

Section 8

Recommendations

Agreement No. CE 58/2006 (HY)

**Central Kowloon Route and Widening of Gascoigne Road Flyover
Investigation**

**Report on Social Impact Assessment on Yau
Ma Tei (Final)**

Jun 2009

8 RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 Mitigation and Local Enhancement Measures

Mitigation measures for social impacts usually involve three levels:

- Avoiding the impact by not taking or modifying an action
- Minimising, rectifying, or reducing the impacts through the design or operation of the project/policy
- Compensating for the impact by providing substitute facilities, resources, or opportunities

Section 7.4 suggests that the CKR has to be in place to accommodate increased traffic induced by the new development areas in Kai Tak and West Kowloon, the proposed mitigation measures will therefore focus on the rest of the two levels.

a) Informed and Continuous Engagement & Commitment to the Sustainability Principles

As discussed in the previous sections, social impacts can be greatly minimised if an on-going public engagement programme is in place and that the project proponent and its consultants and/or contractors are committed to the identified sustainability principles throughout all stages of the project.

The community-based sustainability principles and the associated indicators form an important framework for both mitigation and monitoring measures of the project. They cover a comprehensive spectrum of social, environmental and economic aspects that concern the stakeholders.

If they can be diligently followed and adopted, the study team is convinced that all associated impacts can be minimised. The principles and indicators would also work well as a continuous assessment mechanism. The project proponent and the consultants are recommended to refer to these benchmarks from time to time and at each stage of the development process.

b) Re-provisioning/relocation Plan for the Affected Community Facilities and Services and Businesses

It is important to provide in-situ relocation opportunity for the affected businesses and services as far as possible. Space should be reserved for existing businesses, facilities and services and, ideally, there should be room and capacity for additional/upgraded community facilities.

Plans for re-provisioning and relocation should be made together with the concerned individuals and institutions in an early stage.

c) Urban Design Plan for the Local Open Space

Additional open space is likely to be provided. However, it is essential that the design and layout of the open space are able to meet the needs of the possible users. An urban design plan should be professionally drafted taking into consideration of the comments and views of the community and local authority (i.e. district councillors).

8.2 Monitoring Plan

Monitoring of the social impacts should focus on two core areas: a) impacts associated with the construction and b) long-term and on-going operation and maintenance of the newly added community facilities and open space.

In order to monitor impacts of these two core areas, it is suggested that an impact group should be established to involve local representatives from the residents' groups, business operators and also from the district council to hold regular meetings and site visits at all stages of the project. Senior officials or project manager in charge of the project should participate directly at these meetings in order to have a comprehensive understanding of the concerns. External experts such as academics, social workers and related professionals may also be invited to act as moderators at the meetings as well as to give advice.

It is also suggested that the concerned district councillors or local representatives may work out a locally-based monitoring plan and be actively involved in the future operation and management of the community facilities and open space.

In addition to the regular meetings with the impact group, the project proponent may also consider organising public forums at various timings for awareness building and impact mitigation purposes. The existing newsletters should be published throughout the construction and early operational stages of CKR. Enquiry contacts such as project email address and telephone hotline should also be maintained as far as possible subject to the request of the affected individuals and groups.

8.3 Conclusion

Both the local culture study and the social impact assessment study are the first attempt for a public works government department to initiate on understanding the intangible values and capitals of neighbourhoods and communities. A participatory approach was adopted for both studies and public views and concerns formed some solid justifications for the planning and design for the CKR, the urban design plan for the area as well as the preservation of the local culture in Yau Ma Tei.

The SIA results point to an analysis that the Kansu Street alignment options would result a series of short-term, long-term and cumulative impacts but at

the same time would provide a unique opportunity for regeneration and revitalisation of the Yau Ma Tei area.

The SIA report recommends a package of measures in order to avoid and reduce the identified social impacts. These include a clear schedule and detailed arrangement for the temporary and permanent re-provisioning of community facilities that ensures continuous services; arrangements that ensure continuous operation of local businesses; measures to minimise adverse effects during the construction stage; and most importantly, an on-going public engagement/dialogue that provides for impact mitigation and monitoring as well as consensus building.

It is believed that by adopting the community-initiated sustainability principles, the CKR project is capable of enhancing social and cultural capitals of Yau Ma Tei as one of the earliest settlements of Hong Kong.