

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

In May 2009, the Planning Department commissioned the Hong Kong Island East harbour-front Study (HKIEHS) to formulate a comprehensive plan for enhancing the Hong Kong Island East Harbourfront. Among the various proposed harbourfront enhancement initiatives, a pedestrian boardwalk of about 2km long was proposed to be constructed underneath the Island Eastern Corridor (IEC) from Oil Street to Hoi Yu Street to enhance connectivity along the North Point waterfront. The proposed boardwalk was well received by the public during the HKIEHS public engagement exercise.

In January 2012, the Civil Engineering and Development Department (CEDD) commissioned a topical study on the proposed boardwalk underneath the existing IEC structure (Topical Study) to establish preliminary engineering feasibility of the proposal and to assess possible implications of the Protection of the Harbour Ordinance (PHO) to facilitate further project planning and implementation.

Based on the findings of the Topical Study, the proposed scheme under the HKIEHS was refined (the Refined Scheme). It was assessed that some parts of the proposed boardwalk would fall within the definition of “reclamation” in the context of the PHO.

CEDD presented the Refined Scheme to the Task Force on Harbourfront Developments on Hong Kong Island of Harbourfront Commission (HC) and highlighted relevant legal advice sought in relation to the PHO. The Task Force endorsed the Refined Scheme and the Government agreed to take forward the Project first by ascertaining its compliance with the PHO.

In March 2015, AECOM Asia Co Ltd. was commissioned by CEDD to carry out an assignment under “Agreement No. CE41/2014 (HY) Boardwalk underneath Island Eastern Corridor – Investigation” (the Study). The Study is to conduct a review of the feasibility of the proposed boardwalk under the IEC, which includes a demonstration of its compliance with the PHO before proceeding with the detailed design and construction of the Project.

1.2 The Assignment

The scope of the proposed boardwalk underneath the IEC (the Project) comprises:

- (a) provision of a boardwalk of about 2 km long for a pedestrian walkway, a cycleway including cycling facilities such as parking space and rental kiosks underneath the section of IEC between Oil Street and Hoi Yu Street;
- (b) beautification and revitalization of existing facilities that have interface with the boardwalk, such as the Tong Shui Road Pier and IEC structures;
- (c) provision of access points and/or connections with private or public developments along the boardwalk to ensure proper catchment of the population in neighbouring areas to make use of new facilities including the boardwalk;
- (d) provision or beautification of landing facilities along suitable locations of the boardwalk for possible water transport connections;
- (e) provision of associated activity spaces and facilities such as viewing platforms, fishing platforms, art and other forms of display, lighting facilities and seating; and

- (f) associated geotechnical, structural, electrical and mechanical, marine, drainage, sewerage, greening and landscaping works, waterworks, utilities and traffic engineering works, environmental mitigation measures and other related works.

The main objectives of the Study are to:

- (a) review the recommendations and findings of the Topical Study;
- (b) produce a recommended scheme for the proposed boardwalk through identification and evaluation of alternative options for key elements of the Project, and updating the Refined Scheme taking into account all latest changes and constraints;
- (c) carry out assessment on the recommended scheme under the PHO and prepare the cogent and convincing materials for the reclamation with reference to Environment, Transport and Works Bureau Technical Circular No. 1/04 and the requirement for “overriding public need test” as laid down in the judgement of CFA on 9 January 2004 in respect of the judicial review on the Draft Wan Chai North OZP (No. S/H25/1) can be satisfied;
- (d) collate opinions from stakeholders and the public on the Project;
- (e) assist to gain support from stakeholders and the public through public engagement;
- (f) check that the Project will meet all statutory requirements including but not limited to the Roads (Works, Use and Compensation) Ordinance and the Town Planning Ordinance;
- (g) produce details to enable the Government to demonstrate compliance with the PHO and take forward the Project to the subsequent detailed design and construction stages, including but not limited to the following:
 - (i) schematic design;
 - (ii) buildability considerations;
 - (iii) operation and maintenance considerations;
 - (iv) programme and cost estimates; and
 - (v) plans and details required for initiating all necessary statutory processes;
- (h) carry out an environmental assessment for the Project on environmental implications.

1.3 Purpose and Objectives of Community Engagement

As the proposed boardwalk involves “reclamation” under the PHO, the Study adopts a step by step approach to demonstrate satisfaction of the overriding public need test. In addition to the various technical assessments to demonstrate the various needs (social, economic, and environmental) of the community for the proposed boardwalk, the community engagement (CE) exercise also assisted in establishing a compelling and present need of the community for the proposed boardwalk.

The objectives of CE were three-fold:

- To solicit the views of the community on the design and facilities of the boardwalk proposals;
- To engage the public in the formulation and selection process of the boardwalk proposals (evolution from Refined Scheme, structural options of the recommended scheme) and gain community support on the recommended scheme;
- To gauge the views of the public to establish the overriding public need for the proposed boardwalk and hence the associated necessary reclamation

Stage 1 CE focused on the benefits and the public needs of the boardwalk and associated facilities in the context of the PHO.

Views obtained from CE would be properly documented to form part of the Cogent and Convincing Materials (CCM) to demonstrate compliance with the overriding public need test under the PHO.

1.4 Structure of the Report

This Section presents the background and the objectives of the CE for the Study. Details of CE channels and activities during the Stage1 CE are summarized in Section 2 of the Report. Comments and opinions received from the public and stakeholders during various CE activities are collated and summarized in Section 3 of the Report. Section 4 lays out the way forward of the Project.