

## **Update on the Development of the West Kowloon Cultural District Park**

### **PURPOSE**

This paper briefs Members on the development of the Park of the West Kowloon Cultural District (WKCD), in terms of its design, use and management.

### **BACKGROUND**

2. As an integral part of the 23-hectare public open space within the WKCD, the Park will provide a major green open space in the heart of the city. Located on the western part of the WKCD, the Park will feature a waterfront promenade which wraps around the entire headland area, offering spectacular views over Victoria Harbour.

3. The Park will also house a series of arts and cultural venues including the Arts Pavilion and Freespace (with a Black Box and an Outdoor Stage). Other planned provisions of the Park include retail, dining and entertainment facilities; cycling tracks and bicycle rental points; waterfront promenade and walks; marine landing facilities (subject to compliance with the Protection of the Harbour Ordinance (Cap. 531) and relevant Government departments' agreement); and other recreational and leisure facilities.

4. The West Kowloon Cultural District Authority (WKCDA) has committed to early delivery of the Park and adoption of a simple and functional design in a cost-effective manner, as part of the pragmatic approach in implementing the WKCD project. A design team led by Dennis Lau & Ng Chun Man Architects & Engineers (Hong Kong) Ltd (DLN), supported by landscape architects, West 8 (Netherlands) and ACLA (Hong Kong), was appointed in February 2014 to design and administer the construction of the Park.

### **POSITIONING OF THE PARK**

5. The Park is an imperative part of the WKCD and perceived as a highlight in Foster + Partners' City Park conceptual

plan. Taking into account views expressed during the three-stage public engagement exercise from 2009 to 2011, WKCD has defined a clear positioning for the WKCD Park that would set it apart and distinguish it from other public parks in Hong Kong, which mainly serve to provide recreation and leisure space for the general public. The positioning of the Park, in the form of a vision and mission statement, is as follows –

**Vision**

To create a quality green open space that would make Hong Kong proud

**Mission**

A waterfront park to inspire, promote and encourage cultural pursuits for all

**THE PARK DESIGN**

6. With concerted effort of the design team, a concept layout plan of the Park (**Annex 1**) has been completed and was unveiled to the public on 22 July 2014. By introducing a major path in the Park tentatively named “Cultural Boulevard” that joins up the Arts Pavilion, Black Box and Outdoor Stage, and a waterfront promenade that embraces a great variety of harbourfront experience, the Park will be an accessible urban oasis for relaxation and contemplation. A leisure cycling track, with good flexibility to extend within the Park will be accommodated. Over time, art installations will characterise the Park under the curatorial effort of the M+ team.

7. The Lawn in the western area of the Park will be an important landscape feature within the Park, a place for leisure and public enjoyment designed for everyday use. It can also be a flexible event space capable of accommodating over 10,000 standing visitors for outdoor festivals, classical or pop music concerts, and other performances. A further flexible event space is planned for the southern segment of the Park near the waterfront, capable of hosting up to 5,000 people standing.

8. All arts and cultural venues and activities equipped in the Park will be integrated and embedded in a rich landscape setting. Topographic variations are imposed to invite exploration and reward visitors with unexpected views and experiences. A double edged design is proposed on the southern edge of the Park

allowing visitors to enjoy the spectacular view of the Victoria Harbour at different levels. Spaces of tranquility and intimacy within the Park provide a counterpoint to the grandeur of harbour views from the promenade. All will become the amazing backdrop for cultural events, ranging from festivals and exhibitions through to large outdoor concerts without compromising simultaneous enjoyment of the Park by the public for passive or active recreation.

9. To ensure that the Park design will meet the needs of different users, including the elderly and people with disabilities, the Park design team will work with accessibility design consultants on the application of universal accessibility design principles in the Park.

10. The Park design team recommends a more organic approach to set out the Park delivery programme. Both permanent development and interim improvement works will be proposed and well aligned in the programme throughout the development process starting from 2015, aiming to maintain partial opening of the Park area for public enjoyment.

## **UPDATE ON USE AND MANAGEMENT**

11. In parallel with developing the Park design, WKCD has been preparing for the future operation of the Park, which includes collecting public views on the approach to be taken in the management of the Park, drafting of the Park bylaws, as well as experimenting with different possible uses, in the run-up to the opening of the Park.

### ***Public engagement on the use and management of the Park***

12. Led by the Consultation Panel<sup>1</sup> of WKCD, an engagement exercise titled "A Park We Share - Public Survey on the Operation of the Future West Kowloon Cultural District Park" was carried out to seek views and ideas from the public on how the Park in the WKCD can be operated and managed in new, innovative ways that would meet the aspirations of the public.

13. The survey was conducted by an independent

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<sup>1</sup> Yau Tsim Mong District Council Members Mr Derek HUNG Chiu-wah and Ms KO Po-ling are members of the WKCD Consultation Panel. Mr Hung is also a member of the taskforce leading this engagement exercise.

research agency from May to June 2014, comprising an online questionnaire survey and a series of focus group discussions. A total of 3,302 questionnaires were completed for the online public survey, and seven focus group sessions were held. Three of the sessions involved members of the general public, and the other four involved LegCo Members, District Council members<sup>2</sup>, stakeholders from cultural and creative industry sectors as well as non-governmental organisations. With 52 participants in total, these sessions provided opportunities for more in-depth discussions and exchanges, especially among stakeholders holding different views. Findings of the survey (see an extract in **Annex 2**) will be used as reference for the drafting of the Park bylaws.

### ***Preparation of the Park bylaws***

14. WKCD is preparing the draft bylaws in accordance with section 37(1) of the West Kowloon Cultural District Authority Ordinance to cater for the opening of the future Park. In this connection, WKCD and its external legal advisers have surveyed park bylaws from a number of common-law jurisdictions, including the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, as well as local bylaws of Ocean Park and facilities of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department. The following Park management approach is set out accordingly to seek Members' views on the general framework of the bylaws. The draft Park bylaws will be refined having regard to the results of the Park survey and the views of various stakeholders. WKCD targets to table the final draft bylaws at LegCo in early 2015.

### ***Park management approach***

15. WKCD has worked on the general philosophy that the use of the Park should be as free and open as possible to all people in Hong Kong, but preserving the right and authority for persons authorised by WKCD to intervene where necessary in order to ensure that activities by any one or more Park users do not excessively interfere with or disturb the use of the Park by others. It intended to achieve the following –

- (a) to provide proper management of the Park and arts and cultural facilities within the Park, as well as

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<sup>2</sup> All members of the Yau Tsim Mong District Council were invited to the focus group discussions. Mr Derek HUNG Chiu-wah attended some of the sessions as a member of the park engagement taskforce. Ms KO Po-ling attended one of the sessions.

dining and refreshment facilities therein, and to afford safe and convenient access by the general public;

- (b) to avoid causing inconvenience or nuisance to other park users by authorising WKCDA or its agents to manage certain conduct of visitors to the Park;
- (c) to provide for the effective use of the Park by WKCDA and other community and commercial groups and organisations to conduct concerts, exhibitions and festivals and other arts and cultural activities which may be ticketed and for the handling of lost property found in the Park; and
- (d) to provide for proper management of car parking facilities, and for the management of cycling activities in the Park.

16. While WKCDA contemplates that the Park management will be undertaken with a light hand, it would not be sensible, prudent or in the best interests of public safety and security to have no rules of conduct in place. WKCDA has therefore attempted to structure the bylaws such that there are minimum restrictions on most activities<sup>3</sup>, but where it may be necessary to restrict any activity, such activity may be done if authorised, or may be done in a designated area of the Park where they are specifically authorised by notice.

17. Similarly, as WKCDA hopes to encourage arts activities, performances and presentations by a variety of

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<sup>3</sup> For example, WKCDA preliminarily proposes that users of the Park would commit an offence and be liable to a fine if they -

- (a) obstruct, disturb, annoy or offend other users or use obscene language;
- (b) spit, urinate, defecate or do other bodily functions contrary to public decency or propriety;
- (c) obstruct an authorised person or Authority's employee or contractor in performance of their duties;
- (d) throw stones or missiles, discharge firearms, air guns, bows and arrows catapults or similar devices;
- (e) beg or solicit alms;
- (f) smoke except in designated areas;
- (g) give reasonable cause for annoyance to others after being requested to desist by an authorised person;
- (h) offer goods or services for sale without authorisation;
- (i) play ball games, use skateboards, bicycles or roller skates/blades in areas where such activities are prohibited by notice;
- (j) fly kites and model aircraft or use hot-air balloons etc.; and
- (k) climb perimeter fences, walls, posts, barriers, or other structure.

individuals and groups, some of which may require admission fees whilst others are free of charge, it needs to be able to limit audience numbers to provide safe conditions for audiences. WKCDA therefore proposes to be able to delineate restricted areas in the Park to which admission may be regulated. As activities may take place in different areas of the Park at different times, WKCDA proposes to put in place a booking or registration system for the public to hire the use of these areas with or without charges. Where a given area is to be restricted temporarily, the public will be informed in advance of the arrangement via WKCDA's website, by notices placed at the Park entrances and at the entrances to any such restricted areas, as well as through other available channels.

### ***Pre-opening activities and pilot scheme***

18. To prepare itself and the public for the future Park, WKCDA has been making use of the existing West Kowloon Waterfront Promenade to accumulate operational experience and build up public expectation through events and pilot schemes.

19. After taking over its management in October 2012, WKCDA has continued to open the Promenade for public enjoyment. Major public events such as Freespace Fest and Mobile M+: INFLATION! have enabled the general public to become more familiar with the location of and access to the future Park site. The Promenade has now become a popular destination for outdoor activities especially for families and young people.

20. WKCDA has also experimented with different uses on the future Park site through its own programmes as well as external hirer events. More than 30 events have been held on the site since 2012, from ticketed to free events, major festivals to intimate concerts, and community events to corporate functions, attracting more than 660,000 visitors to the site so far. These events not only bring vibrancy to the site and give the public a foretaste of cultural happenings in the Park, but also provide useful references for WKCDA on future Park operation as well as venue hire.

21. WKCDA launched an automated bicycle rental service, SmartBike, as a pilot scheme in April 2014, which enables visitors to enjoy the stunning views of the Victoria Harbour along the cycling path. Two SmartBike stations have been set up along the Promenade and a third one will open in the near future. Tung

Wah Group of Hospitals' BiciLine Cycling Eco-Tourism Social Enterprise has been engaged by WKCDA to operate the SmartBike service, which also provides job opportunities for disadvantaged young people. Since its inception, the SmartBike service has been well-received by the public. WKCDA will continue to evaluate and improve the service leading up to the opening of the Park.

## **DISCUSSION**

22. Members are invited to note the latest development of the WKCD Park's design, use and management.

**West Kowloon Cultural District Authority**  
**August 2014**

- 1 CULTURAL BOULEVARD 文化大道
- 2 ARTS PAVILION 小型藝術展館
- 3 BLACK BOX 黑盒劇場
- 4 OUTDOOR STAGE 戶外舞台
- 5 BIG LAWN 大型草坪
- 6 WATERFRONT PROMENADE 海濱長廊
- 7 WATERFRONT EVENT SPACE 海濱活動廣場
- 8 WHC VENTILATION BUILDING 西隧通風大樓
- 9 MTR VENTILATION BUILDING 地鐵通風大樓

Annex 1  
附件一



**A Park We Share – Public Survey on the Operation of the Future West Kowloon Cultural District Park**

Preliminary results (extract)

*Online survey*

- An overwhelming majority of the respondents reported that they wished “lying/picnicking on the lawn”, “street art” and “cycling” to be allowed in the WKCD Park, while the majority wished “bringing pets”, “skateboarding/ roller-skating”, “ball games”, “water games/water guns”, “fishing” and “tree climbing” to be allowed;
- About half of the respondents indicated that there should be no restrictions on “lying/picnicking on the lawn” and “street art”. More than half of the respondents suggested that “ball games”, “skateboarding/roller-skating”, “water games/water guns” and “bringing pets” should be restricted to designated areas. Less than half of the respondents indicated that “cycling”, “fishing”, “street art”, “tree climbing” and “lying/picnicking on the lawn” should be restricted to designated areas;
- “Self-discipline of park users” was chosen as the most important condition to allow harmonious co-existence of different activities in the WKCD Park;
- More than half of the respondents indicated that “cycling path”, “bazaar or street markets” and “food/vendor kiosk” should be restricted to designated areas; and
- With regard to street performance policies, “designated hours”, “designated area” and “volume control” were considered acceptable to most of the respondents. On the other hand, about half of the respondents indicated that “requiring permit” and “booking in advance” were not acceptable. Nearly half of the respondents considered it acceptable for WKCD to assume an overall curatorial role for street performances.

*Focus group discussions (summary of views expressed)*

- **Positioning and aspiration of the WKCD Park** - A signature project for arts and culture; location is not convenient for general access; for audience development; ‘practice ground’ for nurturing civic-virtue and park culture

- **For drafting of Park bylaws** - Bylaws should be minimal; bylaws are essential but need to add Vision and Mission before the bylaws; Add exception clause e.g. '...except in designated areas' or 'upon permission of WKCDA' to allow flexibility; instead of park bylaws, park user charter could be adopted to engage the users; positive and friendly signage
- **Management structure** - Management sub-committee (include stakeholders, young people and minorities) to review rules and regulations and management approach regularly; engage independent management agency to co-manage; diverse views on whether the management should be 'stringent first, then relax' (stringent means follow rules and regulations strictly) or vice versa; pilot stage could be applied to find out the most suitable management model
- **Arts and cultural programmes** - Directed by curator or 'open/ fair/ transparent booking system'; proportion for the two programming approaches should be considered by WKCDA; transparency of the application criterion; fewer large-scale events, one large-scale event every quarter is good enough; maintenance should be considered when organizing events; certain areas should be regularly opened for public use
- **Attract visitors to the WKCD Park** - Park as a gateway to cultural venues; diverse activities Vs. only art-related activities; improved transportation and facilities for the elderly and physically-challenged
- **Role of frontline staff** - Facilitators instead of security guards; adequate training to help the frontline staff to make judgment when conflict arises; recruit volunteers (community members and arts students) to serve as ambassadors; diverse range of volunteering programmes
- **Education and promotion** - Promotion and education are important; rules and regulations are not adequate to educate the public; engaging the community in park design and management
- **To avoid conflicting uses** - Do not prefer many designated areas which would decrease the vitality; conflicts will be resolved as in other public spaces; spatial design is important
- **Allowable activities** - Generally agreed: picnic, street performance, political speech; Different views: bring pets, cycling, busking, graffiti, camping; On street performance: simple and transparent application, noise level should be controlled (use areas near the sea for performance); On flea market: balance between commercial and non-commercial players, and between experienced and new sellers, diverse range of products

- **Opening hours** - 24 hours Vs. closed at night; long hours and late hours preferred
- **Other comments** - Consider incorporating waters in performing arts to explore new performance direction