

立法會 *Legislative Council*

LC Paper No. CB(1)608/20-21(04)

Ref : CB1/PS/2/20

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

Meeting on 1 March 2021

Updated background brief on the implementation of infrastructure works for the West Kowloon Cultural District ("WKCD") and connectivity of WKCD with its neighbouring districts

Purpose

This paper provides updated background information on the implementation of infrastructure works for 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").

Background

Infrastructure works for the West Kowloon Cultural District

2. In July 2008, the Finance Committee ("FC") approved a one-off upfront endowment of \$21.6 billion in money-of -the-day ("MOD") prices for the West Kowloon Cultural District Authority ("WKCDA") to implement the WKCD development covering arts and cultural facilities, retail/dining/entertainment facilities, public open space and certain transport facilities. According to the relevant funding proposal ([PWSC\(2008-09\)31](#) in [FCR\(2008-09\)35](#)), other communal and government facilities and related engineering works, such as roads, drainage, fire station, public pier and other ancillary facilities to support the whole WKCD (including residential, commercial and hotel developments) would be undertaken by the Government with funding approval for such works to be sought separately.

3. To date, FC has approved the following funding proposals of infrastructure works for WKCD:

- (a) \$478 million in MOD prices for "Infrastructure Works for WKCD, phase 1 – design and site investigation" in January 2013;
- (b) \$840.5 million in MOD prices for "Infrastructure Works for WKCD, phase 1 – first construction package" in July 2015. As part of the first construction package, the Museum Drive serving the Art Park and the western side of WKCD was substantially completed in end-2018;
- (c) \$192 million in MOD prices for "Infrastructure Works for WKCD, phase 1 – second construction package" in April 2018. The second construction package includes the Austin Road Pedestrian Linkage System ("APLS") connecting the Xiqu Centre basement and the Austin Station. Construction started in May 2018 and all works have been substantially completed. APLS is targeted for commissioning in the first quarter of 2021; and
- (d) \$380 million in MOD prices for "Infrastructure Works for WKCD, phase 1 – third construction package" in March 2020. The third construction package is about the development of the Artist Square Bridge ("ASB") to connect the Artist Square in WKCD and the Kowloon Station Development plus associated road works, ancillary works and landscaping works, etc. The works contract for ASB was awarded in May 2020 with a target for completion before mid-2022.¹

4. The Administration will seek funding from FC for the remaining infrastructure works for WKCD according to the phased implementation programme of WKCD.²

¹ Sources: [PWSC\(2018-19\)46](#) and [LC Paper No. CB\(1\)403/20-21\(01\)](#)

² The remaining infrastructure works mainly include (a) a flyover across the toll plaza of the Western Harbour Crossing; (b) a pedestrian linkage system linking WKCD with the Kowloon Park; (c) berthing/landing facilities for vessels and modification of existing seawall; (d) remaining underground drainage, sewerage and water supply systems; and (e) associated footpaths, lighting, ventilation, traffic system, landscaping, as well as related engineering and ancillary works. (Source: [PWSC\(2018-19\)46](#))

Connectivity with neighbouring districts

5. 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. According to 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

6. The major views and concerns expressed by members of the Joint Subcommittee on the subjects are summarized in the ensuing paragraphs.

Vehicular connections with adjoining areas

7. Expressing concern that the gradual commissioning of the WKCD facilities would further aggravate the traffic congestion problem in adjoining areas and affect vehicular accessibility of the WKCD venues and its nearby developments, members enquired about the measures to minimize the traffic impact in tandem with the commissioning of the WKCD facilities.

8. The Administration advised that based on the results of the West Kowloon Reclamation Development Traffic Study by the Transport Department completed in 2009, a number of transport infrastructure projects would be carried out to enhance the connectivity of WKCD with its neighbouring districts, including the junction improvement works at Canton Road, and an on-going consultancy study for a New Exit Road ("NER") connecting the West Kowloon Highway ("WKH") through the Museum Drive.³ A road linkage between WKH and Canton Road would be provided after completion of the underground road in WKCD in around

³ In September 2018, the Administration entrusted WKCDA to commence a design consultancy for a NER connecting WKH through the Museum Drive. The scheme has been agreed in principle by the relevant government departments and the consultant is currently carrying out the NER design. After completion of public consultation and road gazettal, and subject to the funding approval of FC, NER is targeted to commence construction in early 2022 for completion by 2025. (Source: [LC Paper No. CB\(1\)403/20-21\(01\)](#))

2027-2028⁴ and the ultimate vacation of the Tsim Sha Tsui Fire Station Complex site. Given that road traffic around WKCD was very heavy during rush hours, members of the public were encouraged to use public transport or marine transport services to visit the district in future.

Pedestrian connections with adjoining areas

9. Members considered that the Administration and WKCD should make available direct and convenient pedestrian links to connect WKCD with the major transport nodes (e.g. the Austin Station and Jordan Station), the adjoining developments (e.g. the 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 West Kowloon Station ("WKS") to facilitate convenient access to WKCD for visitors arriving via the Airport Express and the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link.

10. As advised by the Administration and WKCD, pedestrians would be primarily connected to the adjoining areas through a comprehensive network of at-grade walkways, footbridges and subways. A main pedestrian deck linking up WKS with the northern part of WKCD, together with two other pedestrian connections, namely ASB and APLS, would represent the major gateways of WKCD. DP of WKCD also contained proposals to provide a footbridge over Canton Road as a future possible linkage to connect WKCD with the Kowloon Park, as well as a new above-ground connection between the China Ferry Terminal and the waterfront promenade of WKCD. The two proposals would enhance the accessibility of the eastern end of WKCD including the Xiqu Centre and the Zone 2 developments.⁵

⁴ According to WKCD, the underground road in Zone 3A of WKCD has been substantially completed with remaining works to be implemented along with the overall programme of M+; whereas the underground road in Zone 3B of WKCD is under construction. In March 2020, FC approved the remaining works of the Integrated Basement ("IB") of WKCD which include the construction of an underground road in Zone 2. The project is expected to be completed in phases by around 2027. (Sources: [LC Paper No. CB\(1\)512/19-20\(01\)](#) and [PWSC\(2018-19\)46](#))

⁵ In July 2020, WKCD tendered out the design consultancy contract for the proposed footbridge over Canton Road and the new above-ground connection between the China Ferry Terminal and the waterfront promenade. It is targeted to award the consultancy contract in early 2021. (Source: [LC Paper No. CB\(1\)403/20-21\(01\)](#))

Artist Square Bridge

11. At the meeting on 21 April 2017, the Administration consulted the Joint Subcommittee on the funding proposal relating to the construction of ASB. Members expressed serious concern about the original estimated construction cost (at about \$350 million in September 2016 prices) of ASB and suggested alternatives, such as an underground pedestrian walkway. The Administration explained that the high construction cost was attributable to various technical difficulties and site constraints, and undertook to review the ASB project with WKCDA.

12. The Administration consulted the Joint Subcommittee on the revised design and funding proposal of ASB at its meeting on 11 May 2018. According to the revised design, the total length of ASB was reduced from 112 metres to 94 metres and its landing location was shifted from the central area to the northern side of the Artist Square. ASB would be constructed in one go instead of by phases in order to reduce the number of supporting piers. The new estimated construction cost was about \$280 million in MOD prices (equivalent to about \$230 million in September 2016 prices), which was about 70% of that based on the original design.

13. Members in general welcomed the new simplified design of ASB, but a member expressed disappointment about the featureless design. In response, the Administration undertook to work with WKCDA to improve the new design, such as installing decorative lighting system and ancillary provisions for art installations in order to add an artistic touch to ASB. The Joint Subcommittee eventually supported the revised funding proposal of ASB. On 20 March 2020, the proposal was approved by FC.

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

14. Some members asked whether WKCDA would share the responsibilities and costs of the daily management and repair and maintenance of APLS 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 APLS and share the relevant costs; whereas the Administration would be responsible for the management and maintenance work of the existing pedestrian subway, including the beautification works.

15. Members enquired whether APLS would be opened for public access 24 hours a day, and if not, whether there would be other facilities for pedestrian access to WKCD beyond its opening hours. Members also asked

whether the existing pedestrian subway would remain opened to the public when the beautification works were being carried out.

16. The Administration advised that the opening hours of APLS would tally with those of the Austin Station (i.e. 5:47 a.m. to 12:56 midnight). Pedestrians could use the existing pedestrian subway, which would be opened for public use 24 hours a day, beyond the opening hours of APLS. 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.

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. As at April 2020, there were some 30 franchised bus and minibus routes providing convenient reach to WKCD from most parts of Hong Kong, Kowloon, and the New Territories.

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, there was a view 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 to make WKCD a water transport gateway to the harbour, it had entrusted WKCDA to commence a design consultancy for the WKCD's marine landing facilities in March 2020. The Administration also planned to introduce the "Central–Hung Hom" ferry route and water taxi service.⁶

20. Members noted that a new southern marine landing facility near M+ was targeted to be completed in around 2023 to tie in with the completion of

⁶ The "Central–Hung Hom" ferry route commenced service in June 2020 while the water taxi service is still under preparation. (Sources: <https://news.rthk.hk/rthk/ch/component/k2/1534576-20200628.htm> (Chinese version only) and [LC Paper No. CB\(1\)447/20-21\(05\)](#))

the Lyric Theatre Complex and the Artist Square. As the proposed southern marine landing facility would be close to the China Ferry Terminal, there was a 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.

21. On the proposed development of a new northern marine landing facility, members noted that the trade did not support such a proposal given that the new facility would be located within the breakwaters of the New Yau Ma Tei Typhoon Shelter and would have safety implications on vessels. WKCDA advised that the proposed new northern marine landing facility was to tie in with the development of the Art, Commerce and Exhibitions ("ACE") project of WKCD. However, as the Authority had withdrawn the tender for the ACE project and was reviewing and assessing various options before deciding on the best way forward, the development plan of this new marine landing facility would be further studied.

Pedestrian accessibility within the West Kowloon Cultural District

22. Members stressed the importance of 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 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 a suggestion that WKCDA should consider using trams, an environmentally friendly and iconic mode of transport in Hong Kong, to provide shuttle service along the waterfront promenade in WKCD. Members also enquired about the details and progress of the trial service of a driverless electric vehicle within WKCD.

23. WKCDA advised that the use of EFTS in WKCD as a means to address the east-west traffic demand had been included in DP of WKCD. WKCDA had studied various 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. WKCDA 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. The current trial route had been extended to around 3 kilometres in length, serving the entire Art Park with stops at all major venues and visiting points. If the trial proved to be successful and as the technology matured, WKCDA would consider further

testing on the Museum Drive and the future underground road to evaluate the interaction of the autonomous vehicle with normal vehicular traffic, subject to the approval by the relevant government departments.

24. On the barrier-free facilities to be provided at WKCD, some members 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.

25. 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. Moreover, WKCDA 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.

Provision of parking spaces

26. Given that the existing roads in the vicinity of WKCD including Austin Road West were already heavily congested, some members questioned whether the provision of over 2 000 car parking spaces in WKCD was consistent with a vehicle-free design concept.⁷ They were also concerned 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 WKCDA to provide coach parking spaces for free, as well as more pick-up/drop-off points to enhance accessibility.

27. 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. Meanwhile, temporary coach

⁷ WKCDA selected the Conceptual Plan prepared by Foster + Partners ("F+P") in March 2011 as the preferred option to form the basis of a DP for WKCD. IB is an integral component of the F+P Conceptual Plan, the design concept of which is to put the traffic, loading bays, plant rooms and utilities underground, thereby freeing up the site above for public enjoyment and enhancing the walking environment at podium level. (Source: [LC Paper No. CB\(1\)512/19-20\(01\)](#))

parking spaces would be provided to address the interim demand. WKCD would closely monitor the actual parking demand and review the provision of parking facilities for coaches in WKCD as and when necessary. With the opening of the underground car park at M+ in December 2020 which provided about 150 parking spaces, the car park provision of WKCD had increased to about 480 during weekends and public holidays.

Latest development

28. At the meeting of the Joint Subcommittee to be held on 1 March 2021, the Administration and WKCD will brief members on the implementation of "Infrastructure Works for WKCD, phase 1 – fourth construction package" and the improvement of connectivity of WKCD with its neighbouring districts.

Relevant papers

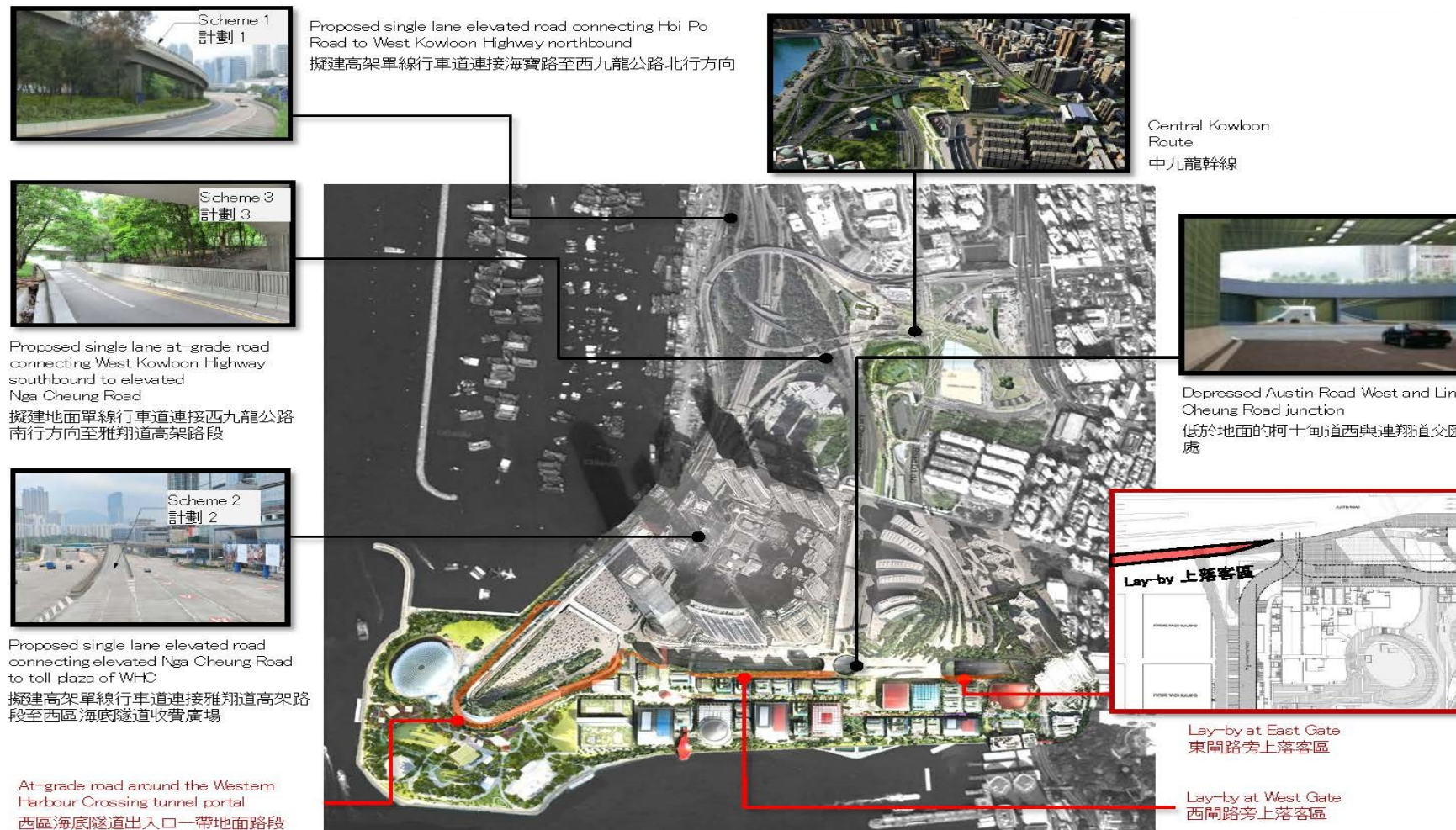
29. A list of the relevant papers on the Legislative Council website is in **Appendix III**.

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\(1\)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\(02\)](#)

Appendix III

Implementation of infrastructure works for the West Kowloon Cultural District ("WKCD") and 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
	7.7.2014 Item I	Agenda Minutes Response of WKCDA to members' concerns raised at the meeting
	24.11.2014 Item II	Agenda Minutes

Committee	Date of meeting	Paper
	12.1.2015 Item II	Agenda Minutes Response of the Administration/WKCDA to members' concerns raised at the meeting
	19.5.2015 Item III	Agenda Minutes
	24.11.2015 Items II & III	Agenda Minutes
	14.12.2015 Item I	Agenda Minutes
	30.5.2016 Item II	Agenda Minutes
	20.12.2016 Item III	Agenda Minutes
Joint Subcommittee to Monitor the Implementation of the West Kowloon Cultural District Project	21.4.2017 Item II	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

Committee	Date of meeting	Paper
	21.11.2017 Items IV & V	Agenda Minutes
	11.5.2018 Item IV	Agenda Minutes
	6.11.2018 Item III	Agenda Minutes
	1.4.2019 Item IV	Agenda Minutes
	25.11.2019 Item IV	Agenda Minutes
	6.1.2020 Item III	Agenda Minutes
	27.4.2020 Item IV	Agenda Minutes
	18.1.2021 Items III & IV	Agenda