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Panel on Development

Meeting on 22 February 2011

Updated background brief on Greening Master Plans

Purpose

This paper provides background information on the development and implementation of Greening Master Plans (GMPs) and summarizes the views and concerns expressed by Members during past discussions on the subject.

Background

2. Pursuant to the direction announced by the Chief Executive in his 2000 Policy Address to green up Hong Kong by planting more trees and flowers in the urban areas, the Administration has established a Steering Committee on Greening to set the strategic direction and oversee the implementation of major greening programmes. The Committee is chaired by the Permanent Secretary for Development (Works) with members drawn from various departments, and under it are three sub-committees namely Works and Maintenance Committee on Greening; Community Involvement Committee on Greening; and Greening Master Plan Committee.

3. One key component in the pursuit of greening is the development and implementation of GMPs. GMPs seek to define comprehensively the greening framework of selected areas with coherent themes and plant species to promote a clear district identity. As greening opportunities arise under different time frames, GMPs embody a full spectrum of short, medium and long-term measures. Short-term measures are those conforming to the district layout and posing no direct conflict with land use or traffic arrangements and can be implemented within one to two years. Greening measures which have to be implemented in association with other projects or

which require private sector participation are classified as medium-term measures. As for long-term measures, they depict the ultimate greening vision and include proposals such as tree corridors along major roads which can only be achieved in conjunction with urban renewal, etc.

Development and implementation of Greening Master Plans

4. In July 2005, the Administration briefed the former Panel on Planning, Lands and Works (now renamed as "Panel on Development") (the Panel) on the initiative to develop GMPs for selected urban areas in order to bring about coordinated efforts and visible improvements in urban greenery. Since then, the Administration had consulted the Panel regularly on funding proposals about the development of GMPs for different urban areas and their implementation.

5. On 31 March 2009, the Administration consulted the Panel on the proposal for the implementation of greening works under GMPs for remaining urban areas, which covered Kowloon West (including Sham Shui Po and Kowloon City), Hong Kong Island (including Western District, Southern District and Eastern District), and Kowloon East (including Wong Tai Sin and Kwun Tong). The relevant funding proposal, at an estimated cost of \$466 million, was subsequently endorsed by the Public Works Subcommittee (PWSC) and approved by the Finance Committee (FC) on 22 April 2009 and 8 May 2009 respectively. The planting works were scheduled for completion by July 2011, followed by a one-year establishment period.

Members' views on the development and implementation of Greening Master Plans

6. When the subject was discussed at various meetings of the Panel, PWSC and FC, Members in general welcomed the development and implementation of GMPs. They urged the Administration to expedite the implementation, and accord priority to districts which were least greened and hence had the greatest need for greening. In particular, they opined that all major roads should be greened and beautified as far as practicable and private developers should be encouraged to do more greening within their developments.

7. On members' concern about the development and implementation of GMPs for areas in the New Territories, the Administration advised in

December 2007 that the situation in regard to greening was generally better in the New Territories than the urban areas due to good planning in new town development. At that time, the green coverage ratio (i.e. green coverage area/total area) of NT is about 74% versus about 46% in the urban areas. However, in view of the public's aspiration for development of GMPs for NT, the Administration would proceed to do so in mid-2009 when the development of GMPs on the urban front was largely completed.

8. At the meetings of the Panel and PWSC on 31 March 2009 and 22 April 2009 respectively, when discussing the Administration's proposal on the implementation of greening works under GMPs for remaining urban areas (covering Kowloon West, Kowloon East and Hong Kong Island), some members expressed the following views --

Greening strategies

- (a) There should be a clear policy on the design and implementation of the greening works, more thoughts should be given to the design of greening works to achieve the best aesthetic effect;
- (b) The Administration should put in more efforts in devising high quality greening plans and more effective greening measures, by drawing reference from the experiences in other places such as Shenzhen and Zhuhai;
- (c) More resources should be provided for greening works to achieve significant improvement of the environment and to generate more job opportunities;
- (d) The Administration should ensure that the implementation of the greening proposals could match the theme titles named for individual districts;
- (e) There should be a better coordination of the initiatives in greening works and pedestrian pavement works to achieve an overall improvement in the environment.
- (f) Greening should be implemented on appropriate sites but not on remote sites which were not easily accessible. Given the space constraint in old urban areas, the Administration should seriously consider carrying out the greening works underneath flyovers and along road dividers;

- (g) It would be a waste of resources to put too many plants of different species on the same site, and to replace plants too frequently;
- (h) Manual irrigation of trees and plants was ineffective and the Administration should consider including installation of automatic irrigation systems in the GMPs;

Selection of tree species

- (i) District Councils (DCs) and the local communities should be involved in the selection of tree species to be planted in their respective Districts;
- (j) Flowering trees with longer flowering period be planted in the urban areas, and not only in the central business districts of Central and Wan Chai;
- (k) Flowering trees should be planted at the sites underneath flyovers, and where possible, mature trees could be transplanted to the designated sites;
- (l) It was important to select appropriate plant species which could adapt to the environmental conditions of the particular site;
- (m) Native species were preferred, and seasonal flowers should be avoided to reduce maintenance cost;

Maintenance of greening works

- (n) The Administration should sort out the responsibilities for the long-term maintenance of greening works. If the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) was to be responsible for the maintenance of greening works, the Administration should be cautious in selecting plant species to avoid overloading the Department;
- (o) Due care should be exercised in implementing the greening works especially for the areas with busy pedestrian flow, as these plants would be adversely affected by environmental pollution;

- (p) The Administration should extend the period of greening works maintenance by the contractors to two years for better monitoring of the adaptability of the trees to the new environment; and
- (q) As some road signs along major roads and some street lamps were blocked by trees planted on the roadside, the Administration should pay attention to these situations and take action as appropriate.

9. Responding to members' various concerns, the Administration advised that the views from the DCs and the local communities had been taken into account in developing the GMPs. The Administration had followed the Enhanced Partnering Approach whereby the DCs and the local communities were closely involved from the inception to the finalization stage, and also taken into account suggestions from the public and major stakeholders. Different greening themes and titles were designed for different districts by the Consultants in consultation with the DCs and the local communities with a view to bringing out the unique characteristics of the district. Regarding greening works in old districts, suitable sites were identified through discussions with DCs and the local communities for inclusion in the GMPs.

10. The Administration further advised that under the proposed GMPs, greening works would be implemented underneath flyovers and at the central dividers where appropriate. Vertical greening would be provided for areas underneath flyovers where possible. As regards the use of automatic irrigation systems, it would be incorporated in the proposed GMPs. The greening works in Shenzhen were implemented successfully partly because adequate room had been reserved for the purpose during the early stage of town planning. The situation was different and more difficult in Hong Kong as greening works were to be implemented in developed areas.

11. On the selection of tree species, the Administration advised that suitable species that suited the greening themes of the district would be selected, taking into account the culture, environmental conditions and soil condition of the district, and also the resulting aesthetic effect. Tree experts had been involved during the development of GMPs and selection of plant species. Different native species as well as some non-native species which had settled and survived well in Hong Kong would be planted. The provision of seasonal flowers was not within the scope of the proposed GMPs and there was no need for frequent change of plant species.

12. On maintenance, the Administration advised that the Civil Engineering and Development Department (CEDD) would provide one-year establishment work for the proposed greening works under GMPs and then maintain the works for at least one more year. Before the end of the above maintenance period, CEDD would review the outcome and discuss with LCSD with a view to developing a long-term maintenance strategy for GMPs-related greening works. For tree maintenance over the entire territory, different departments took responsibilities under their respective jurisdictions. For instance, the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department, LCSD and the Highways Department (HyD) were respectively responsible for management of trees in country parks, leisure parks and along expressways. The mechanism and responsibilities for different departments in tree maintenance would be reviewed in the context of the interdepartmental review on issues relating to the Government's tree management policy headed by the Chief Secretary for Administration. Subject to the findings of the review, a more effective mechanism for tree maintenance would be formulated. In designing the GMPs and selection of species, the impact on traffic and pedestrian flow had been taken into account. HyD was responsible for regular maintenance and the pruning of mature trees planted near the road signs.

Recent development

13. The Administration will brief the Panel on 22 February 2011 on the work plan of CEDD for the development of Greening Master Plans for the New Territories and the outcome of the Department's consultation with DCs in the New Territories on its proposed approach to the initiative.

Relevant papers

14. A list of the relevant papers with their hyperlinks in the Legislative Council website is at the **Appendix**.

Greening Master Plans

List of relevant papers

Council/Committee	Date of meeting	Paper
Council meeting	17 November 2004	Hansard http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr04-05/english/counmtg/hansard/cm1117ti-translate-e.pdf
Planning, Lands and Works (PLW) Panel	21 January 2005	Information paper on "Policy Initiatives of the Environment, Transport and Works Bureau" provided by the Administration (LC Paper No. CB(1)707/04-05(01)) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr04-05/english/panels/plw/papers/plw0121cb1-707-1e.pdf Minutes of meeting (LC Paper No. CB(1)1566/04-05) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr04-05/english/panels/plw/minutes/pl050121.pdf
Environmental Affairs Panel	21 January 2005	Minutes of meeting (LC Paper No. CB(1)958/04-05) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr04-05/english/panels/ea/minutes/ea050121.pdf
PLW Panel	13 July 2005	Information paper on "Development of Greening Master Plans" provided by the Administration (LC Paper No. CB(1)1996/04-05(03)) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr04-05/english/panels/plw/papers/plw0713cb1-1996-3e.pdf Minutes of meeting (LC Paper No. CB(1)2362/04-05) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr04-05/english/panels/plw/minutes/pl050713.pdf

Council/Committee	Date of meeting	Paper
PLW Panel	22 November 2005	<p>Information paper on "Development and Implementation of Greening Master Plans" provided by the Administration (LC Paper No. CB(1)289/05-06(07)) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr05-06/english/panels/plw/papers/plw1122cb1-289-7e.pdf</p> <p>Information paper on "Cost-effectiveness of Greening Master Plans" provided by the Administration (LC Paper No. CB(1)299/05-06(01)) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr04-05/english/panels/plw/papers/plw0713cb1-299-1e.pdf</p> <p>Minutes of meeting (LC Paper No. CB(1)654/05-06) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr05-06/english/panels/plw/minutes/pl051122.pdf</p>
Public Works Subcommittee (PWSC)	21 December 2005	<p>Information paper on "35CG – Greening Master Plan for Kowloon West – Studies and Works" provided by the Administration (PWSC(2005-06)34) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr05-06/english/fc/pwsc/papers/p05-34e.pdf</p> <p>Information paper on "36CG – Greening Master Plan for Hong Kong Island – Studies and Works" provided by the Administration (PWSC(2005-06)35) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr05-06/english/fc/pwsc/papers/p05-35e.pdf</p> <p>Minutes of meeting (LC Paper No. PWSC28/05-06) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr05-06/english/fc/pwsc/minutes/pw051221.pdf</p>
PLW Panel	28 February 2006	<p>Information paper on "Greening Master Plans for Kowloon West and Hong Kong Island – Greening Works for Tsim Sha Tsui and Central" provided by the Administration (LC Paper No. CB(1)951/05-06(04)) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr05-06/english/panels/plw/papers/plw0228cb1-951-4e.pdf</p>

Council/Committee	Date of meeting	Paper
		<p>Minutes of meeting (LC Paper No. CB(1)1324/05-06) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr05-06/english/panels/plw/minutes/pl060228.pdf</p>
PWSC	6 April 2006	<p>Information paper on "35CG – Greening Master Plan for Kowloon West – Studies and Works; 36CG – Greening Master Plan for Hong Kong Island – Studies and Works" provided by the Administration (PWSC(2006-07)2) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr05-06/english/fc/pwsc/papers/p06-02e.pdf</p> <p>Minutes of meeting (LC Paper No. PWSC55/05-06) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr05-06/english/fc/pwsc/minutes/pw060406.pdf</p>
PLW Panel	25 July 2006	<p>Information paper on "Development and implementation of Greening Master Plans -- progress report" provided by the Administration (LC Paper No. CB(1)2022/05-06(02)) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr05-06/english/panels/plw/papers/plw0725cb1-2022-2e.pdf</p> <p>Background brief on "Greening Master Plans" prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat (LC Paper No. CB(1)2022/05-06(03)) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr05-06/english/panels/plw/papers/plw0725cb1-2022-3e.pdf</p> <p>Minutes of meeting (LC Paper No. CB(1)62/06-07) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr05-06/english/panels/plw/minutes/pl060725.pdf</p>
PWSC	25 October 2006	<p>Information paper on "35CG Greening master plan for Kowloon West - studies and works; 36CG Greening master plan for Hong Kong Island - studies and works" provided by the Administration (PWSC(2006-07)38) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr06-07/english/fc/pwsc/papers/p06-38e.pdf</p>

Council/Committee	Date of meeting	Paper
		<p>Minutes of meeting (LC Paper No. PWSC12/06-07) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr06-07/english/fc/pwsc/minutes/pw061025.pdf</p>
PLW Panel	27 March 2007	<p>Information paper on "Development of Greening Master Plans -- progress report" provided by the Administration (LC Paper No. CB(1)1184/06-07(03)) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr06-07/english/panels/plw/papers/plw0327cb1-1184-3-e.pdf</p> <p>Supplementary information paper on "Greening master plans for areas in the New Territories" provided by the Administration (LC Paper No. CB(1)1703/06-07(01)) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr06-07/english/panels/plw/papers/plw0327cb1-1703-1-e.pdf</p> <p>Minutes of meeting (LC Paper No. CB(1)1641/06-07) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr06-07/english/panels/plw/minutes/pl070327.pdf</p>
PWSC	6 June 2007	<p>Information paper on "35CG Greening master plan for Kowloon West - studies and works; 36CG Greening master plan for Hong Kong Island - studies and works; 40CG Greening master plan for Kowloon East - studies and works" provided by the Administration (PWSC(2006-07)21) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr06-07/english/fc/pwsc/papers/p07-21e.pdf</p> <p>Minutes of meeting (LC Paper No. PWSC93/06-07) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr06-07/english/fc/pwsc/minutes/pw070606.pdf</p>

Council/Committee	Date of meeting	Paper
Panel on Development	18 December 2007	<p>Information paper on "Greening - Review and Way Forward" provided by the Administration (LC Paper No. CB(1)428/07-08(04)) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr07-08/english/panels/plw/papers/dev1218cb1-428-4-e.pdf</p> <p>Minutes of meeting (LC Paper No. CB(1)775/07-08) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr07-08/english/panels/plw/minutes/de071218.pdf</p>
Panel on Development	25 March 2008	<p>Information paper on "Implementation of Greening Works of Greening Master Plans for Mong Kok, Yau Ma Tei, Sheung Wan, Wan Chai and Causeway Bay" provided by the Administration (LC Paper No. CB(1)1069/07-08(03)) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr07-08/english/panels/plw/papers/dev0325cb1-1069-3-e.pdf</p> <p>Minutes of meeting (LC Paper No. CB(1)1603/07-08) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr07-08/english/panels/plw/minutes/de080325.pdf</p> <p>Supplementary information paper provided by the Administration (LC Paper No. CB(1)1288/07-08(01)) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr07-08/english/panels/plw/papers/dev0325cb1-1288-1-e.pdf</p>
Panel on Development	21 March 2009	<p>Information Paper on "Implementation of Greening Works of Greening Master Plans for Remaining Urban Areas" provided by the Administration (LC Paper No. CB(1)1125/08-09(05)) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr08-09/english/panels/dev/papers/dev0331cb1-1125-5-e.pdf</p> <p>Minutes of meeting (LC Paper No. CB(1)1964/08-09) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr08-09/english/panels/dev/minutes/dev20090331.pdf</p>

Council/Committee	Date of meeting	Paper
PWSC	22 April 2009	<p>Information paper on "35CG Greening master plan for Kowloon West; 36CG Greening master plan for Hong Kong Island; 40CG Greening master plan for Kowloon East" provided by the Administration (PWSC(2009-10)15) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr08-09/english/fc/pwsc/papers/p09-15e.pdf</p> <p>Minutes of meeting (LC Paper No. PWSC86/08-09) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr08-09/english/fc/pwsc/minutes/pwsc20090422.pdf</p>