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

Meeting on 27 April 2020

**Updated background brief on the development of Zone 2 of
the West Kowloon Cultural District ("WKCD") and the connectivity of
WKCD with its neighbouring districts**

Purpose

This paper provides updated background information on the development of Zone 2 of the West Kowloon Cultural District ("WKCD") and the connectivity of WKCD with its neighbouring districts. It also summarizes the major views and concerns expressed by Members on the subjects at meetings of the Joint Subcommittee to Monitor the Implementation of the West Kowloon Cultural District Project ("the Joint Subcommittee") and relevant committees of the Legislative Council ("LegCo").

Background

Zone 2 development

2. The integrated basement ("IB") is an integral component of the "City Park" conceptual plan forming the basis for the Development Plan ("DP") of WKCD. It enables traffic to be put underground thereby freeing up the site for cultural use and public enjoyment and enhances the walking environment at-grade. IB is divided into five zones (2A, 2B and 2C (collectively referred to as "IBZ2"), and 3A and 3B) and its zoning plan is in **Appendix I**. It is implemented by stages to tie in with the phased development programme of WKCD.

3. IBZ2 is the large basement section in between the Xiqu Centre and the Lyric Theatre Complex ("LTC") supporting the remaining Batch 3 arts and cultural facilities,¹ retail/dining/entertainment, and hotel, office and residential ("HOR") developments atop. According to the West Kowloon Cultural District Authority ("WKCD"),² the IBZ2 design consultancy commenced in early 2017 and a phased implementation plan for the construction of IBZ2 and the topside developments has been prepared. Development parcels located on top of the West Kowloon Station ("WKS") of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link ("XRL") project in Zone 2A can be delivered sooner than other parcels as the substructure involved has already been substantially completed under the XRL project for handing over to WKCD. WKCD aims at completing the HOR developments in Zone 2A and Zone 2BC from 2025 and 2027 and beyond respectively. As regards the arts and cultural facilities in IBZ2, WKCD will give priority to delivering the Music Centre by around 2027/2028, and implement the others having regard to demand in line with the organic growth approach of WKCD.

Connectivity with neighbouring districts

4. As stated in the approved DP of WKCD, accessibility and connectivity are two of the seven key planning and design principles for the development of WKCD. According to WKCD, 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 II and III**.

Major views and concerns of Members

5. The major views and concerns expressed by Members on the subjects are summarized in the ensuing paragraphs.

Cost estimate of the integrated basement

6. Some Joint Subcommittee members noted with concern that the cost estimate of the main IB had increased from more than \$10 billion as advised

¹ Batch 3 facilities include the Music Centre, Musical Theatre, Great Theatre and Medium Theatre I.

² Sources: LC Paper Nos. [CB\(1\)418/18-19\(03\)](#) and [CB\(1\)149/19-20\(02\)](#)

by the Administration in July 2013 to around \$23 billion in May 2014,³ and further increased to about \$23.6 billion.

7. The Administration advised that the rough cost estimate of around \$23 billion for the main IB and the associated public infrastructure works was derived in mid-2013 based on WKCDA's preliminary basement layout plans/site investigation results and the assumption that the construction of the whole IB would start in 2014 for completion in one go by 2020. The estimate had not taken into account the impact of the delay in the construction of WKS of the XRL project, the construction works area of which had then temporarily occupied most of the land within IBZ2. Based on the latest design of the remaining works of IB and by making reference to the construction costs of IB in Zones 3A and 3B with similar conditions as IBZ2, the Administration was able to provide a more precise cost estimate of about \$23.6 billion for the IB project, which was considered reasonable given the vast size of IB and the long construction period.

Coordinated development of integration basement and topside facilities

8. At the Public Works Subcommittee ("PWSC") meeting on 8 May 2019 to consider the funding proposal for the remaining works of IB, some members enquired how the implementation of the IB project could dovetail with the development of the topside facilities, and whether the topside facilities could be developed in parallel with the remaining works of IB instead of after the completion of the remaining works. They also expressed concern on how the Administration could ascertain that the IB structure could adequately support the loading of the topside facilities while the design of these developments was yet to complete.

9. The Administration indicated that to enable the construction works of IB and the topside facilities, which were highly integrated, to be carried out at the same time, it had entrusted to WKCDA the implementation of the IB project. Moreover, the Administration had worked together with WKCDA on coordinating the development plans of IB and topside facilities, so that WKCDA could commence the detailed design of topside facilities. Flexibility was also incorporated in the design of IB structure to ensure sufficient load capacity.

³ According to [LC Paper No. CB\(2\)1591/13-14\(03\)](#) provided by the Administration in May 2014, of this \$23 billion (in money-of-the-day ("MOD") prices), about \$19 billion is for the cost of the foundations and substructure of IB for the topside developments; and about \$4 billion is for the cost of public infrastructure works and protection works for the Airport Express Tunnels and the associated foundations and substructure there.

Pedestrian connections with adjoining areas

10. Joint Subcommittee 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 WKS to facilitate convenient access to WKCD for visitors arriving via the Airport Express and XRL.

11. 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 WKS 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.

Artist Square Bridge

12. At the meeting of the Joint Subcommittee on 21 April 2017, the Administration consulted members on the following funding proposals relating to the construction of the proposed ASB:⁴

- (a) upgrading part of 754CL to Category A to take forward the second construction package of public infrastructure works for WKCD (Phase 1) at an estimated cost of about \$380 million (in September 2016 prices), covering 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.; and

⁴ 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.

- (b) upgrading part of 763CL to Category A to take forward the third stage of construction works of IB for WKCD, which included, among others, an estimated cost of about \$60 million (in September 2016 prices) for the construction of the remaining section of ASB.

13. Joint Subcommittee members raised concern about the high estimated construction cost (i.e. totaling at about \$350 million in September 2016 prices) for the originally proposed ASB. They suggested 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.

14. The Administration advised that the design and construction of ASB was subject to many challenges arising from technical difficulties and site conditions. Firstly, the walking level of ASB would be about 15 m above the existing footpaths on Austin Road West so as to provide adequate headroom over the flyover, and its clear width should 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). Secondly, intermediate permanent columns or temporary support for the construction of ASB could not be erected on the flyover structure to avoid imposition of extra loads on the flyover. Furthermore, 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. Since ASB was a Government public works item, the Administration considered it incumbent upon the Government to finance the construction of the proposed ASB, and PPP approach was not appropriate for this project.

15. In response to members' above concerns, the Administration undertook to review the ASB project with WKCDA. At the meeting of the Joint Subcommittee on 11 May 2018, the Administration briefed members on the revised design and funding proposal of ASB,⁵ under which the total length of the proposed ASB was reduced to 94 m and its landing location was shifted from the central area to the northern side of the Artist Square. To further save cost, the construction would be proceeded in one go instead of by phases, so that the number of supporting piers would be reduced from three to two.

⁵ 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.

16. 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 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, the new design, in particular the simplification of the substructure, could achieve an overall cost saving of about 30%.⁶

17. At the request of members for further improvements on the design of ASB, WKCD undertook to incorporate enhancement measures into the design, including decorative lighting system and ancillary provisions for art installations to allow customization of the decorations according to the theme of various WKCD events in future. The Joint Subcommittee eventually supported the Administration's submission of the revised funding proposal to PWSC for consideration.⁷

18. At the meeting of the Joint Subcommittee on 25 November 2019, members were informed that the tender of the ASB main works contract was issued in November 2018 and returned in February 2019. Tender assessment had been completed. The construction could commence immediately upon the funding approval by FC.

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

19. Some Joint Subcommittee members asked whether WKCD 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.⁸ The Administration advised that WKCD 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

⁶ The estimated construction cost of the newly designed ASB 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).

⁷ The revised funding proposal was endorsed by PWSC on 14 May 2019 and approved by the Finance Committee ("FC") on 20 March 2020.

⁸ In April 2018, FC approved the funding proposal for upgrading part of 754CL to take forward the beautification works of the existing subway and the proposed Austin Road Pedestrian Linkage System at an estimated cost of \$192 million in MOD prices.

would be responsible for the management and maintenance work of the existing pedestrian subway, including the proposed beautification works.

20. 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 asked whether the existing pedestrian subway would remain open to the public during the beautification works.

21. The Administration advised that the opening hours of the Austin Road Pedestrian Linkage System would tally with those of the 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. When carrying out the beautification works, the existing pedestrian subway would not be closed, except for the relevant part of the subway when the existing subway cover was being removed.

22. At the meeting of the Joint Subcommittee on 25 November 2019, members were informed that the Austin Road Pedestrian Linkage System was anticipated to be completed and open in the fourth quarter of 2020.

Public transport services (including marine transport options)

23. Joint Subcommittee members called on the Administration and WKCD 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. WKCD 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.

24. Some members requested the Administration and WKCD 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.

25. The Administration advised that it had been exploring the possible provision of water taxi service to connect WKCD and the other major tourist attractions along both sides of the Victoria Harbour with a view to adding vibrancy of the harbour. In parallel, WKCD 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).

26. At the meeting of the Joint Subcommittee on 1 April 2019, members noted that the engineering investigation and design study on the development of a new southern marine landing facility near M+ as public infrastructure would start in 2019, with a target to open the landing facilities around 2022/2023 to tie in with the completion of LTC and the Artist Square. As the proposed southern marine landing facility would be close to the China Ferry Terminal, there was concern about the frequency and operating hours of vessels using this facility. In this regard, the Administration indicated that the operation of this marine landing facility might need to be coordinated with management measures to ensure the safety of fairways.

27. On the development of a new northern marine landing facility, members raised concern over its proposed location inside breakwaters and asked whether the Administration would consider alternative plans including relocating it outside breakwaters. The Administration responded that the Civil Engineering and Development Department would liaise with other relevant government departments during the study on the development of the marine landing facilities to ensure compliance with the relevant statutory requirements.

Provision of parking spaces

28. Some Joint Subcommittee 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. They called on WKCD to provide coach parking spaces for free, as well as more pick-up/drop-off points to enhance accessibility.

29. WKCD 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. Meanwhile, temporary coach parking spaces would be provided to address the interim demand. When M+ opened, additional coach pick-up/drop-off bays would be provided at the entrance of the museum. To attract drivers to park their cars in the district, WKCD had reviewed the parking fee level and reduced the parking fee to a concessionary rate of \$60 for day parking. WKCD 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

30. Joint Subcommittee members raised concern over the increasing traffic flow to/from WKCD, especially during rush hours, with the gradual commissioning of the WKCD facilities. They worried that the prevailing traffic conditions outside WKCD would further deteriorate and affect vehicular accessibility of WKCD venues and its nearby developments.

31. WKCD had indicated that it had maintained close contact with the Police and the Transport Department on the traffic arrangements in and around WKCD. Various measures had been undertaken to improve the traffic in WKCD, such as constructing IB to provide an underground road and more parking spaces, introducing new bus routes and enhancing linkages with MTR stations. The Administration further advised that as road traffic around WKCD was very heavy during rush hours, the public were encouraged to use public transport or marine transport services in future to visit the district.

Pedestrian accessibility within the West Kowloon Cultural District

32. Joint Subcommittee members stressed the importance for enhancing the connectivity between different parts within WKCD and sought details on the proposed option for the Environmentally Friendly Transport System ("EFTS") in the district. Some members suggested that WKCD 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 a suggestion that WKCD 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 details and progress of the trial service of a driverless electric vehicle within WKCD.

33. WKCD advised that the use of EFTS in WKCD as a mean to address the east-west traffic demand had been included in the Development Plan of WKCD. WKCD had studied the options for EFTS and viewed electric bus as the proposed EFTS option. Operating details of the proposed EFTS would be devised upon completion of the underground road in WKCD. WKCD also 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 autonomous, zero-emission electric vehicle had been on trial on a fixed route near the Nursery Park of WKCD since July 2017. In February 2019, the trial route was further extended to cover the waterfront promenade and the Art Park. Subject to the approval of the Transport Department, further testing of the interaction of autonomous vehicles with normal vehicular traffic would be required in the longer run. WKCD would then review and further decide on the adoption or form of adoption of this technology.

34. 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.

35. The Administration advised that barrier-free access/facilities were a standard provision for government premises and facilities. WKCD 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. Moreover, WKCD had launched a policy on universal accessibility covering both hardware and software accessibility, and established a central Accessibility Office to enhance accessibility standards on a district-wide level.

Latest development

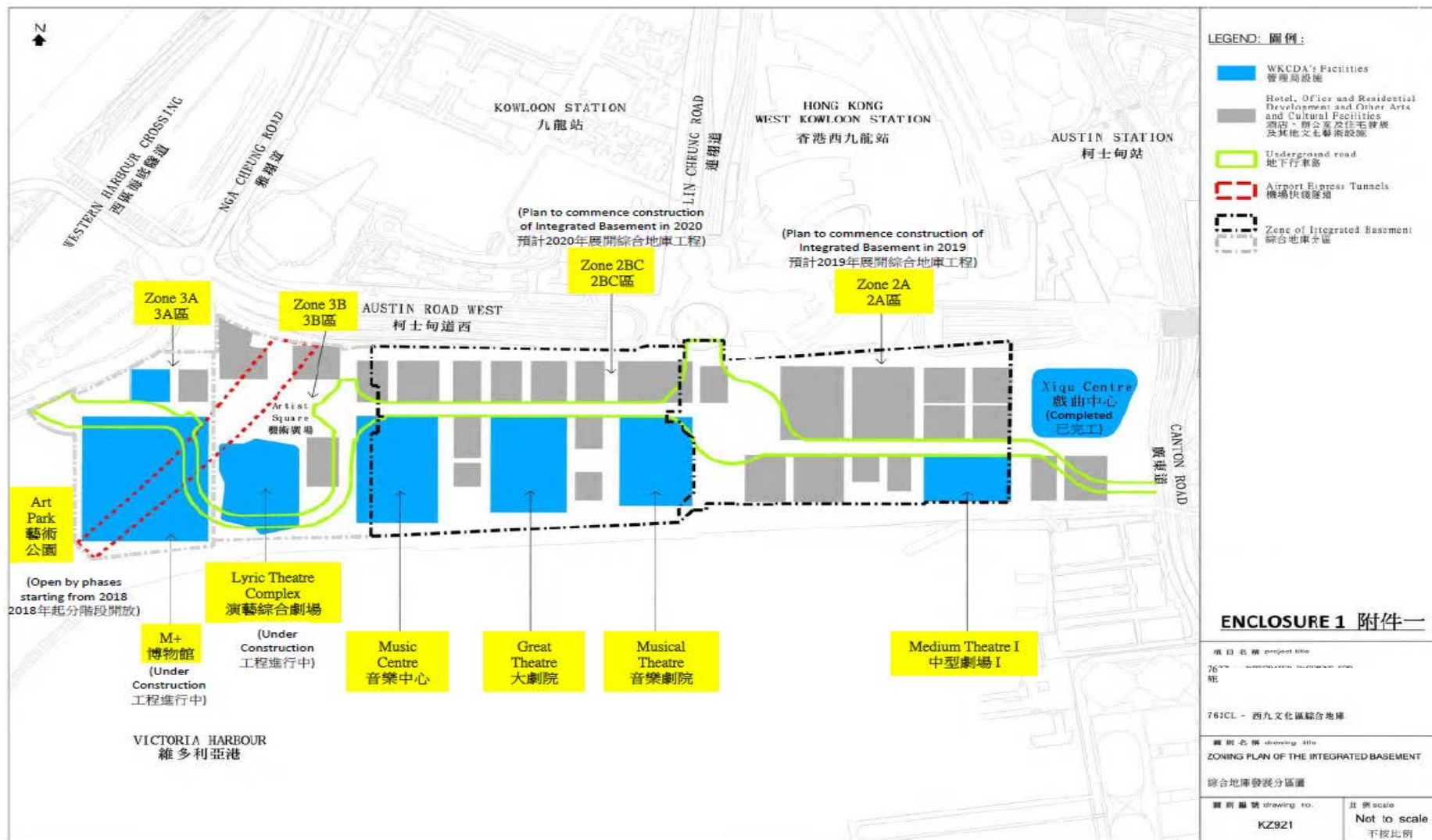
36. At the meeting of the Joint Subcommittee to be held on 27 April 2020, the Administration and WKCD will brief members on the development programme for Zone 2 and the connectivity of WKCD with its neighbouring districts.

Relevant papers

37. A list of the relevant papers on the LegCo website is in **Appendix IV**.

Council Business Division 1
Legislative Council Secretariat
20 April 2020

西九文化區綜合地庫分區圖
Zoning plan of the integrated basement of the West Kowloon Cultural District



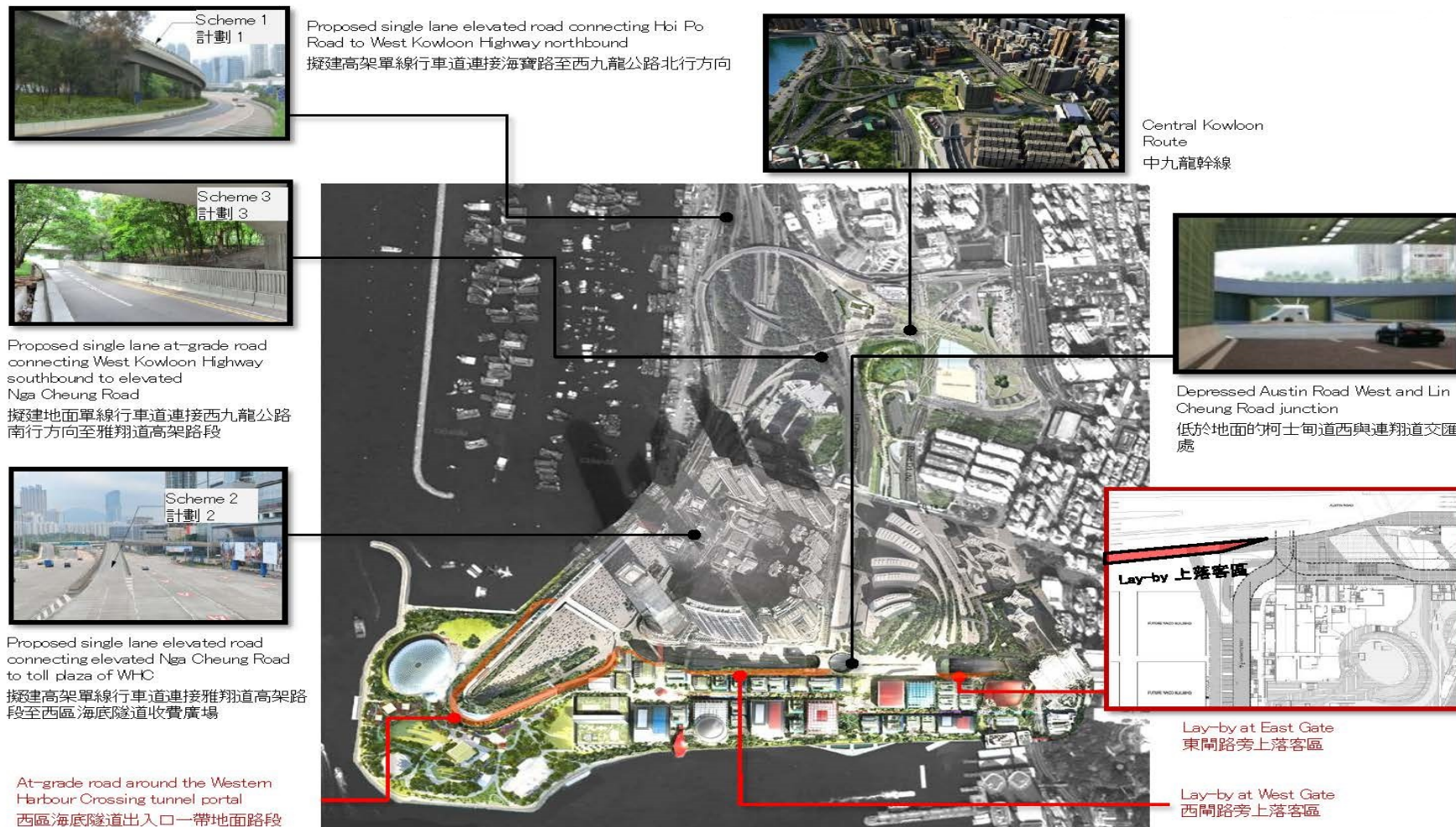
資料來源: [立法會 CB\(1\)418/18-19\(03\)號文件的附件一](#)
Source: Enclosure 1 to [LC Paper No. CB\(1\)418/18-19\(03\)](#)

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\(1\)764/18-19\(03\)號文件的附件 C](#)
Source: [Annex C to LC Paper No. CB\(1\)764/18-19\(03\)](#)

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'



資料來源：[立法會 CB\(2\)561/14-15\(02\)號文件的附件 C](#)
Source: [Annex C to LC Paper No. CB\(2\)561/14-15\(02\)](#)

**Development of Zone 2 of
the West Kowloon Cultural District ("WKCD") and
the connectivity of WKCD 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 Response of the Administration/WKCDA to members' concerns raised at the meeting
	7.7.2014 Item I	Agenda Minutes Response of WKCDA to members' concerns raised at the meeting

Committee	Date of meeting	Paper
	24.11.2014 Item II	Agenda Minutes Response of the Administration/WKCDA to members' concerns raised at the meeting
	12.1.2015 Items II & III	Agenda Minutes Response of the Administration/WKCDA to members' concerns raised at the meeting
	19.5.2015 Item III	Agenda Minutes Response of the Administration/WKCDA to members' concerns raised at the meeting
	24.11.2015 Items II & III	Agenda Minutes Response of the Administration/WKCDA to members' concerns raised at the meeting
	14.12.2015 Item I	Agenda Minutes
	30.5.2016 Items I & II	Agenda Minutes

Committee	Date of meeting	Paper
Joint Subcommittee to Monitor the Implementation of the West Kowloon Cultural District Project	20.12.2016 Item III	Agenda Minutes
	21.4.2017 Items II & III	Agenda Minutes Response of the Administration to members' concerns raised at the meeting
	29.5.2017 Item II	Agenda Minutes Response of the Administration/WKCDA to members' concerns raised at the meeting
	21.11.2017 Items IV & V	Agenda Minutes
	11.5.2018 Item IV	Agenda Minutes
	6.11.2018 Item III	Agenda Minutes
	14.1.2019 Item II	Agenda Minutes Response of the Administration/WKCDA to members' concerns raised at the meeting
	1.4.2019 Item IV	Agenda Minutes

Committee	Date of meeting	Paper
	25.11.2019 Item IV	Agenda
	6.1.2020 Item III	Agenda
Public Works Subcommittee	16.6.2015 Item 3	Agenda Minutes Response of the Administration to members' concerns raised at the meeting
	4.7.2017 Item 1	Agenda Minutes Response of the Administration to members' concerns raised at the meeting
	8.5.2019 Item 1	Agenda Response of the Administration to members' concerns raised at the meeting
	14.5.2019 Item 1	Agenda Response of the Administration to members' concerns raised at the meeting
Finance Committee	10.7.2015 Item 1	Agenda Minutes of meeting at 4:43 pm Minutes of meeting at 7:11 pm

Committee	Date of meeting	Paper
	8.12.2017 Item 2	Agenda Minutes Response of the Administration to members' concerns raised at the meeting
	5.1.2018 Item 1	Agenda Minutes Response of the Administration to members' concerns raised at the meeting
	20.3.2020 Item 3	Agenda