

香港露宿救濟會

Street Sleepers Shelter Society Trustees Incorporated
Box No. 11226 GPO Central, H.K.

7 March 2017

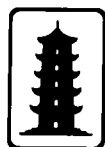
Hon MA Fung Kwok, SBS, JP
Chairman
Home Affairs Panel, Legislative Council
1 Legislative Council Road,
Central, Hong Kong

Dear Hon MA,

Reprovisioning of Shelter for Street Sleepers

The rejection of funding application for the reprovisioning of shelter for street sleepers by the Finance Committee (FC) last year was very much in the limelight arousing significant public concern. Perhaps it is useful to explain the context of this project for better understanding of the key issues.

The Street Sleepers Shelter Society is the only agency in Hong Kong offering shelter to the homeless completely free of charge. The Yau Ma Tei (YMT) Shelter at Shanghai Street is one of our three shelters and popular with street sleepers in Kowloon. We have been temporarily relocated, from the previous water depot site (now a declared monument) opposite the road in end 1990s, to operate on short term tenancy at the present joint-user building, accepting that the existing premises is not designed nor properly equipped for our purpose. Given its temporary status and undesirable condition, we have been expecting permanent reprovisioning to upgrade our services for a long time. In line with the government's planning intention for comprehensive redevelopment of the entire area into a community/cultural/tourist hub for Yau Tsim Mong, our timely reprovisioning has become all the more imminent and inevitable. In addition, this is also call from local community and district leaders to have a facelift of their living environment.



香港公益金會員機構
A MEMBER AGENCY OF THE COMMUNITY CHEST

Thanks to the help of the Social Welfare Department (SWD) and after a long ensuing site search process, a site at Hau Cheung Road in the new reclamation area was identified for a joint-user building with our shelter to be accommodated on the upper floor. We worked closely with SWD in providing comments on design and layout. The proposal was rejected by some LegCo members earlier partly because of co-location with a refuse collection station and non-provisioning of air-conditioning. The shelter has now been shifted up to the top floor (4/F) which is well above the RCP (G/F) to minimize impacts. The project has also been thoughtfully revised to improve quality of living, including adjustment in orientation, internal layout, interface with co-users, ancillary facilities, environmental mitigations and green measures, design and landscaping. Considering the constraints and our best endeavors to resolve issues, we are of view that this is already the optimal option. Unfortunately the funding proposal was not accepted by the LegCo last year.

Knowing how difficult to hunt for a suitable site in the land-hungry urban area, we have all along expressed full acceptance of the site at Hau Chung Road and agree to the joint-user arrangement proposed by government. After discussion with SWD, additional mitigation measures to address the LegCo members' concerns have been introduced, e.g. improve air ventilation system and provision of air-conditioning including special government subsidy to cover the recurrent cost incurred.

With the green light of the LegCo, we hope to take forward the reprovisioning so as to meet the increasing social demand and better serve our clients. On the broader context, government can also proceed with the comprehensive redevelopment of the whole area to meet community expectation and provide much-needed attractions to boost tourism industry, which is a win-win situation for all. If the matter cannot be resolved while another site may not be available in the foreseeable future, we will lose the chance of upgrading our services forever, while the holdup of the over-due district redevelopment would create undesirable image from PR perspective that government can ill-afford.

We would hence sincerely seek your support for us to take up this site offered by SWD which is a unique opportunity. Looking forward to your favourable support. Should you require any further information, please don't hesitate to contact us at 2386 4700.

Yours sincerely,



(MY TANG)

Chairman

Street Sleepers Shelter Society Trustees Incorporated



c.c. All Executive Committee Members