

Legislative Council Panel on Development

**Pilot Study on Underground Space Development
in Selected Strategic Urban Areas
Stage 2 Public Engagement**

**Regarding the written enquiries submitted by Hon HUI Chi-fung
for the meeting on 25 June 2019**

Our responses to the written enquiries submitted by Hon HUI Chi-fung on the captioned subject (LegCo Paper No. CB(1)1181/18-19(07)) on 24 June 2019 to the Legislative Council Panel of Development are as follows:

Question (1): Will the Government release the relevant assessment documents for further consultation, and submit to the District Council and the Legislative Council Panel on Development after formulation of construction programme, construction schemes (including social impact assessment and environmental impact assessment) and the project cost.

Response (1): The Civil Engineering and Development Department and the Planning Department are conducting the Pilot Study on Underground Space Development (USD) in Selected Strategic Urban Areas (SUAs) (hereafter, “the Study”), and launched on 22 May 2019 its Stage Two Public Engagement (PE2) exercise for a period of three months. The Study suggests according priority to develop the conceptual scheme beneath Kowloon Park to offer solution space for mitigation of the overcrowded pedestrian environment and accommodation of the much needed community facilities in the district, as well as enhance the park facilities. Thereafter, the Government will take a comprehensive account of the public views collected from PE2 to refine the Kowloon Park Conceptual Scheme under the Study, and consider the way forward on its implementation.

Should the proposed conceptual scheme for USD at Kowloon Park be found feasible and be taken forward for further implementation, the Government will conduct a detailed technical study at the next stage to assess the impacts of different aspects, recommend the mitigation measures required for the proposal, formulate the implementation programme and mechanism, and estimate the development cost, etc. The Government will also compile the relevant technical information for consultation with the relevant advisory and statutory bodies / committees, including the District Council and the Legislative

Council Panel on Development.

Question (2): It is mentioned in paragraph 8 of the paper that proper introduction of retail/food and beverage elements is preferable to provide a comfortable and attractive USD for the convenience of members of the public. According to the minutes of the advisory and statutory meetings attached to the Final Report of the Stage 1 Public Engagement, the Yau Tsim Mong District Council and the Town Planning Board both suggested community uses in underground space. The Harbourfront Commission also suggested avoiding introduction of commercial uses. In this connection, please provide the reasons for introduction of retail/food and beverage facilities.

Response (2): During the Stage 1 Public Engagement, we consulted extensively members of the public and relevant stakeholders, district councils, the Town Planning Board and the Harbourfront Commission on the Study. Many feedbacks suggested that underground space should be developed for diverse uses, including provision of community facilities, recreational facilities, retail/food and beverage facilities, and car parking and loading/unloading facilities, etc. for the convenience of the public. With respect to the topic of introducing commercial element in USD, whilst some comments considered that it could bring vibrancy to the USD, some comments had reservation on the idea. In this regard, the Study has made reference to the popular implementation modes of overseas development of underground space and proposed to introduce proper retail/food and beverage elements with a view to providing a comfortable and attractive underground space environment for the convenience of the public. An “underground street” approach is adopted and the proposed retail/food and beverage facilities will be modestly provided alongside the 3-level passageways connecting to the MTR Tsim Sha Tsui Station, the Park and its surrounding streets at surface level. Besides, covered public space offering public leisure and recreational facilities will be provided. We will take a comprehensive account of the public views collected from the Stage 2 Public Engagement to refine the conceptual scheme of USD at Kowloon Park and the proposed distribution of uses.

Question (3): It is mentioned in paragraph 15 of the paper that involvement of the private sector in USD and future management could be considered. 3.1 Is there any plan of selling or letting the underground space? 3.2 Would short term tenancy be opened for public applications? 3.3 Whether the goal of involving the private sector is to achieve a balance of income and expenditure of the development plan?

Response (3): At this stage, the Government is open to different implementation modes for the Kowloon Park Conceptual Scheme for USD, such as government project, public-private partnership and private development modes. We will list out for the reference of public members of in PE2 on the pros and cons of different possible implementation modes, with a view to exploring their viabilities. Thereafter, the Study will take a comprehensive account of the public views collected during PE2 to refine the Kowloon Park Conceptual Scheme, and recommend a viable implementation mode.

**Development Bureau
Civil Engineering and Development Department
Planning Department
July 2019**