

**Public Works Subcommittee
Meeting on 11 March 2015**

**List of issues requiring follow-up actions
to be taken by the Administration**

PWSC (2014-15)50

**769CL Pilot Study on
Underground Space Development
in Selected Strategic Urban Areas**

At the request of Hon Cyd HO, the Administration will provide information on –

- (a) the rationale for considering developing underground space rather than developing "secondary city centres" above ground, given that huge amount of energy consumption would be needed to support the activities to be undertaken in underground space ;**

The Government has adopted a multi-pronged approach to increase land supply in Hong Kong, including among others underground space development.

Underground space development has been identified as a viable option of long-term land supply in congested urban areas. There is a need to further explore the potential of developing underground space to create space, enhance connectivity and improve the built environment in the four strategic areas.

- (b) the estimated amount of energy consumption per square metre in the underground space of the four urban strategic areas to be covered by the pilot study ("the four strategic areas"); and**

Energy consumption would depend on the design and usage of the underground space. We will evaluate the energy consumption and identify energy-efficient initiatives to achieve energy efficiency and environmental friendly objectives for the priority projects identified in the pilot study.

(c) assessment on the impact of underground space development in the four strategic areas on cross-boundary traffic between Hong Kong and the Mainland.

When assessing the technical feasibility of the priority projects identified in the pilot study, we will mainly examine the impacts of underground space development on the local road traffic and pedestrian circulation. There is apparently no direct significant relationship between cross-boundary traffic and underground space development in the four strategic areas.

At the request of Hon WU Chi-wai, the Administration will provide information on –

(d) the existing underground developments (including MTR stations and underground railways) in the four strategic areas, and whether such developments would impose constraints on underground space development in these areas;

Existing underground facilities (e.g. MTR stations, pedestrian subways and building basements) would inevitably impose constraints on future underground space development in the four strategic areas. However, those existing facilities may also offer synergy effects and opportunities for new urban underground space development by enhancing the overall connectivity and improving the congested urban environment. The pilot study will address those constraints and identify opportunities for underground space development in the strategic areas.

(e) the estimated amount of underground space that would be made available in the four strategic areas for (i) use as pedestrian subway and (ii) commercial use, etc.;

At this stage, it is premature to estimate the amount of underground space that could be developed for pedestrian subway and commercial use in the four strategic areas. The pilot study will take account of the relevant factors, including urban setting, engineering feasibility, financial viability, cost-effectiveness and stakeholders' views, in formulating Underground Master Plans and developing conceptual design schemes for priority projects.

- (f) the existing restrictions, if any, in terms of plot ratio, planning parameters, etc., imposed on the development of underground space in land disposal; and**

Any development within a site, including underground development, would need to comply with the planning parameters as stipulated on the relevant statutory plan. Any building works including those situated underground would also require submission of building plans for approval. Buildings erected within a site, irrespective of above-ground or underground, would be measured for plot ratio (PR) and Gross Floor Area except for any specific exemptions provided for under the prevailing regime (e.g. underground carpark ancillary and directly related to the development). A development proposal would be permitted only if the use and PR are in compliance with the Building (Planning) Regulations and the statutory plan.

Land leases stipulate the obligations and duties of the owner, and the planning, engineering and development requirements that need to be met. Development within a lot boundary, irrespective of above-ground or underground, must comply with the relevant lease conditions. Generally speaking, any development that goes beyond what is permitted under the lease conditions, including development and connections underground involving additional floor space and additional entry or exit points on the lot exceeding the lease limits, would require lease modification.

- (g) whether the pilot study or the territory-wide study (commenced in December 2013, on underground space development in the urban areas of Hong Kong) will include a review on the need for formulating a policy on the restrictions referred to in (f) above.**

Relevant reviews on the control of underground space development will be undertaken in the pilot study.