

CB(1)1525/13-14(12)

To: pid@legco.gov.hk
From: Tst Res
Date: 05/23/2014 11:26PM
Subject: Panel on Development 27 May

Dear Secretariat,

Please circulate a copy of our message to members of:
Panel on Development

Meeting on Tuesday, 27 May 2014, at 2:30 pm
PWP Item No. 769CL - Pilot study on underground space development in
selected strategic urban areas
(3:20 pm - 4:05 pm)
LC Paper No. CB(1)1321/13-14(01)
(issued on 28.4.2014) - Administration's paper on 769CL - Pilot study on
underground space development in selected strategic urban areas
LC Paper No. CB(1)1321/13-14(02)
(issued on 28.4.2014) - Paper on the pilot study on the use of underground
space prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat (Background brief)

Dear Members of Development Panel,

Our group is very disturbed by the proposal to build a shopping mall under Kowloon Park. Our streets and existing malls are over run with tourists, we can no longer go to the waterfront and now our park, our last refuge, is to be turned over to visitors and commercial facilities. This is unacceptable.

That the King George V sitting out area, the only open space convenient to the residents of Jordan West, be trashed is also alarming.

http://www.districtcouncils.gov.hk/ytm/doc/en/committee_meetings_doc/CBC/YTM_CBC_2014_4_E.pdf

Building under a park involves extensive tunneling and the removal of mature trees. Underground facilities require lifts, escalators, ventilation shafts, parking facilities, etc. Look at the way Harcourt Garden in Admiralty has been completely stripped of its vegetation. Moreover it is quite obvious that the promises made by MTR that the park would be

reinstated are false as many multi-storey buildings are already being constructed at the site.

The damage inflicted on Victoria Park when residents were not aware that a road was to be constructed through the park rather than underground was a wakeup call for all districts that we must be vigilant whenever plans that include our parks are put forward.

Not only would the natural environment of the park be completely destroyed, the commercial activities would greatly impact the focus of a public park, some definitions:

- A piece of public land in or near a city that is kept free of houses and other buildings and can be used for pleasure and exercise

- A large area of public land kept in its natural state to protect plants and animals

- A park is an area of open space provided for recreational use. It can be in its natural or semi-natural state, or planted, and is set aside for human enjoyment or for the protection of wildlife or natural habitats.

There is also a strong possibility that ancient ruins will be disturbed by excavation. We remind members of the recent findings at To Kwa Wan. Kowloon Park is home to a number of graded buildings and gun emplacements. On Haiphong Road we have the shrine to the Earth God that predates the British barracks.

We also object strongly to Part 6 of the paper which lists the procedures to be followed with public consultation to take place AFTER all other decisions are made.

ix) undertaking public engagement and consultation with relevant stakeholders.

It is totally unacceptable that the residents are to be the last people to be consulted. Of course this is to ensure that even if we do not approve of the plans they will go through as district councils will have been persuaded via the promise of some underground community facilities or such to give approval.

To date residents of Yau Tsim have not been approached for their views.

We would remind Legco members that plans to encroach on country parks were met with strong public objections. Community parks are held in even more regard as many elderly, the disabled, families with young children and grassroots of limited means currently enjoy the facilities they offer and the opportunity to go get out of crowded and often uncomfortable homes.

The electorate in Yau Tsim has a strong message for legislators. The people, not the government, are the true owners of public land.

HANDS OFF OUR PARKS

Tsim Sha Tsui Residents Concern Group, a registered NGO