

**Yau Tsim Mong District Council (2012 – 2015)**

**Proposed Signature Project in Yau Tsim Mong District**

**Objective**

This paper reports on the progress of the implementation of the Signature Project Scheme (SPS) in Yau Tsim Mong district.

**Background**

2. In the Policy Address delivered on 16 January 2013, the Chief Executive announced the introduction of the SPS to enable District Councils to carry out projects of a larger scale that meet specific district needs. Under the SPS, a one-off allocation of \$100 million will be earmarked for each district to initiate one to two signature projects that would address district needs or be able to highlight the characteristics of the district, and will have a visible, significant and lasting impact on the district. These projects may involve works or non-works elements, or a mixture of both, subject to a lower limit of \$30 million and an upper limit of \$100 million. All SPS projects will be proposed, discussed and agreed by the District Council before they are submitted to the Legislative Council for funding approval and put to implementation. For details, please refer to the information paper on the implementation of the SPS issued by the Yau Tsim Mong District Council Secretariat on 17 January.

3. The Yau Tsim Mong District Council (YTMDC) was briefed on the SPS framework on 31 January 2013. YTMDC agreed that its members could submit in writing SPS proposals to the Yau Tsim Mong District Office (YTMDO) by 15 February.

### **Discussion at YTMDC**

4. We received five SPS proposals before the above-mentioned deadline. After deliberations on individual proposals at its meeting on 28 February, YTMDC resolved to further discuss the following two broad proposals. The first is to identify land for development of venues for community activities under the theme of advancing cultural diversity and fostering ethnic and social cohesion, and to illustrate the multicultural characteristics of the district and to promote the mutual understanding and integration among different ethnic groups, through organising a wide range of cultural and educational activities. The second proposal is to utilise the empty spaces under flyovers in the district, including development of suitable community facilities, and to beautify the flyovers.

### **Initial feasibility assessment and proposed works**

- (i) Construction of activity venue under the theme of advancing cultural diversity and fostering ethnic and social cohesion

5. Sizable ethnic minority communities reside in Yau Tsim Mong district, which constitute around 12.3% of the total population of the district. In late

2012, Home Affairs Department granted funding for a non-governmental organisation to operate a support service centre for ethnic minorities at Battery Street, Jordan. In this connection, members can consider converting the existing Battery Street Sitting-out Area (SOA) into a multicultural activity or exhibition venue to achieve synergy with the above-mentioned support service centre, in order to demonstrate the multicultural characteristics of Yau Tsim Mong district and to enable the mainstream community to better understand the culture of ethnic minorities living in Hong Kong.

6. Furthermore, many ethnic minority groups in the district often organise events and activities, such as festive celebrations, seminars and Chinese lessons, etc, and therefore are in constant need of activity venues. The above proposal can satisfy the demand stemming from ethnic minority groups for organising activities, and help reinforce their connection, mutual support with and integration into the mainstream society.

#### *Detailed works proposal*

7. The proposed works include the conversion of the SOA into a multicultural and ethnic cohesion-themed activity venue. The SOA, with an area of about 473 m<sup>2</sup>, is located at the junction of Battery Street, Saigon Street and Canton Road, neighbouring the Saigon Street Playground. A single-storey structure can be constructed at the SOA for indoor activities, including gatherings, workshops, exhibitions and performances, etc, with a rooftop garden for greening and sitting-out. A site plan is at **Enclosure 1**.

*Relevant statutory and administrative procedures*

8. Since the SOA is now zoned as “open space”, a planning permission has to be obtained from the Town Planning Board (TPB) under s. 16 of the Town Planning Ordinance (TPO) to construct a covered activity venue at the above-mentioned site. In addition, the engineering conditions for land allocation in respect of the SOA issued by Lands Department (LandsD) stipulated that no part of any structure should exceed 10.5 m above the mean formation level of the land on which it stands and the maximum area of this site thereby allocated that may be built-over should not exceed 5%. An application for amending the relevant engineering conditions has to be made to LandsD to construct a covered activity venue at the SOA.

*Project estimate*

9. The initial estimated cost for the above works is about \$40 million, which includes the construction of a one-storey activity venue with an area of about 400 m<sup>2</sup>, rooftop greening, diversion of water mains and the re-provisioning of the existing meter room, etc.

(ii) Utilisation and beautification of empty space under flyovers in the district for developing community facilities

10. The land scarcity in Yau Tsim Mong district has severely limited opportunities for developing community, recreational or cultural facilities. In view of this, some DC members proposed to convert empty spaces under

flyovers in the district for community uses. A series of factors have to be considered before assessing the use of such empty spaces, including the site area, headroom of the flyovers, pedestrian accessibility, and fire rescue accessibility, among others. At present, there are 50 flyovers in Yau Tsim Mong district. After exploring possible sites with relevant Government departments, the empty space under Ferry Street Flyover has been identified as a potential site for development in accordance with the above criteria. Details of the site are appended below:-

Location	Beneath Ferry Street Flyover (near Yau Ma Tei Fruit Market)
Area	Around 1,300 m <sup>2</sup>
Headroom	Around 4.1 m to 7.5 m
Other information	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Pedestrians can access the site via the crossing at the junction of Waterloo Road/ Ferry Street (next to Yau Ma Tei Fruit Market);</li> <li>2. Site formation is required for rough ground surface; and</li> <li>3. The Kowloon Fruit and Vegetable Merchants Association has applied to LandsD for renting the above site.</li> </ol>

Note: We have explored other large empty spaces under flyovers in the district for community uses, including the empty spaces under Lin Cheung Road and Austin Road West Flyovers. Both sites are considered not suitable for development, as the former lacks pedestrian crossing facilities and the latter is reserved for West Kowloon Reclamation Road Improvement Works.

### *Detailed works proposal*

11. It is recommended to make reference to the architectural style of the Energizing Kowloon East Office Temporary Office by placing freight containers under the Ferry Street Flyover, which provides a two-storey venue of about 500 m<sup>2</sup> for indoor activities. The rest of the empty space, having an area of about 830m<sup>2</sup>, can be converted into an open-air venue for cultural performances or recreational activities. A site plan is at **Enclosure 2**.

### *Relevant statutory and administrative procedures*

12. Since the empty space under the Ferry Street Flyover is now zoned as “road”, a planning permission has to be obtained from the TPB under s. 16 of the TPO to construct an activity/ performance venue at the above-mentioned site. In addition, an application for land allocation has to be made to LandsD.

### *Project estimate*

13. The initial estimated cost for the above works is about \$32 million, which includes the purchase and retrofitting of freight containers as an activity venue, site formation, procurement and installation of lighting facilities, as well as on-site landscape greening, etc.

*Other proposals relating to greening under flyovers and beautification of flyovers and footbridges*

14. With regard to other proposals relating to greening under flyovers and beautification of footbridges, after considering relevant factors such as exposure to sunlight, the presence of underground facilities, etc, we have initially identified the following three sites:-

- a. Space under Tai Kok Tsui Road Flyover (near CCC Kei Tsun Primary School), with an area of around 28 m<sup>2</sup>;
- b. Space under Tai Kok Tsui Road Flyover (near 82 Tai Kok Tsui Road), with an area of around 40 m<sup>2</sup>; and
- c. Space under Nga Cheung Road Flyover, with an area of around 60 m<sup>2</sup>.

15. The initial estimated cost of the above-mentioned greening works is about \$100,000. In view of the relatively small amount involved, members can consider implementing the proposed greening works under the District Minor Works (DMW) programme.

16. With regard to the proposal to beautify the footbridges, YTMDC has approved funding for the beautification works at the footbridges connecting Cherry Street Park and Tak Cheong Street (with a length of 310 m), Cherry Street and Argyle Street (with a length of 410 m) and Cherry Street Park and Waterloo Road (with a length of 250 m) under the DMW programme since June 2010. The beautification works (enclosing footbridge columns with waterproof adhesive posters) covered 215 footbridge columns. The average

cost of each poster ranges from \$180 to \$230, inclusive of poster design, production, installation, removal, and maintenance during exhibition period. Depending on the theme of the beautification works, members can consider reserving funds under the SPS for these beautification works as part of the promotional activities to be organised in due course, or implementing the proposed works under the DMW programme.

17. As for the proposal to beautify flyovers, according to Highways Department (HyD), the beautification proposals have to be submitted to the Advisory Committee on the Appearances of Bridges and Associated Structures (ACABAS) for approval. The primary function of ACABAS is to vet design proposals for highways, railways, bridges and other structures associated with the public highway system from the perspectives of compatibility with the surrounding environment, design, style, greening, aesthetics, traffic safety and public needs. In addition, HyD will consider the proposals based on whether they would pose difficulties for maintenance of structures, and whether additional costs would be incurred by the beautification proposals.

18. Since YTMDC has not initiated any beautification works on flyovers in the past, and has yet to provide details of the proposed beautification works (e.g. specific location, scope involved, design theme, etc.), we are not able to assess the viability or estimate the cost of the proposal. Similar to the proposal to beautify the footbridges, members can consider reserving funds for beautifying the flyovers as part of the promotional activities under the SPS, or implement the proposed works under the DMW programme.



*Public engagement activities under the SPS*

19. In order to encourage public participation in the SPS and to highlight its benefits to the community, members can consider reserving funds up to \$10 million for promotional activities. The relevant details can be discussed after endorsing the theme of the SPS and the detailed works proposal involved.

**Advice Sought**

20. Members' views are sought on the progress and proposals of the SPS.

Yau Tsim Mong District Office

April 2013



### Site Map of the empty space under Ferry Street Flyover

