

CE's speech in delivering "The Chief Executive's 2020 Policy Address" to LegCo (8)

VII. Building a Liveable City

Development and Conservation

107. There is no conflict between increasing land supply and building a quality living environment. In fact, with sufficient new land supply, we will be better placed to retain our country parks, preserve the natural and cultural heritages, and address the overcrowding problems in old urban areas. During my tenure as the Secretary for Development, I have strived to promote urban development by attaching importance to both development and conservation so that Hong Kong people and visitors can enjoy the hustle and bustle of our city and harbour, and stroll in the narrow streets of our old urban areas.

Urban Development

108. A decade ago, the Government implemented two major revitalisation initiatives, i.e. Conserving Central and Energizing Kowloon East using a district-based development model. To date, a number of historic building revitalisation projects under Conserving Central have been completed, including the Tai Kwun – Centre for Heritage and Arts which received the Award of Excellence, the top honour in the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation Asia-Pacific Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation. The Energizing Kowloon East initiative has successfully transformed areas in Kwun Tong, Kowloon Bay and Kai Tak into the second core business district in Hong Kong. The commercial gross floor area in the districts has increased by 70% to 2.9 million square metres at present, and will further increase to about 3.5 million square metres in two years, making it comparable in scale to the core business district in Central.

Invigorating Island South

109. In light of our past experience, we propose to implement the Invigorating Island South initiative to develop the Southern District into a place full of vibrancy, vigour and velocity for people to work, live, explore new ideas and have fun.

110. In the past, owing to road and transport infrastructure constraints, there was no clear development positioning for the Southern District on Hong Kong Island. With the commissioning of the MTR South Island Line (East) in 2016, the connectivity of Wong Chuk Hang, Aberdeen and Ap Lei Chau with other districts has been enhanced. The beautiful natural landscapes, pleasant sea and land scenery, well-known attractions such as Ocean Park, four country

parks, a number of beaches and a marine reserve, as well as rich historical and cultural resources, all underline the great potential of the Southern District.

111. The Invigorating Island South initiative being contemplated includes the following key projects:

(1) formulating a proposal for the rebirth of Ocean Park, with emphasis on enhancing and leveraging its strengths in education and conservation, making use of its natural landscape, strategic seaside location and the Water World which will open next summer to offer diversified entertainment, leisure and travel experiences;

(2) revitalising the Jumbo Floating Restaurant, which is a historic landmark in Hong Kong. The owner of the floating restaurant has recently agreed to donate it to Ocean Park at no cost. The Government will facilitate the collaboration between Ocean Park and NGOs for the rebirth of the floating restaurant in the Aberdeen Typhoon Shelter on a non-profit-making basis, so that it will become a distinctive cultural heritage and tourist attraction in the Southern District;

(3) enhancing the cultural and leisure facilities in the vicinity of Aberdeen and Wong Chuk Hang, including the Aberdeen Typhoon Shelter, Aberdeen Promenade and Ap Lei Chau Main Street to enable members of the public and visitors to immerse in the ambience, history and culture of a fishing village and enjoy eco-tourism in the area;

(4) exploring new marine tourism routes by taking advantage of the district's seaside location with Ocean Park as the core to link up with other districts and islands, as well as exploring the expansion of the Aberdeen Typhoon Shelter area and the vessel berthing area as well as providing more landing facilities along the coastal area;

(5) exploring the development of a water sports centre at the rehabilitated Shek O Quarry site under public-private partnership to provide advanced training facilities for athletes and water sports enthusiasts;

(6) expediting the redevelopment or conversion of old industrial buildings in Wong Chuk Hang through the Government's policy of revitalising industrial buildings, so as to provide more operating space for emerging industries and the arts and culture sector;

(7) exploring room for redevelopment or consolidation of the existing "Government, Institution or Community" sites or facilities in the district so as to promote "single site, multiple use"; and

(8) taking the opportunities brought by the large-scale topside development project at the Wong Chuk Hang Station, which will commence population intake two years later, to beautify public space and cityscape through "place making"; as well as enhancing pedestrian connectivity of the Wong Chuk Hang Business Area and the waterfront area nearby while improving the pedestrian environment along Shum Wan Road and Po Chong Wan through minor works.

By drawing on the successful experience gained from the Energizing Kowloon East initiative, we will set up a multi-disciplinary professional team under the DEVB to interact and collaborate with stakeholders, as well as co-ordinate and implement the various projects under the Invigorating Island South initiative.

Expediting the Revitalisation of Old Industrial Districts

112. In the 2018 Policy Address, I announced a number of initiatives to revitalise industrial buildings, among which the increase of the maximum permissible plot ratio by 20% for redevelopment of old industrial buildings was well received. The Town Planning Board has so far approved more than 30 applications for redevelopment of industrial buildings, which may supply approximately 600 000 square metres of new floor space for commercial or industrial use. Land owners have also been approaching the LandsD for lease modification. To expedite the work, the DEVB will introduce a pilot scheme for charging land premium at “standard rates”. The DEVB and the LandsD are working out the details of the new scheme, which is targeted to be launched in early 2021.

Urban Renewal

113. With the Government’s support, the URA has, in recent years, adopted the “planning-led” and “district-based” approach in taking forward urban renewal. This approach has the benefit of allowing redevelopment projects to go beyond demolition and reconstruction of individual single-block buildings by capitalising on the opportunities brought by redevelopment to re-plan traffic routes, pedestrian facilities as well as greening and leisure areas within the district, thereby creating a more people-oriented community and bringing greater benefits to residents. The Kwun Tong Town Centre project, which is the largest single redevelopment project ever undertaken by the URA, is progressing towards this direction. Upon completion of the five development zones in the coming few years, the Kwun Tong Town Centre will be given a brand new look. The URA will adopt the same urban renewal approach in enhancing old districts such as Kowloon City, To Kwa Wan, Yau Ma Tei and Mong Kok.

Traffic and Transport

Enhancing Local Transport Infrastructure

114. The Government strives to push forward the implementation of transport infrastructure projects and provide reliable and affordable transport services to the public. We are implementing a number of new railway projects in a proactive manner: the MTRCL is embarking on the detailed planning and design of the Tung Chung Line Extension and Tuen Mun South Extension, while the Government will press ahead with the Northern Link with a view to commencing the detailed planning and design work shortly. The MTRCL will also submit the South Island Line (West) project proposal to the Government by the end of this year to tie in with the redevelopment of Wah Fu Estate and the Invigorating Island South initiative, after which relevant departments will study the proposal and implement the project in due course.

115. In addition, the Government will carry out a comprehensive traffic and transport strategy study which includes surveying the latest travel patterns of the public, making reference to and introducing innovative transport modes and technologies as appropriate with a view to enhancing our public transport services to meet the demand of the public, as well as deploying different transport resources more effectively to support sustainable development and facilitate the flow of people and goods in the GBA. Concurrently, we will conduct the Strategic Studies on Railway and Major Roads beyond 2030 to explore the layout of railway and major road infrastructure and conduct preliminary engineering and technical assessments for their alignments and supporting facilities, so as to ensure that the planning of large-scale transport infrastructure will complement or even reserve capacity to meet the overall long-term land development needs of Hong Kong.

Developing Green Transport

116. To tie in with the further development of Energizing Kowloon East initiative, the Government has largely completed the detailed feasibility study on the Environmentally Friendly Linkage System (EFLS) for Kowloon East. The study suggests implementing a multi-modal EFLS in the district, which will be more effective and desirable than a standalone infrastructure. The proposed multi-modal EFLS includes introducing new bus and green minibus routes in the area; developing travellers network linking up the former runway of Kai Tak, the Kowloon Bay Action Area and the MTR Ngau Tau Kok Station; providing a GreenWay network running through promenades and open spaces in the Kai Tak Development Area for shared use by pedestrians and cyclists; constructing an elevated landscape deck to connect the MTR Kwun Tong Station; and establishing a water-taxi stand in the Kai Tak Development Area. The DEVB plans to release the details by the end of this year and gauge public views on the proposed multi-modal EFLS.

Upgrading Taxi Service

117. In view of the severe blow caused by the prolonged epidemic to the taxi trade, the current-term Government has decided to temporarily shelve the work relating to the introduction of franchised taxi services. Instead, greater efforts will be made to improve the quality of taxi service in conjunction with the trade, including leveraging technology and organising commendation schemes etc., so as to encourage taxi drivers and fleets to provide quality service for the public. In addition, the THB is preparing legislative amendments on increasing the penalties for illegal carriage of passengers for reward and other malpractices in relation to taxi service respectively to protect the interests of passengers.

Smart Mobility

Application of Technology

118. Apart from continuing to enhance our public transport infrastructure and services, the HKSAR Government has been striving to promote "Smart Mobility" for improving road efficiency. One of the key features of Smart Mobility is to alleviate the problem of insufficient public parking spaces through the

application of technology. In this connection, the Transport Department is actively taking forward six pilot projects on automated parking systems (APS), and has invited tender for the first pilot project at Hoi Shing Road, Tsuen Wan, at the end of September. It is expected that the APS will be put into service next year.

Walk in HK

119. The Government has been promoting "Walk in HK" with a view to creating a pedestrian-friendly environment, thereby encouraging people to walk more. The Government is actively promoting "walkability" in Kowloon East to improve pedestrian facilities in the Kowloon Bay and Kwun Tong business areas, as well as promoting greening and beautification of streetscape. Meanwhile, we will continue to improve the existing pedestrian linkage systems in various districts such as Admiralty and Wan Chai North, including enhancing the system in the vicinity of Admiralty through the redevelopment of the Hutchison House and Queensway Plaza, a government project to connect the Admiralty Centre with the Tamar Footbridge, as well as the pedestrian connection linking up Pacific Place with the footbridge network at the Harcourt Garden under the "Facilitation Scheme for Provision of Pedestrian Links by the Private Sector".

Quality Harbourfront and Public Space

Harbourfront Promenade

120. The past three years saw the completion of five kilometres of harbourfront promenade, making both sides of the Victoria Harbour a popular public space. Upon the completion of 13 large-scale projects supported by a dedicated funding of \$6.5 billion, the harbourfront promenade will be extended from the current 23 kilometres to 34 kilometres in 2028, and both sides of the harbourfront will also be provided with an additional 35 hectares of quality public space with district characteristics. The harbourfront projects to be commenced next year include the Boardwalk underneath the Island Eastern Corridor measuring two kilometres long and ten metres wide connecting Causeway Bay and Quarry Bay, and the harbourfront park at Eastern Street North in Sai Ying Pun. We strive to complete these two projects in phases starting from 2024.

Improving the Cycle Track Network

121. Following the commissioning of the remaining cycle track section from Sheung Shui to Yuen Long, the entire cycle track of about 60 kilometres connecting eastern and western New Territories from Ma On Shan to Tuen Mun has been fully open for use since September. A two-kilometre cycle track from Tsing Tsuen Bridge to Bayview Garden in Tsuen Wan will be open for use early next year, and continued efforts will be made to take forward the construction works of the remaining track of about 20 kilometres of the Tsuen Wan to Tuen Mun Section. As for the urban area, a 13-kilometre GreenWay for shared use by pedestrians and cyclists in the Kai Tak Development Area will be constructed in two phases. The first phase of 7.5 kilometres is scheduled for completion in 2023, while the remaining 5.5 kilometres will be open for

use after 2025. In addition, cycle track design will be incorporated into 13 major harbourfront development projects.

Culture and Sports

New Cultural Landmarks

122. We are committed to developing Hong Kong into a most-cherished international metropolis through cultural and sports development. Blending local traditional characteristics with international elements, the West Kowloon Cultural District (WKCD) is becoming the new cultural landmark of Hong Kong. The two museums in the WKCD, i.e. the M+ museum of modern and contemporary visual arts and the Hong Kong Palace Museum showcasing invaluable Chinese artefacts, are scheduled for completion and commissioning in the next two years. Together with the Hong Kong Museum of Arts which was reopened last year after expansion, the three museums will turn a new page in Hong Kong's visual arts landscape. Featured by distinctive collection and curatorial style, they will definitely offer a fruitful cultural journey to locals and visitors.

Kai Tak Sports Park

123. When completed, the Kai Tak Sports Park will be the largest sports facility in Hong Kong. Based on the current works progress, it is expected to be completed in 2023. The Government will foster the collaboration between the Park's operator and the sports sector to fully utilise the state-of-the-art facilities of the Park, so as to further promote sports in the community, support elite sports development and make Hong Kong a hub for major sports events, while nurturing more sports talents for Hong Kong and enhancing their professional standards.

Environment and Conservation

Environmental Protection Blueprint

124. In the past three years, Hong Kong has achieved good progress in areas such as improvement in air quality, nature conservation, development of renewable energy, energy saving and decarbonisation, and construction of waste-to-resources and sewage treatment infrastructures. To support "green recovery", the Environment Bureau (ENB) is adopting various new environmental protection measures, such as subsidising existing private residential estates to install electric vehicle charging-enabling infrastructure in car parks, expanding the recycling network in all 18 districts in Hong Kong, and introducing the Green Tech Fund, etc. This will not only continuously improve the local environment, but will also create green employment and economic opportunities. It is expected that thousands of jobs will be created with these measures. In the coming year, the ENB plans to launch a long-term strategy blueprint on waste management and Hong Kong's first roadmap on the popularisation of electric vehicles, etc. with the target of ceasing the sale of conventional fuel-propelled private cars, as well as updating "A Clean Air Plan for Hong Kong".

Striving towards Carbon Neutrality

125. Over the last decade, the Government has allocated over \$47 billion to implement various energy saving and renewable energy measures, promote electric vehicles and vessels, and introduce innovative waste-to-energy and waste-to-resources facilities to help reduce waste and carbon emissions. In their last and current development plans spanning ten years, the investment of the two power companies in major decarbonisation projects amounts to some \$39 billion. As set out in the “Hong Kong’s Climate Action Plan 2030+”, we are moving towards the 2030 target of reducing carbon intensity by 65% to 70% as compared with that in the baseline year of 2005. In fact, Hong Kong’s carbon emissions reached its peak in 2014, at a per capita carbon emission of 6.2 tonnes. It was reduced to 5.4 tonnes in 2018, which is about 36% lower than that in the baseline year of 2005. The community in general expects Hong Kong to go further in deep decarbonisation.

126. Combating climate change is an important issue across the globe. In his speech delivered to the United Nations earlier on, President Xi Jinping made it clear that China would endeavour to achieve the peak of carbon emissions in 2030 and carbon-neutrality before 2060. This is an important commitment made by our country in combating climate change and is well-received by governments and international environmental groups around the world. In Hong Kong, the Council for Sustainable Development just submitted a report to the HKSAR Government on long-term decarbonisation strategy. I now announce that the HKSAR will strive to achieve carbon neutrality before 2050. To this end, the Government will update the “Hong Kong’s Climate Action Plan” in the middle of next year to set out more proactive strategies and measures to reduce carbon emissions.

127. We will examine various means to reduce carbon emissions, which include exploring different types of zero-carbon energy and decarbonisation technology, enhancing the energy efficiency of both new and existing buildings, promoting zero-carbon vehicles and green transportation, and building large-scale waste-to-energy facilities. To lower the cost of achieving carbon-neutrality, we need to reduce the demand for energy through ways such as introducing more stringent energy efficiency standards. We also need to enlist the full support of various sectors in society to adopt low-carbon lifestyles and economic transformation. We will develop green finance to boost investments conducive to reducing carbon emissions, build a low-carbon economy which is more resilient to climate change, and enhance public education and publicity. I cordially invite all sectors to work together to promote low-carbon transformation in Hong Kong in a bid to strive towards the goal of carbon neutrality by 2050.

Waste Management

128. Notwithstanding our achievements in decarbonisation, waste reduction remains a major challenge for Hong Kong. The Government introduced the Waste Disposal (Charging for Municipal Solid Waste) (Amendment) Bill 2018 into the LegCo two years ago. Waste reduction is a global trend and is conducive to mitigating climate change. Municipal solid waste charging, as the main driving force behind waste reduction, will not only drive enterprises and the

public to practise waste reduction and recycling, but also facilitate the sustainable development of related industries and the creation of green job opportunities when the quality and quantity of recyclables collected is enhanced. I welcome the decision of the LegCo House Committee to form a Bills Committee again to study the Bill in this legislative year, and hope that the Bill can be passed as early as possible. The Environmental Protection Department has progressively launched complementary measures to promote waste reduction and recycling.

129. The Government is adopting a multi-pronged approach to diversify outlets for local waste paper, including the implementation of a waste paper collection and recycling services programme, and the plan to tender for the development of a modern pulping facility in EcoPark, Tuen Mun. The latest waste paper pulping technology has the benefits of higher efficiency in land use and greater reduction in energy consumption and operating costs, and pulp products are generally not subject to import restrictions. Therefore, it will suit the local situation better and transform waste to resources more effectively. We expect to invite tenders in the first half of 2021 and the pulping facility is expected to commence operation by 2024.

(To be continued.)