

**For Discussion
on 15 April 2011**

**Legislative Council Panel on Transport
Pedestrian Environment Improvement Scheme
in Yuen Long Town**

PURPOSE

This paper reports on the progress of the Pedestrian Environment Improvement Scheme in Yuen Long Town (the scheme) taken forward by Highways Department.

BACKGROUND

2. Improvement to the pedestrian environment in business districts, shopping areas and leisure zones with heavy pedestrian flows is one of the initiatives set out in the 2008/09 and 2009/10 Policy Addresses. To this end, Highways Department is taking forward the Pedestrian Environment Improvement Scheme for Yuen Long Town; the study area covered is shown at **Annex A**.

3. As a result of the increasing pedestrian flow in Yuen Long Town, the existing pedestrian facilities are experiencing capacity problems. Congestions frequently occur in the morning and evening peak hours, as well as periods of busy shopping activities on public holidays. The situation is specially serious at the footways and pedestrian crossings along Castle Peak Road (Yuen Long Section) (CPR(YLS)). We anticipate that the on-going and planned residential developments on the eastern and northern fringes of Yuen Long Town will aggravate the congestion problems.

PROGRESS TO DATE

4. We started taking forward the scheme in May 2009. In order to gather systematically the views and concerns of the public on the pedestrian environment in Yuen Long Town, so that we could give them

due consideration in conceiving, formulating and refining the proposed improvement measures, we took forward a public engagement exercise and appointed a public engagement consultant to assist in organizing the exercise.

5. The public engagement exercise was conducted in three stages. In the first stage which started in May 2009, the public engagement consultant conducted a series of focus group meetings with the various stakeholders, including owners' committees within the study area, public transport operators, transport-related trade associations, trade associations representing local business and members of Yuen Long District Council (YLDC). The consultant also conducted a number of site visits and on-street surveys. We also appointed an engineering consultant in September 2009 to join the project team to assist in studying the pedestrian environment of Yuen Long Town, and to develop improvement proposals in parallel with the public engagement process taking into account public views.

6. The first stage of the exercise was completed in end 2009. Based on the outcome of the first stage exercise (including the understanding on local characteristics, views of local stakeholders on problems affecting the pedestrian environment, the impacts of these problems, and views of the public on the possible solutions), we developed a number of conceptual improvement schemes.

7. We then proceeded to the second stage of the public engagement process, and held the first public forum in March 2010 so that more members of the public could discuss the problems and issues affecting the pedestrian environment and the proposed conceptual improvement schemes. The public forum was well received by the local community. Over 60 members of the public (including members of YLDC, representatives of public transport operators, representatives of residents' groups of Yuen Long, representatives of owners' committees) attended the forum, and made constructive suggestions for the formulation of conceptual improvement measures.

8. After considering the views gathered in the first public forum, we worked out the conceptual improvement measures and use them as the basis for developing the preliminary improvement measures. We held the second public forum in July 2010 to enable the public to discuss these improvement measures. The second forum was equally well received by the public and was attended by about 60 members of the public. They generally supported the preliminary improvement measures.

9. We further refined the proposed improvement measures on the basis of the outcome of the second public forum, and consulted the Traffic and Transport Committee of YLDC on these measures in September 2010. Members of the committee generally supported the measures and agreed to their early implementation.

PROPOSED IMPROVEMENT MEASURES

10. The proposed measures for improving the pedestrian environment in Yuen Long Town may be classified as follows :

- (a) improvements works along CPR(YLS);
- (b) improvements of local roads in Yuen Long Town;
- (c) provision of new footbridges; and
- (d) streetscape improvements.

11. The location plan for the proposed improvement measures is at **Annex B**.

(A) *Improvements works along CPR(YLS) (see locations A1 to A5 at Annex B)*

12. As explained in paragraph 3 above, pedestrian congestion problems are most serious along CPR(YLS). The causes of these problems include the following : busy shopping activities generating high pedestrian flows; limited footway widths at various critical locations resulting in shortfall in capacities; and heavy vehicular and pedestrian flows resulting in conflicts and hence congestion in pedestrian crossings.

13. We therefore propose to mitigate these problems through widening of footways and pedestrian crossings and improving their design at the following locations :

- (a) junction between CPR(YLS)/Tai Tong Road (see location A1) – the proposed improvements may be implemented in two stages. The first stage involves widening the pedestrian crossings on Tai Tong Road and the section of CPR(YLS) to the west of the junction. The second stage, on the other hand, involves widening of the pedestrian

crossings on Kuk Ting Street and the section of CPR(YLS) to the east of the junction. After the implementation of these works, the footways/pedestrian crossings concerned will be widened by about 20% to 80% and will help alleviate the congestion of pedestrians at the concerned locations;

- (b) junction between CPR(YLS)/Yuen Long Hong Lok Road (see location A2) – the proposed works will widen the concerned footways and pedestrian crossings by up to 30% and 80% respectively, which will help avoid pedestrians using the carriageway;
- (c) junction between CPR(YLS)/Kik Yeung Road (see location A3) – the proposed works will widen the concerned footways by about 20% to 30%, thus increasing the holding areas for pedestrians waiting to cross the carriageway; and
- (d) junction between CPR(YLS)/Man Hop Path (see location A5) – the proposed works involve changing the existing staggered pedestrian crossing to a straight crossing, thus shortening the pedestrian waiting time by about 50% (90 seconds).

14. In addition, we will consider providing an extension to the footbridge at Yuen Long Plaza (see location A4) for connecting to the open space east of the building, so that pedestrians not destined for Yuen Long Plaza can take a more direct route.

(B) Improvements along local roads (see locations B1 to B4 at Annex B)

15. Apart from CPR(YLS), we have also explored possibilities for improving pedestrian circulation on the local roads in Yuen Long Town and put forward the following improvement measures :

- (a) junction between Kau Yuk Road/Tai Tong Road/Mau Tan Street (see location B1) – widening of the pedestrian crossings and improvement of junction layout and method of control;

- (b) On Shun Street (see location B2) – imposing no-stopping restriction during busy hours to improve traffic circulation;
- (c) junction between Ma Wang Road/Ping Shun Street (see location B3) – adding a new exit for traffic in the northern part of Yuen Long Town to turn left onto Ma Wang Road west bound, so as to provide an alternative route to destinations outside Yuen Long Town bypassing CPR(YLS), thus relieving traffic congestion; and
- (d) Yau Sun Street (see location B4) – adopting traffic calming measures and designating loading/unloading zones to improve traffic management.

(C) *Provision of new footbridges (see locations C1 and C2 in Annex B)*

16. During the course of the public engagement exercise, the public clearly expressed the desire for an efficient north-south pedestrian route to cope with future development in the area, and to connect directly to West Rail Long Ping Station. For this, we consider that we may explore the possibility of constructing a major footbridge along Yuen Long Nullah connecting West Rail Long Ping Station in the north to Ma Tin Road in the south (see location C1) to serve as a strategic north-south pedestrian route. Furthermore, in view of the on-going and possible new developments in a number of areas around West Rail Yuen Long Station, we also propose to consider constructing a footbridge linking these areas with Yuen Long Town (see location C2).

17. Given that the construction of these footbridges will involve major technical issues (in particular the impact on the discharge capacity of Yuen Long Nullah), the feasibility of the two footbridges will have to be established through detailed studies.

(D) *Streetscape improvements*

18. Appropriate streetscape improvements will be implemented in conjunction with the foregoing improving measures so as to enhance the pedestrian environment. For instance, we will consider the possibility of laying special paving blocks on footways and installing ornamental fencing when implementing the improvement measures for improving CPR(YLS) at locations A1 to A5 described above. We will also consider laying special paving blocks on footways, installing ornamental fencing

and providing greening for Mau Tan Street and Yau Sun Street when implementing the improvement measures at locations B1 and B4 described above.

WAY FORWARD

19. We are now taking forward as minor works the relatively straightforward improvement measures, including those for improving CPR(YLS) at locations A1 (first stage), A2, A3 and A5 mentioned above; those in part B mentioned above for improving the local roads; as well as the associated streetscape improvement works. We will progressively formulate detailed implementation programmes and proceed with detailed design with a view to completing these works in phases in the coming two to three years.

20. As regards the improvement measures of a larger scale, we will need to conduct detailed studies to confirm their feasibility and establish the way forward. In particular, we will conduct detailed feasibility studies on the major footbridges under part C above to explore whether these proposals are feasible, and work out design schemes that will best suit the present and future pedestrian demands. We will also study whether the proposed extension and lift retrofitting for the footbridge at Yuen Long Plaza at location A4 will be feasible from the structural viewpoint. The second stage of the improvement at location A1 involves major junction improvements including banning the left turn from Kuk Ting Street into the eastbound carriageway of CPR(YLS), and re-routing the affected traffic through Yuen Long Tung Tai Street. We will conduct further detailed investigation from the traffic engineering point of view.

21. The detailed feasibility study to be conducted for the measures of a larger scale mentioned in paragraph 20 above is scheduled to start in mid-2011 for completion at or before the end of 2013. If the schemes are found to be feasible, we will develop an implementation programme. We will consult the public and YLDC at appropriate junctures during the course of the study, so as to take on board their views in developing the design options.

**Transport and Housing Bureau
Highways Department**

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