

Premium waived for six footbridges or subways financed by private sector

The Government announced today (April 10) that the Chief Executive in Council has approved premium waivers for six footbridges or subways in Kowloon Bay, Tsim Sha Tsui, Mong Kok and Wan Chai (location plan at Annex).

Approved private organisations will be required to bear the design, construction, management and maintenance responsibilities and related costs of the footbridges or subways, and provide 24-hour barrier-free public access at the future footbridges or subways. The applicants will also need to separately work on other issues related to the implementation of the footbridges or subways such as their design, visual impact assessment, etc.

The 2016 Policy Address announced the implementation of a pilot scheme in Kowloon East to waive land premium for lease modification to encourage landowners to construct at their own cost footbridges or subways connecting their development with the public walkway systems. This serves to improve the area-wide pedestrian network, create a safe, comfortable and convenient walking environment, and encourage people to walk more. At the same time, the Government would also consider premium waiver applications for individual footbridge or subway proposals outside Kowloon East on a case-by-case basis.

Based on an evaluation mechanism developed by academics of the University of Hong Kong, the Development Bureau (DEVB) has considered whether the above six footbridges or subways can bring about public benefits in multiple ways, including assessing whether the proposed footbridge or subway could provide an alternative to address the existing undesirable at-grade walking conditions, strengthen the area-wide walking network and attain local support. As per established practices, the Bureau has consulted the Land and Development Advisory Committee (LDAC), before submitting the applications to the Executive Council for approval.

A spokesperson for DEVB said that the proposed footbridge in Kowloon Bay would provide a more pleasant pedestrian experience than the existing rather vehicle-oriented pavement environment; enhance area-wide connectivity; and offer more choices on routing within the network for pedestrians together with other footbridge proposals in the area. As for the two proposed subways in Tsim Sha Tsui, they are located in close proximity to various attractions along the Tsim Sha Tsui harbourfront and would help enhance the connectivity of the area; provide further routing choices to pedestrians; and are likely to be used by a large number of daily commuters including transit passengers from nearby Tsim Sha Tsui and East Tsim Sha Tsui MTR stations.

Similarly, the proposed footbridge in Mong Kok and the proposed subway in Wan Chai will help strengthen the area-wide connections to the nearby MTR stations including Mong Kok, Mong Kok East and Wan Chai under a weather-proof environment. The proposed footbridge in Wan Chai, meanwhile, will bring convenience to needy groups when they visit various social welfare offices at

Wu Chung House.

"The six proposed footbridges or subways in Kowloon Bay, Tsim Sha Tsui, Mong Kok and Wan Chai are expected to bring benefits to the overall walkability and connectivity in the respective areas. All projects were also supported by the LDAC and the local communities. We will continue to work closely with the applicants to ensure timely implementation of the footbridges or subways," the spokesperson added.