

24 February 2009

Dear Editor,

Appalling pollution a nightmare for elderly Yau Ma Tei residents

We refer to the letter of Edward Lee (*'Appalling pollution a nightmare for elderly Yau Ma Tei residents, February 22*), concerning the Central Kowloon Route (CKR) project. We wish to provide the relevant project information for the reference of your readers.

The CKR project will provide a trunk road, mostly in tunnel, across central Kowloon. It links West Kowloon Highway with the existing road network at Kowloon Bay and the proposed Kai Tak Development. The trunk road will serve as a direct and alternative route for east-west Kowloon traffic and will divert traffic away from existing roads in Kowloon. The traffic relief to existing roads will bring about consequential enhancement to the environmental conditions in central Kowloon, including the Yau Ma Tei Area.

At present, the CKR project is under active planning for construction to commence in 2012. Given the large project scale, we are fully aware of its potential implication on traffic, land use and the environment of the local community. We are carrying out an Environmental Impact Assessment according to the statutory requirements. The construction of the CKR will implement necessary mitigation measures to ensure that the stipulated environmental standards are met.

Right at the beginning, we attach great importance on engaging the public in the project planning. In the past year, we have been keeping in close touch with the residents, owners' committees, respective District Councils, local communities, trade and hawker representatives, professional bodies and other stakeholders to collect their views on the project. We fully understand the concerns of Yau Ma Tei residents on the possible environmental impact arising from CKR. In the early planning, the proposed western entrance of CKR was near Prosperous Garden. Some residents raised concern on the noise and air quality impact arising from the tunnel entrance and the ventilation building. Addressing these concerns, we propose to relocate the tunnel entrance and the ventilation building much farther away from existing dwellings. We also propose to deck over the entrance and landscape a large piece of adjacent area to enhance greening. We have presented the proposal to the residents in our public engagement events and in our project monthly newsletters. The

information is also available for public sight on the project website <http://www.central-kowloon-route.com.hk>.

Some residents also request provision of noise barriers at the carriageways at Ferry Street which are not affected by CKR construction. We have explained to them the constraints encountered in retrofitting these existing carriageways with noise barriers and will continue to study if practical and effective mitigation measures could be implemented.

Thank you for your attention.

Victor CHAN
Senior Engineer/Public Relations
Highway Department