

# **HONG KONG ALTERNATIVES**

*An advocacy group unaffiliated with any commercial or political groups, committed to the development of West Kowloon Cultural District Site as a Culturally integrated Green Park for the best interests of Hong Kong people*

## **An appeal to develop WKCD as**

## **West Kowloon Cultural Green Park**

### **As a legacy for Hong Kong.**

We, members of Hong Kong Alternatives, want to reiterate our appeal to the HKSAR Government to assign the West Kowloon Cultural District site in its entirety for building of a Cultural Green Park. In order to maintain Hong Kong's status as the world city of Asia, we definitely need a green urban park of cultural vibrancy for those who live and work here to be in touch with nature, to walk, to talk and to relax; for the artists, musicians and dancers to practice, to perform and to create; and for the young, old and common folks to learn to and pursue their outdoor interest, to practice Tai Chi, to play chess and to breathe the sea breeze. The WK Cultural Green Park is not an extravagance that Hong Kong cannot afford. It is a necessity and is totally affordable at the present economical condition of Hong Kong, and given the sustained 8 to 10% annual growth of China's economy and the public's increasing standard of living.

### **WKCD is not for Sale! Not for commercial property development !**

We further appeal to Hong Kong's communities of art and culture not to sell the hen that lays eggs. The WKCD site, located at the heart of our metropolitan center, and commanding the best panoramic harbour view, is Hong Kong's crown jewel, and is our last frontier for a cultural green park. The land is too valuable to be sold to developers for the greed of a few. The lands of WKCD site must NOT be treated as private property. They belong to the people. Also we must realize that money received from land sales in Hong Kong is not subject to compromises between the various interest groups, LEGCO and the Government. That is, of course, a matter of good policy.

### **Hong Kong is the world's biggest Concrete Jungle !**

Many years of irresponsible property developments have transformed the metropolitan Hong Kong into the biggest concrete jungle of the world. We can't find a single matured tree along the entire harbor front. All our urban parks are paved with concrete for over 70% of the parkland. There is not a single avenue in the city with matured

grove of trees. We have the most densely populated urban centers and the least parkland per head ratio among all cities in the world. Many of our young people growing up never have a chance to sit on a green lawn or play with a pet in wide open space. Our children are growing up with 80% of their time sheltered in indoor environments. Obesity, asthma coughing, allergy, muscle pains and aches, acid stomach, gastric ulcer, high blood pressure, high cholesterol level and cancer have become common illnesses in Hong Kong, not to mention mental and psychological problems,

### **The Green Revolution is on !**

The past 5 to 10 years have seen an explosion of tree planting and creation of new parks and public gathering places in many major cities. The members of our group have eye-witnessed such to happen in Singapore, Macau, Paris, Chicago, Sydney and in many big and small Chinese cities. This is a revolution inspired by new environmental sciences. Scientists have found that parks and gardens are essential to human society and psychological well-being. Without access to grass and trees, we humans are very different creatures. This is particularly true with the children and young people of today, and as they grow up, they will be the generation to bear the burden of economical growth, prosperity, stability and well being of our society. Our next generation, 20 years from now, must face these concrete jungles and an aging population. Will they have in mind and will to accept such social responsibilities?

### **Take away our Pollution by Good City Planning!**

The streets of our West Kowloon District have a high level of air pollution. This is because the new high-rise buildings have blocked off the sea breezes. This phenomenon, known as the ‘Canyon’ effect, has troubled the Causeway Bay area for many years and the Central District is going to get worse in the next few years to come. Our urban centers are over-built with high-rises and extremely lacking open spaces and trees. In Chicago, trees are found to remove 250 tons of particulates, 100 tons of nitrogen dioxide, another 100 tons of sulfur dioxide and 17 tons of carbon monoxide. In this modern era with all pressure in urban settings, our contact with nature is more crucial than ever.

### **Give us a GREEN PARK !**

Please, don’t ever label again the aging population as Hong Kong’s future problem? Parks help people to take care of themselves, so that this city does not have to spend so much on social, medical and safety services. We must accept that old age is a reality in order for us to be able to appreciate and enjoy its presence. Give us the WK Cultural Green Park and we are certain that the elderly will have their shares of contribution to art and culture and their donation of time and money will be well worthwhile. We can never have enough of NATURE.

### **HK Alternatives’ proposed ACTION PLAN for WKCD :**

- 1) The HKSAR Government and LEGCO shall jointly invite world renowned architect, I.M. Pei to lead us in the conceptual and architectural designs of the proposed WK Cultural Green Park.
- 2) The LEGCO and the Government shall authorize forming of a HK Cultural Authority with the immediate duty to implement building of the WK Cultural Green Park and the long-term duty to plan and promote art and culture.
- 3) The Chief Executive shall have the mandatory responsibility to appoint the Chairman of HK Cultural Authority, who must be a community leader of high integrity and a patron of arts and culture.
- 4) The Government shall be responsible for funding of the HK Cultural Authority and the LEGCO shall be responsible for the annual approval of the funds.
- 5) The HK Cultural Authority shall have its autonomy independent from the Government and LEGCO.
- 6) The chairman shall be authorized to name and appoint members of his/her members of the board and working committee.
- 7) The cultural hub buildings shall be of low-rise designs covering less than 25% of the WKCD site.
- 8) The Green Park shall be an integral part of the Cultural Hub.
- 9) The WK Cultural Green Park shall be an integral part of metropolitan Hong Kong.
- 10) The WK Cultural Green Park shall be the city's most attractive and important water front landmark for all people.

**Let's create a**

**WEST KOWLOON CULTURAL GREEN PARK**

**As a Legacy of Hong Kong for generations to come !**

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