

Task Force on Kai Tak Harbourfront Development

For information
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TFKT/10/2014

Pedestrian Environment Improvement Scheme for Transformation of Kwun Tong Business Area – Feasibility Study Stage 1 Public Engagement

PURPOSE

This paper aims to inform Members of the Stage 1 Public Engagement of the “Pedestrian Environment Improvement Scheme for Transformation of Kwun Tong Business Area (KTBA) Feasibility Study” (the Study) recently launched by Energizing Kowloon East Office (EKEO) of Development Bureau (DevB). Members are welcomed to provide comments on the initial improvement strategies and direction of the Study.

BACKGROUND

2. EKEO commissioned the Study in May 2014 to formulate improvement schemes for the pedestrian environment and road conditions, and enhance accessibility from Kwun Tong and Ngau Tau Kok MTR Stations to KTBA towards the waterfront. We would proactively seek opportunities to improve pedestrian facilities, promote greening and landscaping, beautify the streetscape, connect different places by footbridges and subways, *etc.* with the aim to improve the pedestrian environment in KTBA. We would also look into the existing traffic issues in KTBA in order to formulate appropriate improvement proposals. The Study is anticipated to be completed by mid-2016.

3. In order to gauge public views on the improvement of the pedestrian environment and road conditions in KTBA in the study process, three stages of public engagement programme will be

Task Force on Kai Tak Harbourfront Development

TFKT/10/2014

organized. The Stage 1 Public Engagement is currently undertaken to collect the views from the public and stakeholders on the initial study findings and initial improvement strategies.

FEASIBILITY STUDY

Key Issues of Kwun Tong Business Area

4. The urban design of Kwun Tong district was based on the standards and requirements of an industrial area where pedestrian pavements were relatively narrow with plenty of loading/unloading areas along the roads. Given that the pedestrian and traffic flows have been escalating, these facilities are no longer able to meet and cater for the needs of KTBA under transformation. This would also restrict the future development of this area. By means of site visits, questionnaires, surveys on pedestrian and traffic flows, pedestrian and traffic analyses, as well as preliminary traffic assessment, we have understood and established the key issues of pedestrian environment and road conditions in KTBA. We hope that the local community could share their views with us, and together we could create a safe, comfortable and accessible pedestrian environment, as well as a comprehensive road network that is capable of supporting the future development of KTBA.

Pedestrian Environment

5. The pedestrian pavements in KTBA were built and designed for the industrial development in the past. Therefore, many of them are relatively narrow compared to the standards today. With active industrial and business activities in Kwun Tong, there are huge pedestrian and traffic flows during the peak hours. TPedestrian flows are mainly from the Ngau Tau Kok and Kwun Tong MTR Stations, as well as a number of bus stops along Kwun Tong Road towards various commercial and industrial

Task Force on Kai Tak Harbourfront Development

TFKT/10/2014

buildings, which mainly rely on at-grade pedestrian pavements. Besides, there are numerous kerbside industrial and commercial activities, including loading/unloading, waiting and illegal parking, etc. There are also commercial advertising panels which might cause obstruction along the pedestrian pavements. Some of these activities may occupy the pedestrian walking space and eventually lead to pedestrian and vehicular conflicts.

6. Therefore, some pedestrians would use the back alleys as shortcuts and passageways. However, some of these back alleys are not well utilized because of poor conditions such as dripping and obstruction by miscellaneous objects. Besides, there is a lack of open space and greening in the pedestrian environment which is not able to meet the needs of people who come for work and leisure.

Roads Conditions

7. With regard to road conditions, the current heavy traffic flows in the Kwun Tong District have caused traffic congestion at some road junctions including Wai Fat Road/ Wai Yip Street junction, Hoi Yuen Road/ Wai Yip Street junction, Hoi Yuen Road/ Kwun Tong Road junction and How Ming Street/ Tsun Yip Street junction *etc.* During peak hours, the traffic congestion would extend to other roads, affecting the normal operation of adjacent junctions. In addition, as the major developments in KTBA are found surrounding Kwun Tong Road and Hoi Yuen Road, the majority of the vehicles accessing the western part of KTBA would need to pass through the Wai Fat Road/ Wai Yip Street junction and Hoi Yuen Road/ Wai Yip Street junction. This is also a major reason leading to the traffic congestion mentioned above.

8. Currently there are carparks, metered parking spaces and areas for loading/ unloading located within KTBA. However, vehicles are found to be parked outside these designated areas, leading to serious illegal parking problem. These illegal parking

Task Force on Kai Tak Harbourfront Development

TFKT/10/2014

activities adversely affect the normal traffic operation. Some of the cases may even occupy one whole traffic lane, reducing the capacity of adjacent roads.

9. The road network and traffic arrangement in KTBA were designed for the needs of the former industrial district. In the transformation process, the existing road network is no longer able to cope with the need of transformation.

INITIAL IMPROVEMENT STRATEGIES

10. Taking into account the future development opportunities and local character, as well as the technical feasibility and implementation arrangement, we propose the following initial improvement strategies in order to lead us to the discussion on the short and medium-term improvement proposals in the next stage.

11. For the pedestrian environment, different development projects are pursued with the hope to create synergy in Kowloon East and the pedestrian flows would further increase in the future. Therefore, connectivity to the surroundings is significantly important to KTBA.

External Connectivity

- (a) **East-West Connection** – Strengthen the connection of Kwun Tong to the surrounding districts, and improve the pedestrian connectivity to Kowloon Bay and Cha Kwo Ling.
- (b) **North-South Connection** – Create pedestrian connections that facilitate public access to the waterfront, including improving the connections between KTBA and the residential clusters in Ngau Tau Kok and to the north of Kwun Tong Road. Connections between the Kai Tak

Task Force on Kai Tak Harbourfront Development

TFKT/10/2014

Development Area and Kai Tak Fantasy would also be considered.

Internal Connectivity

- (a) Optimize the main connections from Kwun Tong Road to Kwun Tong waterfront in order to enhance pedestrian accessibility.
- (b) Strengthen the connectivity between Kowloon Bay and Kwun Tong Action Areas via main roads such as Hoi Bun Road and Wai Yip Street.

12. Currently some of these back alleys are under-utilized because of the poor conditions. Improving back alleys among buildings could integrate them into the pedestrian network of the whole business area. Through implementation of quick-win projects, some back alleys could be included in a pilot scheme for revitalization through simple yet unique pattern on the ground, and attract more pedestrians using back alleys.

13. Apart from the pedestrian environment, we would also focus on the current traffic conditions in KTBA. The main strategies include reviewing and improving road network as well as investigating smart transport measures, such as the formulation of traffic management measures, sharing road traffic information to the public, *etc.*

14. We also propose overall beautification and greening measures to improve the pedestrian environment. The existing pedestrian footbridges and subways could be face-lifted; and the pedestrian environment could also be designed uniquely through promoting greening and beautification of streetscape, with the aim to transform Kowloon East into a green CBD of Hong Kong.

Task Force on Kai Tak Harbourfront Development

TFKT/10/2014

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMME

15. The 2-month Stage 1 Public Engagement has started on 3 November 2014, and will end on 30 December 2014. The aim is to collect views from the public and stakeholders on the key issues of pedestrian environment and road conditions in KTBA, as well as initial improvement strategies. A community workshop is scheduled to be held in the EKEO Exhibition Hall on 6 December 2014 (Saturday) as a part of the Stage 1 Public Engagement activities.

16. More details and progress of the Study can be found on the website (www.walkablekwuntong.hk). We welcome you to send comments to us by post, fax, email, or via the commenting form or the interactive public engagement map on the website.

17. For the next stage, we will consolidate the comments received for further investigation and analyses. The Stage 2 Public Engagement is scheduled to be launched in mid-2015. There will be consultation with Members on the short to medium-term proposals to improve the pedestrian and traffic conditions.

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