

立法會 *Legislative Council*

LC Paper No. CB(2)1128/15-16(06)

Ref : CB2/PL/HA

Panel on Home Affairs

Updated background brief prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat for the meeting on 24 March 2016

Reprovisioning of Shanghai Street Refuse Collection Point and Street Sleepers' Services Units for the Phase II Development of the Yau Ma Tei Theatre Project

Purpose

This paper provides background information on the reprovisioning of Shanghai Street Refuse Collection Point ("RCP") and Street Sleepers' Services Units ("SSSU") to a site at Hau Cheung Street, Yau Ma Tei to facilitate the Phase II development of Yau Ma Tei Theatre ("YMTT") project. This paper also summarizes the major concerns expressed by Legislative Council ("LegCo") Members on the subject.

Background

2. In December 2008, the Administration briefed the Panel on Home Affairs ("the Panel") on its proposal to convert two graded historic buildings in Yau Ma Tei, namely YMTT (Grade II) and Red Brick Building (Grade I), into a Xiqu activity centre. Panel members supported the proposal and urged for its early implementation. The Administration was also urged to reprovision the public toilet and RCP beside YMTT, and turn the area into a tourist attraction. The Administration's proposal was subsequently endorsed by the Public Works Subcommittee ("PWSC") and the Finance Committee ("FC") on 21 January 2009 and 13 February 2009 respectively. YMTT phase I was opened for public use in July 2012.

3. In order to release space for the implementation of YMTT phase II, the Administration further submitted a proposal to reprovision Shanghai Street RCP and SSSU to a site at Hau Cheung Street in Yau Ma Tei for consultation with the Panel at its meeting on 15 April 2013. While some members expressed support for the Administration's proposal, some other members held a strong view that the co-location arrangement of RCP and SSSU at the same site was a form of discrimination against street sleepers. These members strongly

requested that the two facilities should be reprovisioned to separate sites. The Panel passed a motion urging the Government to respect the dignity of street sleepers in the course of redeveloping the YMTT and relocating the nearby street sleepers' shelter and RCP, and to uphold the people-oriented principle by reprovisioning RCP and SSSU to separate sites as well as facilitating the access by street sleepers.

4. The Administration subsequently refined its proposal taking into account members' views and re-submitted its project proposal to the Panel for discussion at its meeting on 13 December 2013. While some members expressed concerns on the design of the reprovisioning project, most members did not raise objection to the submission of the project proposal to PWSC. However, when PWSC deliberated on the reprovisioning project on 29 January 2014, the project proposal was negated. The Administration undertook to explore improvement measures and submit the revised design to PWSC for consideration.

Concerns expressed by Members on the reprovisioning project

Co-location of RCP and SSSU

5. Some Members held a strong view that the co-location arrangement of RCP and SSSU at the same site was a form of discrimination against street sleepers. They pointed out that the Shanghai Street SSSU was currently suffering from serious bed bugs problems caused by the humid environment of RCP in the same building and urged the Administration to take the opportunity to separate the two facilities.

6. The Administration explained that the reprovisioning proposal was drawn up in response to Members' previous request for the relocation of the existing RCP and SSSU to improve the overall environment of YMTT. It had reviewed all the sites in the district in response to Members' comments and reaffirmed that there was no other site suitable for reprovisioning the RCP or SSSU.

7. In response to Members' enquiry on precedents of accommodating RCPs in residential buildings in the territory, the Administration advised that eight RCPs under the management of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department were located on the ground floors of private residential buildings, and there was only one floor between the RCPs and the upper residential floors. Some Members held the view that given the scarcity of land and the high population density in Hong Kong, it was unavoidable that some residential buildings were in close proximity to waste facilities.

8. There was a view that if the Administration was unable to identify another site for SSSU, the existing SSSU could be reprovisioned in-situ and incorporated in the phase II development of YMTT. The Administration should explore relaxing the plot ratio and height limit of the new building for the expansion of YMTT, so as to maximize the gross floor area to accommodate the temporary shelter for street sleepers as well as the necessary performance and rehearsal venues. The Administration explained that the proposal was technically infeasible as the site adjacent to YMTT, with an area of just 500 m², was relatively small. The ancillary facilities of SSSU (including lifts, staircases, entrance lobby and circulation spaces) would take up the central portion of the site and seriously affect the basic features, including the proposed expansion of the foyer, backstage facilities and access linkage, of YMTT phase II project.

Constructing two separate buildings at Hau Cheung Street

9. Some Members suggested that if another site could not be identified for reprovisioning SSSU, the Administration should examine the feasibility of constructing two separate building blocks on the site at Hau Cheung Street to accommodate the reprovisioned RCP and SSSU.

10. The Administration advised that the site at Hau Cheung Street was too small to be provided with sufficient means of escape and means of access for fire fighting and rescue if RCP and SSSU were to be constructed as two completely separate buildings on the site. Even if a portion of the adjacent site currently used as Highways Department's material store was included in the reprovisioning project, the two blocks would have to be built adjoining each other and this would not bring any concrete benefits to the service users. In addition, the proposal would necessitate going through the planning process again and that would cause substantial delay to the project for at least 18 months.

Constructing additional storey(s) in the new building

11. At the PWSC meeting on 22 January 2014, some Members urged the Administration to consider construction of additional storey(s) in the future new building for other uses (e.g. storage). In their view, such a proposal would not only optimize the use of precious land resources, but would also maximize the vertical distance between RCP and SSSU to mitigate the impact of odour nuisance generated by RCP on the service users of SSSU.

12. The Administration advised that the Government Property Agency had been consulted and it had confirmed that the current development proposal for the project site could achieve an optimal degree of site utilization. To pursue

Members' suggestion, it would need to conduct internal consultation on the use of the proposed storage areas and draw up the relevant building specifications in accordance with user departments' requirements. That apart, another round of detailed technical feasibility study would need to be conducted leading to further delay in the implementation of the reprovisioning project.

13. According to the Administration, certain refinements had already been made to the design of the project in the light of Members' views. The entrance on the side of RCP facing the pavement would adopt a recessed and inconspicuous design, and planters would be installed. To mitigate the impact of the exhaust air from RCP, apart from treating the air of RCP by enhanced deodorized and filtering system, mechanical ventilation would also be installed at the windows facing Hau Cheung Street on 1/F and 2/F of SSSU. Furthermore, the exhaust air duct of RCP would be located far away from the windows of SSSU and built at the highest possible level.

14. The Administration advised that the main entrance to RCP would be closed at all times except for the passage of refuse collection vehicles, which would make approximately six to seven trips to RCP every day. The staff at RCP would cleanse the place every time after the vehicle had left and further cleanse it thoroughly with diluted disinfectant every night before its closure. No refuse would be stored there overnight. RCP and SSSU would be completely separated internally within the building and the longest possible distance would be provided between their entrances. The Administration had also modified the floor plan to allow flexibility for alteration of the orientation of the main entrance of SSSU to the north such that it would not be located on the same side with RCP.

Location of the reprovisioned SSSU

15. Some Members raised concern about the accessibility to the reprovisioned SSSU as the new site was relatively far away from the existing site which was in the residential areas and the core business areas of Yau Ma Tei and Mongkok. There was a suggestion that the existing SSSU should be reprovisioned to a site easily accessible by users.

16. As explained by the Administration, the purpose of the proposed reprovisioning project was to make available the existing site for the Phase II development of YMTT. Taking into account the need for maintaining the existing services of RCP and SSSU in the district, the selected site at Hau Cheung Street was not too far away from the existing RCP and SSSU. According to the Administration, the Social Welfare Department had consulted the two operators of the Shanghai Street SSSU on the proposed reprovisioning of SSSU. While the proposal was agreeable to both operators, they had also

undertaken to continue the provision of the existing dedicated supportive services for street sleepers on the new premises at Hau Cheung Street.

Latest development

17. In the light of Members' concerns, the Administration has come up with a revised proposal of the reprovisioning project. The Panel has scheduled to discuss the Administration's revised proposal at the next meeting on 24 March 2016.

Relevant papers

18. A list of the relevant papers on LegCo's website is in **Appendix**.

Council Business Division 2
Legislative Council Secretariat
21 March 2016

Appendix

Relevant papers on Reprovisioning of Shanghai Street Refuse Collection Point and Street Sleepers' Services Units for the Phase II Development of the Yau Ma Tei Theatre Project

Committee	Date of meeting	Paper
Panel on Home Affairs	12.12.2008 (Item VI)	Agenda CB(2)427/08-09(05) Minutes
Public Works Subcommittee	21.1.2009 (Item 6)	Agenda PWSC(2008-09)60 PWSCI(2008-09)20 Minutes
Finance Committee	13.2.2009 (Item 2)	Agenda Minutes
Panel on Home Affairs	15.4.2013 (Item IV)	Agenda Minutes
	13.12.2013 (Item VI)	Agenda Minutes
Public Works Subcommittee	22.1.2014 (Item 5)	Agenda PWSC(2013-14)35 Minutes
	29.1.2014 (Item 1)	Agenda PWSC(2013-14)35 Minutes