

Agreement No. CE 31/2019 (TP)

Reimagining Public Spaces in Hong Kong – Feasibility Study Consultancy Report

December 2023

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Nomenclature and Abbreviations

ArchSD	Architectural Services Department
AC	Area Committee
B/D	Bureaux / Departments
Ch	Chapter
CE	Community Engagement
DEVB	Development Bureau
DO	District Open Space
DSD	Drainage Services Department
HAD	Home Affairs Department
Hong Kong 2030+	Hong Kong 2030+: Towards a Planning Vision and Strategy Transcending 2030
HKDC	Hong Kong Design Centre
HKPSG	Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines
HyD	Highways Department
KUF	Kau U Fong
LCSD	Leisure and Cultural Services Department
LO	Local Open Space
MaD	Make a Difference Institute
MTRCL	MTR Corporation Limited
OVT	Old and Valuable Tree
OWL	On Wo Lane
PlanD	Planning Department
Playright	Playright Children’s Play Association
POSPD	Public Open Space in Private Developments
REDA	Real Estate Developers Association of Hong Kong
RO	Regional Open Space

SoA CUHK	School of Architecture, The Chinese University of Hong Kong
TD	Transport Department
TPB	Town Planning Board
UDG	Urban Design Guidelines
UN	United Nations
WCH	Wong Chuk Hang

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Study Background and Objectives

1.1.1 Public spaces are places that are accessible and enjoyable by all without a profit motive¹. They could be streets, ‘spaces between buildings’, pedestrian ways, parks and playgrounds, sitting-out areas, podiums and rooftops, etc. Sufficient amount of well-designed, aptly-located and appropriately-managed public spaces can act as extensions of our personal construct of space, enriching our social experiences while promoting health, and personal and social well-being of the general public. Within the spectrum of public spaces, open space is an essential component of public space in uplifting our liveability under the high-density context of Hong Kong.

1.1.2 One of the strategic directions of the “Hong Kong 2030+: Towards a Planning Vision and Strategy Transcending 2030” (Hong Kong 2030+) is to enhance the overall liveability of our compact high-density city and enhancing the quantity and quality of open space. In response to the public aspirations for more open space, the Hong Kong 2030+ recommended an enhanced open space provision per person to not less than 3.5m². To echo the planning vision, Planning Department (PlanD) commissioned this study: **Agreement No. CE 31/2019 (TP) Reimagining Public Spaces in Hong Kong – Feasibility Study** (the Study) to rethink open spaces, being the essence of public space, in Hong Kong with the aim to further uplift the liveability of our city.

1.1.3 Major tasks under this Study include:

- Consolidate and analyse key issues, public aspirations and trends pertinent to open space in both Hong Kong and other international cities through desktop research, field surveys and stakeholders engagement;
- Review and make recommendations to refine the definition, standards, guidelines and calculation methodology of open space as stipulated under the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines (HKPSG) Chapter (Ch) 4; and
- Identify potential case studies for piloting relevant study recommendations.

1.2 Purpose of the Report

1.2.1 The main purpose of the report is to consolidate the overall findings including key issues, trends and public aspirations of open space and to summarise the proposals and recommendations as proposed under the Study and the conceptual design of pilot cases.

¹ United Nations (UN) Habitat. City-Wide Public Space Strategies: A Compendium of Inspiring Practices (2019)

2 REVIEW OF OPEN SPACE CONCEPT

2.1 Global Trends

2.1.1 Desktop research on five Global Cities, namely New York City, City of London, City of Sydney, Singapore and Shenzhen, was carried out to understand how other international cities manage and steer their planning of open space to achieve the corresponding development visions and policies. Global trends identified in the desktop research on the following aspects, namely the provision targets of open space, open space definition and typologies, management and maintenance, user experience, as well as open space design and delivery are discussed in the ensuing paragraphs.

Open Space Provision Target

2.1.2 Five Global Cities showcase strong open space policies and strategies to drive the approach and improvements to open space. In most cases, their open space policies were promulgated some time ago with partial goals achieved. This indicates that although positive effects of a strong policy could be substantial, actual realisation could be a long process. Measurable targets therefore help to keep the cities to be accountable and on track to delivering their goals. The following **Table 2.1** summarises the current provision target of the five Global Cities studied. Some of these standards have included nature reserves and botanic gardens, which have similar functions/definitions as the Country Parks in Hong Kong. Hong Kong's existing open space provision target is 20 ha per 100,000 persons, i.e. 2m² per person. However, 'Country Parks' are not countable towards open space provision standard in Hong Kong.

Global City	Provision Target
New York City	Optimal city planning goal of 2.5 acres per 1,000 persons (10m ² per person) (including pedestrian plazas) ²
City of London	0.06 ha of publicly accessible open space per 1,000 (0.6m ² per person) weekday day-time population (including civic spaces) ³
Singapore	Park provision ratio of 0.8 ha per 1,000 persons (8m ² per person) (including nature reserve) ⁴
City of Sydney	A state standard of 15% of site area for open space provision, with 9% local and district level open space and 6% for regional open space provision ⁵

² NYC Mayor's Office of Environmental Coordination. (2021). *City Environmental Quality Review Technical Manual*.

³ City of London Corporation. (2015). *The City of London Open Space Strategy Supplementary Planning Document*.

⁴ Ministry of the Environment and Water Resources & Ministry of National Development. (2015). *Sustainable Singapore Blueprint 2015*.

⁵ NSW Department of Planning. (2010). *Outdoor Recreation and Open Space: Planning Guidelines for Local Government*

Shenzhen	10m ² per person (only Green Park is counted into the calculation) ⁶
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Table 2.1 – Open Space Provision Targets of Global Cities

Open Space Definition and Typologies

- 2.1.3 The definitions of open space across all five Global Cities are broad and consist of a wide range of public spaces including streets and community facilities. In particular, concepts of greenness, recreation and amenity value are common amongst the definitions. All five Global Cities adopt a relatively wide-encompassing definition to help promote flexibility and diversity in terms of types and scale of open spaces. Such open spaces are considered more contextual on user's aspects and less dictated by statutory rules or regulations, e.g. zoning.

Management and Maintenance

- 2.1.4 Both public and private sectors participate in the management and maintenance of open space in most Global Cities, but with different degrees of participation. The involvement of private sector allows flexibility in how open spaces are managed and catered the best to the local needs, whereas management and maintenance by the government departments allow for a more coordinated and clearer role in responsibility.

User Experience

- 2.1.5 Most Global Cities do engage in relatively regular feedback of user experience through bi-annual, semi-regular and/or ad-hoc mass surveys, for example the New York City Resident Feedback Survey, City of London regular consultations with frequent user groups, Singapore Park Usage and Satisfaction Biennial Survey, and City of Sydney Greater Sydney Outdoor Survey. The feedback and findings would be taken into account for subsequent open space policies and strategies. A local field survey had also been carried out in this Study which aimed to serve similar purpose to gauge user experience of open space in Hong Kong.

Open Space Design and Delivery

- 2.1.6 In reviewing the recent and notable projects in the world, including cities in addition to the five Global Cities, the following trends of open space design could be identified:
- **Optimisation of Public Spaces:** utilisation of various forms of public spaces to serve as open spaces could be seen in many cities. The types of public space could include underutilised or obsolete urban spaces and the emerging tactical urbanism⁷ in transient open space through transforming streets or other public places. Through innovative ideas, new open space forms could also be created, and quick-win solutions such as tactical urbanism and time sharing of space may positively transform existing spaces;

⁶ 中華人民共和國住房和城乡建设部. (2017). 城市綠地規劃標準 2017. (Chinese Only)

⁷ Tactical urbanism involves interventions which are usually simple and low-cost, and do not require prominent public spaces or necessarily permanent alterations. World Bank Group. (2019). *The Hidden Wealth of Cities: Creating, Financing and Managing Public Spaces*.



Revitalisation of Cheonggyecheon River in Seoul



The High Line in New York City

- **Open Space within Private Developments:** the integration of outdoor and indoor spaces has become more widely-adopted in architectural and spatial design of commercial and residential developments. This trend has resulted in both horizontal and vertical integration of open spaces in the public realm and within developments, enriching overall public experience, greening and vibrancy of a place;



Integrated open space within Taikoo Li Chengdu



The Museum of Modern Art Sculpture Garden in New York City

- **Other Design Trends:** other design trends include the focus on flexible, adaptive uses and all-inclusive design that promote inter-generational uses and usage for people across different abilities; through public participation to strengthen public ownership and sense of identity of a place; as well as introducing more innovative use of spaces.



Flexible lawn at Bryant Park in New York City

Water feature to improve thermal comfort at Granary Square in London

- 2.1.7 These design trends also demonstrated other means of delivery and operating mechanisms. Inter-departmental collaboration and partnership with private sector could unlock new opportunities to provide open space. Public participation is also an alternative means to deliver open space and create a sense of ownership in the community.

2.2 Review of Existing Standards and Guidelines

- 2.2.1 The Hong Kong 2030+ serves as a key policy document spelling out the planning vision and strategic territorial spatial planning framework for Hong Kong transcending beyond 2030. Of which, a key message is to advocate and uplift the overall liveability of our city through reimagination of our public space within the compact city environment.
- 2.2.2 A key recommendation during the Hong Kong 2030+ public engagement is to further enhance the open space provision target from the existing minimum of 20 ha per 100,000 persons i.e. 2m² per person apportioned as (a) a minimum of 10 ha per 100,000 persons (i.e. 1m² per person) for District Open Space (DO); and (b) a minimum of 10 ha per 100,000 persons (i.e. 1m² per person) for Local Open Space (LO), as stipulated under the HKPSG, to not less than 25 ha per 100,000 persons i.e. 2.5 m² per person as proposed during the public engagement stage of Hong Kong 2030+. In view of the public engagement outcome of Hong Kong 2030+ on public aspirations for more provision of open space to enhance liveability, the open space provision standard is increased to not less than 35 ha per 100,000 persons i.e. 3.5m² per person as advocated in the Hong Kong 2030+ Final Report.
- 2.2.3 On the quality aspect, the government aims to enhance liveability in a compact high-density city, with five strategic directions including Healthy and Revitalised City, Blue and Green City, Aspiring and Supportive City, Equitable and Inclusive City, as well as Unique and Diverse City. The planning and design of future open spaces should duly reflect such dimensions of liveability to provide a sustainable built environment with good quantity and quality of open spaces for public enjoyment.

- 2.2.4 A review of the relevant standards and guidelines on open space in Hong Kong was conducted to form a basis for the formulation of Study proposals:

HKPSG Ch 4 Recreation, Open Space and Greening

- 2.2.5 HKPSG Ch 4 is a government manual for Bureaux / Departments (B/Ds) and practitioners to refer to the latest planning standards and guidelines on recreation, open space and greening when preparing town plans or projects of new development or redevelopment. The ‘Recreation and Open Space’ section in Ch 4 includes definition, standard of provision, ratio between active and passive open space and calculation, as well as locational and design guidelines and considerations on implementation with regards to open space.

HKPSG Ch11: Urban Design Guidelines (UDG)

- 2.2.6 The current HKPSG Ch11 provides urban design guidelines covering both the major general urban design issues and air ventilation to shape a better physical environment in aesthetic and function terms and at macro and micro levels. In particular, urban design guidelines on specific major urban design issues such as “waterfront sites” and “public realm”, etc. are presented. Unlike Ch4, which includes open space provision standards, Ch11 provides advisory guidance on overall urban design, which in some cases relate to qualitative aspects of open space.

HKPSG Ch12: Miscellaneous

- 2.2.7 Under Section 7 of the Chapter, passive open space is listed as a conditionally acceptable use in areas located beneath flyovers and footbridges, subject to a set of criteria such as land use compatibility, fire safety, traffic impact, etc. This should be taken into consideration in the review of the concept and definition of open space.

Public Open Space in Private Developments (POSPD) Design and Management Guidelines

- 2.2.8 The POSPD Design and Management Guidelines was developed by the Development Bureau (DEVB) to encourage and monitor public open spaces delivered by the private sector, enhancing overall attractiveness and diversity of the public realm. Under the Guidelines, POSPD is defined as “an open space in private development under private management where the general public are entitled to access, use and enjoy such POSPD. POSPD may be located on private land within a private development and/or on government land adjoining a private development.” The design guidelines provide a design framework based on principles of connectivity, appropriateness, and quality, while the management guidelines highlight the rights, obligations and uses of POSPDs to balance owners’ responsibilities and public use and enjoyment of POSPDs. Relying on the design guidelines and recognising that integrated public open space provision within private developments as a rising open space trend in the global setting, POSPDs should be acknowledged as an increasingly important open space typology.

Harbour Planning Principles and Harbour Planning Guidelines

- 2.2.9 The Harbour Planning Principles and Harbour Planning Guidelines was formulated by the Harbour-front Enhancement Committee Sub-committee on Harbour Plan Review to serve as guidelines for all individuals and organisations in the planning, preservation, development and management of Victoria Harbour and its harbour-front areas. It includes a Vision and a Mission Statements, as well as Harbour Planning Guidelines covering aspects of public engagement, land use planning, urban design, landscaping, physical linkage, land formation, harbour-front management, sustainable development and temporary land uses.

Active Design Guidelines

- 2.2.10 The Study on Active Design for Healthier Lifestyle – Feasibility Study commissioned by PlanD was completed in 2023 and a set of active design guidelines was formulated. Considerations had been taken especially in the review of existing design guidelines of open spaces to echo the active design and healthy lifestyle initiatives as appropriate.

2.3 Community Engagement, Local Views and Aspirations

- 2.3.1 The community engagement (CE) approach was intended to engage the community and key stakeholders at an early stage and along the study process to collect comments on open space planning from users' perspective.

Stage 1: Pre-CE

- 2.3.2 Stage 1 Pre-CE aimed to identify knowledge and expectation gaps, and to understand the community concerns, needs, and aspirations of the open spaces in Hong Kong. In July and August 2020, in-depth interviews and meetings on specific topics were conducted with key stakeholders⁸ who were having direct experience in engaging the public on the topic of public open space.
- 2.3.3 In addition, an inter-disciplinary workshop with the B/Ds was also held in September 2020 to share findings of the literature review, international experiences, and the latest trends of open space, as well as to facilitate discussions on open space typology, design and management. A Field Survey with about 2,000 interviewees was also conducted in November 2020 to understand local users' patterns, opinions, needs and aspirations.
- 2.3.4 One key takeaway is that the public is generally satisfied with the open space provision in Hong Kong. Meanwhile they also supported and welcomed the provision of more open space for public enjoyment. Furthermore, the public emphasises the quality of open spaces, and that small and easily accessible open spaces (within walking distance from residences) play an essential part in their daily life routine, while more

⁸ Pre-CE stakeholders include Civic Exchange, School of Architecture, The Chinese University of Hong Kong (SoA CUHK), Hong Kong Design Centre (HKDC), Make a Difference Institute (MaD), One Bite Design Studio, Playright Children's Play Association (Playright), and Very Hong Kong Foundation.

sizable open spaces with higher scenic values and more greenery are most popular. Public's valued functions of open space are to provide areas for sitting, chatting, socialising, as well as outdoor exercising opportunities, which are crucial for both the mental and physical well-being of the general public.

- 2.3.5 The quality of open spaces can be further enhanced with more shading, greenery and seating. It is also identified that more flexible use in open space should be advocated with a more inclusive environment adapting to the needs of different age groups and abilities thus creating a sense of community.
- 2.3.6 The emerging popularity of informal open spaces had shown that the public is receptive to the idea of utilising potential public spaces as open spaces, e.g. transformation of pedestrian streets into gathering spaces/sitting-out areas during holidays.

Stage 2: CE

- 2.3.7 Findings from the Pre-CE formed basis in formulating the Study Proposals. Stage 2 CE aimed to present to relevant stakeholders on the initial findings and recommendations, including major components/enhancements of HKPSG Ch 4 (Open Space Section) and pilot cases, and to obtain feedback and comments from these consulted stakeholders.
- 2.3.8 A virtual knowledge sharing event was held online in March 2022 to invite the professional institutes and general public to attend. The international expert shared the best practices of open spaces worldwide and representatives from Government B/Ds and organisation⁹ also showcased their efforts to reinvent public spaces in Hong Kong. Subsequently, representatives of advisory bodies, professional institutes, organisations (including the pre-CE stakeholders)¹⁰ and local stakeholders¹¹ on pilot cases were further engaged from March 2022 to July 2022 via some virtual stakeholders' forums, virtual sharing session, and consultation at meetings with advisory bodies.
- 2.3.9 Various stakeholders were generally supportive to the overall objective and recommendations, as well as the conceptual design of the pilot cases at Wong Chuk Hang (WCH) and Kau U Fong (KUF). There was a general consensus that more focus should be put on enhancing the quality of open space and to encourage more public participation in the planning and development process of open space. Other major recommendations, e.g. revised definition and provision standards; removal of ratio on provision of active and passive recreational uses within DO; relaxation in countability

⁹ Invited B/Ds and organisations include the Harbour Office of Development Bureau, Architectural Services Department, Drainage Services Department and HKALPS (operator of Fly the Flyover).

¹⁰ 2 advisory bodies include expert advisory panel and Land Development Advisory Committee (LDAC) – Planning sub-committee; 6 professional institutes include the Hong Kong Institute of Planners, Hong Kong Institute of Architects, Hong Kong Institute of Landscape Architects, Hong Kong Institute of Urban Design, Hong Kong Institute of Surveyors, and Hong Kong Institution of Engineers; 14 organisations include The REDA, MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL), Hong Kong Housing Society, URA, HKGBC, BEAM Society Limited, WYNG Foundation, MaD, Playright, Very Hong Kong, JCDISI, SoA CUHK, One Bite Design Studio, and HKDC.

¹¹ Local stakeholders include Central and Western Chung Wan and Mid-Levels Area Committee (AC) and Owners' Committees, Southern District (East) AC and The Southern District Council - Economy, Development and Planning Committee.

criteria to encourage provision of more covered area, green and amenity features were also welcomed.

2.3.10 All comments and views were duly considered for the refinement of the final recommendations under the Study Proposals as presented in **Section 3** of this report.

3 REIMAGINING OPEN SPACE AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

3.1 Definition of Open Space

3.1.1 Referring to HKPSG Ch 4 Section 1.6.1, open space is primarily defined as “**a statutory land use zone for the provision of open space and recreation facilities for the enjoyment of the general public**”. We propose that this definition should be updated to reflect the current concept and operation of open space, specific to our local context. Appropriate flexibility will be factored in to encompass or embrace the depth and rich value of open space as a key component of our outdoor public realm.

3.1.2 Considering the above, it is proposed to define open space as “**generally refers to accessible outdoor spaces within existing/proposed built-up area with recreation and amenity value for users’ enjoyment**”. This definition would allow a more flexible interpretation adhering to three key attributes of open space:

- an outdoor space¹² with some amenity values such as greening or other scenic resources;
- accessible by the target users¹³ which may include the general public or local residents / users for ancillary open space; and
- accommodate some forms of recreation and leisure activities such as sitting, relaxing, exercising, playing, etc.

3.1.3 This definition in fact echoes with the Town Planning Board’s (TPB’s) Master Schedule of Notes showing the planning intention of “Open Space” zone which is “intended primarily for the provision of outdoor open-air public space for active and/or passive recreational uses serving the needs of local residents as well as the general public”. The re-definition would also provide a broader perspective so that open space is no longer confined by the corresponding statutory land use zoning or with the need to be perceived as a standalone, purposely built or defined spatial entity.

3.2 Standard of Provision

Overall Provision Standard

3.2.1 According to the existing HKPSG Ch 4 Section 1.8, open space provision standard involves (i) LO; (ii) DO; and (iii) Regional Open Space (RO), which varies from size to

¹² Outdoor space generally refers to uncovered open to sky spaces. Some covered area may also be qualified as outdoor space. Please refer to **para. 3.4.4** for details.

¹³ ‘Accessible’ means the public or local residents / users can have access to the venue free of charge or under a reasonable rental/ service charge (e.g. sports grounds, outdoor ball courts). However, fee-paying theme parks managed by private sector are not considered as public open space under the proposed definition.

functions. Standards of provision are a minimum of 20 ha per 100,000 persons apportioned as 1m² LO and 1m² DO per person, resulting in 2m² per person in total. No provision standard is stipulated for RO. RO is provided as a 'bonus' above the minimum standard. However, in the Metro Area, 50% of the RO provision can be counted as DO, which does not apply to New Towns area.

- 3.2.2 Echoing the Hong Kong 2030+ initiative, the open space provision is proposed to be a minimum of 35 ha per 100,000 persons (i.e. 3.5 m² per person) throughout the Territory. Provision standards for LO and DO are proposed to be removed to enhance flexibility in provision of open space, and DO/RO in proximity to local neighbourhood can also perform the function of LO.
- 3.2.3 New developments areas should be planned to meet the standards, whereas old, densely developed areas should pursue gradual improvements towards the targets through means such as comprehensive urban renewal projects by Urban Renewal Authority's or public/private sector's initiatives for comprehensive redevelopment. While an incremental approach would be taken to meet the provision standard in the existing built-up areas, emphasis should equally be placed to improve the quality of existing open spaces to enhance public enjoyment and well-being as appropriate.

Ancillary Open Space Provided by Public Housing Developments and Private Comprehensive Residential Developments

- 3.2.4 According to the existing HKPSG, in public housing developments and comprehensive residential developments, the standard of provision for LO is 1m² per person throughout the Territory. Recognising the important role LO plays in enhancing overall liveability, 1m² ancillary open space per person standard for public housing developments and private comprehensive residential developments is proposed to be maintained to serve the residents of the developments.

Open Space for the Employment Population

- 3.2.5 Considering the importance of convenient open spaces easily accessible by workers, the existing standard is a minimum of 5 ha per 100,000 workers, i.e. 0.5m² per worker in industrial, industrial-office, business, commercial areas and other comprehensively planned employment nodes is proposed to be maintained but relaxed. For employment nodes located in close proximity to residential areas, provision of open space solely to serve the workers in industrial, industrial-office, business and commercial areas may not be required as a "time-sharing"¹⁴ approach can be adopted for enjoyment of the public open spaces in a district by residential and employment population at different times. Nonetheless, for employment nodes which are distant from residential clusters, individual developments are encouraged to provide sufficient open space to serve its own workers according to provision standard.

¹⁴ It should be noted that the "time-sharing" approach is only applicable to public open space.

3.3 Open Space Classification

3.3.1 The open space classification of LO, DO and RO would be maintained, with enhanced definition of their size threshold, functions, etc. to facilitate siting and design. This classification would help to determine their respective permissible building site coverages which provide a general reference for public open space design to balance the need to maintain open-air characteristics and to provide responsive design to address the hot and humid climate of the city, as well as to improve the quality of open space to enhance the users' experience.

3.3.2 As presented in **Section 2**, the results of the community engagement have indicated key aspirations and qualities that stakeholders wish for open spaces. Some of the key aspects include:

- Importance of both small accessible open spaces and medium to large parks;
- Key open space functions include venues for recreation, resting, exercising, and social interactions; and
- Importance of easy accessibility, scenic environment, sufficient greening, shelter for seating areas, and outdoor exercise area.

3.3.3 In response to the public aspirations and different considerations based on the size and function of the open spaces, the open space classification with area threshold (listed below in **Table 3.1**) is proposed to facilitate the corresponding open space locational guidelines. The building site coverage percentage for LO, DO and RO of the existing HKPSG would be maintained to indicate varying degrees of allowance to accommodate built structures within open spaces of various sizes.

Type	Site Particulars	Function
LO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preferable Size not exceeding 1ha, where possible at least 500m² • Building Site Coverage ≤ 5% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neighbourhood open space near/within residential developments or workplaces accessible by walking and primarily for passive recreation. • Serve as an immediate extension of the personal space from users' residence or workplace to promote active/healthy lifestyle. • Open space serving key social function for people in the neighbourhood to relax, interact and play. • Important open area outlets especially in existing built-up areas to add breathing, ventilation and green space for public wellness.
DO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preferable Size ≥ 1ha • Building Site Coverage ≤ 10% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More sizable open spaces where people are willing to travel a certain distance to visit. • Contain a wide range of facilities with active and passive recreation opportunities.

Type	Site Particulars	Function
RO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preferable Size ≥ 5ha • Building Site Coverage $\leq 20\%$ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serve the recreational needs of the district population, territorial population and tourists. • RO is intended to function as large 'green lungs' within built-up areas.

Table 3.1 – Proposed Open Space Classification

- 3.3.4 Covered areas of ancillary facilities within public open space should be countable towards building site coverage calculation as set out in **Table 3.1** above. However, the provision of green and amenity features to address the hot and humid climate of the city that enhance users' comfort, such as pavilions, shelters, covered seating, covered walkways, etc. is encouraged. These facilities provided in a reasonable scale may be disregarded from building site coverage calculation.
- 3.3.5 The specified building site coverage guidelines and considerations are intended to provide a general reference for design of public open space. For open space within private development, the definition and site coverage calculation for open space as a development control parameter should follow the provisions of the Buildings Ordinance administered by the Building Authority.
- 3.3.6 According to the existing guidelines, a general guide on the provision ratio of 3:2 between areas for active and passive recreational uses is applied to DO to provide space for outdoor core activities and passive recreation.
- 3.3.7 There is a global trend for flexible and adaptive use of space within open space venues. With a view to meeting the rising aspiration of people, flexibility should therefore be allowed without the fixed ratio of active and passive recreational use within open space. Hence, the Active to Passive ratio applicable to DO is proposed to be deleted to enhance more spatial design flexibility in open spaces.

3.4 Calculation Towards Open Space Standards

- 3.4.1 The general criteria for deciding the countability of an open space towards the standards of provision, as well as the list of illustrative examples as set out in the prevailing HKPSG, have been reviewed and consolidated taking into account the changing circumstances and be in line with the revised open space definition.

Calculation Factor for ROs

- 3.4.2 As RO performed similar functions and recreational value as DO, the remarks for 50% RO would be countable as DO in Metro Area is proposed to be deleted. In other words, open space classified as ROs could be counted 100% across the territory with same treatment as LO and DO.

3.4.3 Acknowledging the wider spectrum and diversity of open spaces, other recommendations and clarifications on calculation methodology are listed below:

Covered Areas

3.4.4 In response to climate change as well as public aspirations for more comfortable and vibrant open space, covered and / or shaded areas within open space are proposed to be countable subject to scale, function and design considerations on a case-by-case basis. The general considerations may include:

- Covered area forming an integral component, design or extension of an open space may be counted as part of the open space.
- For sizable open spaces, areas occupied by ancillary facilities and structures with specified functions contributing to the amenity, recreation value, sheltering and vibrancy of an open space, such as pavilions, sheltered seating, kiosks and small cafes, etc. may be counted as open space.
- Space beneath a viaduct, highway or footbridge structure with sufficient headroom clearance allowing comfortable pedestrian movement, sunlight penetration, and natural air ventilation, and whose primary function is for active or passive recreation may be counted as open space.

Water Bodies

3.4.5 It was proposed that apart from surrounding land-based area with recreation and amenity value, water bodies and water features with recreation and amenity value within an open space venue can also be counted. The open water part of revitalised channels may be counted as open space depending on its design and function. For beaches, high water mark should be adopted to exclude the water bodies.

Ancillary and Incidental Facilities within Open Space

3.4.6 Facilities including but not limited to pedestrian routes, cycle paths, emergency vehicular access and ancillary roads serving an open space can be countable.

Slopes within Open Space

3.4.7 Under the current HKPSG, slope correction factors are stipulated recognising that sloping parts of a site may have issues of accessibility, limited function and utilisation, while the amenity value of planting and landscaping at slopes is acknowledged. In reviewing the slope correction factor, various thresholds have been reviewed, taking into account the gradient acceptable for unassisted barrier-free access as well as amenity value consideration. It is proposed that the slope correction factor gradation should be maintained in principle as in **Table 3.2** below to strike a balance between steep slope and usable space.

Slope Gradient	Land area % to count as standard	Remarks
Slope < 1:20 ¹⁵	100%	Site allowing unassisted barrier free access. Slope correction factor not required.
Slope between 1:20 and 1:5	60%	-
Slope between 1:5 and 1:3	30%	-
Slope > 1:3	Nil	Site beyond the maximum gradient for natural slope/ berm for planting/ vegetation, which provides limited amenity value and less possible for natural greening, and should not be counted as open space.

Table 3.2 – Proposed Slope Correction Factors

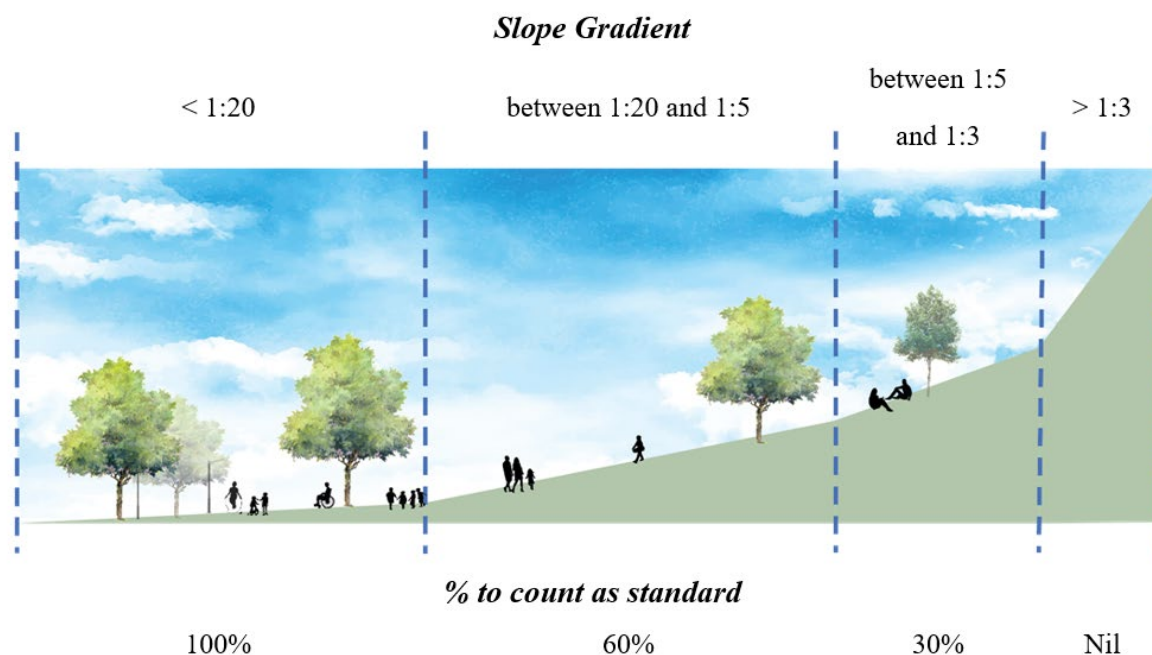


Diagram 3.1 – Illustrative Diagram for Slope Correction Factors

¹⁵ Slope gradient of 1:20 is considered gentle slope for unassisted barrier free access in “Design Manual: Barrier Free Access 2008”, https://www.bd.gov.hk/doc/en/resources/codes-and-references/code-and-design-manuals/BFA2008_e.pdf

3.5 Locational Guidelines for Open Space

3.5.1 Open space should be planned in its own right and in the right location to serve its intended population taking into account the following considerations.

(a) **Accessibility** – Generally, at-grade open space is more preferred than elevated open space for better accessibility, visibility and greening opportunities.

- (i) LO must be conveniently located to serve its intended users. It should preferably be located within 400m from its nearby residences or workplaces, which is equivalent to about a 10-minute walking distance. In public housing developments and in private comprehensive residential developments, LO may be provided at ground or above ground level.
- (ii) DO and RO should be easily accessed along street frontages, and preferably within 400m from public transport facilities including railway stations and public transport interchanges to facilitate patronage by the territorial population and tourists. They should be located where there is sufficient flat land to accommodate active recreation facilities and be easily accessible. Natural areas suitable for recreation facilities may also be included as part of DO or RO.
- (iii) It is important to improve the connectivity among public open spaces, especially the pocket open spaces, so that they form a network of open space to serve the neighbourhood more effectively. An open design without fences/gates can help to enhance connectivity and accessibility.

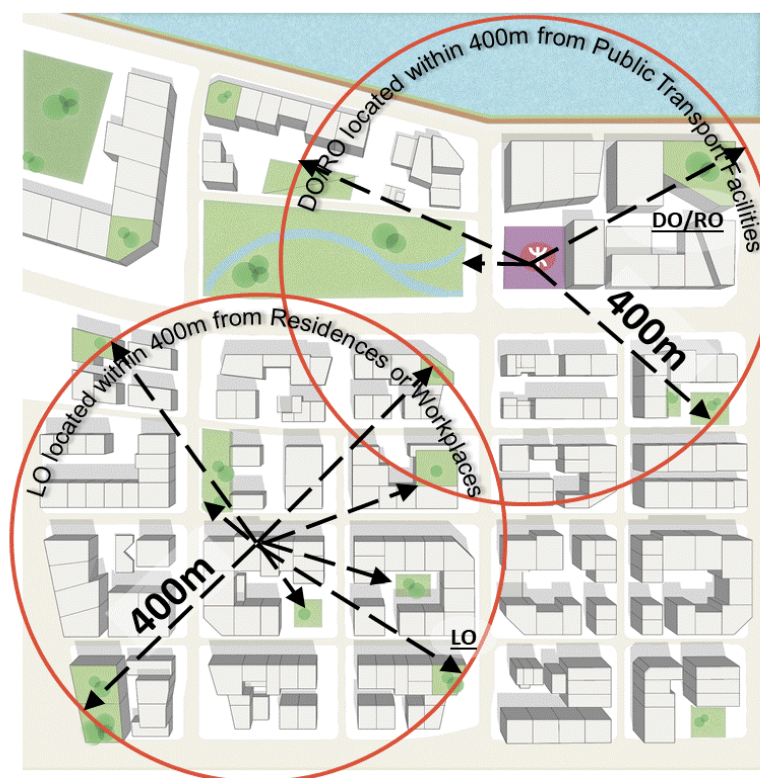


Diagram 3.2 – Conceptual Diagram of Locational Guidelines on Accessibility

(b) **Compatibility and Synergy** – Open spaces must be compatible with adjacent uses and their surrounding site context.

- (i) They should be located away from potential nuisance, such as sources of air and noise pollution. The environmental guidelines as set out in Ch 9 of the HKPSG on ‘Environment’ should be applied in designing the locations of open spaces.
- (ii) Open space venues which may attract a large patronage, and facilities within open space that may create potential nuisances should be carefully located/designed to minimise impacts on nearby residents.
- (iii) Public open spaces should be planned and sited to create synergy through an open space network with different themes and good connectivity to complement each other.

(c) **Optimisation of Unused Public Space** – Beautification and facelifting of unused public space as leisure, recreation and amenity purpose (such as sitting-out areas) should be promoted as far as possible. This is especially important for existing urban areas where comprehensive planning of open space framework would be more constrained.

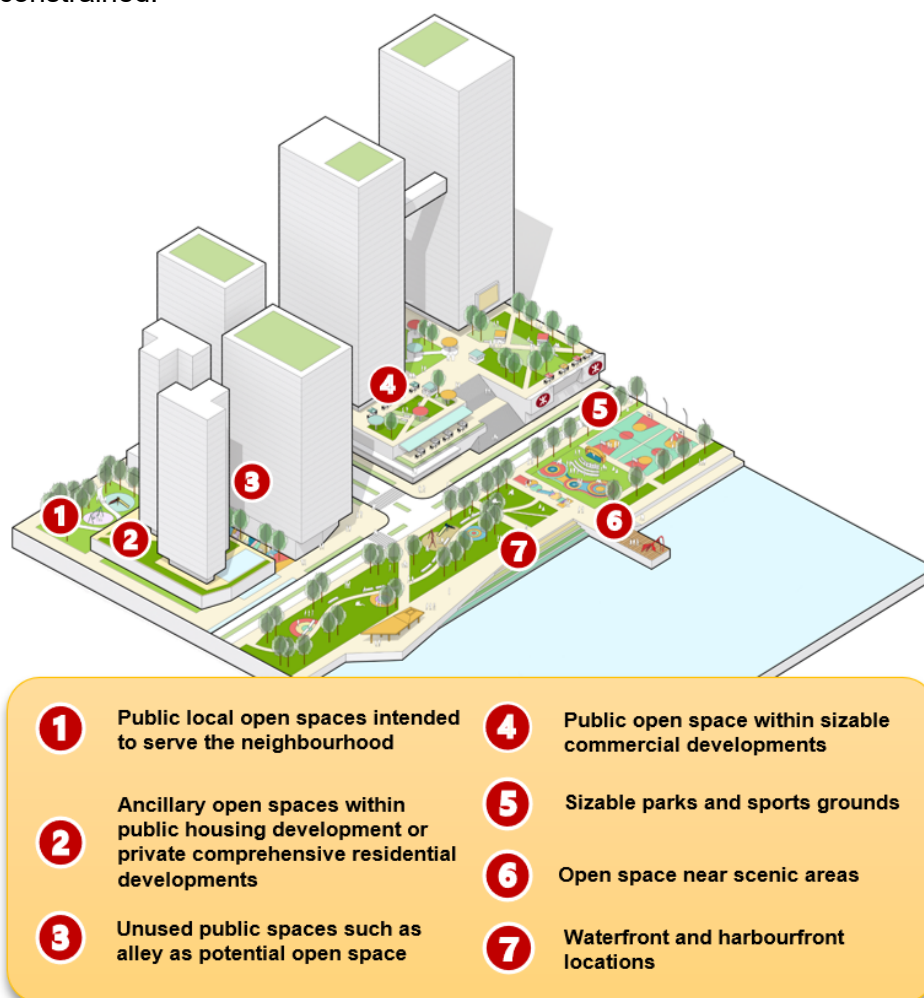


Diagram 3.3 – Conceptual Diagram of Locational Considerations

3.6 Design Guidelines for Open Space

3.6.1 To create quality open space that can attract people to walk, stay and enjoy, the following broad design principles and guidelines should be considered:

(a) **Place-making and Functions** – Open space should consider site context, local identities, user characteristics and seek opportunities to augment overall place-making impact through holistic consideration of the uses and design of its adjoining spaces to promote synergy and vibrancy. It should flexibly provide active and passive functions within open space in a balanced way and encourage active frontage with visual connections to pedestrians at street level for vibrancy. Open spaces could also be created on a temporary or time-sharing basis for public recreation or social activities.

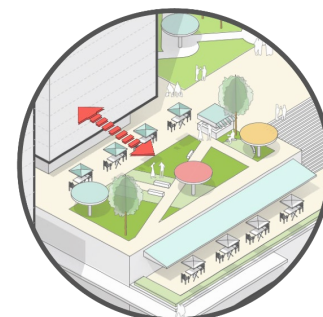


Diagram 3.4 - Place-making and Functions

(b) **Play, Flexible and Active Design** – Open space design should cater for more flexible and adaptive uses to create more possible usages physically and in different times and seasons. A range of dynamic play options should be considered. Multi-purpose and spontaneous play space design for shared play by different ages and abilities should be provided. Active design considerations should also be adopted to encourage physical activities to promote health and wellbeing (e.g. provision of cycle path, stairs and ramps, where appropriate).

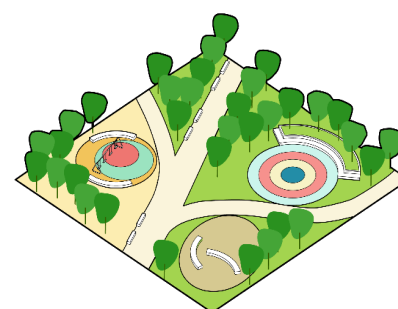


Diagram 3.5 - Play, Flexible and Active Design

(c) **All-inclusive and Inter-generational Design** – The needs and activities for people of different ages, ethnic groups and abilities should be considered in designing the space and types of facilities within an open space, which can also foster a sense of community. Co-sharing of open space among different users should be encouraged where appropriate.



Diagram 3.6 - All-inclusive and Inter-generational Design

(d) **Safety and Comfort** – Good visibility by way of adequate lighting, clear demarcation of access routes free of physical barriers, universal design, and adequate protective devices should be provided to enhance safety. Adequate shading, greening and water features, seating, and suitable choice of colours, materials and design of facilities should also be provided to enhance comfort.



Diagram 3.7 - Safety and Comfort

- (e) **Accessibility and Permeability** – The open space should promote seamless connection with the adjoining footpaths/ destinations to enhance walkability, interactions and vibrancy. Fence-free design for open space and promenade should be considered as far as practicable to promote visual permeability from outside. Besides, physical permeability within the site should also be provided through proper design of a walking route which is connected, safe, enjoyable and legible. Sense of openness should be provided within an open space to promote air and natural light penetration.

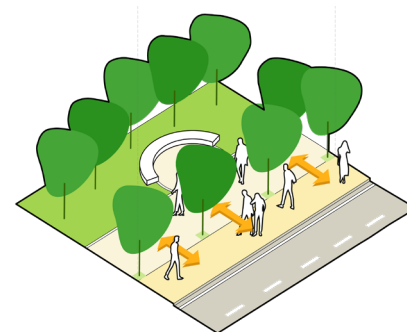


Diagram 3.8 - Accessibility and Permeability

- (f) **Greening, Smart, Biophilic and Resilient Design** – Sufficient greening, in particular tree planting and activity lawns should be provided. Guidelines on greening provision in open spaces are set out in the Greening section of HKPSG Ch.4. To embrace sustainability and adapt to climate change, it is also encouraged to deploy smart, biophilic and climate-resilient initiatives in the design process, such as co-use of space for recreational ground and flood relief, provision of retention ponds and bioswales. Reference should be made to Drainage Services Department (DSD)'s Practice Note No. 2/2022 Guidelines on Application of Floodable Area and Drainage Facility Co-Use in Drainage Management.

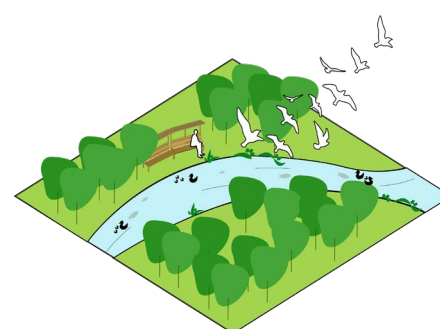


Diagram 3.9 - Greening, Smart, Biophilic and Resilient Design

- 3.6.2 For more details about the guidelines, please refer to **Appendix I** on **“Design Guidelines for Open Space”**.

3.7 Implementation of Open Space

- 3.7.1 Many different bodies are involved in the provision of a wide range of open space. The Leisure and Cultural Services Department is primarily responsible for the development and management of public open space. Other departments such as Environmental Protection Department and DSD, etc. would provide and manage public open spaces at their facilities when opportunities arise. Open spaces are also provided in private development and redevelopment projects and/or managed by commercial organisations and management committees in private residential developments. Some open spaces could also be implemented through public-private collaboration.

Collaboration

- 3.7.2 Different government departments involved in the open space design, management and maintenance should pay concerted efforts from project inception to operation. Relevant management departments/parties should be closely involved and duly consulted in the planning process so that they may take up and manage the open space in a timely manner.

Public Participation

- 3.7.3 Open space could be co-created with the community to meet local needs and aspirations. Stakeholders involvement in the design stage is encouraged, e.g. through collaborative workshop or design competition of open spaces.

Management and Maintenance

- 3.7.4 The management and maintenance of open space venues should be pursuant to relevant laws and regulations. For public open space provided by the private sector, the implementation mechanism should be carefully deliberated with respective B/Ds to avoid passing the financial responsibility to individual owners/occupiers/residents¹⁶. Besides, advance opening of open space within a development should be encouraged to facilitate early enjoyment by the public, if possible.

Information Transparency

- 3.7.5 The opening hours, information dissemination and routing of the open space should be publicised. Some context- and place-specific users' signages could also be introduced to allow more flexible use in temporal and spatial terms. Proper channels for user feedback collection could facilitate better communication between users and the managing agent.

¹⁶ Development Bureau (2010). Refined administrative arrangement for provision of POSPDs as set out in the discussion paper for the Legislative Council Panel on Development dated 26 January 2010 "Provision of Public Open Space in Private Developments"
https://www.devb.gov.hk/en/issues_in_focus/provision_of_public_facilities/index.html

4 CONCEPTUAL DESIGN OF PILOT CASES

4.1 Requirements of the Pilot Case Studies

4.1.1 One open space was selected in consultation with the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) and other relevant agency(s) as a pilot case study. In addition, two pilot case studies of small pocket spaces were selected to showcase how generic spaces could be transformed into attractive public spaces. The three venues are:

- KUF Children’s Playground (**Figure 4.1**);
- KUF/ OWL Streetscapes (**Figure 4.1**); and
- Open Area Adjoining Tai Wong Ye Temple in WCH (**Figure 4.4**).

4.2 Pilot Case 1 : Kau U Fong Children’s Playground

Design Vision and Theming

4.2.1 The Central and Western District comprises a good collection of historical elements scattering across the district. It was therefore proposed that the KUF and OWL area should extend this exquisite urban character by expressing its own “Old Meets New” composition based on the existing spatial orientation and atmosphere.

Design Principles

4.2.2 The following design principles of the Study are taken into account.

- **Play, Flexible and Active Design** – revamping the existing children’s playground into an “Urban Playroom” with a variety of design and facilities;
- **All-inclusive and Inter-generational Design** – Achieve better inclusiveness accommodating inter-generational needs through flexible and adaptive design;
- **Greening, Smart, Biophilic and Resilient Design** – Complementing the existing Old and Valuable Tree (OVT) and large trees, more greening, shading and sitting opportunities will be introduced; and
- **Accessibility and Permeability** – Existing fencing between the open space and the adjoining footpath is proposed to be modified to improve visual permeability while maintaining safety.

Conceptual Design Proposal

4.2.3 The proposed Conceptual Design Plan of the pilot case is shown in **Figure 4.2** with the following key features:

- **Children’s Play and Active Zones** – The overall spatial arrangement for children’s play and active zones will be divided into two major areas: (i) the new

planting areas for multiple uses including sitting and exercising, and (ii) integrative playground. The new planting areas are arranged along the north-eastern and north-western boundary of the Site. Integrative playground to the west has an undulating character with integrated slide and play-mounds for a more active and dynamic experience; while integrative playground to the east is flatter and allows greater flexibility for both exercise and play.

- **Covered Sitting Area and Public Toilet** – The existing public toilet and sitting area are proposed to be revamped with addition of a new canopy to provide better shading and create a contemporary appearance. The canopy is proposed to be arranged diagonally towards the playground to align a clear visual corridor along various activity zones.
- **Existing OVT Treatment** – The design proposal will not affect the existing 1m-tall planter structure which houses the OVT. Further study shall be carried out during detailed design and construction stage.
- **Fencing Treatment** – The proposed soft landscape edge with varying heights and a diverse palette of shrub plantings will enhance overall visual quality and permeability and create a green backdrop for the seating in playground and along the southern footpath of KUF.

Proposed Implementation Strategy

- 4.2.4 Upon discussion with Architectural Services Department (ArchSD) and LCSD, both departments indicate no in-principle objection to the proposed scheme. Yet, the proportioning of facilities, style and materials shall be further reviewed in detailed design stage. ArchSD will liaise with LCSD and other relevant departments for the detailed design, construction and implementation schedule.

4.3 Pilot Case 2 : Kau U Fong/ On Wo Lane Streetscape

Design Vision and Theming

- 4.3.1 To be devoted to the “Old Meets New” ambience, the public space along KUF and OWL is proposed to adopt a more retro design to contrast with the more colourful design of the KUF Children’s Playground, and to realise a charming urban quarter through various heritage façades, colour tones, and material textures along the street.

Design Principles

- 4.3.2 The following design principles of the Study are taken into account.
- **Place-making and Functions** – Capitalising on the cul-de-sac arrangement with no through traffic, shared-use paving is proposed to beautify the streetscape, enhance district identity and promote pedestrian priority for more fluid pedestrian movement; and

- **Safety and Comfort** – To revitalise the existing OWL with more bespoke design elements to attract usage of areas along the staircases through people-oriented design as well as accentuating the existing heritage assets and ambience.

Conceptual Design Proposal

4.3.3 The proposed Conceptual Design Plan of the pilot case is shown in **Figure 4.3** with the following key features:

- **New Paving Area** – The existing concrete carriageway and pavement are proposed to be replaced with new natural granite stone paving, comprising 2 to 3 mixed grey tones, to enhance overall spatial quality, promote the “shared-use” concept between vehicles and pedestrians and echo with the “cobblestone” character across the area.
- **Social and Gathering Area** – New design interventions will preserve and enhance the casual gathering spots for the local communities. Timber decks and new “special railing” are proposed to cater for resting and gathering along the staircase. Pot planting and new timber decks are proposed to increase overall greening, complementing the existing character of the Site.
- **Street Furniture** – Existing pedestrian lamp poles and railing are proposed to be replaced by those of a retro theme. “Special railing” is also proposed to enhance social interactions through special railing form, wider handles and “lean friendly” profiles. Standalone plaques are proposed to be installed in proximity to areas/elements with heritage value.

Proposed Implementation Strategy

4.3.4 The conceptual design, together with the comments from stakeholders, was discussed with Home Affairs Department (HAD), Transport Department (TD) and Highways Department (HyD). Implementation details and actual design are subject to further deliberation during detailed design stage.

4.3.5 HAD has been conducting the feasibility study through a termed consultancy. Local consultation and application for District Minor Works funding for detailed design and implementation will follow afterwards.

4.4 Pilot Case 3 : Open Area adjoining Tai Wong Ye Temple in Wong Chuk Hang

Design Vision and Theming

4.4.1 The WCH Pilot Case is located at a strategic converging point in WCH area. It is a key confluence node connecting local destinations and neighbourhood, processing multiple directions and levels of pedestrian flow. The objective is to upgrade the

existing open area into a more prominent “Piazza” to facilitate people’s daily activities and regenerate the area into an energetic hub. Good walkability, connectivity and social interactions are critical for the area to continue to thrive while fostering community spirit.

Design Principles

4.4.2 The following design principles of the Study are taken into account.

- **Place-making and Functions** – The location and spatial layout of the Site carries the quality of a “Piazza”. It can connect people to places, and offer people a comfortable open space with pleasant scenery after the revitalisation of Staunton Creek Nullah.
- **Play, Flexible and Adaptive Design** – Apart from being a gathering place, the Site can also provide the community with space to host events. Moveable street furniture is recommended to facilitate adaptive and flexible use of the space.
- **Accessibility and Permeability** – The design of the proposed “Piazza” and the adjoining Nam Long Shan Road Children’s Playground and Rest Garden shall be complementary to each other in terms of physical connectivity and openness.

Conceptual Design Proposal

4.4.3 The proposed Conceptual Design Plan is shown on **Figure 4.5** with the following key features:

- **Flexible Event Space** – An open event area is proposed along the open nullah, which is capable to house events and performances. A feature paving design with natural granite stone paving comprising 3-5 grey / beige tones, is proposed to create a focal point. Despite the area is proposed to serve as a flexible event space, its main purpose of pedestrian circulation should also be retained.
- **Mobile and Multi-purpose Furniture** – Multi-purpose mobile furniture, with lightweight materials, is proposed to replace the original planter boxes at the centre part of the Site to provide seating and greenery, and also serve as an artistic feature to provide visual stimulation for the WCH Piazza. These features could also be re-arranged specially during events to ensure no disruption to pedestrian movement and operation to the adjoining Tai Wong Ye Temple. The maintenance of lamppost and pillar box and existing cable routing would not be affected.
- **Feature Visual Anchor** – Re-painting the columns with vibrant colours or creative patterns are proposed at the two major columns standing at the Site underneath the railway viaduct to create vertical visual anchor and enhance the landmark ambience of the Piazza.

- **Upgrading of Existing Children’s Playground and Rest Garden** – The existing children’s play area is proposed to be converted into a sitting-out area with sufficient shading for users of the Nam Long Shan Road Cooked Food Market and also as an extension of the WCH Piazza. Canopy trees are proposed at the sitting-out area to provide natural shading.
- **Facelifting of Street Furniture** – Metal bollards, light poles and column are proposed to be replaced or repainted to enhance the overall spatial quality.

Proposed Implementation Strategy

- 4.4.4 Implementation of the proposals at the open area adjoining Tai Wong Ye Temple involves various components under the purview of different B/Ds. Joint discussion with the Invigorating Island South Office of DEVB, DSD, HyD, TD and MTRCL had been carried out to identify possible funding and implementation agents for the proposals by components.
- 4.4.5 As one of the quick-win measures under the Invigorating Island South initiative, murals were created on the two railway viaduct columns at the Site based on the winning scheme under the City Dress-up Design Competition. Provision of benches by HAD in the form of District Minor Works has been completed. The proposed social railing fronting Staunton Creek Nullah shall form part of the revitalisation proposal for Staunton Creek Nullah under DSD’s purview and be implemented at a later stage by DSD. Implementation of other features of the conceptual design would be subject to further discussion among relevant parties.

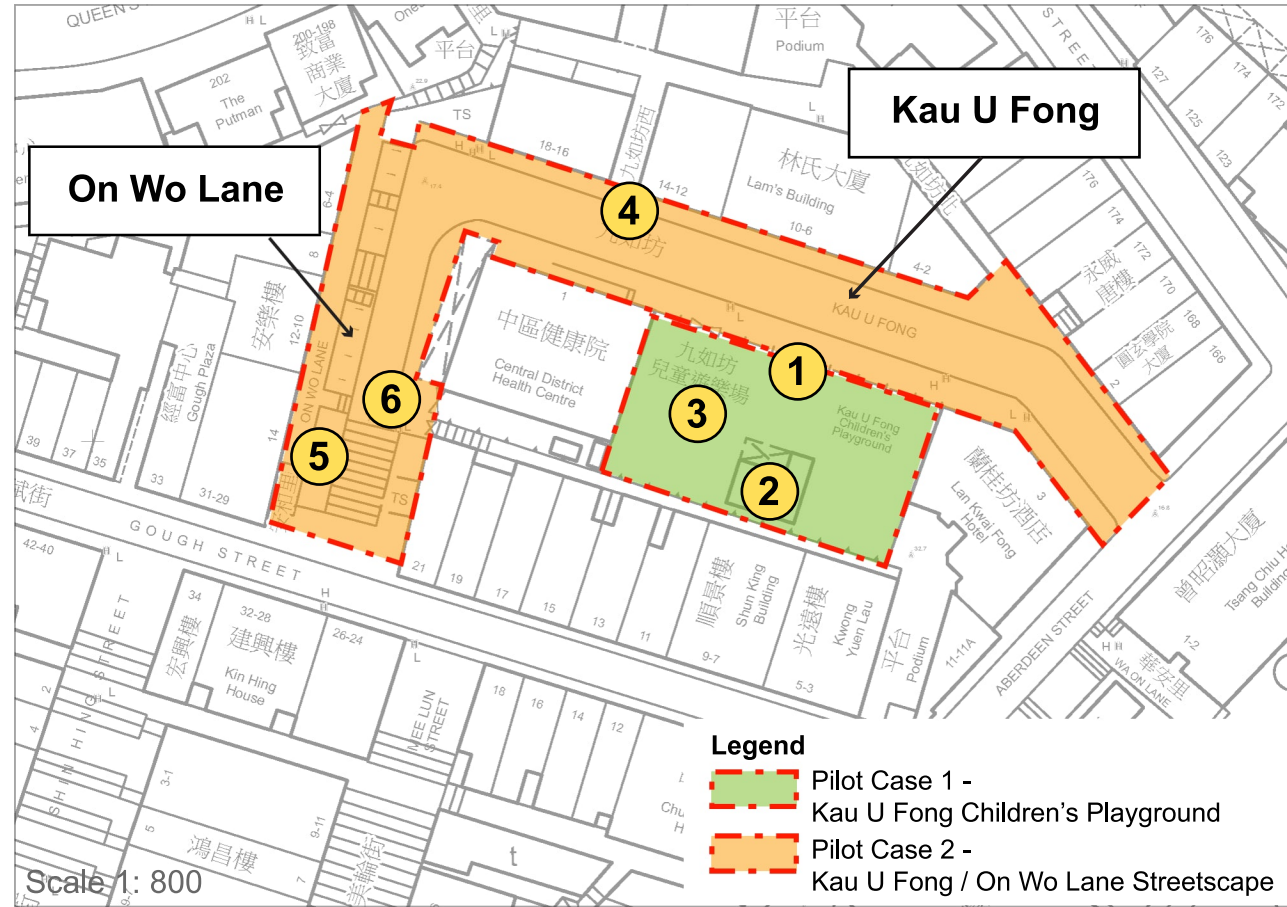
5 CONCLUDING REMARKS

- 5.1.1 Echoing the Hong Kong 2030+ planning vision to increase the provision of open space, the Study strives to enhance the overall liveability of our compact high-density city through enhancing the quantity and quality of open space. This Study has redefined the open space to acknowledge the wider spectrum of open space, updated the relevant administrative standard and guidelines to reflect the public aspirations in more open space provision and higher quality of open space design, and formulated conceptual design for selected venues for piloting study recommendations.
- 5.1.2 The Study recommendations provide the basis for proposed revision of the HKPSG Ch4 Open Space Section. The proposed conceptual design of the pilot cases will be implemented jointly by various B/Ds upon further deliberation.
- 5.1.3 Joint efforts of public and private sectors and relevant stakeholders are invited to deliver more quality open spaces within the urban environment. Through the Study we strive to promote future open space planning and enhance the overall liveability in Hong Kong.

Figures

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Location Plan



Key Considerations

Kau U Fong Children's Playground

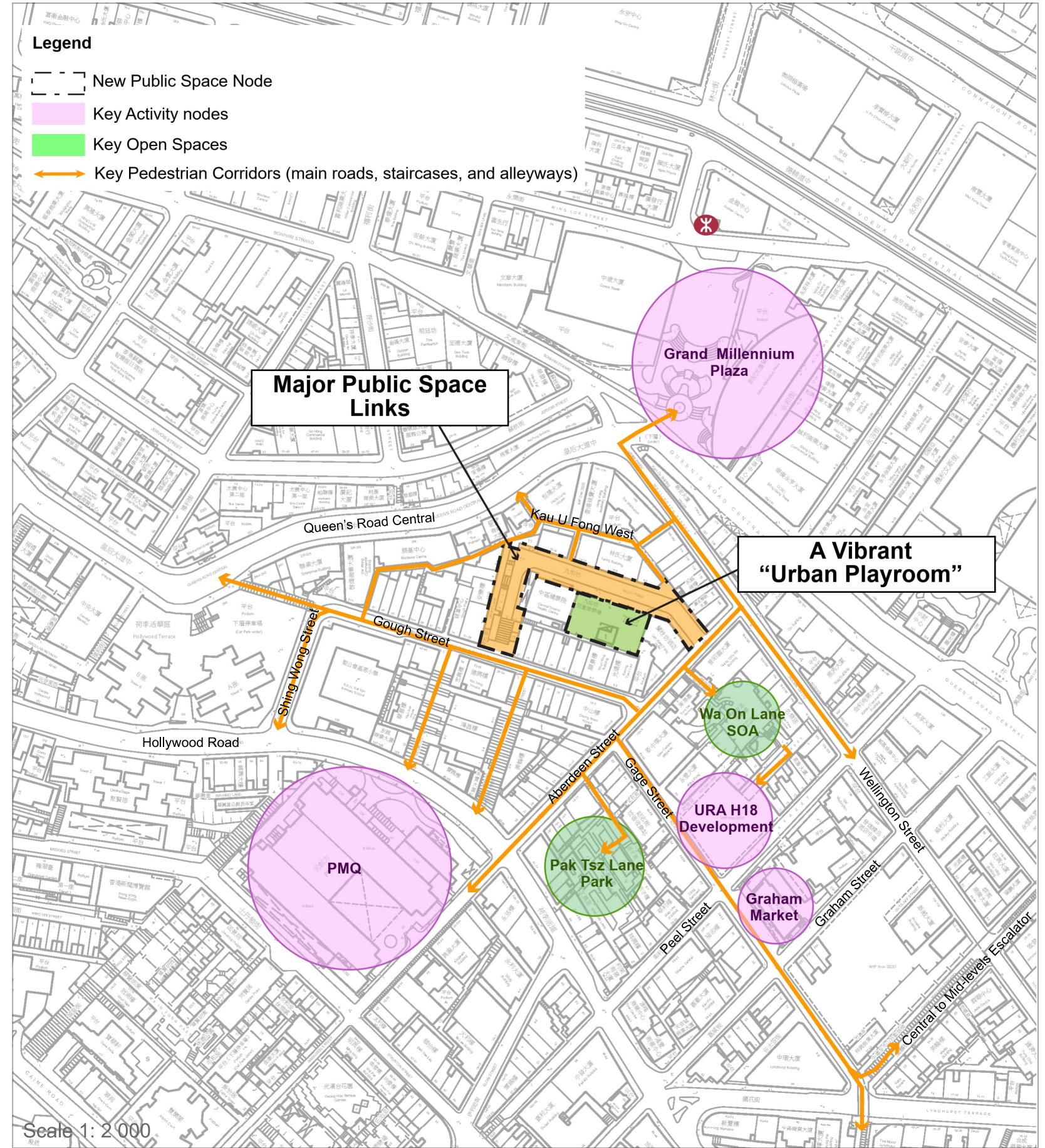


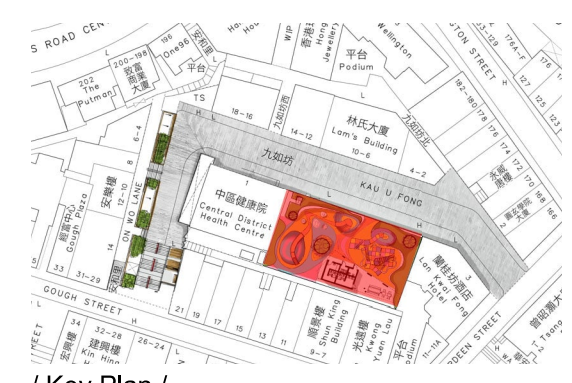
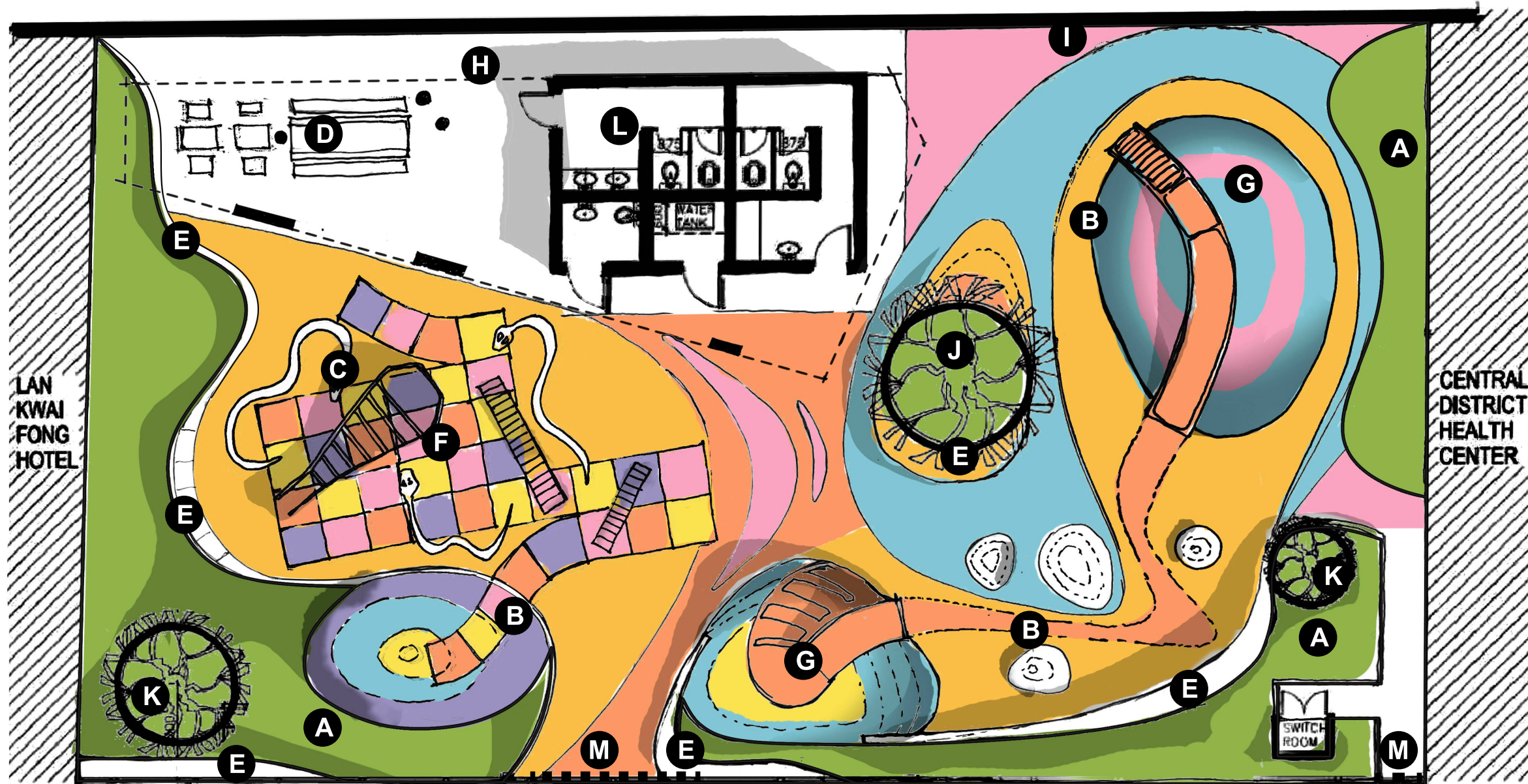
Kau U Fong / On Wo Lane Streetscape



Photo Credit : AECOM

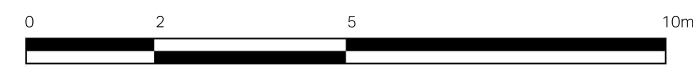
Creation of an Intricate Network of "Places" and "Links"





Legend

A. Proposed New Planting Area	G. Slide
B. Integrative Playground	H. Proposed New Canopy Layout
C. Monkey Bar	I. Existing Retaining Wall Structure
D. Covered Sitting Area with Tables	J. Existing OVT (To be retained)
E. Sculptural Planter Wall-benches	K. Existing Tree (To be retained)
F. "Snake Ladder Game" Super Graphics	L. Existing Toilet
	M. Fencing Treatment



Project: Agreement No. CE 31/2019 (TP)
 Reimagining Public Spaces in Hong Kong - Feasibility Study
 Consultancy Report

Title: Proposed Conceptual Design Plan of Pilot Case 1

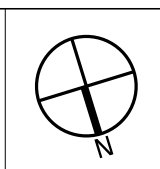
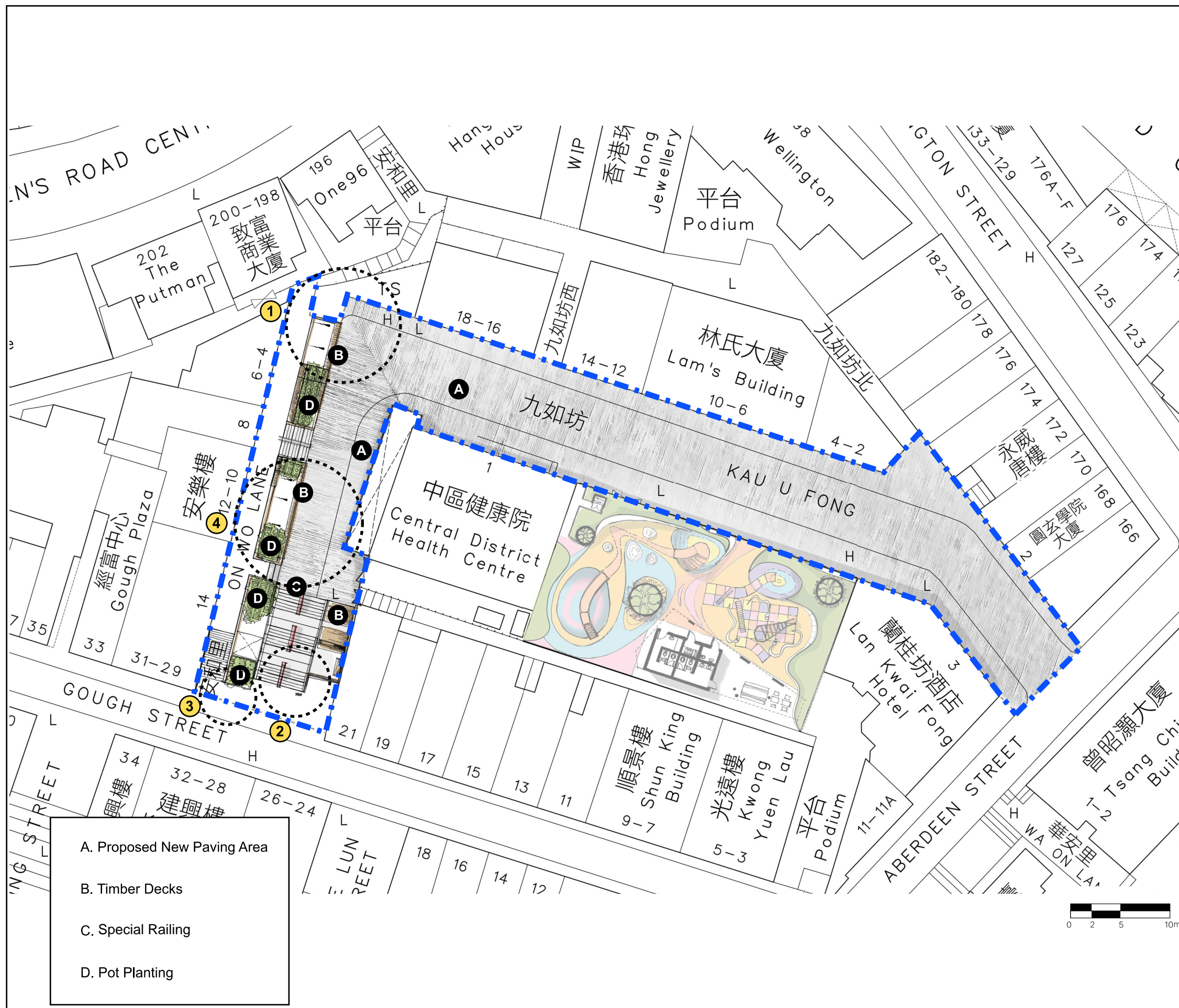


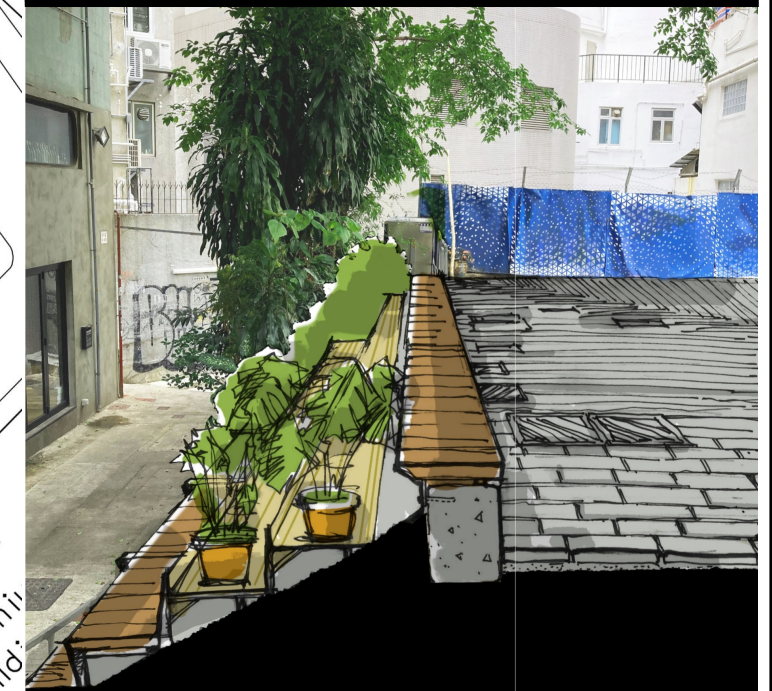
Figure: 4.2
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 Scale: As Indicated



*The detailed design would be subject to refinement by relevant departments.



Proposed Design Interventions to Stairs in KUF



Proposed Design Interventions to Edge between OWL and KUF

Project: Agreement No. CE 31/2019 (TP)
Reimagining Public Spaces in Hong Kong - Feasibility Study
Consultancy Report

Title: Proposed Conceptual Design Plan of Pilot Case 2

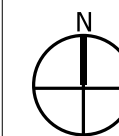


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*The detailed design would be subject to refinement by relevant departments.

Proposed Wong Chuk Hang Piazza Network

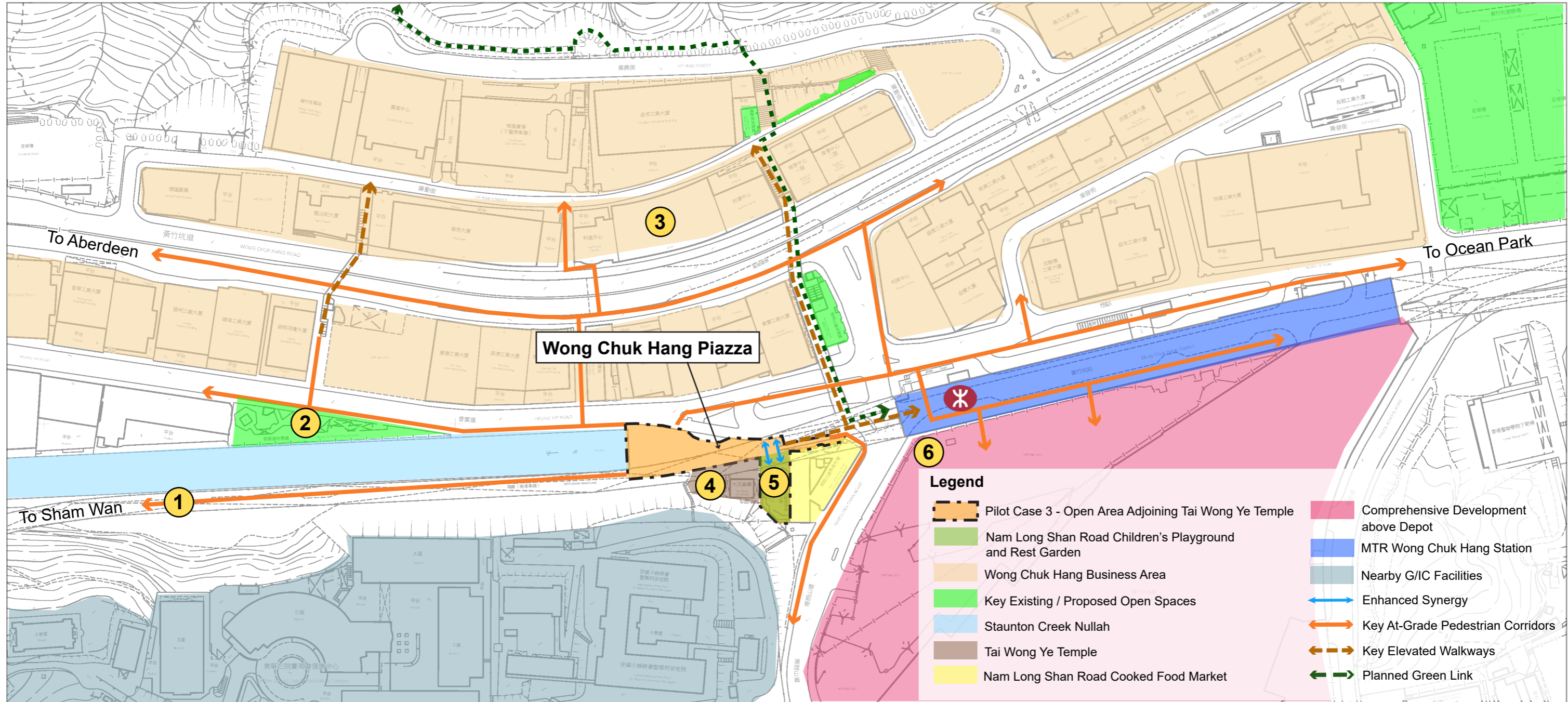


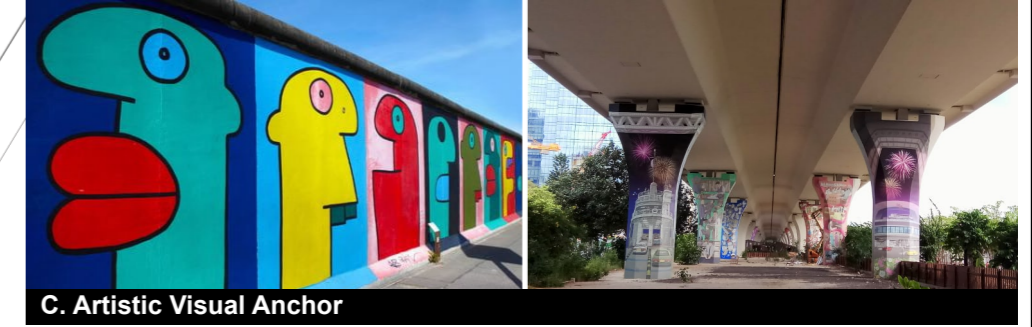
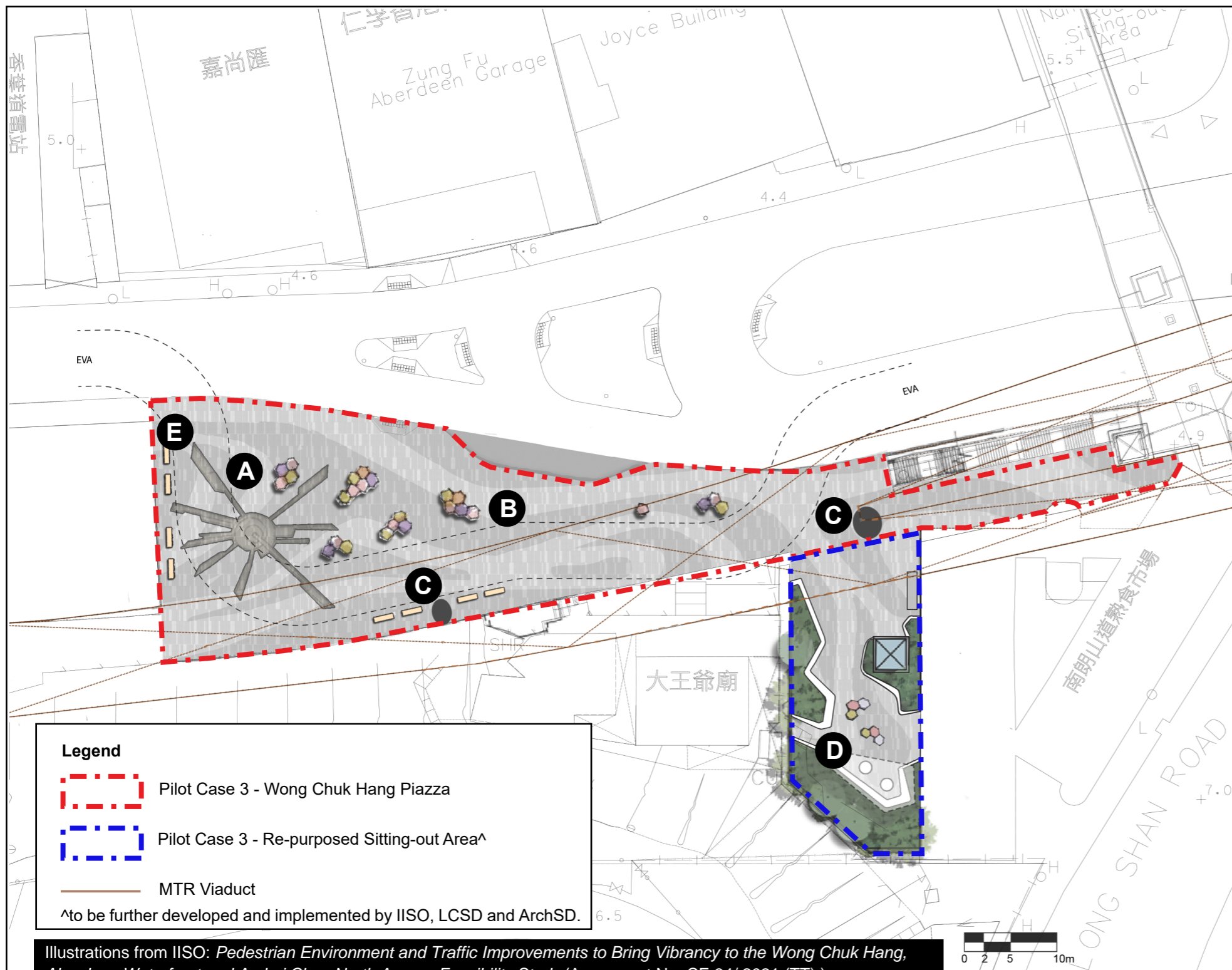
Photo Credit : AECOM (#1-5), MTRC (#6)

Project: Agreement No. CE 31/2019 (TP)
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Consultancy Report

Title: Location Plan of Site adjoining Tai Wong Ye Temple

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Date: Dec 2023
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Illustrations from IISO: *Pedestrian Environment and Traffic Improvements to Bring Vibrancy to the Wong Chuk Hang, Aberdeen Waterfront and Ap Lei Chau North Areas - Feasibility Study* (Agreement No. CE 34/ 2021 (TT))



Photo Credit : EKEO, Archello, Pinterest

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Consultancy Report

Title: Proposed Conceptual Design Plan of Pilot Case 3

Figure: 4.5
Date: Dec 2023
Scale: As Indicated



*The detailed design would be subject to refinement by relevant departments.