2.2 Facilitating Ecological Tourism in GBA

As stipulated in the “State Council Guiding Opinion on Deepening Pan-Pearl River Delta Regional Cooperation” released in 2016, the GBA cities should dedicate themselves to transform the region into a pilot ecological civilization zone through accelerating industrial upgrading and strengthening environmental protection and management. GBA cities should devote themselves to the conservation of their natural assets while also prioritizing economic development with a vision to offer a beautiful bay area to both the visitors and locals. Specific actions that safeguards and promotes our invaluable ecological endowments are as follows:

Strengthening regional Environmental Protection and Management

The GBA cities should acknowledge that pollution generated by an individual city would also pose a threat to other neighboring cities. For instance, sewage discharge from city borders into non sensitive water bodies will eventually flow to other cities and may pollute the area and lower the biodiversity. Therefore, to promote the GBA as a beautiful and attractive area, collaborative actions have to be done by the regional governments to monitor pollution levels, and whether they induce any negative effects on other cities. A transparent and constructive dialog should be held periodically to keep track of the impact of human and economic activities on the regional natural habitats.

Establishing Cross boundary conservation areas

To cherish and protect the rich biodiversity of the conservation areas and ecological sensitive zones, different governments have already stepped up and clearly delineated a strict ecological redline to avoid unnecessary damage. Yet, individual actions from governments usually failed to acknowledge the dynamic and cross-boundary nature of some natural habitats. For instance, the coastal wetlands, mangroves, and the Mai Po Natural Reserve in the Deep Bay and Mirs Bay are identified as important marine natural reserves as well as fisheries protection areas for species and stock conservation (EDP, 2005). Thus, to better safeguard and restore those sensitive areas, concerted efforts have to be made by the Hong Kong and Shenzhen governments to jointly set up regional ecological protection barriers. The concerted efforts can achieve better coordination in coming up with action plans and development standards in the vicinity of the sensitive areas such that both locals and tourists can enjoy in a sustainable manner.



Figure 54. Regional protection boundary (EPD, 2005)

9.2.3 MICE Industry

Background

Hong Kong is undoubtedly one of the most competitive cities for top enterprises to hold exhibitions and conventions, with its world leading venues and superb supporting infrastructure. However, such a competitive edge could be overshadowed given the growing economic and infrastructure development of other cities in the region. According to ICCA international rankings (2019), Hong Kong and Beijing are both ranked 22 while Singapore has ranked 7.

Yet, few cities in the world could match our strategic location and geographical advantage, positioned at the heart of enterprising Asia. Credit to our comprehensive regional and international transport connections, enabling a one step to the region's fastest growing markets, and also serving as a gateway to connect international cities. Meanwhile, Hong Kong should also stress its conspicuous international image, free trade system and sound legal business system (e.g. protection of intellectual property) that safeguard the integrity of its business activities which stands out among the GBA cities.

Diversified MICE products

The Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB) has long been promoting Hong Kong as Asia's MICE capital, with MICE tourism as one of the main branding products. With the world-class infrastructure and facilities, it is with no doubt that Hong Kong has been chosen as the host city for various international MICE events. However, the MICE industry is a highly competitive field, with Hong Kong facing competition from neighbouring cities such as Singapore and other competitive economies in the Asia-Pacific region. To strengthen our competitive edge as a world-class MICE destination with our unique positioning, we suggest the government diversify the currently available MICE products. On top of the existing world-class venues, more flexible, niche MICE venues can be provided.

Provision of flexible and niche MICE venues

Coinciding with our strategies to develop tourism resiliency, we believe that diversification and increasing the capacity of the existing MICE products can consolidate our leading position to provide world class services and experiences.

Amid the pandemic, we witnessed the potentials of urban open spaces and their flexibility to transform into temporary quarantine stations in dire situations. While in normal circumstances, the adaptive nature of open spaces should be highlighted as well. Therefore we suggest to underscore the importance of open space in the planning and design stage of commercial or government institutes which enables flexible adaptive transformation of open space into MICE venues when necessary.

In addition, we also encourage the flexible arrangement of Short Term Tenancy (STT) to allocate spaces for the industry. Which aims to liberate obsolete urban open spaces for niche MICE activities. (E.g. small scale music concerts) and offer the venues to small & medium sized MICE industries in Hong Kong at an affordable price.

Enhancing capacity of MICE products

Apart from the provision of a diverse range of MICE venues, to capitalize on the high-value added nature of MICE tourism, supporting amenities have to be provided to cater to the business tourists. For instance, the provision of high quality accommodation is necessitated as a complementary direction to support our MICE industry. More Tariff A hotels should be strategically placed near the vicinity of the MICE venues. In fact, these hotels usually contain medium to small-size conference and exhibition spaces to increase Hong Kong's stock of MICE venues. To avoid congestion in the central areas and the conventional tourist destinations. The government should also encourage the development of resort hotels in New Territories, Lantau and Outlying Islands to relieve the stress in the CBDs.

Active participation in international organizations

To continue to hold international scaled events and maintain Hong Kong's prestigious position as a world class MICE venue, Hong Kong and the GBA cities should collectively engage in international organizations such as the Union of International Associations (UIA) or International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA). Participation in international organizations in the form of a regional alliance will strengthen our bargaining power and increase the chance of bidding mega-events.

9.2.4 Capitalizing on the enhanced connectivity network in GBA

Promotion of multi-destination travel

As highlighted in the Outline Development Plan for the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (2018), we should make good use of the regional collaboration model and leverage on Hong Kong's status as an international transportation centre to promote comprehensive and world class tourism products that encapsulate the essences of the Greater Bay Area. The success of such tourism development in the GBA will serve as a national tourism demonstration zone and allow other integrated cities to follow suit.

A preliminary vision co-introduced by the regional governments is to transform the bay area into an international leisure hub using a multi-dimensional development model of "Ocean-Island-Coast" tourism. The three-pronged approach including sea, outlying islands and coastal cities can be promoted as the main strategy to leverage on the advantageous coastal location, natural endowments and the well integrated transport network of GBA cities, supplementing the Harbour Metropolis Belt in our proposed spatial framework.

9.2.5 "Ocean-Island-Coast" tourism.

Cruise Tourism

The scenic islands, coastlines and the vibrant activities along the harbour fronts in GBA cities will be the key attractions that tourists will gravitate to. With reference to the 2018-19 Strategic Directions and Initiatives for Cruise Tourism Development in Hong Kong by HKTC, we strive to consolidate Hong Kong as both the regional and international cruise destination, and to seize the growing momentum of international cruise tourism. Cruise tourism can be promoted with multi-cities cruise trips both within and outside GBA to unleash the potential of the Kai Tak Cruise Terminal as an international cruise vacation interchange. Meanwhile, private developers also anticipated the unlimited opportunities in developing multi-destination cruise products in GBA. New World Development Company Limited has announced to invest over HKD10 billion to develop a large-scale cultural retail destination in Prince Bay of Shenzhen, next to the brand-new cruise terminal in Shekou with a GFA of 3.9 million square feet,

thus the project will become the largest harbourfront cultural-retail destination in Shenzhen. The collaborative efforts from the regional authorities and the private sector have jointly expanded tourism destinations, and improved the quality of cruise development and leisure.



Figure 55. Prince Bay Project (New World Development Company Limited, 2019)

Comprehensive Cruise Tourism Study

To cultivate Hong Kong as an appealing cruise destination, multi-pronged initiatives are necessitated to enrich the experiences provided to our visitors.

Building on the preliminary cruise tourism directions which failed to address the necessary steps to diversify our visitor profile. If the situation persists, a monotonous visitor segment will be expected and fail to achieve our vision of developing tourism resiliency. Hence, we propose conducting a tourism study on cruise tourists and categorise them in terms of different characteristics (e.g. visitor origin, purpose of visit), such that the authorities can develop targeted tourism initiatives to provide tailored experiences for cruise tourists from various backgrounds. We expect that negotiations are required between GBA governments in studying the feasibility of inter-city cruise tourism and agreements have to be reached on potential cruise lines between cities.

Facilitating visits to outlying islands for overseas tourists

The natural endowments of the outlying islands can be embraced as tourist attractions with appropriate policies implemented to conserve the ecological features. The current policy, Visiting Scheme to Outlying Islands (2017-2019), is only applicable to local organizations, no specific schemes to facilitate island tourism for tourists. Hence, we

suggest expanding the current scheme to offer visiting tours to outlying islands for overseas tourists.

As potential opposition from inhabitants of outlying islands in promoting island tourism is expected, negotiations with local communities and social, ecological impact assessments on outlying islands are required before promoting tourism to outlying islands.

Developing bundled cruise tourism products

Leveraging on Hong Kong's diversified profile of different transit options, the HKTB is advised to develop bundled cruise tourism products. Multi-modal tourism packages like "Railway-Cruise", "Fly-Cruise" and "Drive-Cruise" can be launched under the joint efforts from the trade and the industry to cater to the diverse needs of our visitors. For instance, our preliminary approach is to offer discounted packages for tourists travelling with the Guangzhou-Shenzhen Hong Kong Express Rail Link and boarding at the Kai Tak Cruise Terminal. Associated publicity and promotion campaigns targeting consumers in various source markets will be launched to supplement the aforementioned solution.

9.2.6 Self-driving tourism

Despite the availability of an array of mass transit that effectively connects the GBA cities, given the high degree of freedom and flexibility of self driving tourism that appeals to family visitors, it should not be overlooked in our strategic planning. To realize the "Ocean-Island-Coast" tourism development, GBA cities have in fact stepped up in improving their coastal infrastructure. Adopting an Axial development, the vision is to introduce a scenic and safe coastal drive along high speed motorways that connects Chaozhou to Zhanjiang with important stops like Hong Kong and Macao to attract the self-driving tourists. Meanwhile, the Shenzhen government has also utilized the natural endowment of both Dananshan (大南山) and XiaonanShan (小南山), and developed a 1.7-kilometre harbourfront promenade to create a spectacular scenic experience. All these diligent efforts from the GBA governments will foster a comprehensive connectivity along the coastal cities and facilitate the implementation of self-driving tourism in GBA.

Streamlining the cross boundary travel regulations

Owing to different driving regulations and customs among the special administrations and the Mainland municipalities, current policies and institutions do not favor self-driving tourism. Thus, we should take advantage of the relatively simple cross-border administrative procedures and close geographical connections.

The incumbent policy, the Ad Hoc Quota Trial Scheme for Cross Boundary Private Car (2012) only permits private cars with five seats or less to enter Guangdong province via Shenzhen Bay Port for a stay of less than 5 days and it impedes the implementation of self-driving tourism in GBA. Therefore, we suggest the Negotiation of the Transport Department and the Mainland Authorities to loosen the restrictions and allow joint-inspection and border control at different entry checkpoints to smoothen the transition process at the boundaries of GBA cities.

To mitigate the potential growth of external traffic upon the promotion of self-driving tourism, different GBA governments should carry out comprehensive traffic impact studies to evaluate the capacity of their road network to handle the potential increase of vehicle flow.

Conclusion

The image features a blurred city skyline in the background, with several tall buildings. In the middle ground, there is a body of water reflecting light, creating a shimmering effect. The foreground is dominated by dark, silhouetted plants with thin stems and small, spiky flower heads. A semi-transparent grey rectangular box is positioned on the left side of the image, containing the word "Conclusion" in white text.

10. Conclusion

10.1 Achieving Resilience

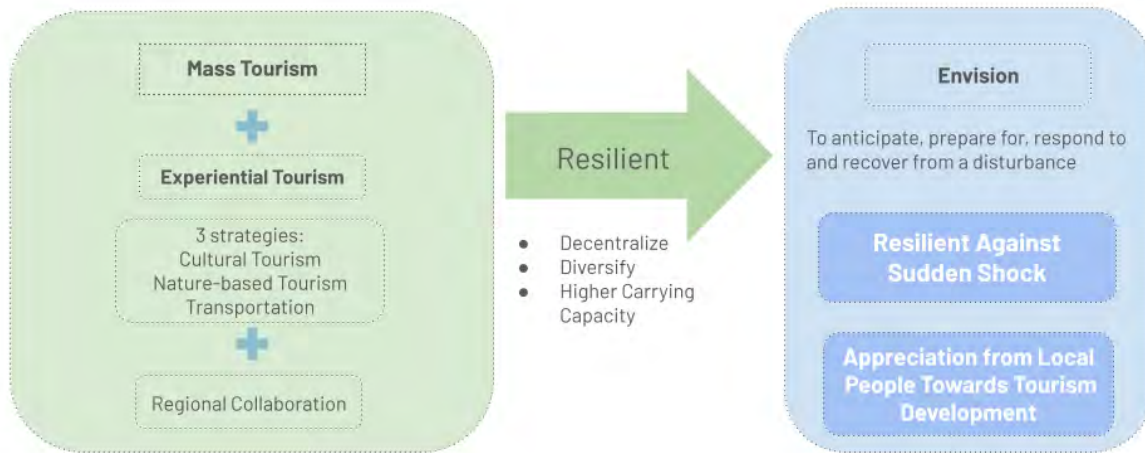


Figure 56. Envisioning the resilient framework

Hong Kong has great potential to be further developed as a most touristic city. In retrospect with the 6 assets evaluation, there is room for improvement from cultural, natural, spatial and digital aspects. Shown in Figure 56, this study proposed to use mass and experiential tourism direction and bring decentralized, diversified tourism industry with higher carrying capacity. The recommended strategies aimed at reinstating the Hong Kong image - a cutting-edge destination with various experiences. Table 8 and Figure 57 indicates the relationship between the proposed solutions, problems and the 6 assets development. It anticipated to shape an all-rounded tourism industry that no longer overemphasized economics and overlooked cultural and natural assets.

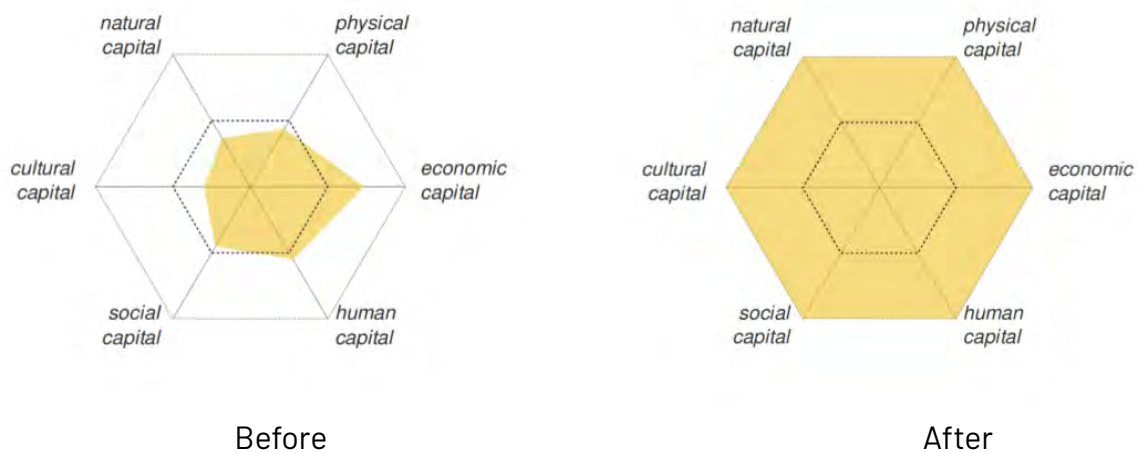


Figure 57. The anticipated changes in 6 Assets

10.2 Improved Assets

Solution	Improved Assets
5.1 Tangible Heritage Conservation	Cultural, Social, Physical
5.2 Destination building	Cultural, Social, Economic, Physical
5.3 Interactive and immersive activities	Cultural, Social, Economic, Physical, Human
6.1 Creation of Nature-Based Destination	Natural, Physical
6.2 Natural Tourism Products	Natural, Cultural, Human, Economic
7.1 Land Transport	Natural, Physical, Economic, Cultural, Social
7.2 Water Transport	Physical, Natural, Cultural, Economic
7.3 Air Transport	Physical, Natural, Cultural, Economic

Table 8: Summary table of the improved assets

Economy

The close connection with GBA through hard and soft measures would increase the competitiveness of Hong Kong. MICE industry and economic cooperation would increase the economies of scale which further boost the status quo as the International Financial Centre. In addition, new job opportunities are created to enlarge the GDP per capita

Social

Our solution of Interactive and immersive cultural activities enables bottom-up planning and achieves mutual understanding between the authorities and the locals and softens the side effect of tourism activities on their daily activities.

Physical

The well connected infrastructure and alternative transportation formulate a comprehensive connection. The untapped resources are utilised by new pedestrian streets, cycling routes, water and air transport to accommodate the needs of domestic and inbound tourists.

Natural

The recommendations diversify the natural tourism activities and enhance the carrying capacity of existing tourist spots. A balanced development to explore the new trails and holistic conservation would achieve the will to preserve the natural resources.

Cultural

The solution of Tangible Heritage Conservation provides a more holistic protection of the existing buildings which embeds Hong Kong's cultural fabric. The solution of the area based conservation better preserves a cluster of structures with historical significance for both locals and tourists to enjoy.

Human

The promotion of nature-based tourism products enhances the support and provides skills training for eco-guides, promoting human assets.

10.3 Key Considerations

The project envisioned a resilient sector which is elastic towards sudden shock and gain appreciation from residents towards tourism development. A collaborative framework is adopted to guide the future development but there are some general concerns to complex challenges.

It is hard to anticipate all the potential disturbance which covers Exogenous and Endogenous challenges. The former refers to unpredictable natural disasters, climatic risks and epidemics while the latter one covers the predicted shocks as ageing population in the long run (Fabry & Zeghni, 2019, pp. 101 -102). Resilient-based governance with better coordination across various sectors could shape responsive tourism.

The future development should also consider the public opinion towards tourism development and proactively seek for improvements. The networked governance approach with cross-departmental collaboration helps to cope with uncertainties.

10.4 Way Forward

It is crucial to make the tourism industry rejuvenated in the short term along with the step by step implementation timeline, so as to maximize synergy and to ensure an interdisciplinary tourism industry. To secure a steady recovery in long run, the following are the key factors and enabling steps:

- Sufficient and sustainable funding that subsidize districts development, such as placemaking, village revitalization, thematic linkage;
- High level policy mandate and support to foster the momentum of tourism development after the consultancy study;
- An enabling institutional arrangement that drives implementation and review progress; and
- Further deepen cooperation amongst Hong Kong, Macau and Guangdong which fully leverage the composite strength of Greater Bay Area Initiative.

Hong Kong is unique with its fascinating natural landscape, culturally diversified society, countless street food and professional working environment. 'Infinity Hong Kong' is envisioned to shape the place with one step to a different world and one step to infinite experience. This initiative would provide a strategic guideline for the continuous development in the years to come. May the recommendations will serve as a resilient guide light guiding Hong Kong's tourism development on a safe journey.



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Appendix I Gist of interview

Interviewee: A

Profession: Scholar

Aspects	Implications
Tourism related policies	<p>- Natural and green tourism are mentioned in the policy address under COVID and before COVID, however, it faces huge development constraints from the following reason:</p> <p>i) Economic (Exchange value) of tourism is prioritised rather than proposing a diversified tourism development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ecotourism would not bring tremendous economic benefits which is the root course for the underdevelopment of sustainable tourism - tourism as a commercial decision cannot solely rely on the particular sector/developer/stakeholder to develop the ecotourism, whereas the government did not provide comprehensive and consolidated blueprint <p>ii) Lacking comprehensive and holistic policies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - insufficient infrastructure support - Cannot find a strong leading role that coordinate each sectors
Carrying capacity	<p>Assessment criteria:</p> <p>i) ecological</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - measurement: surveying and compare with guidelines/standards to find out patterns/trends and justify the definition of overcapacity - regularly check the conditions of hiking trails, campsites, use measures to control visitor number (eg. booking system) - theoretical discussions: 95:5 RULE: let the 5% place to be sacrificed for human activities, protect the remaining 95% <p>ii) social: cannot rely on the quantitative measurement (e.g. income and visitor's number)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - measurement: planning and management framework derived from carrying capacity eg. recreation management, etc. - subjective views from tourists and local residents on building hotel & related infrastructure → encourage PPP - can formulate a comprehensive index - "the capacity is reducing, instead of inadequate"
Consumer behavior	<p>There is the locational advantage of HK to develop ecotourism with urban-rural proximity, however, the projection of post-COVID tourists number may not be high with the following reasons:</p>

	<p>i) local tourists</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - from the experience of SARS, there would not be a significant increase of tourists in post-COVID scenario - divergent between rich and poor as observed → rich people who are living next to country park will have more chance to visit there <p>ii) visitors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - depend on the pandemic control to project the number of tourists <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● short-haul trips, travel bubbles, increase in mobility from safer place to safer place ● prefer outdoor environment, concern on hygiene - depend on the tourists' interest → e.g. many Japanese visitors know the geological features in Hong Kong better than local people; they are interested in the local pocket park
<p>Vision/suggestion in developing resilient tourism</p>	<p>1) From quantity to quality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The government should not quantify the benefits from tourism based on economic index, top destination ranking and standard, tourists number and hotel occupancy rate - Consider more on tourists' rating/satisfaction, tourists' interest and participation in ecotourism, nature-based tourism → allow us to acknowledge ways of development → who turn out to be high-end consumers <p>2) From hardware to experiential</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - should not regard tourism as an end product, it should be a method to make the place better, emphasising experience → keep the visitors' connection eg. Japan island: develop tourists' sense of attachment to the place → promote in-depth local community culture and stories in HK, apart from sightseeing, promote the education about ecological features in HK <p>3) Towards holistic and comprehensive planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - TIC: policies; TB: marketing - City branding should also focus on the natural resources → highlighting the urban-rural proximity

Interviewee: B
Profession: Scholar

Questions	Comments
<p>How would you foresee the recovery of the tourism industry from the pandemic? Is there anything in particular a destination should be prepared for?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Refer to case of Bhutan which have been trying to use ecotourism as a national tourism branding - What have been noticed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ecotourism under current period have shown vulnerability - What should be done: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Diversity of on community and tourism industry would be the key - Promote tourism as a supplementary income - Expectation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - While developing eco-tourism, with the current situation, it should be expected that the ecotourism will not thrived at first
<p>Eco-tourism has been a growing trend recently, have you encountered any good practices or tricks to encourage community involvement?</p>	<p>Ecotourism has two definition:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The broad definition of any outdoor tourism; - Or the more academic definition, <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) With educational aspect 2) Investment on env aspect 3) Local involvement, community embeddedness - Community should be the main manager, with major, primary roles on stakeholders planning - Some good practise to involve community in planning eco-tourism 1) Avoid economic leakage: To keep profit inside the community <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reinvest in infrastructure, well-being, etc. benefiting the community with the profit. - Setting up community funds: Wildlife engagement, experiential tourism, participating in wildlife monitoring

<p>What would you say are critical in the success of balancing community needs and tourism development?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Case study: Ecotourism destination in Bhutan in a valley - Potatoes farmers reduced the expansion of their farms to meet the needs of ecotourism and preservation of the wetlands - It was stable until when there are too many tourists, with new trails and more disturbances - Key takeaway: limits the amount of tourists
<p>Are there any particular facilities/policies that are often beneficial for promoting community-based destinations?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Operating community funds - Rotational base system - Cooperation with NGOs - Capacity investment
<p>What would be the key to promoting community based tourism, in terms of attracting tourists?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - First we have to identified the types of eco-tourists - Meeting the expectation of the tourists <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Providing different styles of activities - Cultural expectations: cultural engagement, the way of life, creative tourism - Environmental protection: Wildlife engagement, experiential tourism, participating in wildlife monitoring - Education - Ecotourists want to experience "authenticity", but as time is changing, the culture and "authenticity" is also changing too.

Interviewee: C

Profession: Policy advocator

Questions	Comments
<p>In your opinion, what are the key elements of a resilient tourism ecosystem?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Don't think there are any methods to resist shocks, it's about how to reduce negative effects and recovery. - Resilience means the ability to bounce back after shock - Adaptation vs mitigation, resilience focuses on rebounding of situation compare with direct resistance of crisis, crisis expected, rebound speed is key - Market force will finds its equilibrium - When there is no shock, we have overtourism, in fact this would affect residents' daily lives - To mitigate the over/under tourism impacts, set up a mechanism to let tourists know when or where some place is fully occupied so that they will go somewhere else
<p>Would you anticipate a general shift in consumer preference in the post-pandemic tourism market, in which eco-tourism would become more popular while traditional consumption-based tourism may not fully recover?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Too early to say - 3 sub sectors of tourism <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consumption 2. Leisure and entertainment 3. Destination experience - 1. Is witnessing decline, given the growth of e-shopping - Tourists of 2 are flowing to 3. with more authentic travel experience - E.g. Japan hiking tours/ eco-park, ecotourism
<p>What are some of the ways to increase social and infrastructural carrying capacities for tourism development in high density cities?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This question implies carrying capacity is inadequate, leading to direct answers of increasing infrastructure.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Carry out transportation studies and increase the physical road capacity will be a conventional method - Use of remote sensing for more efficient traffic management\ - Increasing facilities cannot improve over tourism because it will attract more visitors
<p>From your experience in communicating with non-indigenous villagers in Hong Kong, how would you expect the development of eco-tourism to impact the living quality of rural residents?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Never heard locals complain about eco and cultural tourism. - Current conflict point → landlord want to develop on areas with high ecological value - Government should represent people who would like to conserve to balance the conservation instead of comparing with leaving it to private hands - Land price is too expensive → the worth of conservation - Can citizens pay for the price of preservation?
<p>Can eco-tourism/countryside tourism be economically efficient in high density cities where land is competitively sought after for various developmental uses?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - High, compact development can also satisfy economic growth and conservation. - Hong Kong has chosen a high rise model, to concentrate on a few points and promote density - How to accommodate so many people while conserving monuments and ecology?

Interviewee: D

Profession: Architect, countryside conservationist & urban designer

Questions	Comments
<p>What are the considerations to balance the benefits of local residents (such as indigenous villagers) and conservation, and how to encourage local residents to participate in conservation and nature-based tourism?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recommended to reflect on Taiwan's situation which also suffered from over-tourism. - Rethink what our tourism should be - Promotion of smaller scale tourism
<p>Any possible consequences and mitigation measures to develop rural tourism?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expected complaints from locals which will not be sustainable - Necessitate controlled transports/ access and need to prioritize the local residents - Develop infrastructure which encourages the tourists to stay behind and develop more civilised acts, committed to protect the place - Increase economic activities while protecting the environment - Foster returning visitors
<p>Given the proximity of cultural and natural assets to the urban environment is a special characteristic of Hong Kong. Do you think there is an opportunity to utilize this feature in NDAs to provide a harmonious environment for both local residents and tourists?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No bulldozing actions - Utilize the natural and green elements (Local character) - Mode of development in Sandy Ridge serve as a negative example, cutting of slopes and severely damages the natural ambience - Preserve the original natural setting - New development built around these natural settings and every NDA will have its own character, - Standardized parks are not recommended
<p>Any dilemma about development of NDA conservation and tourist attraction sites? Will it result in the same result as the previous new towns</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Take reference from the Kai Tak development - Develop specific urban design guideline to celebrate the local character
<p>Are there any considerations to develop urban fringe areas to cater to tourists?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There should not be a clear cut between urban and rural development

- A gradual transition is more applicable
- Areas next to boundary of country park should be considered for low-density development

Interviewee: E
Profession: Senior partitioner in the tourism industry

Questions	Comments
<p>Are prevailing policies and strategies on tourism development still applicable in the post-pandemic situation?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hong Kong will remain its competitiveness after COVID - Effect of COVID is temporary - Post-COVID development of tourism mainly lies on the recovery pace and the performance of other cities. - Expected implementation of travel bubbles/ vaccination visa, but not entirely sure about the details as everything is still in the preliminary stage
<p>Do you expect the tourism industry to rebound to the pre-2019 level (i.e. before the occurrence of the pandemic and social movement) in terms of tourist arrivals, revenue and employment? Are there any factors that may cause stagnations in the recovery process?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do not expect a quick recovery like what happened after SARS - Take years to bounce back - Depends on the government and regional policies
<p>What provisions or assistance does HKTIC expect the government to provide to the industry considering the current decline? Any suggestions on the way forward?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stressed the importance of financial aid to help the industry survive - Already received funds of \$80000 HKD per agent in different phases - Government should support domestic tourism - Develop GBA tourism products - GBA cities are expected to recover faster than other cities, even faster than travel bubbles policy - Yet to be any concrete policies to facilitate GBA travel
<p>What is your opinion on gaining <i>tractions</i> in different new trends of tourism forms such as eco-tourism, staycations and cultural tourism? Do you think it has any potential or areas to be aware of? Are there new skills incorporated in the tour guide training courses?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hong Kong has to diversify its tourism products - Cost is the main concern, training of tour guides to handle those tours - Need of supporting infrastructure and increase the accessibility - Developing themed tours in different districts will be a way to go.

Interviewee: F

Profession: Local councillor

Question	Answer
<p>Tourism development in the Southern District</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How was the relationship between the community and tourism development before the COVID-19 pandemic? - What have been the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, specifically the drop in tourist number, on the Southern District and what were the responses to them by the community? (eg. Typhoon shelter tours in Aberdeen) 	<p>Conflicts - before COVID</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New hotels, large-scale shopping tours - Coaches in the narrow streets parking, long queues → disturbance to local residents - Local residents unsatisfied: occupying public roads, no buffer zones or facilities offered by government - eg. Tin Wan: weird location for escorted tour restaurant - Traffic congestion reflect lack of traffic capacity - Ecotourism: Mount Johnston & Brick Hill, but need to be cautious with the scale of development <p>Community problems caused by COVID</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Fishing village heritage tour <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Limited number of traveler (reduce from 8 ppl to 4 ppl) → poor income - Conflicts between owners to fight for customers - Stringent regulations → can only ship within the typhoon shelter 2. Restaurant providing F&B are nearly all stopped <p>Suggestions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Focus on local products → fish village kaitos, boat ride - Shelter visit <p>Southern's usual image: isolation from the world</p>
<p>Invigorating Island South</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In your opinion, what is the role of the Southern District in HK's tourism development? - Do you expect changes or clarifications on the Initiative? If yes, in what aspects? - How would you evaluate the development plan of Ocean Park? In 	<p>Role of Invigorating Island South</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The initiative seems to be the coordinator of the development of the whole Southern District - Public and himself were unclear about the development objectives <p>His expectations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Economic industry → working opportunities - Embrace the local characteristics

your opinion, what is the significance of Ocean Park to the district?

heritage, eco-tourism, harbourfront-related features

- Hope to deal with existing local issues eg. waterfront park, typhoon shelter area expansion
- High-end products

Ocean Park

- Core value → collective memory
- Economic aspect → local working opportunities
- Should not focus on mainland tourists only / entertainment only → should focus on education, conservation, start new kinds of entertainment e.g. water park; eco-tourism
- New suggestions on racing car activities may work → utilize geographical advantage → allow all locals to go and don't want to compete with mainland tourists

Suggestion:

- Concentrate new tourist activities in the development of Ocean Park and develop low-density tourism in other area

Tourism Resources

- Do you think that the current tourism resources available (e.g. landscape, tranquil environment, tourist attractions and transport infrastructure) are adequate to support the district as a tourist destination?
- Are there any untapped potential of tourism resources overlooked or currently underutilized?

- Not very suitable
- MTR only has 3 carts, unless future has better traffic (new section of South Island Line)
- Community facilities: conflicts with locals, no facilities can accommodate such large tourists flow
- High value, Wong Chuk Hang residential development → intensify the transportation problem: private car, racing car → not really suitable for large-scale development

Untapped potential

- South Horizons, far from residents, but effects are not good; better to build in wong chuk hang mall, similar to kwun tong
- Harbourfront tourism and connecting country parks through water transport: from developing within district (eg. Tin wan to Ap Lei Chau) to connecting with outside (eg. HK island to Cheung Chau → education

	<p>needs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Both kaito and ferry licenses should be promoted - Issues within district: Aberdeen to Stanley is already very congested - Need to assist the marine transport operator - Not enough administrative and financial support from government: currently max 10 ferry routes for subsidy
<p>Local Community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do you think the government has carried out adequate public consultation regarding the future planning of the district? Do you have any suggestions to make tourism development in the district more community-based? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Not enough consultation - The whole initiative was directly proposed in the Policy Address

Appendix II List of country parks, special areas, marine parks, marine reserve and Geopark sites

Country Park

Country Park	Area (ha)	Adjacent/Enclosed Special Area	Adjacent/Enclosed Marine Park/Marine Reserve	UNESCO Global Geopark Sites
Shing Mun	1400	Shing Mun Fung Shui Woodland, Tai Mo Shan Montane Scrub Forest		
Kam Shan	339			
Lion Rock	557			
Aberdeen	423			
Tai Tam	1315			
Sai Kung East	4494	High Island		High Island
Sai Kung West	3000		Hoi Ha Wan Marine Park	
Plover Cove	4600	Chiu Keng Tam, Lai Chi Wo, Double Haven	Yan Chau Tong Marine Park	Double Haven, Wong Chuk Kok Tsui, Kat O, Ap Chau, Lai Chi Wo
Lantau South	5646	Lantau Peak, Sunset Peak	Southwest Lantau Marine Park	

Lantau North	2200	Sunset Peak		
Pat Sin Leng	3125	Pat Sin Range		
Tai Lam	5412			
Tai Mo Shan	1440	Ng Tung Chai, Tai Po Kau Nature Reserve		
Lam Tsuen	1520	Pak Tai To Yan		
Ma On Shan	2880	Ma On Shan		
Kiu Tsui	100			
Plover Cove (Extension)	630	Kat O Chau	Tung Ping Chau Marine Park	Tung Ping Chau
Shek O	701		Cape D'Aguilar Marine Reserve	
Pok Fu Lam	270	Pok Fu Lam		
Tai Tam (Quarry Bay Ext.)	270			
Clear Water Bay	615			

Sai Kung West (Wan Tsai Ext.)	123			
Lung Fu Shan	47			
Lantau North (Ext.)	2360			

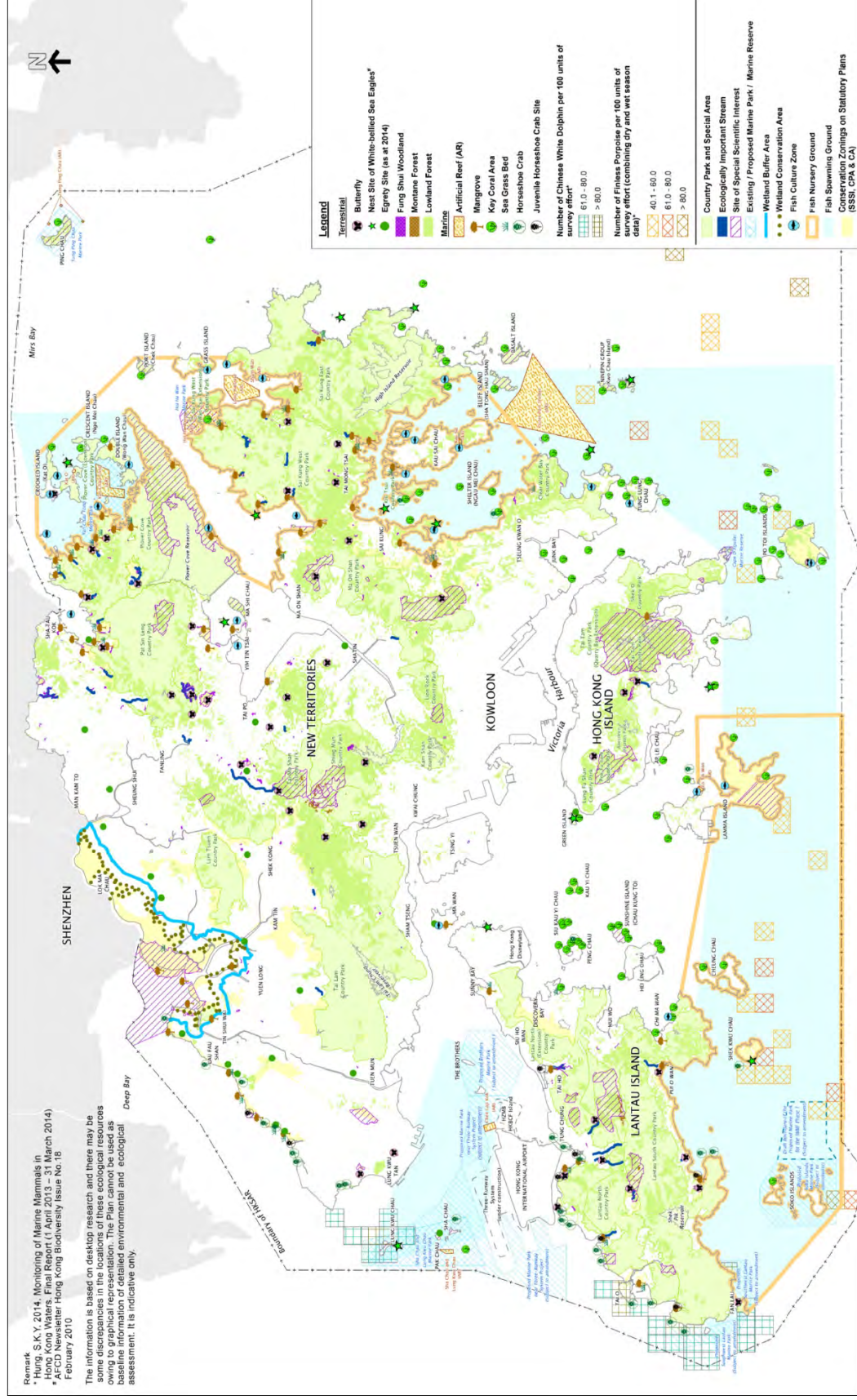
Special Area (Outside country parks)

Special Area	Area (ha)	Hong Kong UNESCO Global Geopark Sites
Tung Lung Fort	3	
Tsiu Hang	24	
Ma Shi Chau	61	Ma Shi Chau
Hong Kong Wetland Park	61	
Sharp Island	0.06	Sharp Island
Ung Kong Group	176.8	Ung Kong Group
Ninepin Group	53.1	Ninepin Group

Marine Park (Outside country parks)

- Sha Chau & Lung Kwu Chau Marine Park
- The Brothers Marine Park

Appendix III Ecological Interests in Hong Kong (Adapted from PlanD, 2016a)



Appendix IV Tourism Assets along the Belts in the Conceptual Spatial Framework

Harbour Metropolis Belt: Two-Tier Approach in selecting focal points (Assets)

Tourism Nodes (Tier 1)	Assets	Transport Linkage	Respective Tier 2 Destinations
Airport/Tung Chung	Shopping Accommodation <i>Marina at Tung Chung North</i>	<u>HK-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge</u> <i>New Railway and/or highway link to ELM</i>	
East Lantau Metropolis	<i>Harbourfront Future CBD</i>	<i>New Railway link from ELM to HK Island</i>	Mui Wo, Peng Chau and other outlying islands
Central	Harbourfront Hospitality MICE venues	Tung Chung Line	Western District (Heritage, architecture)
West Kowloon	WKCD Hospitality Museums	West Rail Line <u>High-speed Railway</u>	Sham Shui Po (Niche shops, handcrafts)
Tsim Sha Tsui	Hospitality	<i>Tuen Ma Line</i>	
Kai Tak	<i>Sports Park</i> <i>Cruise Terminal</i>	<i>Lam Tin Tunnel</i>	Kowloon City (Local Culinary) Kwun Tong (Niche shops)
Tseung Kwan O Area 137	<i>Harbourfront Landscape</i>	<i>To Island South using multimodal water transport</i>	
* <u>Cross-border Infrastructure are underlined</u> * Proposed/under construction items are in Italic			

Urban and Rural Belt: Tourism Assets

Tourism Nodes	Tourism Assets	Transport Linkage
Tung Chung North	Pak Mong Village <i>Marina at Tung Chung North</i>	<u>HK-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge</u> Tuen Mun-Chek Lap Kok Link
Hung Shui Kiu NDA	Ping Shan, Ha Tsuen Walled Villages Lau Fau Shan Castle Peak	<u>Deep Bay Link</u> West Rail Line
Yuen Long South NDA	Wong Nai Tun Reservoir	<i>EFTS</i>
San Tin NDA	Wo Sang Wai Wetland Walled Villages	<u>Lok Ma Chau Checkpoint</u> <i>Northern Line</i>

Kwu Tung North NDA	Military Relics at Tai Shek Mo	<i>Northern Line, East Rail Line</i>
Northeast New Territories NDA	Villages at Lung Yeuk Tau Sheung Shui Wah Shan	<u>Heung Yuen Wai Checkpoint</u> <i>Northern Line (Extension)</i>
Sha Tau Kok	Sha Tau Kok Town (<i>after abolition of Border Area</i>)	<u>Sha Tau Kok Checkpoint</u> Sha Tau Kok Road
<p>* <u>Cross-border Infrastructure are underlined</u> * <i>Proposed/under construction items are in Italic</i></p>		

Active Recreation Belt: Mode of transportation and assets

Nodes	Assets, Activities and Events	Modes of Connection				
		Land Transport	Cycling	Ferry	Water Sports#	Walking
Kwu Tung North	Community Sports (展能運動村) Cycling Trail Equestrian Sports	<u>Lok Ma Chau Checkpoint</u> East Rail Line	✓			✓
Tai Po	Cycling Trail Canoeing Trail running	East Rail Line	✓	✓	✓	✓
Tolo Harbour	Water sports Cycling Trail	East Rail Line	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sha Tin	River Regatta Cycling Trail Dragon Boat	East Rail Line	✓	✓		✓
Kai Tak	<i>Sports Park</i>	Tuen Ma Line		✓		✓
HK Stadium	Football Matches Rugby 7 Private Clubhouses	South Island Line				✓
Island South	Ocean Park Rock climbing Dragon Boat Water sports	<i>To Tseung Kwan O/ Victoria Harbour using multimodal water transport</i>		✓	✓	✓
<p>* <u>Cross-border Infrastructure are underlined</u> * <i>Proposed/under construction items are in Italic</i> # Water sports include but are not limited to kayaking, canoeing, wind sailing etc.</p>						

Team Profile



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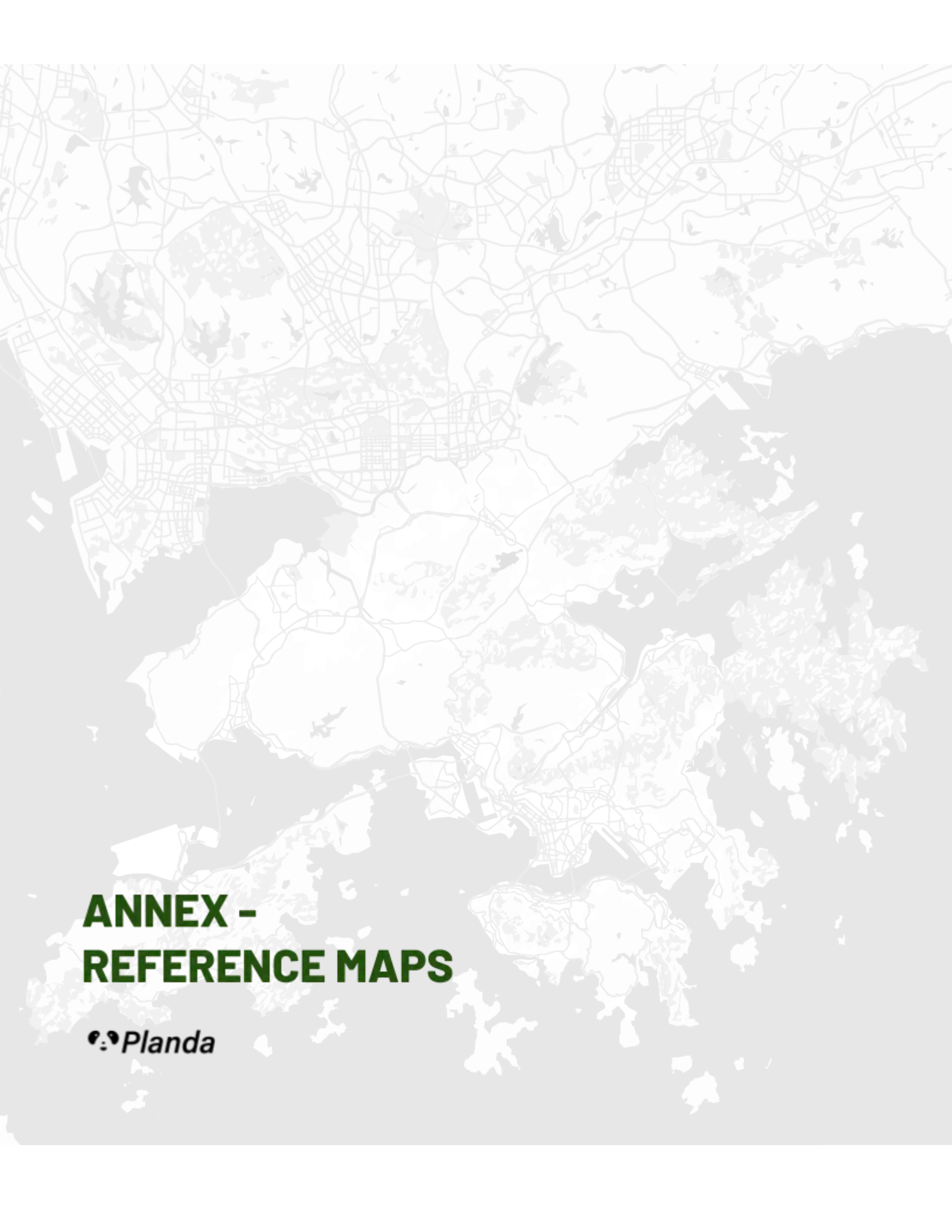
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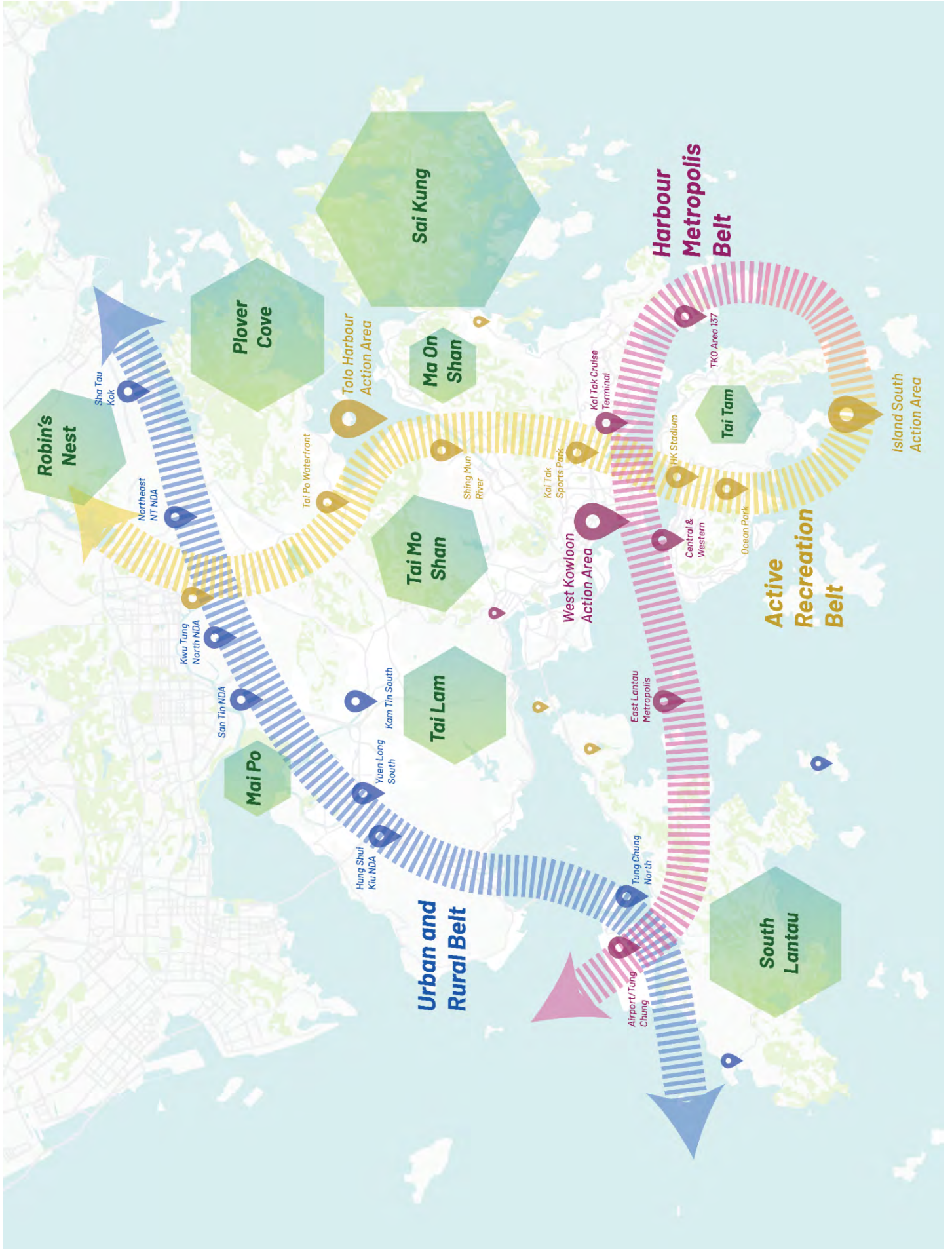


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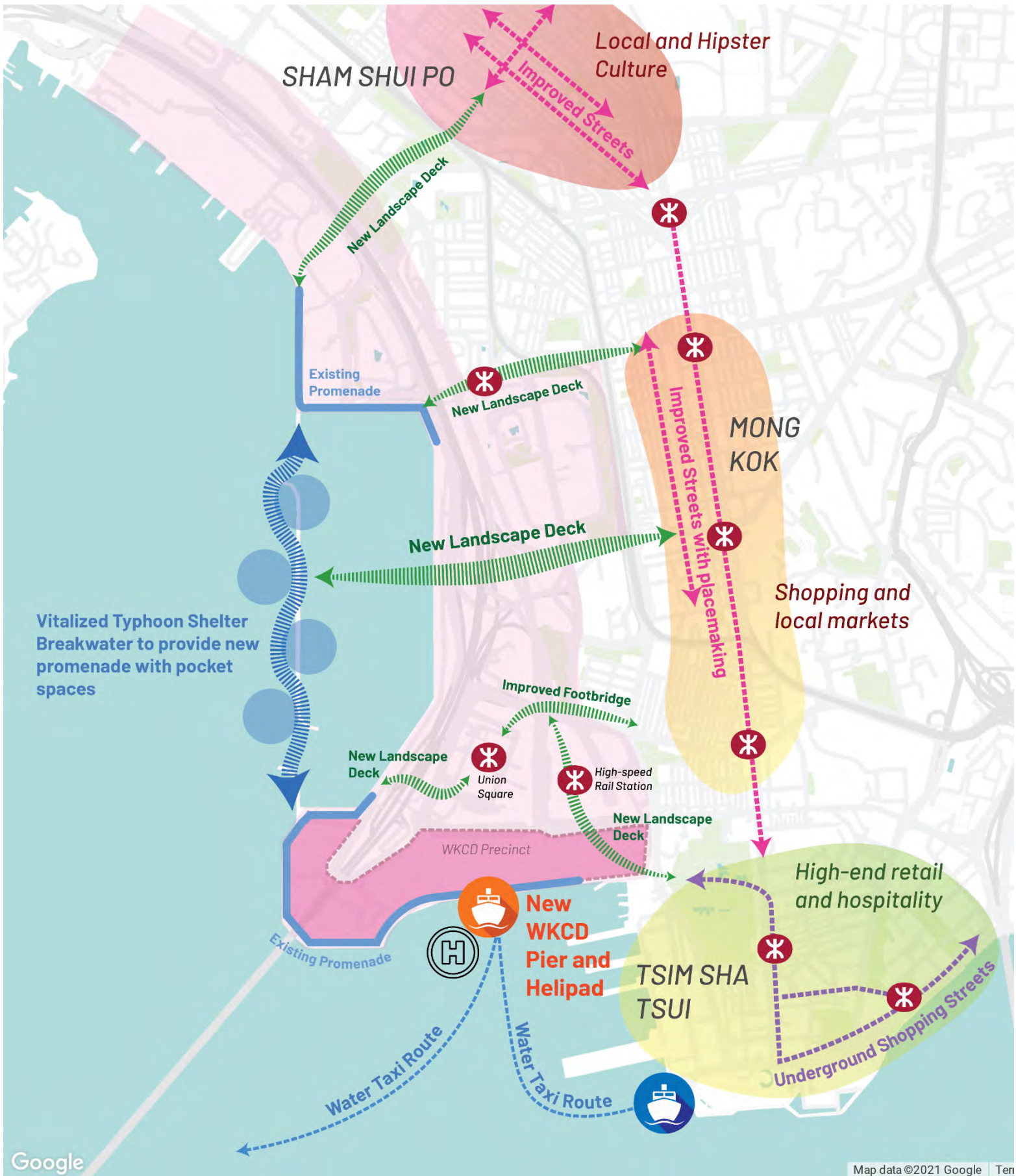


ANNEX - REFERENCE MAPS

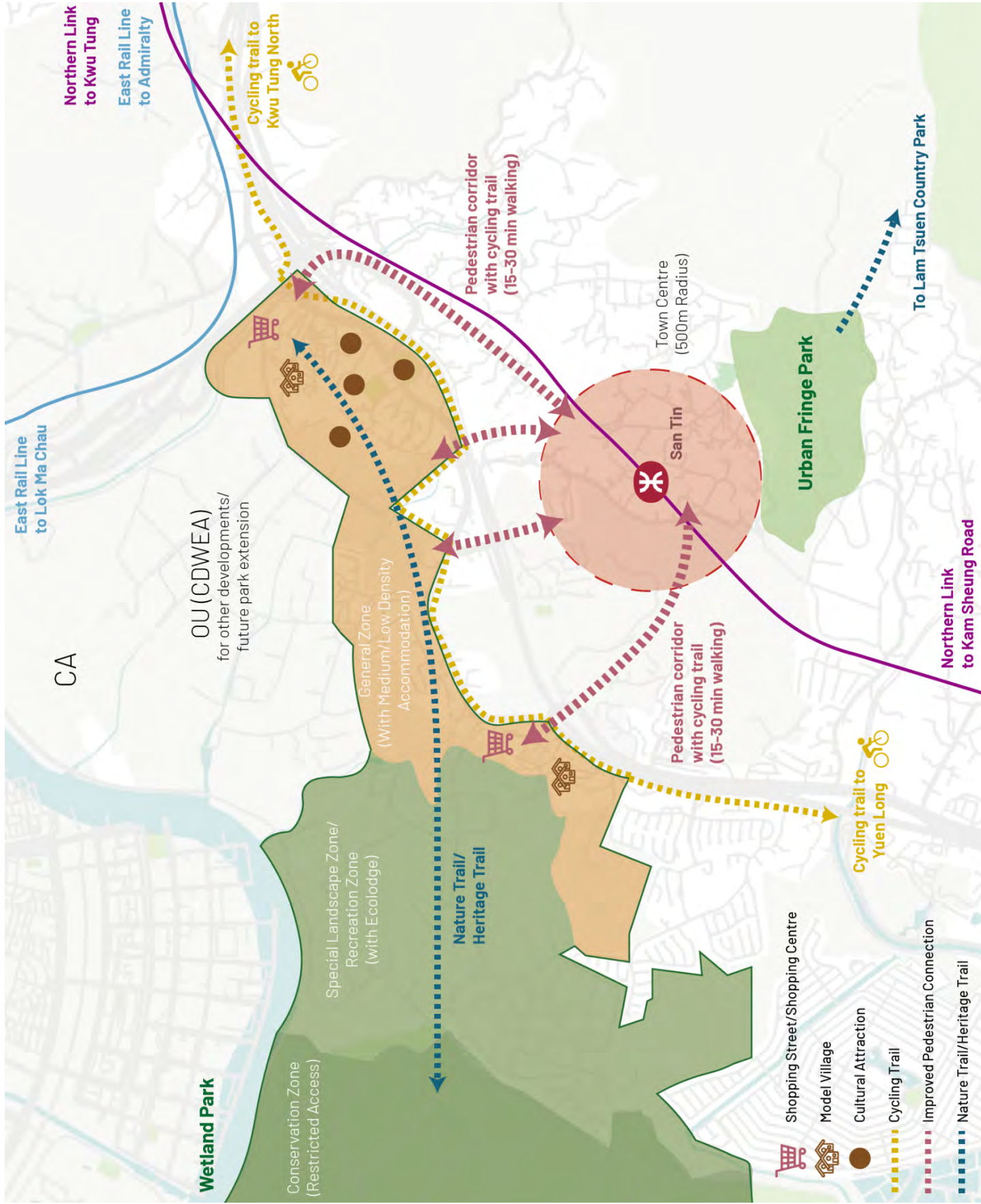
 **Planda**



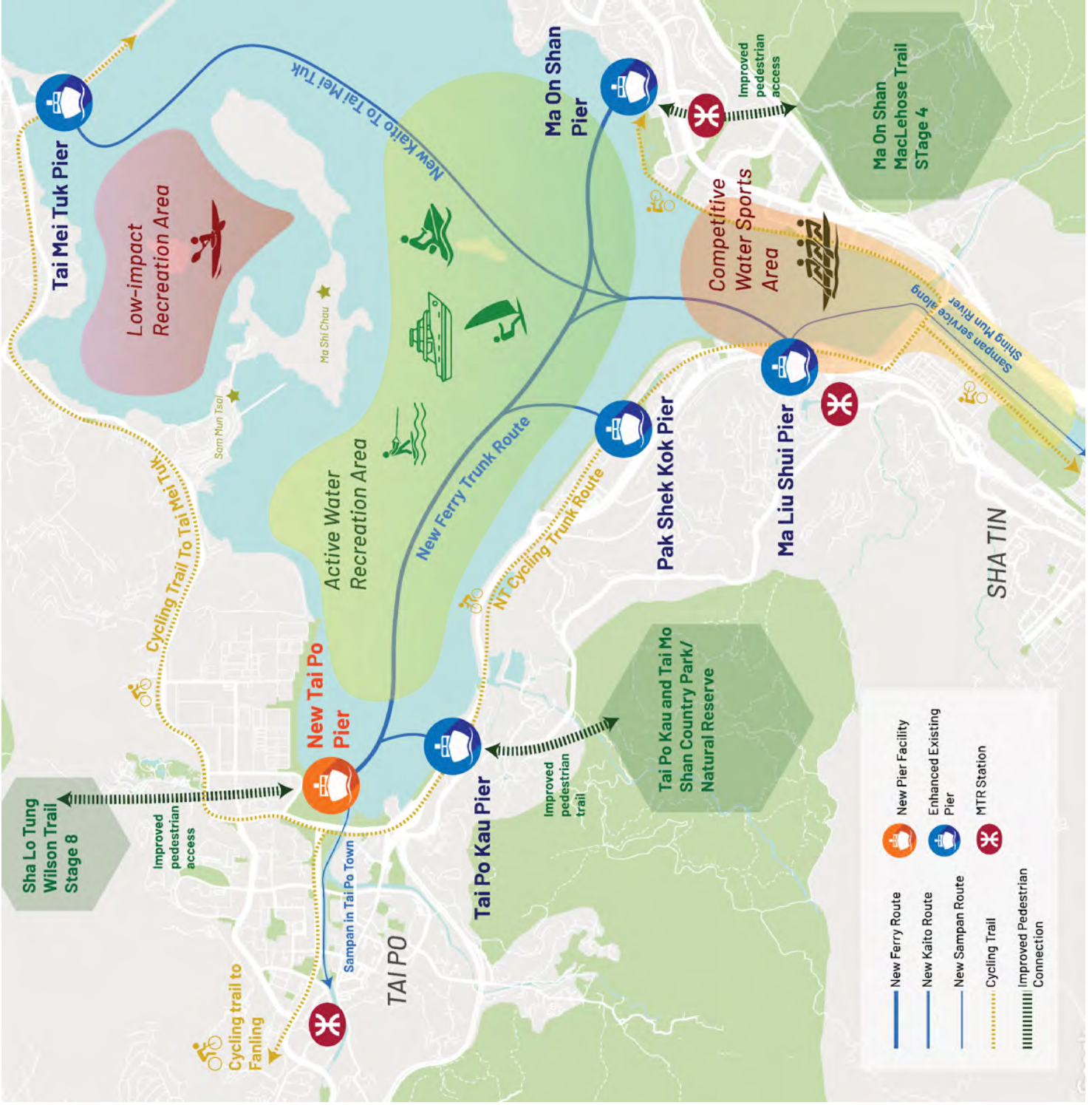
Overview of Spatial Framework (Section 8)



Map of West Kowloon Action Area (Section 8.1.2)



Map of San Tin Action Area (Section 8.2.2)



Map of Tolo Harbour Action Area (Section 8.3.2)



Map of Belts Positioning in GBA (Section 8.6)