

**EIA report on
“Cycle Track between Tsuen Wan and Tuen Mun (Tuen Mun to So Kwun Wat)”**

**Relevant Extract of the draft minutes of
the Environmental Impact Assessment Subcommittee meeting
held on 18 July 2022**

Question-and-Answer Session (Open Session)

Project Design and Cycle Track Alignment

2. A Member enquired about the considerations of the overall design and alignment of the cycle track to facilitate the usage by different target groups in the community. With the overall objective of providing a comprehensive cycling network in the New Territories, Ms Fiona Liu explained that the project would extend the existing cycle track network in the western part of the New Territories to So Kwun Wat. Having regard to the technical and space constraints, the cycle track network was designed to route through various scenic spots to enhance its recreational value for better public enjoyment. Ms Liu supplemented that the cycle track network was intended to be further extended from Tsuen Wan to So Kwun Wat, subject to the outcome of a public consultation exercise of the related projects scheduled for later in the year.

3. In response to a Member's question on the locations of supporting facilities, transport connections of the proposed cycle track, and the possible disturbance to the nearby residence, Ms Fiona Liu explained that, as part of the overall cycle track network project, associated supporting facilities, including cycling entry/exit hubs located near public transport interchanges, resting stations, cycle parking spaces etc., would be provided at appropriate locations along the cycle track. Considering that there were other interfacing projects being planned in the vicinity, the implementation of the cycling entry/exit hub originally proposed in the current project would be deferred for further consideration under the subsequent stages of the cycle track network project. Apart from leisure and recreational purposes, this project might also facilitate short-distance commuting of the local residents by cycling. It was expected that the disturbance to residents in the neighbourhood would be insignificant.

Tree Felling and Compensatory Tree Planting

4. Noting that two camphor trees numbered T352 and T353 to be felled in the project were particularly tall with their height reaching 36 m, a Member asked if the exact location and photomontage of the trees could be provided for reference. He further enquired about the condition of two trees and the reasons for felling them. Ms Fiona Liu clarified that the two trees were located along Castle Peak Road, but only one of them, that is tree number T352, was related to the current project while the other one was under a different project on the road widening scheme for Castle Peak Road. Ms Liu further explained that there were established guidelines and procedures to govern how trees affected by works projects should be handled. She said that the project proponent would exercise great care to ensure that the requirements of tree conservation and compensation would be properly met though some trees would have to be felled in the project due to space constraints in certain locations. Even though tree number T352 was in fair condition, Ms Wong Wing-ye added that the survival rate after its transplantation was expected to be low not to mention the technical feasibility of transplanting trees of such size.

5. With reference to the design of the existing cycle track in Sheung Shui, a Member suggested, with the support of another Member, that considerations should be made to create resting stations or scenic spots around the tall trees to avoid felling them. Ms Fiona Liu explained that the proposed cycle track design and alignment had already taken into account different factors, including the design standards of the proposed cycle tracks, the connectivity of the proposed cycle track sections, the locations of resting stations or other associated facilities, space constraints as well as the feasibility of conserving the existing trees etc. She thanked the two Members for their suggestions and added that they would explore the possibility to finetune the design in order to minimise the possible impacts to the tall trees near the proposed cycle track.

[Post-meeting notes: After the meeting, CEDD conducted an inspection on trees number T352 and T353 on 19 July 2022. The two tree were felled under another project and were no longer on the site.]

6. To address a Member's question on the details of the proposed compensatory tree planting ratio of not less than 1:1, Ms Fiona Liu explained that a detailed compensatory tree planting plan would be devised and submitted to the relevant departments for approval before the commencement of the project. In addition to tree compensation in terms of quantity, she supplemented that other measures would

be implemented to enhance also the quality of the project from the visual and landscape perspectives, with due consideration on the feasibility and practicality.

7. Noting that only 50 trees were to be compensated on-site, a Member sought details of the remaining 157 trees to be compensated off-site. Ms Fiona Liu explained that while the project proponent would plant as many compensatory trees along the cycle track as possible, there remained 157 new trees to be planted off-site due to space constraints in the vicinity. Ms Liu assured Members that the project proponent would actively liaise with the relevant government departments for identifying planting locations near the project site and within the district as far as possible. Ms Wong Wing-yee advised Members that off-site tree planting was proposed mainly in Siu Lang Shui in Tuen Mun tentatively while areas near So Kwun Wat would also be considered as potential sites subject to the agreement of relevant government departments.

8. As the trees to be felled were located in the urban area, a Member suggested some locations in the Tuen Mun town centre for consideration of off-site compensatory tree planting of native species in order to help mitigate the loss and increase urban biodiversity. Ms Fiona Liu thanked the Member for his suggestion and agreed to explore different urban areas for tree planting as far as practicable.

9. In response to a Member's question on the Environmental Monitoring and Audit (EM&A) programme on the effectiveness of compensatory tree planting for the project, Ms Fiona Liu indicated that appropriate terms would be included in the works contract in accordance with the established guidelines to ensure that the contractor would carry out proper tree conservation during both the construction phase and the one-year post-construction establishment period.

10. The Chairperson suggested extending the period of monitoring and maintenance of the planted trees by the contractor for more than one year. Ms Wong Wing-yee said that the suggestion could be explored when devising the contractual terms on tree maintenance if required. Ms Fiona Liu supplemented that, as a norm under the current division of responsibilities within the Government, after the one-year establishment period by the contractor, relevant government departments would take over the maintenance work from the project proponent. The project proponent would liaise with the departments concerned to ensure proper handover of the relevant responsibilities.

Ecological Impacts

11. The Chairperson enquired and Ms Fiona Liu confirmed that no land reclamation was required for the project though the piling works of the cycle bridge would affect about 19 m² of the seabed.

12. A Member raised questions on the potential impact of the piling works to the hard corals and suggested incorporating ecological features into the design to enhance biodiversity. Ms Wong Wing-yee confirmed that coral surveys within the piling footprint would be conducted prior to the commencement of piling works and appropriate coral translocation plan would be devised if found necessary. Ms Fiona Liu supplemented that a study would be conducted before the commencement of the marine works to explore if feasible and practical ecological enhancement measures, such as providing uneven surfaces on the subtidal portion of the proposed marine viaduct structure to provide microhabitats for marine organisms, could be adopted as trial.

Waste Management

13. A Member suggested reusing or recycling the wood generated from the felled trees. Ms Fiona Liu said that the contractor would sort out suitable wood materials for recycling at Y•PARK and consider reusing some of the wood for other purposes, like making furniture in the project.

Conclusion

14. There being no further questions from Members, the Chairperson thanked the project proponent team for their detailed presentation and clarification in relation to the project.

(The presentation team left the meeting at this juncture.)

Internal Discussion Session (Closed-door Session)

15. The Chairperson advised Members that the EIASC should make recommendations to the ACE on the EIA report with the following consideration -

- (i) endorse the EIA report without condition; or
- (ii) endorse the EIA report with conditions and / or recommendations; or

- (iii) defer the decision to the full Council for further consideration, where issues or reasons for not reaching a consensus or issues to be further considered by the full Council would need to be highlighted; or
- (iv) reject the EIA report and inform the project proponent of the right to go to the full Council.

16. The Chairperson proposed and Members agreed to endorse the EIA report with conditions and recommendations.

Compensatory Tree Planting

17. In view of the possible loss in urban ecological functions arising from the trees felled in the project, a Member suggested that the project proponent should consider planting compensatory trees in other urban locations. With reference to the Member's suggestion and Members' earlier discussion on the subject, the Chairperson suggested with the agreement of Members that a condition should be imposed to require the project proponent to devise a detailed Compensatory Tree Planting Implementation Plan (the Plan) with engagement of terrestrial ecologist(s), which should include details of the planting objectives, planting numbers and locations and list of native tree species to be used, with the aim to enhance urban biodiversity. Off-site locations in the urban area such as Tuen Mun town centre should also be considered for compensatory tree planting. The project proponent should consult the Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation (DAFC) on the Plan prior to submission to DEP for approval before the commencement of the compensatory tree planting.

18. In response to a Member's question on tree number T352, Mr Terence Tsang supplemented that the photo of the tree was not indicated in the EIA report but the project proponent could be requested to provide the information separately. To achieve tree conservation at the project site as far as possible, the Chairperson suggested and the meeting agreed that the project proponent should be recommended to retain as far as possible any tall and big trees, in particular tree number T352 in the site area, notwithstanding that they do not fall under the category of trees of particular interest and consider creating resting stations and scenic spots surrounding the tall trees for public enjoyment.

19. On the Member's further question on the usual duration of mitigating measures in the EM&A programme, Mr Terence Tsang replied that the duration would vary depending on the aspects involved. As far as compensatory tree

planting was concerned, the post-construction monitoring period was usually one year. In case a longer monitoring period was warranted, a Further Environmental Permit (FEP) arrangement could be made to pass the relevant monitoring and maintenance responsibility from the project proponent to the department(s) concerned after the monitoring period under the EM&A programme.

20. Another Member went on to enquire if departments would have enough resources for tree maintenance. The Chairperson added that problems in tree transplantations would usually arise after the one-year post-construction monitoring period. Mr Terence Tsang indicated that while the responsible department for tree management would depend on the specific project location and nature, the follow up on maintenance of the trees in the project could be assigned in accordance with the FEP granted. Mr Simon Chan supplemented that departments would be allocated with the resources required to take over the tree maintenance and monitoring works in the subsequent nine years after which the trees could normally grow in a self-sustainable manner.

21. As an improvement to the EIA process in the long-run, the Chairperson suggested, with the support of Members, that EPD should consider the requirement of a higher compensatory tree planting ratio than 1:1 in the EIAO process review considering that a seedling plant could not provide the same ecological function as a large tree.

22. Given that the replanted trees would be monitored by the project proponent and the relevant government departments for a reasonably long period of time, the meeting agreed that a condition or recommendation on additional EM&A programme was not necessary.

Waste Management

23. With reference to the relevant deliberations on the subject during the open session, the Chairperson suggested with the agreement of Members that the project proponent should be recommended to explore ways to minimise the overall waste generation and disposal arising from the project, and consider to reuse and recycle the wood generated from the felled trees as far as practicable.

Ecological Impact to Corals

24. The Chairperson opined that a condition or recommendation on coral survey and conservation might be necessary given the limited information provided in the EIA report on this aspect. A Member suggested imposing a condition on ecological enhancement of corals given the technologies and data available. On the understanding that any ecological impacts to the corals by the piling works should be avoided as far as possible, Mr Terence Tsang advised Members that a recommendation on enhancement of the ecological environmental for corals alongside a condition on coral surveys would be appropriate.

25. The Chairperson suggested with the agreement of Members that a condition should be imposed to require the project proponent to conduct a comprehensive coral survey within the piling footprint between Cafeteria Old Beach and Kadoorie Beach, in consultation with DEP and DAFC, prior to the commencement of piling works with a view to avoiding the construction of viaduct structures in locations which might bring adverse impact to any significant coral colonies in the vicinity.

26. With the above condition on coral survey, the Chairperson suggested and the meeting agreed to recommend the project proponent to devise a detailed design and implementation plan for the subtidal portion of the proposed viaduct in consultation with DAFC and DEP, with a view to enhancing the biodiversity and ecosystem functions, especially the affected corals.

Traffic Impact

27. The Chairperson sought clarifications on the requirement of traffic impact in the EIA process. Mr Terence Tsang confirmed that traffic impact assessment was not a requirement under the EIA Ordinance, but the noise or air pollution arising from the traffic would fall under the purview of the EIA assessment. Given the aforesaid, the meeting agreed that a condition or recommendation in this regard was not necessary.

28. There being no other comments from Members, the meeting agreed that the EIA report could be endorsed with two conditions and three recommendations. The project proponent team would not be required to attend the subsequent full Council meeting.

(Post-meeting notes: The list of proposed conditions and recommendations was circulated to Members for comments on 22 July 2022.)

**EIA Subcommittee Secretariat
August 2022**