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**Joint Subcommittee to Monitor the Implementation of the
West Kowloon Cultural District Project**

**Updated background brief prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat
for the meeting on 7 July 2014**

**Integration and connectivity of the West Kowloon Cultural District
with its neighbouring districts**

Purpose

This paper summarizes the deliberations of the Joint Subcommittee to Monitor the Implementation of the West Kowloon Cultural District Project ("the Joint Subcommittee") on issues relating to the integration and connectivity of the West Kowloon Cultural District ("WKCD") with its neighbouring districts.

Background

2. As stated in the approved Development Plan ("DP") of WKCD, accessibility and connectivity are two of the seven key planning and design principles for the development of WKCD. WKCD adopts a "vehicle-free" design concept, where all vehicular traffic and servicing facilities will be put underground to create a safe and open environment for pedestrians and improve the air quality at the ground level. According to the West Kowloon Cultural District Authority ("WKCDA"), connectivity of WKCD will be enhanced by providing new footbridge linkages and convenient transport services within and outside the district, so that WKCD can integrate with the neighbouring areas and connect with other parts of Hong Kong and beyond.

3. At its meeting on 10 July 2013, the Joint Subcommittee was briefed by WKCDA on the integration and connectivity plan of WKCD based on the approved DP and the consultation conducted with the Yau Tsim Mong District Council ("YTMD") on related matters. According to WKCDA, the connectivity plan had been formulated to make WKCD accessible by various

modes of transport and easy to move around for all mobility groups. WKCD would be connected with the neighbouring districts and other parts of Hong Kong through various existing and planned pedestrian connections as well as railway and road networks. Members were also advised that a series of road improvement schemes were being carried out or had been planned to improve the traffic conditions of West Kowloon and enhance the accessibility of WKCD. Pursuant to members' agreement at the meeting, the Joint Subcommittee conducted a site visit to WKCD on 17 December 2013 to better understand the pedestrian connections for WKCD.

Members' concerns

4. Apart from the meeting of the Joint Subcommittee on 10 July 2013, issues relating to the integration and connectivity of WKCD with its neighbouring districts had also been raised in the context of the discussions on the approved DP of WKCD and WKCDA's proposals for minor relaxation of development intensity of the WKCD site and implementation of the WKCD integrated basement at various meetings held between February 2013 and May 2014. The major views and concerns expressed by members are summarized in the ensuing paragraphs.

Connectivity of WKCD with the neighbouring areas

5. Members in general were concerned about the pedestrian and vehicular accessibility of WKCD and the connectivity of WKCD with its surrounding areas and other parts of Hong Kong. They called on the Administration and WKCDA to make available direct and efficient pedestrian links to connect WKCD with the major transport nodes (e.g. Austin Station and Jordan Station) and the adjoining developments (e.g. Kowloon Park). Dr Hon Helena WONG suggested that pedestrian subways should be provided to link WKCD with the concourses of Kowloon Station and West Kowloon Terminus ("WKT"), so as to ensure convenient access to WKCD for visitors arriving via the Airport Express and the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link.

6. According to the Administration and WKCDA, pedestrians were primarily connected to the areas outside WKCD through a comprehensive network of at-grade walkways, footbridges and subways. The existing Austin Road pedestrian subway would be extended and improved to connect Austin Station and the basement of the Xiqu Centre. Regarding the connection between WKCD and Jordan Station, the Transport Department ("TD") had presented to the Traffic and Transport Committee of YTMDC in November 2012 the proposed pedestrian links between WKCD and Jordan/Tsim Sha Tsui

("TST") districts, including a pedestrian subway along Jordan Road via Shanghai Street and Bowring Street to link WKCD and Jordan Station. The feasibility of the proposals would require further study and there was no firm programme at the moment. As regards the connection between WKCD and Kowloon Park, upon the relocation of the existing TST Fire Station Complex and subject to future demand and investigation on feasibility, a footbridge could be provided over Canton Road to link WKCD and Kowloon Park to facilitate pedestrian access to/from TST. Furthermore, three footbridges and one pedestrian subway connecting WKT and the Elements shopping mall had also been planned to enhance the accessibility to WKT from its adjacent areas.

7. Some members suggested that to enhance pedestrian access to WKCD from the inner parts of West Kowloon, the Administration should consider constructing a continuous waterfront promenade to link WKCD with the waterfront areas of the New Yau Ma Tei Typhoon Shelter and Sham Shui Po/Cheung Sha Wan. Hon Frankie YICK, however, cautioned that the Administration should duly consider the impact of the suggestion on the operation of the Yau Ma Tei Public Cargo Working Area in the vicinity. The Administration advised the Joint Subcommittee that it would look at the suggestion in conjunction with the Harbourfront Commission in the context of considering issues relating to harbourfront planning and enhancement in Hong Kong. TD and WKCDA would also discuss measures to enhance the connectivity and integration of WKCD with, among others, the inner parts of West Kowloon.

8. Hon Alan LEONG considered that the success of WKCD hinged largely on its integration and connectivity with the surrounding old districts. He enquired whether the transport planning of WKCD had taken into account the off-district arts and cultural activities held in the neighbouring areas such as Yau Ma Tei and Sham Shui Po. Some members urged the Administration to enhance the pedestrian connections between WKCD and the adjacent old districts (e.g. Jordan), as improved pedestrian access would help revitalize these districts. The Administration assured members that efforts would be made to strengthen the pedestrian links between WKCD and its surrounding old districts and facilitate the integration of WKCD with the neighbouring communities.

Traffic conditions in the West Kowloon area

9. When the Joint Subcommittee was briefed on WKCDA's proposal for minor relaxation of development intensity of the WKCD site and the results of the technical assessments conducted for the proposal at its meetings on 24 January, 28 March and 25 April 2014, members generally expressed concern

that the proposal might further add to the heavy traffic pressure on the existing roads in West Kowloon, in particular Jordan Road, Austin Road and Canton Road. They urged the Administration and WKCD to carefully study the traffic impact of the proposal on the whole West Kowloon area, taking into account the progressive commissioning of WKT and the arts and cultural facilities in WKCD. They also enquired whether improvement works would be carried out to ensure that the road networks of West Kowloon could cope with the additional traffic to be generated from the proposal.

10. WKCD advised the Joint Subcommittee that the technical assessment results showed that the traffic impact on the adjacent road networks as a result of the minor relaxation of development intensity of the WKCD site would be minor. TD also agreed with WKCD consultant's assessment that the planned road networks in West Kowloon could accommodate the additional traffic demand to be generated from the proposed minor relaxation of the development intensity of WKCD.

11. The Administration further advised that to cater for the traffic needs generated by the progressive completion of the developments in the West Kowloon Reclamation Area, a traffic study was completed by TD in 2009. To strengthen the road network of the area, the study recommended a series of road improvement schemes which were designed primarily to provide more direct connections from WKCD and WKT to nearby major roads, such as the West Kowloon Highway, the Western Harbour Crossing ("WHC") and the future Central Kowloon Route ("CKR"), so as to minimize the need for traffic to pass through the busy junctions along Jordan Road, Austin Road and Canton Road. In addition, junction improvement schemes would be carried out to widen the junction of Canton Road with Austin Road and Austin Road West, the junction of Canton Road with Wui Cheung Road, and the junction of Canton Road with Jordan Road and Ferry Street, so as to improve the capacity of these key road junctions. The Administration planned to seek the endorsement of the Public Works Subcommittee and the funding approval of the Finance Committee for these road improvement schemes within the 2013-2014 legislative session.

12. Hon MA Fung-kwok expressed concern whether the planned road network, with CKR being the only new major road to be built, could cope with the heavy traffic demand in West Kowloon, particularly during the time between 7:00 pm to 7:30 pm when many people would be in a hurry to get to WKCD at the same time to attend shows in various performance venues or patronize the dining facilities in WKCD. The Administration explained that while there was not much room for widening existing roads in the district due to site constraints, improvement projects to widen the junctions of these roads and

other traffic management schemes (such as signaling control of traffic light) would be implemented to increase the junction capacities for smoother traffic. New link roads would be built to connect the local road networks directly to nearby major highways to provide for more direct accessibility to and through the West Kowloon Reclamation Development. The planned CKR would also serve to divert vehicles commuting between West Kowloon and East Kowloon away from the busy local road networks.

13. Concern had also been raised about the crowd dispersal arrangements for performances/activities held on the WKCD site. Some members enquired whether under the peak crowd dispersal scenario (e.g. after performances at various major arts and cultural venues and during mega events such as fireworks display), the huge crowd of people gathered in WKCD could be efficiently dispersed within 30 minutes. Hon Christopher CHUNG considered it important for the Administration and WKCDA to devise contingency plans for crowd dispersal to cope with situations such as suspension of MTR service or temporary closure of the Kowloon Station.

14. WKCDA advised the Joint Subcommittee that even assuming that performances at all the venues ended at the same time and together with the pedestrian volumes generated by the retail, dining and entertainment facilities, the pedestrian forecasts and crowd dispersal analysis for WKCD for year 2031 (upon full development scenario) indicated that the planned pedestrian and vehicular facilities could accommodate surged demand during major events in WKCD and visitors could be dispersed within 30 minutes. Besides, the end times of shows staged in various WKCD venues could be staggered to control the pedestrian volumes.

Public transport facilities/services for WKCD

15. Members considered that to avoid adding pressure on the heavy traffic conditions in the West Kowloon area, visitors to WKCD should be encouraged to use public transport instead of private cars to get to WKCD. Hon YIU Si-wing expressed concern whether a bus terminus would be set up at/near WKCD and if not, whether the Administration would review the need to enhance the capacity of the China Ferry Terminal ("CFT") Public Transport Interchange ("PTI") to cope with the increasing transport demand and passenger flow brought about by the WKCD development.

16. According to the Administration, TD had endeavoured to enhance the connectivity of WKCD with the surrounding areas and other parts of Hong Kong through making available efficient pedestrian and railway connections, road-based traffic and public transport schemes. WKCD was currently well

served by the Airport Express/Tung Chung Line and the West Rail Line through Kowloon Station and Austin Station respectively. There were also two PTIs near WKCD including the Kowloon Station PTI and CFT PTI. WKCDA was preparing a Public Transport Plan for WKCD and TD would work closely with WKCDA on relevant issues, including studying the possible bus routes.

17. Noting that there were two planned piers in WKCD, some members urged the Administration and WKCDA to consider providing water taxi/ferry service to enhance the marine accessibility of WKCD and also as an add-on service to enhance the tourism appeal of WKCD. WKCDA advised the Joint Subcommittee that it had been in discussion with the Harbourfront Commission on the provision of marine access to WKCD. While WKCDA was keen to make available marine facilities/transport in WKCD, the provision of public piers in WKCD would be subject to demand, confirmation of technical feasibility and compliance with the Protection of the Harbour Ordinance (Cap. 531), and would therefore require further discussion with TD. WKCDA hoped to launch as soon as possible a pilot scheme on the provision of landing steps at the north-western end of WKCD.

18. TD and WKCDA were urged to formulate and report to the Joint Subcommittee in due course a more detailed and comprehensive connectivity plan and public transport scheme for WKCD, in particular how visitors could access WKCD from its neighbouring areas by public transport and on foot.

Connectivity between different parts of WKCD

19. Members stressed the importance for the Administration and WKCDA to enhance the accessibility of and connectivity between different parts of the WKCD site. Hon Frankie YICK suggested that given the long walking distance between the eastern and western ends of WKCD and to capitalize on the harbourfront location of WKCD, WKCDA should consider using trams, which was an environmentally friendly and iconic mode of transport in Hong Kong, to provide shuttle service along the West Kowloon Waterfront Promenade in WKCD. Hon YIU Si-wing also suggested using electric carts to provide shuttle service in WKCD. Hon LEUNG Che-cheung considered that to maintain a green environment in WKCD, visitors driving to WKCD should be encouraged to park their cars in the nearby parking facilities (e.g. car parks at the Kowloon Station and WKT) and access the various venues in WKCD by using the shuttle service to be provided on the site.

20. As advised by WKCDA, an environmentally friendly transport system ("EFTS") would be provided in WKCD to facilitate visitors' access to different parts of the site. Various transport modes, such as travellers,

environmentally friendly buses, trams and other electric vehicles would be considered. The mode of operation and routing of the EFTS would be subject to further study. WKCDA's aim was to finalize the relevant plan within 2014-2015 to dovetail with the phased completion of WKCD facilities starting from 2015. In addition, cycle paths would be provided in WKCD and an automated bicycle rental system would be launched within the site as a pilot scheme.

21. In response to Hon Cyd HO's enquiry about how stage sets and equipment could be transported to various arts and cultural venues in WKCD and the availability of suitable loading and unloading facilities at these venues, the Administration advised that Foster + Partners' conceptual plan had provided for direct connections among major performing arts venues and the corresponding loading and unloading facilities at stage level. As for the Mega Performance Venue ("MPV") located at the western end of WKCD which was separated from the integrated basement by WHC, appropriate ancillary facilities would be provided to facilitate the efficient operation of the venue.

22. When the Joint Subcommittee was briefed on the Administration/WKCDA's proposal for the implementation of the integrated basement at the meeting on 28 May 2014, some members expressed concern whether the proposed phased implementation would result in delivery of the integrated basement in a fragmented manner and lack of connections between different zones of the basement. The Administration responded that the phased implementation approach was commonly adopted in major public works projects. The Civil Engineering and Development Department would conduct a technical study to examine the feasibility and cost implications of the proposed phased implementation arrangement for the integrated basement. Issues to be studied would include, among others, the exact boundaries between zones and the connectivity and integration of different zones of the basement. WKCDA undertook that it would give due regard to east-west connectivity during the detailed design and construction of the basement, and seek to ensure that different zones of the basement would be interconnected upon full completion.

Design and management of pedestrian facilities for WKCD

23. Hon Tony TSE considered that there should be effective coordination among the relevant government departments and WKCDA in designing the pedestrian facilities (e.g. subways and footbridges) connecting WKCD with its neighbouring areas, so that the design of such facilities would be coherent and match with the artistic and cultural ambience of WKCD. He also suggested that consideration should be given to providing appropriate spaces at the

pedestrian subways concerned for young local artists to display their artworks. Members noted that at the meeting between Legislative Council ("LegCo") Members and YTMDC members held on 9 January 2014, YTMDC members had expressed concern about the planning, design and management of the pedestrian facilities connecting WKCD with the adjoining developments and major public transport nodes as well as the heavy traffic conditions in West Kowloon.

24. Members were assured that the relevant government departments would seek to ensure that the design of the pedestrian facilities linking WKCD with its neighbouring areas would blend in well with the overall ambience of WKCD. With a view to facilitating better coordination and ensuring consistency in the management of the pedestrian facilities for WKCD, the Administration's initial plan was to entrust the management of such facilities to WKCDA. It was believed that this arrangement should allow greater flexibility for WKCDA to consider and decide how the spaces at these pedestrian facilities should be utilized and managed. The government departments concerned would look into the feasibility and operational details of the proposed entrustment arrangement.

25. Some members expressed concern about the design of the barrier-free facilities to be provided at the pedestrian connections for WKCD. Hon Alice MAK considered that the footbridges for WKCD should be built/retrofitted with cover and large lifts to better cater for the needs of persons with disabilities. Hon Emily LAU also opined that WKCDA should make available sufficient and appropriate barrier-free facilities in WKCD, and consult organizations representing persons with disabilities on the provision of such facilities on the site.

26. The Administration advised that barrier-free access/facilities were a standard provision for government premises and facilities. The government departments concerned would look at the design of the barrier-free facilities to be provided at the pedestrian connections for WKCD and ensure that all relevant requirements were met. WKCDA also assured members that to make WKCD a place for everyone, it would endeavour to provide easy, convenient and barrier-free access to and within WKCD and maintain communication with the disabled community in this regard.

Provision of parking spaces in WKCD

27. Members noted that a total of around 2 100 parking spaces had been planned to be provided in WKCD. In response to members' enquiry about whether all of the planned parking spaces would be open for use by members of

the public and whether any assessment had been conducted on the future demand for parking facilities in WKCD, WKCDA advised the Joint Subcommittee that the overall provision of 2 100 parking spaces should be sufficient to meet the demand arising from the various developments in WKCD and it would decide on the allocation of parking spaces at a suitable juncture.

28. Pointing out that WKCD would be a major tourist destination for both foreign and local visitors, some members urged the Administration and WKCDA to ensure adequate provision of parking spaces and lay-bys for coaches in WKCD. WKCDA advised the Joint Subcommittee that under the current planning for WKCD, the coach drop-off area could accommodate about 25 coaches at the same time, while some 40 parking spaces would be provided in the temporary waiting area for coaches. As the projected demand for coach parking spaces for the whole WKCD was about 30, there would be a spare capacity of about 15 coach parking spaces under the planned provision. Where necessary, the site for the construction of MPV could be used as a temporary parking area for coaches before the relevant construction works commenced.

29. Some members considered that the planned provision of some 40 parking spaces for coaches in WKCD was inadequate to meet the demand of local and foreign visitors. Hon YIU Si-wing stressed that in planning the provision of coach parking spaces in WKCD, WKCDA should take into account not only the demand arising from the various facilities in WKCD but also the demand arising from the neighbouring districts (e.g. TST), given the acute shortage of coach parking spaces in these districts. He suggested that WKCDA should discuss with the tourism sector on the provision of lay-bys and parking spaces for coaches in WKCD, including the number of such spaces to be provided and relevant arrangements during the phased delivery of facilities in WKCD and upon full development of WKCD. Hon Christopher CHUNG also cautioned that the planned provision of coach parking spaces in WKCD should also cater for the situation where performances at different arts and cultural venues within the site ended at the same time.

Consultations with District Council and local residents

30. Hon CHAN Yuen-han considered that the Administration and WKCDA should implement the WKCD project in close consultation with YTMDC and residents of the Yau Tsim Mong district, especially on issues relating to the accessibility of WKCD and the connectivity between WKCD and its neighbouring areas. Hon Emily LAU also considered it important for the Administration and WKCDA to ensure that the views and concerns of the local community would be duly considered and addressed as the WKCD project

developed.

31. According to WKCD, it had constantly consulted and solicited comments from YTMDC on matters relating to the accessibility of WKCD and the connectivity of WKCD with its neighbouring areas. Representatives of TD had also attended meetings of YTMDC to respond to questions raised on the subject. The proposed connectivity plan of WKCD had been formulated having regard to the views and suggestions of YTMDC. The Administration also advised that the Highways Department had consulted the Traffic and Transport Committee of YTMDC on the road improvement schemes for West Kowloon Reclamation Development.

32. Dr Hon Helena WONG expressed concern that the residents of the West Kowloon district had not been consulted by WKCD and YTMDC on the connectivity plan of WKCD. She suggested that WKCD should consider gauging the views of the local residents more directly through, for instance, issuing information pamphlets on matters relating to the WKCD project to the residents.

Latest development

33. The Joint Subcommittee will meet with the Administration and WKCD to discuss the latest position regarding the connectivity plan and public transport scheme for WKCD at the meeting on 7 July 2014. The Joint Subcommittee will also receive deputations' views on the integration and connectivity of WKCD with its neighbouring districts at the meeting.

Relevant papers

34. A list of the relevant papers available on the LegCo website is in **Appendix**.

**Relevant papers on
Integration and connectivity of the West Kowloon Cultural District
with its neighbouring districts**

Committee	Date of meeting	Paper
Joint Subcommittee to Monitor the Implementation of the West Kowloon Cultural District Project	25.2.2013 Item II	Agenda Minutes
	8.4.2013 Item III	Agenda Minutes
	10.7.2013 Item II	Agenda CB(2)1539/12-13(02) Minutes
	24.1.2014 Item II	Agenda Minutes
	28.3.2014 Item II	Agenda Minutes
	25.4.2014 Item I	Agenda Minutes
	28.5.2014 Item II	Agenda