

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(1)764/18-19(04)

Ref : CB1/PS/2/16

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

Meeting on 1 April 2019

**Updated background brief on the integration and connectivity of
the West Kowloon Cultural District with its neighbouring districts**

Purpose

This paper summarizes the major views and concerns expressed by members 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 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, which enables traffic to be put underground in an integrated basement, thereby freeing up more space for public enjoyment and creating a pedestrian-friendly environment at-grade. According to the West Kowloon Cultural District Authority ("WKCDA"), WKCD will 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. The pedestrian connections network and the planned vehicular connections from the neighbouring districts to WKCD are respectively given in **Appendices I and II**.

Major views and concerns of members

3. Issues relating to the integration and connectivity of WKCD with its neighbouring districts, including the implementation progress of various public infrastructure works ("PIW") projects for WKCD, were discussed at meetings of the Joint Subcommittee. The major views and concerns expressed by members on the subject are summarized in the ensuing paragraphs.

Pedestrian connections with adjoining areas

4. Members considered that in planning the pedestrian network, the Administration and WKCDA should make available direct and convenient pedestrian links to connect WKCD with the major transport nodes (e.g. MTR Austin Station and Jordan Station), the adjoining developments (e.g. Kowloon Park) and the nearby districts, and to minimize the need for pedestrians to make multiple level changes. Some members suggested that pedestrian subways should be provided to connect WKCD with the concourses of Kowloon Station and the West Kowloon Terminus ("WKT") to facilitate convenient access to WKCD for visitors arriving via the Airport Express and the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link.

5. As advised by the Administration and WKCDA, pedestrians would be primarily connected to the adjoining areas through a comprehensive network of at-grade walkways, footbridges and subways. A main pedestrian desk linking up WKT with the northern part of WKCD, together with two other pedestrian connections, namely the Artist Square Bridge ("ASB") connecting the Elements shopping mall and the northern entrance to the Artist Square, and the Austin Road Pedestrian Linkage System connecting the MTR Austin Station to the Xiqu Centre, would represent the major gateways of WKCD.

The proposed Artist Square Bridge

6. At the meeting of the Joint Subcommittee on 21 April 2017, the Administration consulted the Joint Subcommittee on the funding proposal for the second construction package of PIW for WKCD (Phase 1) at an estimated cost of about \$380 million (in September 2016 prices) (i.e. the funding proposal for upgrading part of 754CL to Category A ("754CL(part)")), which included the construction of the main section of ASB at an estimated cost of about \$290 million (in September 2016 prices), and the beautification works for the existing subway across the junction of Austin Road West and Canton Road, and other associated road works, landscaping works, etc. Separately under the funding proposal for the third stage of construction works

of the integrated basement for WKCD (i.e. the funding proposal for upgrading part of 763CL to Category A ("763CL(part)")), the Administration requested funding support at an estimated cost of about \$60 million (in September 2016 prices) for the construction of the remaining section of ASB.¹

7. Members raised concern about the high estimated construction cost (i.e. totaling at about \$350 million in September 2016 prices) for the proposed ASB. As a comparison, some members pointed out that the construction cost for a footbridge linking up the MTR Tsuen Wan West Station and the MTR Tsuen Wan Station (620 m long) was about \$190 million. There was a suggestion that the Administration should consider alternatives to the proposed footbridge, such as an underground pedestrian walkway. Given that the proposed ASB would serve as a pedestrian link to the Elements shopping mall and the owner/tenants of the shopping mall would benefit from the increased pedestrian flows, some members suggested asking the owner of the shopping mall to finance the construction cost of ASB under a public-private partnership ("PPP") approach.

8. The Administration advised that the design and construction of ASB was subject to many challenges arising from technical difficulties and site conditions. Firstly, to provide adequate headroom over the flyover, the walking level of ASB would be about 15 m above the existing footpaths on Austin Road West. Secondly, to avoid imposition of extra loads on the flyover, intermediate permanent columns or temporary support for the construction of ASB could not be erected on the flyover structure. The clear width of ASB would have to be at least 7 m to provide sufficient surface area for peak crowd dispersal (e.g. after the performances at major arts and cultural venues). WKCD also advised that as the site was located right above the MTR Airport Express Line and between two major buildings yet to be built, various constraints and pre-existing factors had to be taken into account in the works design. On the suggestion of taking forward the construction of ASB under a PPP approach, the Administration responded that since ASB was a Government public works item, it was incumbent upon the Government to finance the construction of the proposed ASB. WKCD also considered it inappropriate to deliver PIW for WKCD through the PPP approach.

9. In response to members' concerns over the design and high estimated cost of the proposed ASB, the Administration undertook to review the ASB project with WKCD. To avoid delaying the beautification works of the

¹ According to the original design of the proposed ASB, the total length of the footbridge would be 112 metres ("m"), including a main section of 69 m over the existing Austin Road West flyover, a remaining section comprising a 15 m-long bridge deck and a 28 m-long escalator(s)/staircase.

existing subway, the Administration separately sought the Finance Committee ("FC")'s approval for the beautification works first together with the proposed Austin Road Pedestrian Linkage System.² As regards 763CL(part), the part relating to ASB was taken out from the project scope and funding application.³

10. At the meeting of the Joint Subcommittee on 11 May 2018, the Administration briefed members on the revised design and funding proposal of ASB.⁴ According to the revised design, the total length of the proposed ASB would be reduced to 94 m and its landing location would be shifted from the central area to the northern side of the Artist Square. In addition, the proposed footbridge would be constructed in one go instead of by phases, so that the number of supporting piers would be reduced from three to two.

11. While members in general welcomed the new simplified design of the proposed ASB, some members were disappointed that the Administration sought to achieve cost savings at the expense of design features, rendering the new design featureless. WKCD explained that in view of members' earlier concern over the high construction cost of the proposed ASB, it had critically reviewed the original design through a value engineering exercise with a view to reducing the construction cost. Comparing to the original design, it was estimated that the new design of the proposed footbridge, in particular the simplification of the substructure, could achieve an overall cost saving of about 30%.⁵

12. The Joint Subcommittee eventually supported the Administration's submission of the revised funding proposal to the Public Works Subcommittee

² In April 2018, FC approved the funding proposal in respect of 754CL(part) for the beautification works and the proposed Austin Road Pedestrian Linkage System at an estimated cost of \$192 million in money-of-the-day ("MOD") prices.

³ In January 2018, FC approved the funding proposal in respect of 763CL(part) at an estimated cost of \$3,178.4 million in MOD prices.

⁴ The revised funding proposal was to upgrade part of 754CL entitled "Infrastructure Works for West Kowloon Cultural District, phase 1 – third construction package" to Category A at an estimated cost of about \$380 million in MOD prices, which included, among others, the construction of the proposed ASB.

⁵ The estimated construction cost of the new design of the proposed footbridge is about \$280 million in MOD prices (equivalent to about \$230 million in September 2016 prices), which is about 70% of that of the original design at about \$400 million in MOD prices (equivalent to about \$350 million in September 2016 prices).

for consideration.

Austin Road Pedestrian Linkage System and beautification works for the existing pedestrian subway

13. Some members asked whether WKCDA would share the responsibilities and costs of the daily management and repair and maintenance of the Austin Road Pedestrian Linkage System and the existing pedestrian subway. The Administration advised that WKCDA and the MTR Corporation Limited ("MTRCL") had agreed to be jointly responsible for the management, operation and maintenance of the Austin Road Pedestrian Linkage System and share the relevant costs; whereas the Administration would be responsible for the management and maintenance work of the existing pedestrian subway, including the proposed beautification works.

14. Some members enquired whether the Austin Road Pedestrian Linkage System would be open for public access 24 hours a day, and if not, whether there would be any other facilities for pedestrian access to WKCD beyond its opening hours. Some members were concerned whether the existing pedestrian subway would continue to be open to the public when the proposed beautification works for the subway had commenced.

15. The Administration advised that the opening hours of the Austin Road Pedestrian Linkage System would tally with those of MTR Austin Station (i.e. 5:47 a.m. to 12:56 midnight). When it was closed, pedestrians could still use the existing pedestrian subway which would be open for public use 24 hours a day. During the construction period for the beautification works, the existing pedestrian subway would not be closed, except for the relevant part of the subway when removal of the existing subway cover was being carried out.

16. When asked about the management of street performances inside the existing pedestrian subway, the Administration indicated that in general, activities conducted in public places should not cause noise or other nuisance, annoyance or obstruction to people. Given the high pedestrian flow of the existing pedestrian subway, the Administration did not expect many street performers to stay there for performances.

Public transport services (including marine transport options)

17. Members called on the Administration and WKCDA to ensure that the planned transport infrastructures for WKCD and the road improvement works for the West Kowloon Reclamation Development area would be completed in

good time and public transport services would be available to tie in with the commissioning of the WKCD facilities. WKCDA assured members that it had been in constant dialogue with the relevant government departments, MTRCL and bus service providers on the planning and implementation of transport infrastructures and road improvement works as well as the provision of public transport services for WKCD.

18. Some members requested the Administration and WKCDA to consider providing berthing/landing facilities and marine transport services (such as water taxi/ferry service) to enhance the marine accessibility and the tourism appeal of WKCD. Yet, some members were concerned that given the existing heavy marine traffic in the Victoria Harbour, it might be impracticable to provide additional marine transport services between WKCD and other parts of Hong Kong.

19. The Administration advised that as the availability of water taxi service to connect WKCD and the other major tourist attractions along both sides of the Victoria Harbour would add to the vibrancy of the harbour, it had been exploring the possible provision of such service. In parallel, WKCDA was proceeding with a feasibility study on the provision of two marine access points within WKCD on the premise that these facilities would not trigger the test on overriding public need under the Protection of the Harbour Ordinance (Cap. 531).

Provision of parking spaces

20. Some members expressed concern that the existing roads in the vicinity of WKCD including Austin Road West were already heavily congested. They questioned whether the provision of over 2 000 car parking spaces in WKCD was consistent with a vehicle-free design concept, and were worried that such provision would aggravate the traffic congestion in the area. Some other members however pointed out that given the keen demand for car parking spaces in the West Kowloon area, sufficient car parking spaces, in particular for coaches, should be provided in WKCD.

21. WKCDA advised that it was obliged to conform to the requirements set out in the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines, and had adopted the minimum standards in order to minimize the traffic impact in the West Kowloon area taking into account the projected demand for car parking spaces in the WKCD development. To tie in with the development programme of WKCD, new parking spaces (including parking spaces for coaches) would be provided progressively and for efficient management, WKCDA planned to manage all the parking spaces in WKCD except for those at the Exhibition

Centre which was a PPP project. WKCDA would also closely monitor the actual parking demand and review the provision of parking facilities for coaches in WKCD as and when necessary.

Traffic congestion in West Kowloon area

22. Members raised concerns on the existing traffic congestion problem in the West Kowloon area, particularly during 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 the district. Members also queried if the prevailing traffic conditions outside WKCD would further deteriorate and affect vehicular accessibility of WKCD venues and its nearby developments.

23. WKCDA indicated that the relevant transport studies had indicated that when the road improvement works were completed in 2018, the existing congestion could be significantly relieved. While members of the public would be encouraged to use public transport to access WKCD, it would not be possible to ban vehicles from accessing WKCD given the operational needs of various facilities in WKCD.

Pedestrian accessibility within the West Kowloon Cultural District

24. Members stressed the importance for the Administration and WKCDA to enhance the connectivity between different parts within WKCD. Some members suggested that WKCDA should provide appropriate facilities to enable visitors to access WKCD by cycling and consider using electric carts to provide shuttle service in WKCD. There was also a suggestion that WKCDA should consider using trams, which was an environmentally friendly and iconic mode of transport in Hong Kong, to provide shuttle service along the waterfront promenade in WKCD. Members also asked about the operational details of the autonomous vehicle on trial within WKCD.

25. WKCDA indicated that the Authority was committed to providing cycling facilities in WKCD. WKCDA launched Hong Kong's first bike sharing programme, the SmartBike, in April 2014 to encourage visitors to use bicycles as a sustainable means of getting around the Art Park. Moreover, a new form of completely autonomous, zero-emission vehicle had been on trial on a fixed route near the Nursery Park of WKCD since July 2017. In the trial rides, a vehicle conductor was stationing on board to override control of the vehicles in case needed. WKCDA planned to extend the autonomous vehicle trial in phases within WKCD to cover the waterfront promenade and the Art Park before confirming details of its service for the whole district.

26. Some members expressed concern about the design of the barrier-free facilities to be provided at WKCD. They considered that the footbridges for WKCD should be built and/or retrofitted with cover and large lifts to better cater for the needs of persons with disabilities. The Administration advised that barrier-free access/facilities were a standard provision for government premises and facilities. WKCDA assured members that it would strive to provide easy, convenient and barrier-free access to and within the district and maintain communication with the disabled community in this regard.

Latest development

27. At the meeting of the Joint Subcommittee to be held on 1 April 2019, the Administration and WKCDA will brief members on the integration and connectivity of WKCD with its neighbouring districts.

Relevant papers

28. A list of the relevant papers on the Legislative Council website is in **Appendix III**.

由鄰近地區前往西九文化區的行人連接網絡
The pedestrian connections network from the neighbouring districts to the West Kowloon Cultural District



資料來源：[立法會 CB\(1\)908/17-18\(01\)號文件的附件 I](#)

Source: [Annex I to LC Paper No. CB\(1\)908/17-18\(01\)](#)

由鄰近地區前往西九文化區的已規劃車輛連接系統
The planned vehicular connections from the neighbouring districts to the West Kowloon Cultural District



Scheme 1
計劃 1
Proposed single lane elevated road connecting Hoi Po Road to West Kowloon Highway northbound
擬建高架單線行車道連接海寶路至西九龍公路北行方向



Central Kowloon Route
中九龍幹線



Scheme 3
計劃 3
Proposed single lane at-grade road connecting West Kowloon Highway southbound to elevated Nga Cheung Road
擬建地面單線行車道連接西九龍公路南行方向至雅翔道高架路段



Depressed Austin Road West and Lin Cheung Road junction
低於地面的柯士甸道西與連翔道交匯處



Scheme 2
計劃 2
Proposed single lane elevated road connecting elevated Nga Cheung Road to toll plaza of WHC
擬建高架單線行車道連接雅翔道高架路段至西區海底隧道收費廣場



Lay-by at East Gate
東閘路旁上落客區

At-grade road around the Western Harbour Crossing tunnel portal
西區海底隧道出入口一帶地面路段

Lay-by at West Gate
西閘路旁上落客區

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

List of relevant papers

Committee	Date of meeting	Paper
Former Joint Subcommittee to Monitor the Implementation of the West Kowloon Cultural District Project formed in the Fifth Legislative Council	25.2.2013 Item II	Agenda Minutes
	8.4.2013 Item III	Agenda Minutes
	10.7.2013 Item II	Agenda 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 Minutes
	7.7.2014 Item I	Agenda Minutes WKCDA's response to members' concerns raised at the meeting
	24.11.2014 Item II	Agenda Minutes
	12.1.2015 Item II	Agenda Minutes

	24.11.2015 Item III	Agenda Minutes
	14.12.2015 Item I	Agenda Minutes
Joint Subcommittee to Monitor the Implementation of the West Kowloon Cultural District Project	21.4.2017 Item II	Agenda Minutes The Administration's response to members' concerns raised at the meeting
	29.5.2017 Item II	Agenda Minutes
	21.11.2017 Item IV	Agenda Minutes
	11.5.2018 Item IV	Agenda Minutes