

Southern District Council (SDC)
Economy, Development and Planning Committee

Progress Report on Invigorating Island South Initiative

Purpose

This paper is to brief members on the latest progress of the Invigorating Island South (IIS) initiative.

Background

2. The IIS initiative was announced in the 2020 Policy Address 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. The Invigorating Island South Office (IISO) co-ordinates and implements various IIS key projects, focusing on the Wong Chuk Hang (WCH), Aberdeen and Ap Lei Chau (ALC) areas (IIS focus areas), and actively participate in projects led by other policy bureaux.

3. Members were briefed on the IIS Conceptual Master Plan (CMP) 1.0 and 2.0 covering the IIS focus areas in September 2021 and May 2022 respectively. In November 2022, Members were consulted on the proposals formulated under the Pedestrian Environment and Traffic Improvements to Bring Vibrancy to the Wong Chuk Hang, Aberdeen Waterfront and Ap Lei Chau North Areas – Feasibility Study (the Study).

4. The 2022 Policy Address announced the development of a “Round-the-Island” Trail of about 60 kilometres on Hong Kong Island, connecting the waterfront promenades on the northern shore and a number of existing promenades and countryside walking trails in the Southern District. IISO is responsible for co-ordinating and working with the relevant departments to take forward this project.

Progress of Work

5. With the support of stakeholders on the four main strategies adopted in the CMP, i.e. (a) Enhance Connectivity and Walkability; (b) Improve Urban Environment; (c) Unleash Development Potential; and (d) Enliven the District, IISO is taking forward various proposals and projects including quick-win measures to bring early improvements to the IIS focus areas. The key tasks of IISO are highlighted in the ensuing paragraphs. The status of various quick-win measures and projects, categorised by reference to the four main strategies, is set out at **Annex 1**.

Enhance Connectivity and Walkability

6. The Study mentioned in paragraph 3 above was commissioned by IISO in December 2021 to formulate comprehensive pedestrian environment and traffic improvement measures as well as waterfront and open space enhancement proposals to bring vibrancy to the Study Area. A public engagement exercise on the proposals formulated was held from mid-November to end-December 2022. While the proposals were generally supported by stakeholders, some of the proposals for ALC North have been revised to address issues raised in the further local consultation conducted during May to July 2023. On proposals targeted for implementing in the short term, we are already working with the relevant departments to complete them progressively by minor works. Upon completion of the Study in late 2023, we will take forward the medium/long-term proposals in accordance with public works procedures in order of priority.

Connectivity in WCH Business Area (WCHBA)

7. As articulated in the Landscape Master Plan (LMP) formulated under the Study (see **Annex 2**), a landscape corridor along Heung Yip Road and Staunton Creek Nullah will be improved to enhance the connectivity and walkability between WCHBA and the waterfront, including the provision of a boardwalk along the northern bank of the nullah. Various quick-win measures in WCHBA taken forward in parallel with the Study have been completed, including renovating the WCH Road flyover and footpaths, and widening/provision of pedestrian crossings at various locations with the support of the Transport Department and the Highways Department (HyD).

8. Works on other quick-win measures within the IIS focus areas are in progress or will commence soon, such as the improvement/provision of more pedestrian crossings in WCHBA, footpath widening along WCH Road adjoining Ocean Park Plant Nursery, and repaving of road carriageway at Wah Ting Street and Yuet Hoi Street.

Connectivity along Sham Wan and Po Chong Wan Waterfronts

9. To enhance the pedestrian environment along the Sham Wan and Po Chong Wan waterfronts, we are working with the relevant departments on the proposed footpath widening and facelifting works along the western side of Shum Wan Road fronting the two Temporary Industrial Areas, as well as liaising with the Hospital Authority regarding the section adjoining Shum Wan Laundry. Works are targeted for commencement by early 2024.

10. The proposed elevated boardwalk behind the three shipyards near Ap Lei Chau Bridge to provide the missing link between Heung Yip Path and the Sham Wan waterfront will be taken forward under the Round-the-Island Trail project.

Pedestrian environment and traffic circulation in ALC North

11. Quick-win measures including repaving road carriageway and provision of additional pedestrian crossings in the Main Street, ALC area have been completed. Implementation of the proposed walkability improvements in the area and the provision of a metered car park (with more than 20 parking spaces) at the Lee Man Road Bus Terminus site are under active planning. Further to the recent local consultation, it is concluded that the originally proposed public vehicle park at the existing soccer pitch within ALC Park would adversely affect the celebration events of Hung Shing Festival, in particular the Cantonese opera performance. Since no practical alternative venue can be identified, we now propose to relocate the two existing gateball courts to the waterfront with a view to providing a public car park of about 30 parking spaces. The temporary car park at Wah Ting Street is proposed to be retained and slightly extended eastwards to provide about 10 additional parking spaces. The previously proposed new local road would not be taken forward as it would affect the existing car park there. As a result, more than 60 additional parking spaces could be provided in the ALC North area to cater for the parking demand.

12. Taking account of the local views received during the public engagement exercise of the Study, a 6-metre wide emergency vehicular access would be incorporated into the existing and proposed open spaces in ALC Northeast to connect ALC Praya Road and Ping Lan Street. It would not only serve the open spaces, but also provide an alternative access for emergency vehicles to the Main Street, ALC area when necessary. We would take forward the critical section between Ping Lan Street and the eastern end of ALC Waterfront Promenade by minor works, ahead of the new open space project in ALC Northeast.

Improve Urban Environment

13. We adopt a “place-making” approach to enhance the leisure facilities and beautify public spaces in the IIS focus areas. The LMP formulated under the Study articulates strategies for improving and providing open spaces along landscape corridors, linking them up for forming an open space system and integrating with the pedestrian network.

Green Link in WCH

14. The Green Link will connect the MTR WCH Station and Aberdeen Country Park through a series of sitting-out areas and pedestrian facilities. Based on the winning entry of the design competition, construction works by the Civil Engineering and Development Department (CEDD), the Architectural Services Department (ArchSD) and HyD commenced in January 2023. The hiking trail between Yip Hing Street and Aberdeen Country Park, improvement of the Yip Kan Street Sitting-out Area and the adjoining staircase are expected to be completed by end-2023. Improvement works on Nam Long Shan Road Sitting-out Area and the area along Yip Kan Street are scheduled for completion around mid-2024.

Revitalisation of Staunton Creek Nullah and adjoining public spaces

15. The Drainage Services Department (DSD) is collaborating with IISO in the formulation of proposals for revitalising Staunton Creek Nullah into a river with environmental and landscape upgrading. Subject to funding approval, works on the proposed boardwalk along the northern bank in the downstream section of the nullah will commence in early 2024.

16. In tandem, IISO is working on improvements to the public spaces and sitting-out areas along this landscape corridor. Various quick-win measures have been completed or nearing completion, including enhancements to the public space next to Tai Wong Ye Temple with benches and mural painting, and the provision of a parklet near MTR Wong Chuk Hang Station. Repaving of the footpaths near MTR Wong Chuk Hang Station as well as the public space next to Tai Wong Ye Temple will commence soon. Detailed design for the improvement of Heung Yip Road Sitting-out Area, and Nam Long Shan Road Children’s Playground and Rest Garden is expected to commence around end-2023.

Waterfront Enhancements

17. Various quick-win measures to provide more leisure spaces and enhance the waterfronts have been completed, including opening up the enclosed landscaped/lawn

area adjoining ALC Park and the enclosed area adjoining ALC Main Street Sewage Pumping Station, widening of the waterfront promenade next to the public car park in ALC North, and improvements to the marine-related signboards around Aberdeen Typhoon Shelter to minimise blockage.

18. We have formulated comprehensive proposals for enhancing the waterfronts on both sides of Aberdeen Typhoon Shelter based on different themed zones as the design framework, and will commence a number of minor works projects progressively from 2025 onward. The feasibility study for a new open space near Shum Wan Pier Drive has been completed by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) and detailed design is in progress. The feasibility study for providing children's play facilities near Aberdeen Tennis and Squash Centre commenced in May 2023. On the transformation and extension of the children's playground in ALC Park, schematic design based on the winning entry of the design competition on public play spaces is expected to be completed around end-2023, followed by detailed design in 2024.

19. With the confirmation of various proposals for ALC North, we target to define the project scope and development framework for the open space site yet to be developed in the northeastern part of ALC within this year. The project would be taken forward in accordance with the public works procedures.

Green@Southern in ALC

20. To address the concerns raised by some local stakeholders, the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) has revisited other site options for the proposed Green@Southern facility, and considers the site at Ap Lei Chau Drive more suitable due to its larger coverage of residential developments and better accessibility. The scale of the proposed facility would be substantially reduced, focusing more on environmental education and providing larger outdoor green space for public enjoyment. The local stakeholders concerned would be further consulted.

Unleash Development Potential

Revitalisation of industrial buildings in WCHBA

21. With the gradual transformation of WCHBA, there are now 18 commercial buildings (including hotels) in WCHBA through new development, redevelopment or wholesale conversion of industrial buildings. Two more commercial buildings will be completed around end-2023. Of the remaining 33 industrial buildings, three have applications for redevelopment/wholesale conversion approved. IISO provides facilitation services for development proposals from the private sector to help expedite

the transformation of old industrial buildings in WCHBA through the policy of revitalisation of industrial buildings, which would in turn help provide more space for emerging industries and the arts and cultural sector.

“Single site, multiple use” projects

22. The Recreation and District Facilities Committee of SDC was consulted on the development scope of the Redevelopment and Enhancement of Recreation and Sports Facilities in WCH in January 2022. To promote “single site, multiple use”, the project includes the reprovisioning of the existing recreation ground, sports centre, sports ground and swimming pool in WCH, incorporating skatepark, district health centre, elderly health centre, small library, public vehicle park and other facilities. The technical feasibility study has been completed. Upon approval, the formulation of a master layout plan and related detailed technical assessments will follow.

Review of temporary sites

23. IISO is exploring with the relevant bureaux and departments on the possibility of consolidating the existing bus depot facilities in WCH. Temporary sites under review also include those being occupied by shipyards and marine engineering workshops. IISO will continue to consult the relevant stakeholders.

Enliven the District

Future strategy of Ocean Park

24. Led by the Culture, Sports and Tourism Bureau, the Government and the Ocean Park Corporation (OPC) have been actively implementing the various initiatives under the future strategy. Apart from completing the work on relevant legislative amendments, the Government and the OPC are also reinforcing conservation and education endeavours both inside and outside the Park, and taking forward outsourcing arrangements for the different themed zones within the Park. The OPC will continue its effort in actively taking forward the different components of the future strategy.

25. Upon launching of the temporary landing facility at Tai Shue Wan in August 2022, OPC provided, on a pilot basis, ferry services among Tai Shue Wan, Ap Lei Chau and Aberdeen for visitors to and from the Water World on specific days, and launched marine tourism routes between Tai Shue Wan and Central as well as Ap Lei Chau and Tai Shue Wan. CEDD is conducting technical studies for the pier projects at Deep Water Bay and Tai Shue Wan. Subject to the completion of the studies and funding approval, construction works for the two proposed piers would commence in 2025.

Revitalisation of Aberdeen Wholesale Fish Market area

26. IISO is working with the Environment and Ecology Bureau, the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department and the Fish Marketing Organisation to formulate a preliminary schematic proposal, with technical support provided by ArchSD, for consulting stakeholders within this year. The project would then be taken forward in accordance with the public works procedures. Meanwhile, a quick-win measure has been implemented to improve the connectivity between Aberdeen Praya Road and Yue Shi Cheung Road for pedestrians.

Expansion of Aberdeen Typhoon Shelter

27. Led by IISO, CEDD commenced in April 2022 an investigation, design and construction consultancy study for the expansion of Aberdeen Typhoon Shelter to address the strong regional demand in Hong Kong Island South for sheltered space, and to support tourism, leisure and recreation development in the Southern District. It is proposed to extend the typhoon shelter from its south by about 24 hectares (including passage areas). Under the consultancy, the feasibility of opening up some of the existing and new breakwaters is being studied. Site investigation works have been largely completed, to be followed by various detailed impact assessments and design work. Subject to funding approval, construction works would commence in 2025.

28. On quick-win measures, CEDD completed the additional landing steps at the northeastern point of Ap Lei Chau in August 2023. Another public landing facility incorporating harbour steps will be provided near Ap Lei Chau Praya Road to facilitate safe embarkation and disembarkation of smaller vessels. The signage for sightseeing sampans on both sides of the typhoon shelter has also be refurbished. To meet vessels' needs, the Water Supplies Department collaborates with IISO in identifying suitable waterfront locations for providing water selling facilities within the typhoon shelter, with the first one on the Tin Wan waterfront.

Revitalisation of Nam Long Shan Road Cooked Food Market (CFM) area

29. The Nam Long Shan Road CFM is being refurbished under the Market Modernisation Programme. To dovetail, works on the direct connection proposed by IISO between the CFM and the adjacent footbridge will commence by mid-2024. IISO has also proposed refurbishing the roof garden above the CFM, and providing a lift tower to connect with the adjoining children's playground and rest garden. Detailed design for the relevant proposals by ArchSD is expected to commence around end-2023.

Place-making events

30. IISO will continue to collaborate with interested parties to facilitate place-making events to bring more vibrancy and vigour to the areas. We are working with the

Southern District Office and the Southern District Youth Community Building Committee on a community building project to collect old photos of Aberdeen Typhoon Shelter and its surroundings for setting up a photo gallery at the exhibition house of Aberdeen Promenade. We are also exploring with the Art Promotion Office of LCSD on a possible art event around the typhoon shelter.

Round-the-Island Trail

31. Led by IISO, CEDD commenced a consultancy study on the Round-the-Island Trail in May 2023. We plan to commence works progressively from this year onward with a view to connecting 90% of the Trail by end-2027. Priority would be accorded to the sections along the rocky shore at Sandy Bay, between South Bay Beach and Chung Hom Kok Road, and between Cape D’Aguilar Road and Shek O Beach. Some District Minor Works being implemented will form part and parcel of the Trail, such as a new trail at Sandy Bay, the proposed footbridge connecting Waterfall Bay Park with Cyberport Road, and the improvement to Waterfall Bay Park. To provide the missing link between the Sandy Bay waterfront and Cyberport Road, the Hospital Authority has agreed to improve and open up the existing staircases within the Queen Mary Hospital Pumping Station site.

Public Engagement

32. We engage the public, in particular local stakeholders, in the preparation/refinement of CMPs, and in the formulation and implementation of various measures and projects under the IIS initiative. Since 2021, IISO has organised various briefings, forums and exhibitions to share our ideas and proposals, interacting with the public to gauge their views. IISO launched its website (www.iiso.gov.hk) in March 2023 to release more information about the initiative. We will continue to work hand in hand with various stakeholders to take forward the IIS initiative.

Annexes

- Annex 1** Quick-win Measures and Projects under the IIS initiative
- Annex 2** Landscape Master Plan for the IIS Focus Areas

Invigorating Island South Office

Development Bureau

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