

For Information

Legislative Council Panel on Home Affairs
Public Library and Indoor Recreation Centre in Area 3, Yuen Long

Purpose

This paper informs Members of a proposed capital works project (the Project) to construct a library and indoor recreation centre in Area 3, Yuen Long that we plan to submit to the Public Works Subcommittee (PWSC) for consideration at its meeting on 7 January 2009. If Members of the Panel on Home Affairs would like to discuss the Project, we would make arrangement with the Secretariat for it to be discussed at a meeting of the Panel on Home Affairs before it is submitted to PWSC.

Background

2. The Project is an ex-Municipal Council project and is one of the 25 priority projects announced in the Policy Address in 2005.

Location of the Project Site

3. The project site, occupying an area of about 6 800 square metres, is situated at Ma Tin Road. It is currently used as two 5-a-side soccer pitches, a roller-skating rink, a jogging trail and a sitting-out area on a temporary basis, and is available for development. A site plan and the artist's impression of the building are at **Enclosures**.

Scope of the Project

4. The proposed scope of the Project comprises –

- (a) A district library to replace the existing district library (Yuen Long Public Library) on 1/F, Yuen Long Government Offices, Kiu Lok Square, Yuen Long. The facilities in the proposed district library include -

(i) Public facilities

- adult lending library, children's library, quick reference section, newspapers and periodicals section, multimedia library, computer and information centre, extension activities room, coffee corner, exhibition area and students' study room;
- cloakroom, book drop, public area for self-charging terminals, Internet workstations, online access catalogues and photocopying service, baby care room, public toilets; and
- readers' advisory desks, customer service counter, computer equipment rooms, security control room.

(ii) Office accommodation

- general accommodation and ancillary facilities for staff including book processing room, book sorting room, staff changing room and toilet facilities, etc.

(b) A central reserve stack for library materials of the library system to replace the existing temporary rented premises in Yu Chui Shopping Centre, Yu Chui Court, Sha Tin.

(c) An indoor recreation centre with -

- a main games arena with two basketball courts/two volleyball courts/eight badminton courts and spectator stand;
- a children's play room, a table-tennis room, a multi-purpose activity room, a fitness room; and
- ancillary facilities including a baby care room, a first aid room, toilet and changing facilities, a management office, a booking office, a conference/committee room, parking spaces, loading and unloading area, etc.

Justifications

Public library

5. Yuen Long District is presently served by two district libraries (Tin Shui Wai Public Library and Yuen Long Public Library), one small library and ten mobile library stops. Tin Shui Wai Public Library is an interim district library with a floor area of 1 570 square metres at rented premises in Kingswood Ginza, Tin Shui Wai. It will be replaced by a major library with a net operational floor area (NOFA) of about 6 200 square metres under another project near Tin Shui Wai Station of Mass Transit Railway (MTR) by mid 2012 to serve the population of Yuen Long District.

6. Yuen Long Public Library is a district library with a floor area of 1 540 square metres on 1/F, Yuen Long Government Offices. Its floor area is below the latest standard space requirement for a district library of 2 900 square metres. The library was opened in 1984 and its present floor area is unable to meet the heavy demand on public library service from the local community. Constrained by its small area, the existing Yuen Long Public Library can offer only a limited capacity in term of library facilities provided to the public. Considering the increasing demand in library service for more library materials and to cope with the wider use of information technologies to support the infrastructure and operation of the library, there is an increased demand for larger floor area to accommodate the facilities.

7. The Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines (HKPSG) suggests a district library be provided for every 200 000 population and the departmental guidelines suggest a major library for a population of 400 000. According to the Planning Department, the population of Yuen Long District would increase from 554 200 in 2008 to 650 200 in 2016. To meet the high demand of the growing population in Yuen Long District for library services, there is a need to replace the existing Yuen Long Public Library by a standard district library in addition to the provision of a major library in Tin Shui Wai and other library services provided. The proposed new district library, with an NOFA of some 2 900 square metres, would provide a full range of library services and facilities to better meet the needs of the local residents.

Central reserve stack

8. In addition to the standard district library, it is proposed that a central reserve stack, with an NOFA of some 3 100 square metres, be included in the Project with a view to replacing the existing one at the Yu Chui Shopping Centre, Yu Chui Court, Sha Tin which is a rented premises. Currently, some 500 000 library materials of Hong Kong Public Libraries are stored in the central reserve stack there. The stored materials include the collections for the “Libraries@neighbourhood - Community Libraries Partnership Scheme” which provide special block loan service for setting up of community libraries and the block loan services for schools. With the rapid development of library collections and the fast growth of public library service, it is necessary to secure additional storage space for the central reserve stack. The relocation of the central reserve stack from the rented premises at Sha Tin to the project site can accommodate the increasing amount of closed stack library materials and minimise the Government’s rental expenditure.

Indoor recreation centre

9. According to HKPSG, Yuen Long District, with a projected population of 563 800 in 2009, should be provided with some eight sports centres. At present, there are only four in the district. In addition, one sports centre near Tin Shui Wai Station of MTR is under construction and two sports centres in Area 101, Tin Shui Wai and Kam Tin/Pat Heung respectively are under active planning. The proposed project will help alleviate the shortfall of sports centres in the district.

10. The population of Yuen Long District is characterised by a relatively high proportion of working age population, and a relatively high proportion of young age population in Yuen Long New Town area, resulting in a keen demand for recreational and sports facilities. In view of the anticipated increase in population, the provision of a new sports centre in Yuen Long New Town area would be highly welcomed by local residents.

Project Estimate and Implementation Plan

11. The estimated cost of the Project is \$852 million in September 2008 prices.

12. Subject to funding approval by the Finance Committee, construction is expected to commence in late June 2009 for completion in May 2012.

Public Consultation

13. We consulted the Town Planning and Development Committee of the Yuen Long District Council (YLDC) on 18 September 2002 and the Culture, Recreation and Sports Committee of YLDC on 10 January 2006, 5 September 2006 and 8 May 2007 on the scope of the Project. Members supported the Project and urged for its early implementation.

14. We consulted the District Facilities Management Committee of YLDC on the design of the Project on 5 September 2008. Members reiterated their strong support to the Project and urged for its early implementation.

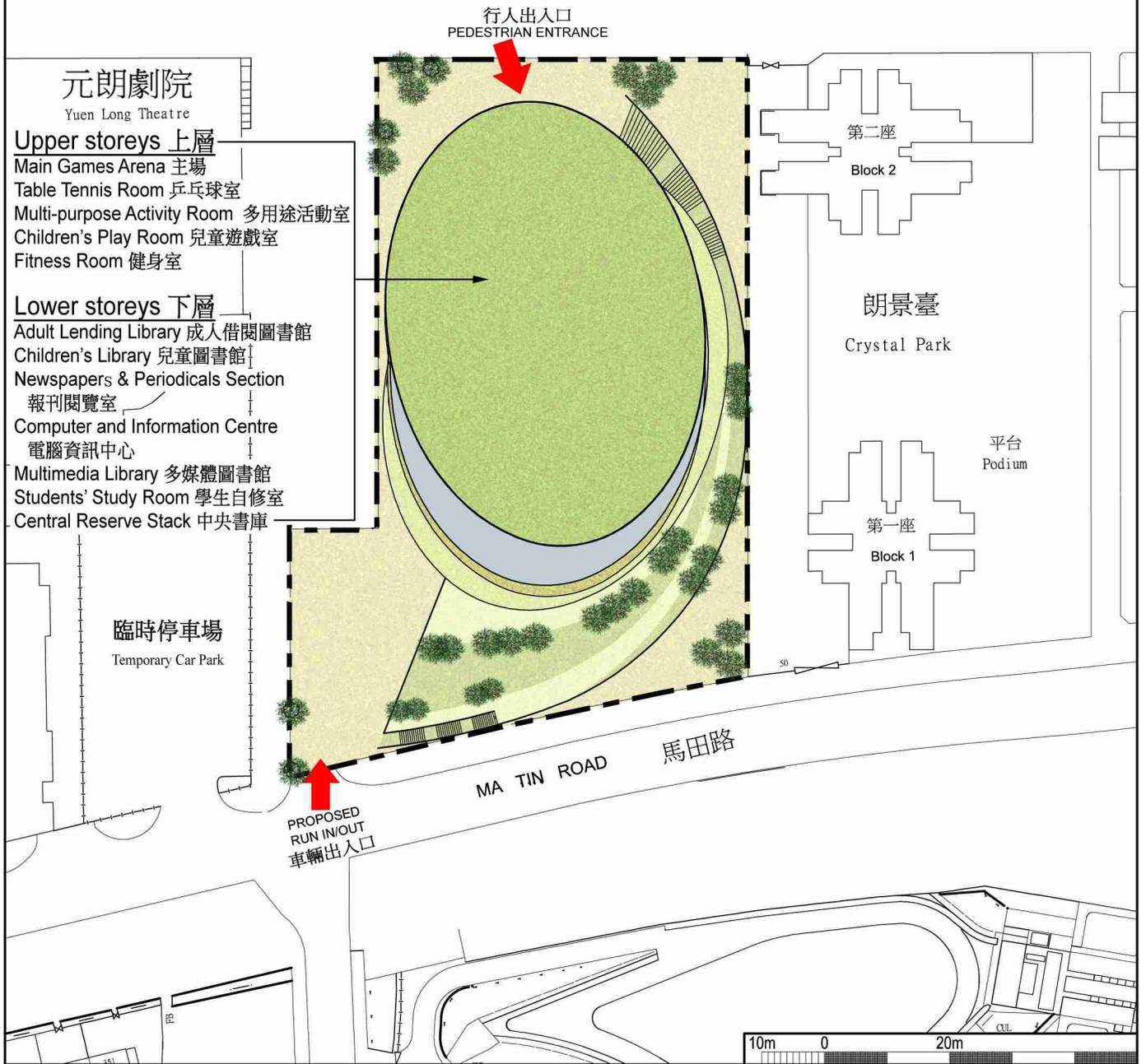
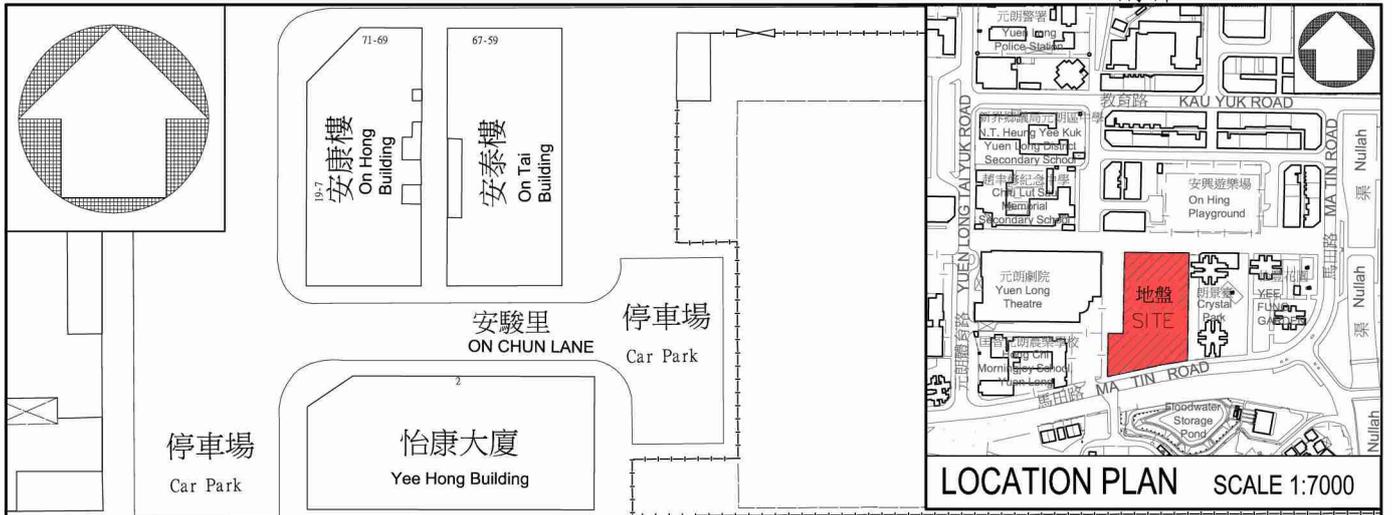
Way Forward

15. We intend to submit the Project to the PWSC of the Finance Committee for consideration at its meeting on 7 January 2009.

Advice Sought

16. Members are invited to support the implementation of the Project.

**Home Affairs Bureau
December 2008**



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