Walking as a Means to Urban Liveability in Hong Kong

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Walking, walkability and liveability

• A global trend that takes a pedestrian-first approach to city and transport planning

• Pedestrian network is the most important public space of any city. It serves a “link” function in the overall transport system, but also an important a “place” function for people and social life

• Walking brings multiple benefits to people and society
Benefits of walking

• Promote a **health life style**
• Increase **economic opportunities**
• Enhance **property value**
• Improve pedestrian movements and **accessibility**
• Integrate better with **public transport**
• Produce **environmental benefits**
• Support **active ageing**
• Enrich city / **social life for all**
• Ensure **social justice and equity**
Hong Kong: a dense and compact city...
... with skyscrapers and a layered morphology
Why walkability in Hong Kong?

- 80% of Hong Kong people walk every day
- 90% of our trips by public transport
- People get around without a car, but some neighbourhood areas are not walkable
- Pedestrians face obstacles
- Hong Kong’s challenge: how to make people walk more often & for longer distance, and to make the experience more enjoyable?
State of walkability in Hong Kong

Elements of good walkability

- Excellent connection between different city layers
State of walkability in Hong Kong

Areas for improvement

• Way-finding
• Lack of at-grade crossing
• Poor permeability
• Inconsistent & unclear signage & maps
• Universal access
State of walkability in Hong Kong

Areas for improvement

• Over-crowding
• Long detour
• Street obstacles
• Lack of seating
• Street aesthetics
Ingredients for change

- Leadership
- Overarching strategy
- Planning for pedestrians
- Promotion of non-motorized transport and public transport
- Streets as destinations
- Administrative support
- Working with stakeholders
Making Hong Kong a city for pedestrians

New approach

• Holistic planning, not piece-meal approach

• A shift from car-based to people-based planning

• Shared space rather than priority for vehicles over pedestrians

• Equal access to quality public space as a right, not a privilege

• Top-down plus bottom-up approach

• Hardware and software are both essential

• Promote / preserve street life
Example: tram & pedestrian precinct in Central
Example: Kowloon East
Walking smart

My Kowloon East (MyKE) mobile app
• Recommend Points of Interest
• “Easy Walking” function – personalised route recommendation based on user’s preference, such as sheltered paths or barrier-free access

Personalised Real-Time Air Quality Informatics System for Exposure – Hong Kong (PRAISE-HK)
• Mobile app to put real-time air quality information in your palm
• Recommendation of cleaner routes
• Personalised alerts
Thank you

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