

Proposed Pedestrian Footbridge System in Mong Kok

Introduction

- 1 This document aims to brief the stakeholders in Yau Tsim Mong district on the preliminary scheme of the proposed pedestrian footbridge system in Mong Kok and the arrangement for the coming public consultation activities.

Project Background and Purpose

- 2 Mong Kok is a major shopping and commercial centre in Hong Kong, as well as a famous tourism hot spot. The district is densely populated with heavy vehicular flows and pedestrian movements such that vehicle-pedestrian conflicts happen frequently.
- 3 The Administration proposed in the 2008-09 Policy Address to improve the pedestrian environment in Mong Kok, with a view to minimizing vehicle-pedestrian conflicts. A consultancy study was commissioned by the Transport Department (TD) in March 2009 to explore the improvement of the pedestrian environment by creating more space for pedestrian movement in the centre of Mong Kok, and preliminarily draw up some conceptual plans for the proposed footbridge system. Subsequent to TD's study, the Highways Department (HyD) carried out a technical feasibility study in 2011, based on the proposed conceptual plans and taking into consideration the complex environment of Mong Kok. HyD reported the progress of the study to Traffic and Transport Committee of the Yau Tsim Mong District Council (YTMDC) in March 2013 jointly with TD. Mong Kok is a highly developed area, which is characterized by dense population, vibrant business activities, heavy vehicular flows and packed underground utilities. As such, the construction of a new footbridge system in Mong Kok requires thorough consideration of various complicated issues, including its integration with transport facilities and developments in the vicinity; locations of footbridge piers, staircases, escalators and lifts; as well as its impact on traffic, pedestrian flow and at-grade/ underground facilities (including the MTR Mong Kok station). A consultant was engaged by the HyD in October 2013 to conduct further investigation for the project, including forecast on the pedestrian flow of the proposed footbridge, assessment of its impact on the traffic and pedestrian flow during the construction and operation stages, formulation of the traffic arrangements to be implemented during these two stages, and assessment of its impact on the environment and underground utilities, etc. With the investigation substantially completed in 2016, we are planning to proceed with a series of public consultation activities in early 2017.

- 4 We anticipate that upon completion of the proposed footbridge system, there will be improvements to the crowded footpaths in the district, the pedestrian environment, the connectivity of the walkway system in the central district of Mong Kok and the vehicle-pedestrian conflicts as well as the pedestrian safety.

Preliminary Scheme of Proposed Pedestrian Footbridge System (Please see the attachment)

- 5 According to the findings of the investigation study, the HyD has developed a preliminary scheme of the proposed footbridge system. Details are as follows:

5.1 Footbridge Alignment

5.1.1 Argyle Street Section – along Argyle Street from Tong Mi Road Footbridge to Hak Po Street

- (a) Due to the busy traffic along Argyle Street, the piers of the footbridge will be constructed on the existing central dividers in order to avoid occupying existing traffic lanes and minimize disturbance to the traffic in the vicinity.
- (b) For the section of Argyle Street between Reclamation Street and Sai Yeung Choi Street South, there are only westbound traffic lanes with no central dividers to accommodate the piers of the proposed footbridge system. To minimize the impact on the traffic, the piers of the proposed footbridge system will be constructed on the northern footpath along Argyle Street to avoid occupying existing traffic lanes.
- (c) Along the Argyle Street northern footpath between Portland Street and Sai Yeung Choi Street South, the underground space is packed with utility facilities with complex arrangement, including a sewer of 1.35m in diameter and a stormwater drain of 1.5m in diameter, while part of the footpath is occupied by four existing Mong Kok MTR station exits. Moreover, the junction of Argyle Street and Nathan Road is a traffic hub in Mong Kok area. To avoid affecting the traffic at this important junction, the Consultant recommended reconstructing the Mong Kok MTR station exits C1, C2, D1 and D2 one by one, and the structures of these exits will be augmented to support the proposed footbridge system. In order to reduce the disturbance to the MTR passengers, the Consultant proposed to carry out the reconstruction of the exits by stages.
- (d) The footbridge will provide a 4m clear width of pedestrian corridor, which is adequate to cater for future pedestrian flow, according to the assessment of the Consultant.

5.1.2 Tong Mi Road Section – along Tong Mi Road from Tong Mi Road Footbridge to Fuk Tsun Street.

- (a) Due to the busy traffic along Tong Mi Road, the piers of the footbridge will be constructed along the planters at the central divider under the existing West Kowloon Corridor to minimize the disturbance to the traffic along Tong Mi Road.
- (b) To comply with the fire safety regulation, an emergency vehicular access of 6m wide should be maintained adjacent to the facade of a building to cater for the fire services officers to handle rescue operation during emergency. Hence, a clear width of 2m to 2.5m will be provided for pedestrian access at the proposed footbridge along Tong Mi Road, which is adequate to cater for future pedestrian flow according to the assessment of the Consultant.

5.2 Footbridge Usage and Related Pedestrian Flow Data

- 5.2.1 According to the Consultant's study, the pedestrian flows along Argyle Street and Tong Mi Road are anticipated to increase by about 15% from 2014 to 2031, reaching an approximately maximum pedestrian flow of 12,000 per hour during peak hours. The walking environment will be undesirable. By then, the southern footpath along Argyle Street between Portland Street and Nathan Road, the southern footpath along Argyle Street between Sai Yeung Choi Street South and Hak Po Street, and the northern footpath along Argyle Street between Sai Yeung Choi Street South and Sai Yee Street will be very crowded.
- 5.2.2 Upon completion of the footbridge, depending on the final design of the landings of the footbridge, it is anticipated that the highest pedestrian flow per hour along different sections of the footbridge deck during peak hours will be about 800 to 3,300 pedestrian/hour¹. The highest pedestrian flow on Argyle Street during peak hours will be reduced by about 30% on average and the crowded pedestrian environment will be relieved. According to the current standard, the design width of footbridge and pedestrian comfort are satisfactory.

5.3 Location and Design of Footbridge Landings

- 5.3.1 According to the preliminary proposal, there will be 10 landings along the footbridge. The Consultant has taken into account the pedestrian flow, road safety, locations of the nearby at-grade pedestrian crossings, the connectivity of the surrounding walkway system and locations of adjacent shops and buildings, when designing the locations of the proposed landings.

¹ For the main deck of the footbridge in different sections along Argyle Street, the highest pedestrian flow per hour during peak hours is estimated to be around 1,600 to 3,300 pedestrian/hour; that of the main deck along Tong Mi Road is estimated at about 800 pedestrian/hour.

5.3.2 Footbridge along Argyle Street

- (a) 9 landings will be provided at the footbridge along Argyle Street. They are at Canton Road, Reclamation Street, outside Langham Place, both sides of Nathan Road, Tung Choi Street, Fa Yuen Street, Sai Yee Street and Hak Po Street. Staircases and lifts will also be provided for most of the landings.
- (b) To comply with the fire safety regulation, an emergency vehicular access of 6m wide should be maintained adjacent to the facade of a building to cater for the fire services officers to handle rescue operation during emergency. Hence, only 2 lifts could be provided for each landing at Canton Road and Fa Yuen Street respectively as there is not enough space to accommodate staircase or escalator. Moreover, as mentioned in Para. 5.1.1 (c), the underground space of the northern footpath of Argyle Street between Portland Street and Sai Yeung Choi Street South is packed with underground utility facilities with complex arrangement. Therefore, there is not enough space which is suitable for accommodating lifts for the 2 landings on both sides of Nathan Road.
- (c) Since there is enough open space at Reclamation Street, Tung Choi Street and Sai Yee Street, the Consultant proposed to provide an escalator at each of these landings to serve the pedestrians.

5.3.3 Footbridge along Tong Mi Road

- (a) One landing will be provided at Fuk Tsun Street at the footbridge along Tong Mi Road. A staircase, an escalator and a lift will be provided at this landing.

5.4 Footbridge and the Connectivity to the Surrounding

- 5.4.1 In the present proposal, the Consultant earmarked 4 possible locations for connecting the proposed footbridge, including ex-Mong Kok Market, Langham Place, Argyle Centre, and the proposed redevelopment of Government sites at Sai Yee Street. HyD will liaise with relevant departments to further explore the feasibility of these 4 connections.

5.5 The Impact of Footbridge on Landscape and Air Quality

- 5.5.1 As mentioned in Para. 5.1, the alignment of a section of footbridge will be located closer to existing buildings, because of the site constraints. According to the design of the preliminary proposal, the closest distance between the footbridge and the facade of nearby buildings will not be less than two metres. The concerned section of footbridge is located along Argyle Street between Reclamation Street and Portland Street with about 100m in length. The proposed footbridge will be situated at 5.1m above ground to allow large vehicles to pass underneath the proposed footbridge.

- 5.5.2 The Consultant had conducted an air quality assessment within the district of Mong Kok. The result showed that the air ventilation condition of the district after completion of the footbridge would be more or less the same as that at the pre-construction stage.
- 5.5.3 To avoid the impact of the footbridge on the landscape of the area, the Consultant employed professional architects and landscape architects to design the appearance of the footbridge and to recommend greening measures to further beautify the appearance of the footbridge. We also propose to provide translucent screens or bulletin boards on the proposed footbridge at the side close to buildings to protect the privacy of relevant premises occupants.

5.6 Construction Arrangements of Footbridge

- 5.6.1 The proposed redevelopment of Government sites at Sai Yee Street will involve a series of road and traffic improvement works, which include the widening of a section of Argyle Street and Sai Yee Street adjacent to the site of the redevelopment, as well as relocation of the existing red minibus terminus at Tung Choi Street to the new public transport interchange under the redevelopment programme. According to the recommendation of the Consultant, in order to reduce the burden on the traffic at the Argyle Street/Sai Yee Street junction, the footbridge section between Fa Yuen Street and Hak Po Street has to be constructed after the completion of the above road improvement works. On the other hand, the landing of the footbridge at Tung Choi Street has to be constructed after the relocation of the red minibus terminus at Tung Choi Street to the public transport interchange within the proposed redevelopment to reduce the impact on the traffic on that section of Tung Choi Street.
- 5.6.2 For the above reasons, the works would be carried out in two stages according to the preliminary recommendation of the Consultant. The first stage includes the footbridge section along Argyle Street between Tong Mi Road and Fa Yuen Street, and another footbridge section along Tong Mi Road between Argyle Street and Fuk Tsun Street. The second stage includes the footbridge section along Argyle Street between Fa Yuen Street and Hak Po Street and the landing on Tung Choi Street.
- 5.6.3 As the Mong Kok district is packed with underground utilities with complex arrangement and coupled with a high pedestrian flow, the Consultant anticipated that the diversion works of underground utilities would take a long time to complete. Moreover, the construction works should also be carried out in phases, with the implementation of a series of temporary traffic arrangements to maintain the smooth traffic flow in the district. According to the preliminary estimation of the Consultants, the construction periods of the first stage and the second stage works are some five years and some three years respectively. Depending on the actual progress of the proposed

redevelopment of Government sites at Sai Yee Street, the two construction periods may be overlapped to reduce the overall construction time.

Public Consultation Activities

- 6 We plan to launch a series of public consultation activities in 2017 to collect the comments on the preliminary scheme for the footbridge system from the public. We will also hold roving exhibitions at several locations in Mong Kok during public consultation to promote public understanding of the project and collect public opinions with a view to enhancing the scheme.

- 7 The planned public consultation activities are as follows:

Consultation Activities
(a) Presentation to the Traffic, Transport and Housing Committee (TTHC) of the Yau Tsim Mong District Council regarding details of the preliminary scheme for the footbridge system and the planned public consultation activities. (Completed on 5 January 2017)
(b) Local Consultation
(c) Focus Groups Meetings with different stakeholders
(d) Roving Exhibitions
(e) Community Forum
(f) Report to the TTHC of the Yau Tsim Mong District Council on the public consultation results and consult TTHC on the enhanced design of the scheme

Consultation

- 8 We welcome your valuable comments on the preliminary scheme for the footbridge system to help us formulate effective measures to implement this project to improve the pedestrian environment in Mong Kok.

Major Works Project Management Office

Highways Department

May 2017

Attachment: Preliminary Scheme for the Footbridge System in Mong Kok

