

立法會 *Legislative Council*

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Meeting of the Panel on Planning, Lands and Works on 25 July 2006

Background brief on Greening Master Plans

Introduction

The Administration plans to consult the Panel on Planning, Lands and Works (the Panel) on the development approach of Greening Master Plans (GMPs) for Mong Kok and Yau Ma Tei in Kowloon West, and Sheung Wan, Wan Chai and Causeway Bay on Hong Kong Island at the Panel meeting on 25 July 2006. This paper provides background information on the development and implementation of GMPs and summarizes the views and concerns expressed by Members during past discussions on the subject.

Background

2. Pursuant to the general direction announced by the Chief Executive in his 2000 Policy Address to green up Hong Kong by planting more trees and flowers in the urban areas, the Environment, Transport and Works Bureau established the Steering Committee on Greening in December 2002 to formulate related strategies and supervise implementation of major programmes. This committee is chaired by the Permanent Secretary for the Environment, Transport and Works (Works), comprising members drawn from 16 bureaux and departments.

3. A GMP seeks to define the overall greening framework of an area by identifying suitable locations for planting together with desirable themes and species, thus serving as a guide to the planning, design and implementation of greening works for continuous and consistent results. A GMP embodies a full spectrum of short, medium and long-term measures as follows –

- (a) Short-term measures are those conforming to the district layout, posing no conflict with land use and/or traffic arrangements;

- (b) Greening opportunities associated with urban renewal or redevelopments are classified as medium-term measures; and
- (c) Long-term measures depict the ultimate greening vision setting aside constraints such as land availability, congested underground installations and overhanging signboards, deploying ambitious and innovative methods or techniques like tree corridors alongside highways, roof/podium gardens and vertical greening. Realization of this vision will have implications on planning and land administration policies.

Development and implementation of Greening Master Plans

4. At the Panel meeting on 13 July 2005, the Administration briefed the Panel on the initiative to develop GMPs for selected urban areas in order to bring about coordinated efforts and visible improvements in urban greenery. The Administration also reported on progress of the two GMPs for Tsim Sha Tsui and Central bearing the themes of “Jade Necklace” and “Heart of Gold” respectively, highlighting that there was overwhelming support from District Councils, Area Committees, Town Planning Board as well as the local community.

5. On 22 November 2005, the Administration presented to the Panel two funding proposals covering the implementation of greening works as recommended in the GMPs for Tsim Sha Tsui and Central, as well as the engagement of consultancy services for the development of GMPs for selected areas in Kowloon West and on Hong Kong Island. When the Public Works Subcommittee (PWSC) examined the two funding applications at its meeting on 21 December 2005, Members expressed a number of concerns on the design and visual effect of the illustrative greening works presented by the Administration, the solicitation of community input in the planning process and the scope of consultancy services etc. In view of the concerns, the Administration withdrew the funding applications.

6. Since the main thrust of concerns raised by Members at PWSC was directed at the development of GMPs, the Administration decided to seek funding approval for the implementation of short-term greening works recommended in the GMPs for Tsim Sha Tsui and Central in the first place and submit a separate funding proposal on the development of GMPs for other selected areas in Kowloon West and on Hong Kong Island at a later stage. The Administration thus consulted the Panel on the implementation of short-term greening works in Tsim Sha Tsui and Central at a total estimated cost of \$38.4 million in money-of-the-day prices on 28 February 2006. The relevant funding proposal was endorsed by PWSC and approved by the Finance Committee in April 2006.

Members' views on the development and implementation of Greening Master Plans

7. When the subject was discussed at various Panel meetings, members in general welcomed the development and implementation of GMPs. They urged the Administration to expedite the progress, and accord priority to districts which were least greened and hence had the greatest need for greening. In particular, they opined that all major roads should be greened and beautified as far as practicable and private developers should be encouraged to do more greening within their developments. To enhance greening efforts, members also made various suggestions as follows –

To improve planning, implementation and monitoring

- (a) Conduct strategic overall planning so that different greening themes would be adopted for different districts to project the local characteristics of individual districts;
- (b) Decide as early as possible on the theme trees/flowers to be planted in different districts so as to avoid overlapping and ensure that the works projects undertaken by various Government departments could complement such greening efforts;
- (c) Liaise with the relevant District Planning Offices to identify greening opportunities in conjunction with the designation of pedestrian boulevards;
- (d) Invite District Councils to provide input at the early stage of development of GMPs;
- (e) Examine how to reduce greening cost, which presently stood at some \$3,000 per square metre, and ensure cost-effectiveness in developing the GMPs and implementing the related planting works;
- (f) Select plant species carefully taking into account the characteristics and constraints of individual districts and ensure good maintenance of plants;
- (g) Devise measurable performance indicators to facilitate monitoring of the progress of greening efforts;

To introduce or relax relevant statutory and non-statutory requirements to facilitate greening efforts

- (h) Liaise with the Buildings Department to work out the technical requirements of flower racks on buildings, so as to ensure flower

racks could be safely erected on private buildings to facilitate greening efforts by individual households;

- (i) Consider amending the Buildings Ordinance (Cap. 123) to relax provisions regarding site coverage to encourage developers to leave more space for road construction, so that roads would be wide enough to accommodate trees;
- (j) Encourage private developers to green the slopes in the boundaries of their developments;

To maximize planting space

- (k) Maximize planting space by better organization and maintaining proper records of underground installations; and
- (l) Identify opportunities to plant climbers on footbridges and slopes to enhance greening effect.

8. On the issue of cost-effectiveness of GMPs, the Administration provided a relevant information paper (LC Paper No. CB(1)299/05-06(01)) in November 2005, which is reproduced at **Appendix I**. In presenting the funding proposal for the short-term greening works in Tsim Sha Tsui and Central to the Panel in February 2006, the Administration also provided a summary of its response and actions taken to address the comments and suggestions raised by Panel members. The summary was annexed to LC Paper No. CB(1)951/05-06(04) and is reproduced at **Appendix II**.

9. A list of the relevant papers with their hyperlinks in the Legislative Council website is in the **Appendix III**.

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
PANEL ON PLANNING, LANDS AND WORKS**

COST-EFFECTIVENESS OF GREENING MASTER PLANS

PURPOSE

The purpose of this paper is to inform Members of various ways through which cost-effectiveness has been achieved in developing the Greening Master Plans (GMPs) and implementing the related planting works.

BACKGROUND

2. When we reported progress on development of GMPs for selected urban districts and implementation of related planting works at the meeting held on 13 July 2005, Members requested to know how cost-effectiveness could be ensued in the process.

GENERAL APPROACH

Master Planning

3. One key objective of GMPs is to establish an overall framework and planting theme based on thorough research of local characteristics with due consideration given to greening opportunities and site constraints. In addition, early input from stakeholder groups such as District Councils and the Town Planning Board will be solicited to obtain public acceptance.

Plant Species Selection

4. Most species recommended under GMPs will be those which are readily available locally or in the South China region since this not only helps to secure reliable supply of plants to meet the implementation programme, but also to lower the acquisition and delivery costs.

5. As some species may not adapt well to adverse urban conditions, those with proven record of successful establishment at a particular location will be accorded with priority. For example, *Aleurites moluccana* (*Candlenut Tree*) [石栗] and *Crateva unilocularis* (*Spider Tree*) [魚木] which have thrived along

Chatham Road South in Tsim Sha Tsui will be chosen for additional planting in the same area. This strategy cuts down the likelihood of plant replacement as well as maintenance cost.

Planting Methods

6. In-ground tree planting will be done whenever possible to produce the largest greening mass by a relatively small space occupied by the tree trunk. More costly methods such as removable planters are only confined to places with congested underground utilities.

Works Coordination

7. Before actual planting works commence, part of the road pavement will have to be opened up to ascertain that no serious obstruction is posed by underground utilities. The opportunity will then be taken for other agencies to inspect or repair utilities thereat to avoid further road openings at the same location within a short period of time.

8. In order to minimize public inconvenience and to comply with administrative/statutory requirements, mitigation measures including temporary traffic diversion arrangements must be deployed when carrying out planting works in busy districts like Tsim Sha Tsui and Central. These measures will be avoided as far as possible in new development areas to save cost.

Maintenance

9. Some species such as turf, topiary and tender herbaceous plants and annuals require frequent tending to upkeep their outlook. We will strike a sensible balance between the desired visual effect and maintenance requirement in finalizing the design of greening works.

CONCLUSION

10. We will strive for an optimal outcome in developing GMPs and implementing related greening works taking into account cost-effectiveness and community aspirations.

Summary of Response and Actions Taken to Address Comments and Suggestions Raised by the Legislative Council Panel on Planning, Lands & Works

Planning and Implementation

- Greening themes reflecting local characteristics will be formulated in the context of each GMP to guide all implementing parties.

Greening Cost and Indicator

- An average unit cost of the proposed greening works in Tsim Sha Tsui and Central of about \$1,400 per square meter is reasonable taking into account constraints prevailing in densely populated urban areas. The estimated quantities of trees and shrubs to be provided could be relied upon as an indicator to monitor outcome of the proposed greening works.

Maintenance of Plants

- The Leisure and Cultural Services Department will take over long-term maintenance of the plants after a 12-month establishment period.

Relaxation of Site Coverage for Greening

- The long-term greening measures recommended under GMPs will cover tree corridors that require more space to be reserved for future planting. Since these proposals are likely to have impact on planning and land administration policies, detailed examinations must be carried out.

Greening of Slopes

- Apart from guidelines and practice notes for industry practitioners, promotional talks/seminars and award schemes have been organized to encourage private sector participation in slope greening. The surface of public man-made slopes will be protected by greenery and existing vegetation as far as possible.

Green Building Features

- There are practical difficulties in establishing a standard flower rack design to suit different buildings. Nonetheless, Practice Note No. 68 promulgated by the Buildings Department already exempts window flower boxes not exceeding 500mm in width projecting from the face of a building from site

coverage and plot ratio calculation. Guidelines have also been issued to include green features on all new flyovers and footbridges.

Underground Installations and Tree Planting

- As a result of concerted efforts made by Government and utility companies, the organization and accuracy of underground installations have improved in recent years. The feasibility of widening footpaths to make more room for tree planting in urban areas is being actively explored.

**Environment, Transport and Works Bureau
February 2006**

Greening Master Plans

List of relevant papers

Council/Committee	Date of meeting	Paper
Council meeting	17 November 2004	Hansard (http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr04-05/english/counmtg/hansard/cm1117ti-translate-e.pdf)
Planning, Lands and Works (PLW) Panel	21 January 2005	Information paper on “Policy Initiatives of the Environment, Transport and Works Bureau” provided by the Administration (LC Paper No. CB(1)707/04-05(01)) (http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr04-05/english/panels/plw/papers/plw0121cb1-707-1e.pdf) Minutes of meeting (LC Paper No. CB(1)1566/04-05) (http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr04-05/english/panels/plw/minutes/pl050121.pdf)
Environmental Affairs Panel	21 January 2005	Minutes of meeting (LC Paper No. CB(1)958/04-05) (http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr04-05/english/panels/ea/minutes/ea050121.pdf)
PLW Panel	13 July 2005	Information paper on “Development of Greening Master Plans” provided by the Administration (LC Paper No. CB(1)1996/04-05(03)) (http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr04-05/english/panels/plw/papers/plw0713cb1-1996-3e.pdf) Minutes of meeting (LC Paper No. CB(1)2362/04-05) (http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr04-05/english/panels/plw/minutes/pl050713.pdf)

Council/Committee	Date of meeting	Paper
PLW Panel	22 November 2005	<p>Information paper on “Development and Implementation of Greening Master Plans” provided by the Administration (LC Paper No. CB(1)289/05-06(07)) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr05-06/english/panels/plw/papers/plw1122cb1-289-7e.pdf</p> <p>Information paper on “Cost-effectiveness of Greening Master Plans” provided by the Administration (LC Paper No. CB(1)299/05-06(01)) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr04-05/english/panels/plw/papers/plw0713cb1-299-1e.pdf</p> <p>Minutes of meeting (LC Paper No. CB(1)654/05-06) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr05-06/english/panels/plw/minutes/pl051122.pdf</p>
Public Works Subcommittee (PWSC)	21 December 2005	<p>Information paper on “35CG – Greening Master Plan for Kowloon West – Studies and Works” provided by the Administration (PWSC(2005-06)34) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr05-06/english/fc/pwsc/papers/p05-34e.pdf</p> <p>Information paper on “36CG – Greening Master Plan for Hong Kong Island – Studies and Works” provided by the Administration (PWSC(2005-06)35) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr05-06/english/fc/pwsc/papers/p05-35e.pdf</p> <p>Minutes of meeting (LC Paper No. PWSC28/05-06) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr05-06/english/fc/pwsc/minutes/pw051221.pdf</p>
PLW Panel	28 February 2006	<p>Information paper on “Greening Master Plans for Kowloon West and Hong Kong Island – Greening Works for Tsim Sha Tsui and Central” provided by the Administration (LC Paper No. CB(1)951/05-06(04)) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr05-06/english/panels/plw/papers/plw0228cb1-951-4e.pdf</p> <p>Minutes of meeting (LC Paper No. CB(1)1324/05-06) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr05-06/english/panels/plw/minutes/pl060228.pdf</p>

Council/Committee	Date of meeting	Paper
PWSC	6 April 2006	<p>Information paper on “35CG – Greening Master Plan for Kowloon West – Studies and Works; 36CG – Greening Master Plan for Hong Kong Island – Studies and Works” provided by the Administration (PWSC(2006-07)2) (http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr05-06/english/fc/pwsc/papers/p06-02e.pdf)</p> <p>Minutes of meeting (LC Paper No. PWSC55/05-06) (http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr05-06/english/fc/pwsc/minutes/pw060406.pdf)</p>