

For discussion on
15 March 2021

Legislative Council Panel on Home Affairs

Facility Upgrading of Tai Po Civic Centre

Purpose

This paper seeks Members' comments on the proposed facility upgrading of Tai Po Civic Centre (TPCC).

Background

2. TPCC was the assembly hall of the former Tai Po Government Secondary School (TPGSS). In 1981 during the construction of TPGSS, the Government modified the assembly hall into a district cultural performance venue with a view to addressing the community's need. The facilities of TPCC include an Auditorium with a maximum of 756 seats and two function rooms. The works were completed in early 1985. On the basis of shared use with TPGSS, TPCC was managed by the then Regional Services Department and subsequently taken over by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) in 2000. Due to spatial and structural constraints of TPCC, the stage installations and equipment at the Auditorium can only cater for school events and very basic performances, which falls below the standard of a professional performance venue.

3. The former Regional Council (RC) and Tai Po District Council (TPDC) had requested for the construction of a well-equipped civic centre in the district for years. A site on Plover Cove Road was reserved by the Government for this purpose back in the days of the former RC. Subsequently in April 2009, LCSD advised the District Facilities Management Committee (DFMC) of TPDC that a New Territories East Cultural Centre would be developed in Area 11, Fanling to meet the needs of residents of various districts in New Territories East including Tai Po. Meanwhile, LCSD also proposed upgrading the facilities of TPCC to professional performance standards upon closure of the former TPGSS. In July 2009, TPDC accepted the

Government's proposal on facility upgrading of TPCC and shelved the plan to build a new civic centre in the district. The reserved site on Plover Cove Road was then released for the development of a sports centre with indoor heated pools, a community hall and two 7-a-side hard-surface football pitches.

4. The former TPGSS ceased operation officially in 2014. In response to the strong demand from TPDC for early implementation of the facility upgrading of TPCC, LCSD planned to carry out the project in two phases. In the first phase, one of the function rooms was converted into a Black Box Theatre (BBT) as a minor works project in 2016, and BBT was subsequently opened in April 2017. On another front, Tai Po Arts Centre (TPAC) was retrofitted from the former TPGSS school premises under the Signature Project Scheme of TPDC, and was officially opened in September 2019 with performing arts groups as its major tenants. The proposed works set out in the ensuing paragraphs are under the second phase of the facility upgrading of TPCC.

Objectives

5. After extensive consultation with the stakeholders, LCSD proposed the following objectives for the second phase of the project :

- (a) to increase space and upgrade existing facilities of the venue to meet the performing arts sector's requirement for stage technology and address the aspiration for a professional performance venue which caters for the needs of performances in different arts forms;
- (b) to enhance the accessibility of TPCC, and improve the connectivity between its indoor and outdoor facilities and its linkage with the neighbourhood; and
- (c) to establish a new cultural landmark in Tai Po by creating synergy effect with TPAC to offer better equipped arts space and facilities.

Project Site

6. The project site is the existing site of TPCC with an area of about 5 650

square metres at 12 On Pong Road, Tai Po, next to TPAC. TPCC is zoned “Government, Institution or Community” on the Tai Po Outline Zoning Plan No. S/TP/28 with a building height restriction of eight storeys.

Project Scope

7. The proposed project scope includes:

Major facilities

- (a) expansion of the Auditorium and enhancement of related facilities, including (i) provision of about 700 raked seats for improved sightline and comfort; (ii) upgrading of stage machinery, and lighting and sound equipment; and (iii) extension of back-of-house area and improvement of related facilities;
- (b) expansion of BBT, including (i) enlargement of the performance space; (ii) provision of variable stage modes; (iii) addition of stage lighting equipment; and (iv) extension of back-of-house area and improvement of related facilities;

Ancillary facilities

- (c) reprovisioning of two function rooms;
- (d) expansion of the foyer and addition of toilet facilities, a babycare room, passenger lifts and an escalator;
- (e) provision of barrier-free access and facilities; and

Outdoor facilities

- (f) enhancement of outdoor landscaping to create an artistic and cultural ambience.

8. A site and location plan is at **Enclosure 1** while an artist’s impression of the project is at **Enclosure 2**.

Justifications

9. LCSD manages 16 performance venues¹. These venues have served the performing arts community from over two to six decades, and some of them now face issues arising from aging structures and installations. In terms of architectural design and stage facilities, the performance venues compare unfavourably with our counterparts in neighboring cities such as the National Theatre for the Performing Arts in Beijing, the Guangzhou Opera House and The Venetian Theatre in Macao. The Government announced in the 2018 Policy Address its policy objective to support the development of culture and the arts, and set aside \$20 billion in the 2018-19 Budget for the improvement and development of cultural facilities² in the coming ten years to align with the long-term development need of culture and the arts in Hong Kong. At present, six performance venue-related projects³ are under active planning by LCSD, and one of which is the facility upgrading of TPCC set out in this paper.

10. The Chief Executive advocated in the 2019 Policy Address the incorporation of advanced innovative technology into the East Kowloon Cultural Centre under construction, and mentioned in the 2020 Policy Address that the integration of arts and innovative technologies has become a new trend in arts development. To align with the objectives mentioned above, LCSD will introduce appropriate innovative technologies when planning for facility upgrading of its performance venues to meet the requirement of the performing arts sector and their aspiration for professional performance venues. Examples of the innovative technologies include immersive projection and sound systems, projection mapping

¹ LCSD manages a total of 16 performance venues, including 14 performing arts venues (Hong Kong City Hall, Sheung Wan Civic Centre, Sai Wan Ho Civic Centre, Hong Kong Cultural Centre, Yau Ma Tei Theatre, Ko Shan Theatre, Ngau Chi Wan Civic Centre, Sha Tin Town Hall, North District Town Hall, Tsuen Wan Town Hall, Tuen Mun Town Hall, Tai Po Civic Centre, Kwai Tsing Theatre and Yuen Long Theatre) and two indoor stadia (Hong Kong Coliseum and Queen Elizabeth Stadium).

² Paragraph 156 of the 2018-19 Budget Speech reads, “In order to continuously upgrade our cultural hardware, I will set aside \$20 billion for the improvement and development of cultural facilities. Projects to be rolled out in the coming ten years include the construction of the New Territories East Cultural Centre and the Heritage Conservation and Resource Centre; the expansion of the Hong Kong Science Museum, Hong Kong Museum of History and Hong Kong City Hall; and the renovation of the Hong Kong Cultural Centre.”

³ The five remaining performance venue-related projects are the expansion and renovation of the Hong Kong City Hall, renovation of the Hong Kong Cultural Centre, Phase II development of the Yau Ma Tei Theatre, renovation and improvement of the Sai Wan Ho Civic Centre and construction of the New Territories East Cultural Centre.

system, tracking enabled audio-visual-light system, and 4K live streaming systems.

11. Currently, the Auditorium of TPCC lacks a flying system for use during performances and a cargo lift for delivery of scenery and stage technical equipment while the back-of-house area and storage space are gravely insufficient. As some seats are not raked, sightline and comfort of the audience are also being affected. Due to space limitation, the BBT converted in 2017 is only provided with minimal performance space and a single end stage mode, thus failing to optimise its flexibility in changing stage configurations typical of a BBT. Improvements are also required to address the issues such as the foyer being small as well as lack of passenger lifts and barrier-free access facilities. With this facility upgrading project, TPCC seeks to provide a pleasant environment by upgrading its stage facilities, and secure public safety by improving TPCC's equipment and building services installations to comply with the latest statutory requirements.

12. We envisage that upon the facility upgrading, TPCC will generate synergy with TPAC. Apart from providing performance space for tenants of TPAC, TPCC may also join hands with TPAC to establish a cultural landmark in Tai Po in order to attract visitors and users.

Proposed Facilities for Upgrading and Improvement Details

Auditorium

13. By installing about 700 raked seats and resolving the existing light and sound leakage problems in the Auditorium, we aim to provide audience with comfortable seating and improved sightline for quality viewing experience. Ancillary facilities will be added on the north side of the Auditorium to support professional performances and cater for the needs of arts groups, including the installation of a power flying system with additional hanging bars for the main stage, enhancement of stage lighting and sound equipment, expansion of back-of-house area, addition of dressing rooms and storage space, provision of a cargo lift to backstage and barrier-free access, and improvement of the air-conditioning system to meet the acceptable noise rating level required for professional performance venues.

BBT

14. The upgrading works involve expansion of the BBT. Apart from the

provision of variable stage modes, works will be carried out to expand the performance space, the crossover for performers and technicians to move across the stage without being seen by the audience, and back-of-house area in order to enhance the overall flexibility of BBT to meet the needs of varied arts groups. Additional stage lighting equipment, hanging points and dressing rooms will be provided while the storeroom will be enlarged. The air-conditioning system will also be improved to meet the acoustic standard pre-requisite of a professional performance venue.

Foyer

15. The foyer area will be expanded to accommodate barrier-free access and an accessible lift which serves to connect the facilities on all floors. For the visitors' easy access to these facilities, a staircase and an escalator will also be added to connect the foyer on the ground and first floor. Male and female toilet facilities with senior-friendly cubicles and accessible toilets will be provided in the foyers on the ground and first floor. A universal toilet, a baby care room, and digital display panels for promotion of programmes will be provided in the foyer on the ground floor.

Open Space

16. The upgrading works seek to enhance the visibility of TPCC by demolishing most of the existing fence walls, and create a public space which connects TPCC with TPAC. The green space thus created will provide an open and spacious area for people to relax. The enhanced landscaping will also contribute to the creation of a cultural and artistic ambience.

17. Furthermore, to address the inadequacy of roadside space at the bus stop on On Cheung Road off the entrance to TPCC, upon the proposed demolition of the fence walls, planters within the site of TPCC will be set back to make way for a walkway no less than two metres' wide to provide more walking space to improve the pedestrian flow.

Project Estimate and Timetable

18. The estimated project cost is about \$516.5 million in money-of-the-day prices. Subject to funding approval by the Finance Committee (FC) within the 2020-21 legislative session, the construction works will take about two and a half years to complete.

Arrangement during Closure of TPCC

19. Because of safety and noise issues, all facilities in TPCC will be temporarily closed during the upgrading works. Meanwhile, LCSD will cease accepting booking applications for TPCC until its re-opening. During the closure of TPCC, potential hirers will be referred to TPAC, community halls in Tai Po, the North District Town Hall as well as other LCSD performance venues to organise activities.

20. Moreover, LCSD will organise more community cultural programmes and district entertainment programmes in Tai Po, and liaise with Tai Po District Office (TPDO) to arrange staging of performances in the community halls in the district. Programmes to be staged at performance venues in New Territories East, namely the North District Town Hall and Sha Tin Town Hall, will also be enhanced to alleviate the impact caused by the decreased number of performing arts programmes during the closure period.

Public Consultation

21. LCSD consulted DFMC of TPDC on the proposed scope and the conceptual design of the project on 28 July 2009 and 8 November 2018 respectively. In December 2018, a site visit including representatives of the Architectural Services Department, the Transport Department, TPDO and the Hong Kong Arts Development Council, and DFMC members, was conducted. DFMC supported the project and urged for its early implementation.

22. In view of a large number of new councillors in TPDC at its new term commencing in 2020, LCSD arranged another site visit for members of its District Facilities Management and Culture, Recreation and Sports Committee in November 2020 to brief them on the project. Members participating in the visit expressed their support for the project.

23. From November 2018 to January 2019, LCSD also gauged the views of various stakeholders, including its Committee on Venue Partnership, Art Form Panels under the Programme and Development Committee, major arts groups of various art forms, district arts groups, major users of TPCC and organisations for people with

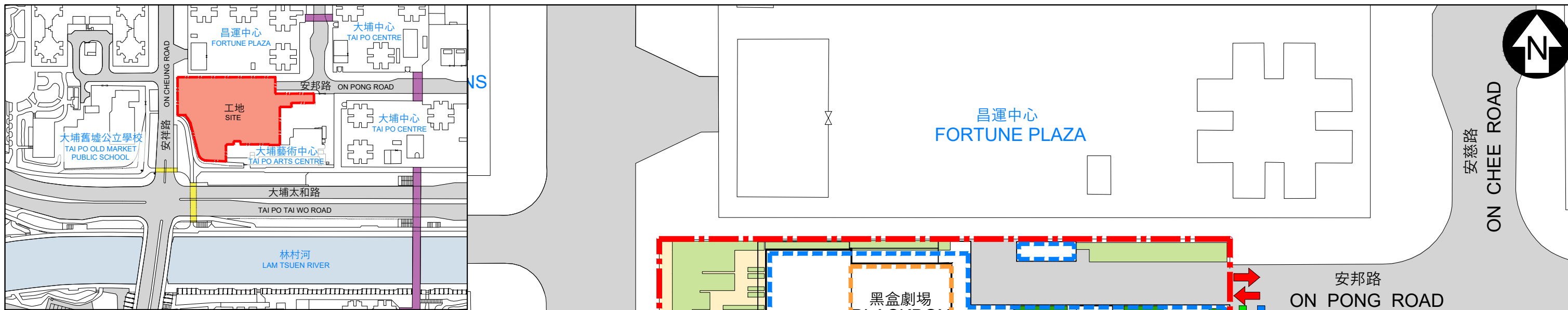
disabilities. The stakeholders unanimously supported the project.

Advice Sought

24. We plan to seek funding approval from FC after consulting the Public Works Subcommittee.

Home Affairs Bureau

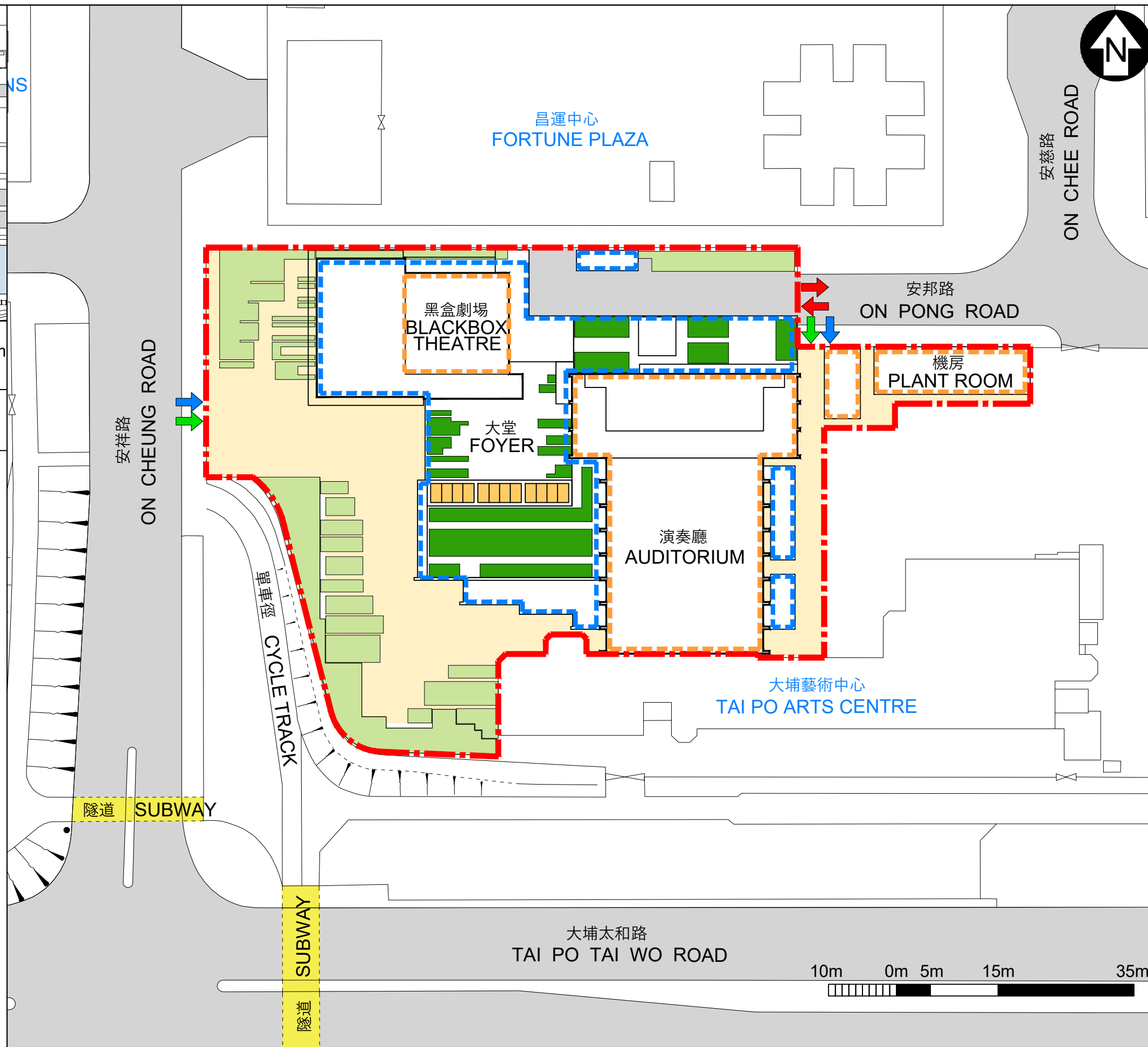
March 2021



位置圖
LOCATION PLAN

圖例 LEGEND

- - - 工地界線
SITE BOUNDARY
- - - 改建範圍
RENOVATION AREA
- - - 新建範圍
EXTENSION AREA
- 地面綠化
AT-GRADE GREENING
- 天台綠化
LANDSCAPED ROOF
- 露天場地
OPEN SPACE
- 現有隧道
EXISTING SUBWAY
- 現有有蓋行人天橋
EXISTING COVERED FOOTBRIDGE
- 太陽能光伏板
PHOTOVOLTAIC PANEL
- ↑ 車輛出入口
VEHICULAR INGRESS / EGRESS
- ↑ 無障礙出入口
BARRIER-FREE ENTRANCE / EXIT
- ↑ 行人出入口
PEDESTRIAN ENTRANCE / EXIT



工地平面圖
SITE PLAN

62RE
大埔文娛中心設施提升工程
FACILITY UPGRADING OF TAI PO CIVIC CENTRE





從安祥路望向大埔文娛中心的構思透視圖
PERSPECTIVE VIEW FROM ON CHEUNG ROAD (ARTIST'S IMPRESSION)

構思圖
ARTIST'S IMPRESSION

62RE
大埔文娛中心設施提升工程
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 ARCHITECTURAL
SERVICES
DEPARTMENT 建築署