

People's Panel on West Kowloon
Views on WKCD Development

WKCD-181

From recent media reports, we understand that the government is moving towards some form of authority for WKCD, and is ready to consider scrapping single-tender and even the canopy. However, as far as People's Panel on West Kowloon (PPWK) is concerned, if WKCD were to remain as a cultural project, then it must have the cultural substance - which we seek to develop through our "Redefining WKCD" proposal. Without that, it could still become just a development project - maybe a fairer one than single tender, but still a property development project, in other words, a failed cultural project. Even if the land-use and property development can be handled fairly and that the canopy is dropped, WKCD still has one big missing element and is deficient.

In response to Report of the Legco's Subcommittee on WKCD on Phase I study and the issues of WKCD, PPWK has the following points of views :

1. Similar to the Phase I study Report, PPWK recognizes that the development of WKCD is a milestone in Hong Kong 's culture development. However, there must be "cultural depth" in WKCD development, if it were not to become a mere white elephant. For this reason, PPWK establishes six elements of a "cultural vision" in our "Redefining West Kowloon " proposal, which published in May 2005, as follows:

- WKCD should be a cultural landmark and civil society has involved in the creation process
- WKCD should be a base for developing policies on cultural development and urban planning
- WKCD's governance model should be based on that of tri-partite (civil society, government and business) cooperation
- WKCD should be a public space that allows flexible and sustainable multi-stage development
- WKCD should be independently developed, both in construction, management, and resources for development
- West Kowloon planning should complement that of harbour development and must interface with nearby districts

To develop a culture and urban space with "cultural vision" and "urban planning vision"

2. To fulfill the West Kowloon vision, PPWK believes that a democratic, easy to participate, inclusive, organic and transparent re-planning process is essential, one which enables WKCD to become a project which civil society can "own". The "redefining WKCD" process must thus be sustainable and living, so as to enable an "organic blueprint for WKCD" to be formulated. Thus the re-planning process must go beyond the confines of West Kowloon itself; but should be guided by an overall

“urban planning vision” for the whole of Hong Kong. In other words, WKCD planning is more than the planning of West Kowloon, but the planning of Hong Kong as a world-class cultural metropolis.

To establish Cultural Metropolis Think Tank: A democratic, inclusive and transparency redefining WKCD processes

3. In the Phase I study Report, the Subcommittee suggested setting up an overseeing authority for the development on WKCD. However, more than that, PPWK has a consideration of cultural content in current urban planning and development. To help Hong Kong progress into a genuine cultural metropolis, PPWK believes that the establishment of a Cultural Metropolis Think Tank (CMTT) is essential. This think tank should be firmly based in civil society, while at the same time have a global cultural horizon and a thorough understanding of urban planning and cultural development. It should be responsible for researching and developing Hong Kong's cultural vision and urban planning vision, based on which the West Kowloon vision and the town planning parameters for WKCD should be drawn up.

A town-planning process concentrates on investigation, R&D, civil society participation, consultation and implementation of both hardware and software

4. We expect CMTT will provide the elements of cultural vision in the urban planning process and hence fill the structural void arising from the current system. With full tripartite participation and an emphasis on R&D and investigation, CMTT will involve the community in every stage of WKCD's development, including hardware design.

A democratic Redefining West Kowloon procedure

5. The formulation of the cultural vision being a cross-sectoral public policy-making process, it may be led by a senior government official to enable smooth coordination among various departments as well as deployment of resources and support, but the secretariat must be independent. Members should come from civil society including the legislature, district councils, cultural and creative industries and other professionals, through a representative and possibly electoral process to be developed by civil society itself.

6. Redefining West Kowloon Trilogy:

- i. CMTT to evaluate the cultural policy and design the cultural vision
- ii. To build up a “town planning” with the participation from the public
- iii. To develop West Kowloon vision and to develop the land in stages in accordance to the proposal.

7. PPWK proposes that a Provisional West Kowloon Authority (PWKA) to undertake the planning and construction of WKCD. PWKA's governance should be tri-partite-based (civil society,

government and business sector), with multi-stakeholder representation and participation. After the first-phase development of WKCD, the PWKA should be gradually transformed into a full statutory West Kowloon Authority.

8. Agenda and Timetable of "Re-defining West Kowloon"

PPWK supports setting up a cultural district in West Kowloon to engender a clustering effect. Some opinion in society holds that the planning of West Kowloon has been ongoing for several years. "Re-planning" it is a waste of previous efforts. We do not agree with this view. Any "re-planning" is to be based on existing foundations, not from scratch. From the point of view of encouraging broad citizen participation, we must not let ourselves be led by the "timetable". However, we would like to stress as well that "Re-defining West Kowloon" will not delay the WKCD indefinitely.

Timetable	2005	2006	2007	2008
Agenda / Mechanism	Civic society comprehensive participation →			
		Establish CMTT, formulate 'West Kowloon Vision', conduct R&D and consultation →		
		CMTT to generate 'West Kowloon vision' organic blueprint →		
		Establish the Provisional West Kowloon Authority to manage construction of hardware and establishment of software →		
		First Stage of Construction begin		

9. For more information about PPWK's proposal on "Re-defining on West Kowloon", please visit our website at : http://www.ppwk.org/statement_proposal_v2.htm