

Harbourfront Commission

For discussion
16 June 2014

Walkable Kowloon East

Purpose

This paper aims at reporting to Members about our work and plan towards creating a walkable Central Business District (CBD) in Kowloon East (KE)¹. It is our aim to create a pedestrian environment in Kowloon Bay and Kwun Tong business areas that is “walkable”, “stayable” and “sittable” and easily accessible by vehicular traffic.

Background

2. Enhancing connectivity in KE is one of the major strategies of the Energizing Kowloon East (EKE) initiatives. The 4 key strategies of EKE, as shown in the Conceptual Master Plan (CMP), are “Connectivity”, “Branding”, “Design” and “Diversity”. Connectivity is the most important key to the success of this complex urban transformation process. In the 2014 Policy Address, the Government advocates again the sustainability concept on “walkability” in KE through improving connectivity and enhancing the pedestrian environment to facilitate its transformation into an attractive alternative core business area to support the long-term economic growth of Hong Kong.

3. To solve the congestion problem of pedestrian flows and road network in the developed area of KE, we have to adopt a gradual approach to enhance connectivity in strategic, inter-district, intra-district and local levels. At the strategic and inter-district levels, the Highways Department is planning

¹ In the 2011-12 Policy Address, the Chief Executive announced the adoption of a visionary, coordinated and integrated approach to expedite the transformation of Kowloon East into an attractive, alternative CBD to support Hong Kong’s economic development. This initiative was reiterated in the 2013 and 2014 Policy Addresses.

to construct the Central Kowloon Route (CKR) to alleviate the existing inter-district congestion problem. At intra-district level, the Civil Engineering and Development Department is also studying to strengthen the network through the proposed Environmentally Friendly Linkage System (EFLS). The Energizing Kowloon East Office (EKEO) mainly focuses on improving the pedestrian connectivity and traffic conditions at the local level within KE.

Short-term Improvement Proposals

4. Since the establishment of EKEO in June 2012, we have established an inter-departmental traffic group with the Transport Department and Highways Department to work out short-term improvement measures. Up to April 2014, we have implemented road improvement works at 24 locations and reviewed 41 signalized junctions with adjustments in signal timings carried out where necessary. We have also provided 37 traffic/directional signs to enhance the connection between MTR stations and the waterfront. We will continue to push ahead with other improvement works with a view to improving the pedestrian connectivity and traffic conditions for the enjoyment and convenience of the public.

Medium to Long-term Improvement Proposals

5. Apart from the short-term proposals, we are also working on the medium to long-term pedestrian linkage network proposal to connect different parts of KE with the adjacent Kai Tak Development (KTD) and the waterfront by improving at-grade pedestrian facilities, enhancing landscape/streetscape, promoting greening and connecting important nodes of attraction through at-grade connection or grade-separated facilities.

6. A feasibility study to formulate short, medium and long-term improvement proposals required for the pedestrian and traffic environment in the Kowloon Bay Business Area

(KBBA) was commissioned in February 2013 for completion in late 2014. Details of the proposals are set out in paras. 8 to 18 below.

7. To enhance the walkability and connectivity in the Kwun Tong Business Area, we have just commissioned another pedestrian and traffic study in May 2014 for completion in mid-2016. We will also commission a planning and engineering study on the Kowloon Bay Action Area shortly to review and formulate feasible development options, and we will look into the connectivity between the Action Area and the surrounding area including KTD and the waterfront.

Kowloon Bay Business Area Pedestrian Environment Improvement

8. This study aims at improving the walkability from the Kowloon Bay MTR Station to KBBA and towards KTD and the waterfront area, and improving the traffic conditions. Since the commencement of the study in February 2013, we have reviewed the existing pedestrian and traffic conditions and analysed the impact due to the development in KE.

9. We carried out 3 stages of Public Engagement (PE) exercises collecting views and ideas from the public -

- (a) Stage 1 PE – the public was supportive of the objective and strategy in creating a walkable CBD in KBBA. We proposed adopting a “weave” approach to improve connectivity between Kowloon Bay MTR Station, KBBA and KTD.
- (b) Stage 2 PE – we introduced various short to medium-term at-grade measures for 3 key areas and 17 individual locations. These proposals have been taken forward progressively in collaboration with the relevant departments.
- (c) Stage 3 PE, – we have formulated the implementation programme for the improvement of 10 pedestrian

facilities and 7 road junctions that were introduced in Stage 2 PE. It is anticipated that the improvement to the pedestrian facilities will commence within 2014 for completion in phases from 2014 to 2016. Meanwhile, to tie in with the implementation programme of the major works in the vicinity, the improvement to the road junctions is expected to take more time, commencing from 2015 onwards for completion in phases from 2017 to 2020. We have also formulated a pedestrian linkage network proposal to meet future increase in pedestrian demand.

Pedestrian Linkage Network Proposal in KBBA

10. We have made reference to the pedestrian framework that we proposed for the Study during Stage 2 PE, and considered the existing and future pedestrian flows and activities in KBBA. We have also taken the public comments into account. Under our medium to long-term pedestrian linkage network proposals, there are 7 pedestrian links for connecting different parts of KBBA and the adjacent KTD and waterfront. We hope to weave an attractive and complete pedestrian linkage network to enhance connectivity. The proposed 7 pedestrian links are as follows:

(a) Green Spine

11. In Stage 2 PE, we proposed “Key Area 1 - Green Spine (“GO₂”Link)” to attract pedestrian flow accessing KBBA through the strip of the enhanced open space with improved pedestrian crossing facilities under a green walking environment on ground. The original scheme covered: (1) North/South Section - Kai Cheung Road to Sheung Yuet Road, extending to Wang Yuen Street and Sheung Yee Road; and (2) East/West Section - Lam Wah Street from the Green Spine to Wang Kwun Road. As a long-term plan, we propose to extend and facelift the “Green Spine” including pedestrian crossing improvement, greening, new landscape/streetscape, etc, along the west side of Lam Wah Street to the Kowloon Bay International Trade & Exhibition Centre (KITEC) to provide a

major east/west pedestrian passageway.

(b) Green Link

12. For the north/south connection along the western portion of KBBA, a link with green treatment and enhancement to pedestrian crossing will be provided from KITEC in the north to MegaBox in the south and the future Kowloon Bay Action Area. The triangular space at the junction of Sheung Yee Road/Kai Fuk Road has the potential to be a connectivity hub for connecting people in KTD, the future EFLS station, other parts of KBBA and the future Kowloon Bay Action Area.

(c) Northern Kai Tak Link

13. We propose to provide a northern link starting at the open space beside KITEC, using the proposed footbridge across Kai Fuk Road to be constructed by the CKR project, connecting to the future developments in KTD and the planned pedestrian footbridge system. The “Northern Kai Tak Link” can be linked with the “Green Spine” and “Green Link” introduced above. It will serve as a major pedestrian connection between KBBA and the waterfront of KTD.

(d) Southern Kai Tak Link

14. At the southern part of KBBA, we propose a pedestrian connection for accessing to KTD. We propose to make use of the existing footbridge in the vicinity of the junction of Wang Kwong Road and Wang Tung Street to cross Kai Fuk Road and connect to the pedestrian footbridge system under planning at KTD. In order to attract pedestrian for using the foresaid route with enhanced walking environment, the existing footbridge crossing Kai Fuk Road will be facelifted with enhanced appearance. The "Southern Kai Tak Link" can be linked with the “Green Link” introduced above for accessing KBBA. Again, it will be served as a pedestrian connection between KBBA and the waterfront of the KTD. We will also explore whether the foresaid linkage can be extended to the

future development of Kowloon Bay Action Area.

(e) Telford Amoy Link

15. We are studying the feasibility in widening the pedestrian connection from the MTR Kowloon Bay Station Exit B, via the Kwun Tong Road footbridge and future Cross District Community Cultural Center (CDCCC), and towards the Ngau Tau Kok Road residential area in the east.

(f) Siu Yip Street Link

16. In order to meet the future demand and relieve the pressure of the existing footbridges across Wai Yip Street, we propose to provide a grade-separated pedestrian link along Siu Yip Street crossing Wai Yip Street and extending to Sheung Yee Road.

(g) Tai Yip Street Link

17. As proposed in Stage 2 PE, we will widen and facelift the footpath of Tai Yip Street as well as facelift the existing Sheung Yee Road footbridge to attract pedestrian for using the footbridge with increased walking comfort and to divert the demand from those travelling along the congested Telford Plaza footbridge across Wai Yip Street. Noting a proportion of pedestrian demand across Telford Plaza and Wai Yip Street to KBBA at the commuting peaks is caused by the bus passengers alighting at Kwun Tong Road, we are exploring ways to divert the existing bus passengers pick-up/drop-off at further south on Kwun Tong Road so that public can access to KBBA by Hong Tak Road, Tai Yip Street and the existing Sheung Yee Road footbridge.

Implementation Plan

18. After the Stage 3 PE event, we will coordinate the necessary resources, detailed technical study and design required for the progressive implementation of the proposed pedestrian linkage network and liaise with relevant

departments to implement the proposals in phases. For details of the pedestrian linkage network proposal in KBBA, please download the Stage 3 PE Digest at the project website (<http://www.ekeo.gov.hk/kbba-pedestrian/en/doc/AEC-3rd-Digest-r7-0516.pdf>).

Way Forward

19. We will continue to identify possible improvement proposals to enhance connectivity in KE. We will also continue to communicate with the public and relevant stakeholders to work on creating a walkable CBD in KE.

Advice Sought

20. Members' views on our plan towards creating a walkable CBD in KE are welcome.

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