



Clyde Docks Preservation Initiative

*Protecting and Promoting the Evolving Maritime Heritage of the Tidal River Clyde*

Glasgow City Council  
Development and Regeneration Services  
231 George Street  
Glasgow  
G1 1RX

### **Comments on the Glasgow Strategic Development Framework (SDF) – River Clyde Corridor**

CDPI broadly supports the content of draft SDF for the Clyde Corridor. We recognise that taking forward the aims of it will have the potential to make a significant contribution to the economy of the city and 'reactivation' of the river/waterfront.

**There are however a number of issues/areas where we think that greater focus is needed and would be of benefit. These are outlined below:**

1. Greater focus is needed on maritime heritage (both historical and modern) and for the legacy of shipbuilding to be respected, reflected and interpreted in new developments and landscaping of public realm – something that has not been done to date. How can we integrate Glasgow's past into its future and respect the history and heritage? To date this has not been seriously addressed in a planning context.
2. Greater focus is needed on potential for new, clean and sustainable industrial development as part of the mix of future regeneration – in particular taking into account recent proposals for returning marine engineering work to the derelict Govan Graving Docks. Could the BAE Systems shipyards diversify beyond defence work? Could Govan graving docks be reactivated for modern marine industry as part of a mixed-use regeneration that also includes cultural, museum, education/interpretation and small business space? These are questions that community/advocacy groups and academics are asking and they need to be included more formally in future local authority planning.
3. Removal of Govan Graving Docks from the housing land supply should be considered due to the flood risk and other considerations.
4. Focus is needed on ensuring industrial facilities at Govan/Scotstoun currently operated by BAE Systems remain in marine engineering / maritime use beyond the lifetime of current defence contracts.
5. Focus and strategy is needed to ensure the continuation and development of KGV dock as an industrial dock facility – including ensuring that suitable infrastructure connections to the dock are maintained and developed. We are concerned at the risk of remaining industrial facilities on the Clyde (and their supporting infrastructure) being 'strangled' by encroaching housing and retail development that could force facilities to close (due to engineering and freight handling work going to better

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Registered office: 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, 7 Water Row, Glasgow G51 3UW  
[www.cdpi.org.uk](http://www.cdpi.org.uk) | [info@cdpi.org.uk](mailto:info@cdpi.org.uk) | 07977 622 502



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- connected facilities elsewhere in the UK).
6. A strategy is needed for maintaining and retaining facilities that could be put to maritime use – ensuring the waterfront does not become entirely housing. This should also include infrastructure measures to ensure such sites can exist side-by-side with residential and leisure developments.
  7. Detailed strategies are needed for development of active and safe public realm along the entire waterfront and plans for implementation that will ensure beneficial projects do not stall or face significant delays once they are commenced.
  8. Opportunities presented by new legislation e.g. community buyout / right to force sale of disused land and buildings should be addressed as part of the SDF, along with local government measures to promote, support and streamline community acquisition of under-utilised assets.
  9. We would like to see a framework for more structured collaboration between local authorities in the Clyde region to ensure the benefits of the SDF concept do not stop at the city boundary. Additionally better multi-agency connections are needed across all sectors.
  10. Business development support should be introduced for businesses focused on use of the waterfront and the river corridor – particularly social enterprise based businesses and those focused on sustainable development and community benefit.
  11. A strategy should be considered to allow for flooding in the long-term design of the waterfront (look at Boston Harbor, MA as an exemplar). For example flood resilient landscaping, drainage/barriers as architectural features, etc.
  12. Research and development needs to look wider at international success stories of waterfront and post-industrial regeneration to see what lessons Glasgow can learn from other river cities. Academic networks are already looking at this and local authority planning could potentially benefit from greater engagement of these networks.
  13. Lessons that can be learned from developments that have not lived up to early promises (e.g. lack of amenities at first phases of Glasgow Harbour) should be identified. It needs to be recognised that the first phase of Glasgow Harbour was not as successful as it could have been due to lack of amenities, thus creating a monoculture of effectively a dormitory that is isolated from the rest of the city.
  14. A strategy should be developed to look at the potential of the river as a sustainable transport corridor and the infrastructure needed to support this (moorings, maintenance facilities, etc) for e.g. river buses / water taxis. Particularly how this could contribute to reducing city centre congestion.
  15. Development of river taxis / buses so the river can function as a public transport corridor cannot rely on private sector initiative and investment alone. Action will be needed from government, Clydeport and from SPT to take this forward – potentially to

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develop a franchise model similar to the west coast and island ferries network.  
Allowing for ZoneCards and other travel passes to be used on river transportation.

16. In many places use of the waterfront has regressed. For example the amphitheatre/bandstand and cafe that existed next to the suspension bridge below Clyde Street during the 1990s fell into disuse and deterioration. Despite being prime city centre waterfront, this area has become neglected and unsafe after dark due to antisocial behaviour.
17. Cultural use of the waterfront needs to be addressed (e.g. popup retail/catering, entertainment, etc) and promoted throughout the year. This needs to engage organisations like Glasgow Life as well as independent arts and cultural organisations/groups.
18. More sympathetic architecture needs to be enforced and we can look at other cities e.g. Copenhagen, Stockholm and Lyon as examples of sympathetic waterfront developments. Do we want the Clyde lined entirely with glass and concrete?
19. There needs to be more focus on the river for maritime use - e.g. sail cargo and visitor moorings for small ships. The area between the Riverside Museum and the Clydeside Distillery (as well as Princes Dock canting basin and Govan Graving Docks) could be ideal for this.
20. Developers need to be guided (and to an extent controlled) by a framework for the river in a way that previous City Development Plans have not ensured. Even with the recently adopted City Development Plan, private developers are still trying to do their "own thing". The refusal of planning consent for the proposed 700+ flats on Govan Graving Docks suggests a positive shift in approach to planning decisions that needs to be maintained and formally established. This needs to be carried forward to upcoming phases of Glasgow Harbour for example (we don't need something akin to a retail park, or another cinema/casino on the waterfront in Partick) and other vacant sites on and near the river.
21. Quaysides need to present opportunity for mooring more ships and vessels on the Clyde which themselves could have multiple uses as floating units (e.g. for cafes, offices, event space, etc) and to allow for loading/unloading of e.g. small sail cargo ships or barges near the city centre. Taking the opportunity to shift at least some freight movement (as well as passenger transport) onto the river corridor. This means allowing for delivery vehicle access in proximity to quaysides. CDPI will be working to gather expert views from sail cargo operators on the potential for this to develop on the Clyde as a way to tackle CO2 emissions from shipping and transportation. This would also mean a less "industrial" method of goods transportation that could be combined with opportunities for e.g. sail volunteering and skills training as well as increasing river transport. A more active river would draw interest from sightseers and tourists. This could also combine with load/offload of larger consignments of goods at commercial docks e.g. KGV onto small vessels that could carry goods upstream – essentially a river courier type of activity. This could also be relevant to the canal network. **Given that much of the quayside is in need of repair, this should be taken as an opportunity to address that (as well as infrastructure for mixed use**

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**floating facilities) in planning the quay upgrade work.**

22. Currently the river is disjointed with a lack of imagination and joined up thinking for its reactivation. It is largely an incidental feature of the urban landscape that in a few places gives added property value to residential properties but without any amenity.
23. A November 2016 CDPI report into the planning history of Govan Graving Docks identified key policy objectives for waterfront regeneration, dating back to 2002, that had not been delivered. Many of these have been reiterated in the SDF although specific action plans are needed for implementation.
24. Recent calls for the Clyde Port Authority to be nationalised need to be given serious thought and discussion - to consider whether this (or alternatively imposing significantly increased government regulation of the port authority) could help to unlock or would hinder the economic potential of the river. We are inclined to question whether the two functions of port authority and property developer (as well as landowner of significant areas of the waterfront) are compatible in a single private corporate entity or group, particularly when the port authority function encompasses that of a statutory consultee in planning decisions and the ability to create by-laws for the river. This needs to be addressed at Scottish Government level but Glasgow City Council should consider and arrive at a position on this to ensure Strategic Development Framework objectives can be carried forward. **Commercial conflict of interest, with the economic needs of the region and its communities, needs to be avoided in the engagement of statutory consultees.**
25. The lack of “multi-agency river governance” is a concern and we believe an organisation or stakeholder partnership (involving transport, environment, economic, etc agencies, local authorities, industry groups, community groups and the private and third sectors) needs to be developed to address this.
26. More research is needed into other waterfront cities to look at what has worked well and lessons from these that could be transplanted onto the Clyde.
27. More “blue sky” thinking is needed to promote a creative process of developing innovative ideas for the Clyde. In particular work of architecture and urban planning students should be looked at to see the kind of creative ideation that can be brought forward without constraints of client briefs. This needs to be a starting point; with feasibility/deliverability brought into the process at a later stage to pare such ideas down to what is realistic but still ambitious.
28. Failures of 1960s-1970s urban planning need to be acknowledged as serious failures and ensure the lessons from these have been learnt. It is concerning for example that high rise residential buildings are being demolished throughout the city only for similar buildings to emerge or be proposed on the waterfront. This is simply relocating a problem without necessarily solving it.
29. We need to avoid the river being turned into a canyon by too many large monolithic buildings, high-rise flats, etc. Such tall buildings could be confined to specific areas

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- e.g. Anderston and other areas where conservation/heritage is less of an issue.
30. Unlike many modern cities Glasgow lacks an iconic skyline with well designed / well positioned skyscrapers. While not desirable citywide, Anderston and the M8 corridor could be an appropriate area for this given proximity to city centre and lack of any remaining historic architecture that would be negatively impacted. The relationships of buildings to their setting and (both architecturally and functionally) to each other needs to be considered to avoid the disjointed approach to developing tall buildings that seems to exist for example in London. In this regard we broadly support the principles stated on Page 15 of the November 2018 Draft SDF. While not universally popular, the lack of landmark skyscrapers (and so many having been proposed and then abandoned) is sending out a message that Glasgow is continuing to lag behind other modern / post-industrial cities in the UK (e.g. Manchester, Liverpool, Leeds and Cardiff).
  31. Particular focus is needed on adaptable space, modular/moveable structures and buildings that can be easily and quickly repurposed.
  32. A planning strategy is needed for facilitating the creation of sustainable skilled jobs and addressing the changes in the labour market expected in the coming decades. This needs to account for jobs that are going to be lost due to automation, what jobs (if any) will replace them, what facilities and infrastructure these new jobs will need (for example energy efficient, open, ergonomic co-working spaces integrated with meeting space, cafes and relaxation space). It also needs to consider the changes in working patterns, potential for increase in numbers of freelance workers and work-life balance that may emerge in the coming decades. This is a wider issue than urban planning but a vital one nevertheless.
  33. A critical policy initiative (that should be addressed at all levels) should be to look at the feasibility of moving towards universally free public transport and introduction of electric or hydrogen powered bus fleets. Hydrogen buses already exist in London and (with hybrid as a stop-gap) are becoming more prevalent. This will be vital to reducing urban air pollution and could be coupled with strategically located park-and-ride facilities for people coming into central areas of the city. Free public transport for example is already being introduced in Luxembourg this year. Free public transport could help improve social inclusion for low-income families. Transport planning could also promote greater uptake of car sharing services (e.g. Zipcar) by developing a framework of infrastructure and subsidies to introduce them.
  34. We had put forward in an objection to plans for the next phase of Glasgow Harbour [Ref. 18/01993/MS] and would reiterate here that more needs to be done to develop the confluence of the Rivers Clyde and Kelvin into a prime focal point for the city's waterfront. The lower reach of the River Kelvin is not being developed as well as it could be and is becoming surrounded with unremarkable student accommodation by developers cashing in on an unsustainable boom in demand for luxury student accommodation. As already suggested, other river cities throughout Europe need to be looked at to determine what works.

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35. CDPI has lodged a number of comments on recent planning applications that further point to need for a more connected and sympathetic strategy for waterfront regeneration – these include objection to Glasgow Harbour as mentioned above, objection to housing plans for Govan Graving Docks [17/02948/DC] and comment supporting (but seeking planning conditions for) the expansion of the SEC [18/03336/PPP]. We would put our comments on these forward as references to be taken into account to further underpin our comments here on the River Corridor SDF.
36. Tackling antisocial behaviour needs to be a major consideration in making the waterfront safe and desirable in the evenings and after dark. This requires mixed use and leisure facilities as well as late opening cafes/bars, small retail, provision for street performers, etc that will promote busy use of the waterfront well into the evenings, as well as an active and visible security presence.
37. Repair of quay wall and infrastructure could be funded as far as reasonably possible by Section 75 agreements imposed on private developments along the waterfront.
38. A dynamic strategy is needed that is constantly being reviewed through a transparent and accessible process to engage communities – rather than a SDF framework that is defined and set in stone for the next 10+ years. We need to avoid dominance of ‘fad’ architecture that dates very quickly and developers cashing in on temporary property booms (e.g. the current rush to build luxury student accommodation).
39. **We would suggest that development and revision of the Strategic Development Framework needs to be extended into wider stakeholder, community and academia engagement – allowing ideas and proposals to be tested through an ‘urban laboratory’ approach over a longer (say 5 year) period before full adoption of a SDF. A more accessible and engaging consultation process is needed to encourage as much participation as possible. Wholesale review is needed with early stakeholder input, not just a revision and update of existing development frameworks.**

**In summary we support the core aims of the River Corridor Strategic Development Framework but take the position there needs to be:**

- ❑ Less focus on the waterfront for housing, especially where this only serves to enhance the property values of ‘luxury’ flats without furthering social inclusion, community development, public amenity and open access to the river. There are also flood risk concerns as were addressed in the decision to reject housing plans for Govan Graving Docks.
- ❑ Significantly more focus on maritime/shipbuilding heritage interpretation through e.g. artistic intervention and design of hard landscaping.
- ❑ Significantly more focus on modern maritime use of the upper river corridor – including whether long-term plans are needed to replace the Clyde Arc bridge with an opening bridge to reactivate the river as far as Central Station – allowing river

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transport connections to the national rail network with for example fast catamarans similar to those operating in London.

- ❑ Significantly more focus on scope for development of modern, sustainable marine industry – which could include (at least partial) reactivation of Govan Graving Docks for marine engineering purposes, ensuring shipbuilding facilities at Govan and Scotstoun have a sustainable future (without being reliant indefinitely on BAE Systems and naval contracts) and ensuring KGV dock continues to be actively used for shipping. This could include strategies for temporary repurposing of mothballed industrial facilities while allowing them to be quickly and easily reactivated.
- ❑ There needs to be a limit on the number and location of tall buildings lining and blocking the river so as not to create a ‘canyon’ in the river corridor, particularly downstream of the SEC.

Yours Faithfully

Iain McGillivray  
Executive Director

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