

## **Letter to the editor of SCMP (3 May 2013)**

I refer to the SCMP's article "Tram may suit Kai Tak better than monorail" dated April 29.

Kowloon East (KE), covering the Kai Tak Development (KTD) and the existing business districts in Kowloon Bay and Kwun Tong, has the potential to supply a total office floor area of 5.4 million square metres (double the existing stock in the Central District) for sustaining Hong Kong's economic growth in the long term. We plan to adopt a holistic strategy to cope with the significant traffic growth arising from the progressive development of KE into an alternative Central Business District (CBD). At the initial stage, the walking environment will be improved by provision of footbridges and subways in KTD and adjacent areas. Road-based green transport such as electric and hybrid buses will be deployed progressively from 2013 onwards. In the long term, an environmentally friendly linkage system in the form of an elevated monorail connecting to the elevated MTR stations at Kowloon Bay and Kwun Tong is proposed to be added to provide reliable, efficient and safe services enhancing the inter-district and intra-district connectivity of the KE CBD. In general, the supporting columns of the proposed monorail can be located within the central dividers of the existing roads or roadside open spaces as far as practicable, thus reducing occupation of road space with minimum disturbance to road users.

From the information provided by the tram operator, the at-grade track of the proposed tramway will occupy about two traffic lanes for their exclusive use and an additional traffic lane will be needed at the tram stations. It would be practically impossible to accommodate the proposed tramway within the existing roads in Kowloon Bay and Kwun Tong. For instance, occupying two traffic lanes of the four-lane Wang Chiu Road and three-lane Hoi Yuen Road will seriously affect the existing road network and traffic.

Moreover, the current Kai Tak Outline Zoning Plan does not provide for an at-grade tramway system. The proposed tramway alignment runs at-grade through part of the promenade in Kwun Tong and Kowloon Bay and cuts across major open spaces, such as the Metro Park and the Station Square in Kai Tak. Its impacts on the promenade and park users including the safety concern will

not be acceptable. Last but not the least, a cheap option which cannot satisfy the functional requirements of the connectivity of the KE CBD is hardly a cost-effective solution.

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