

**HONG KONG ALTERNATIVES**  
**West Kowloon Cultural District**  
**LEGCO Meeting on 23 October 2007**

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you for inviting Hong Kong Alternatives to the Legislative Council and once again giving us the opportunity to appeal to the Government to use all of the land at the WKCD site for a cultural green park, and not to sell any part of the land to private developers for residential or commercial use.

Hong Kong Alternatives was established two and a half years ago after we attended the “West Kowloon Design Exhibition” organized by the Government. We found that we unanimously disapproved of all the proposals put forward by the government and the developers. We decided, as Hong Kong citizens, to put forward an alternative “West Kowloon proposal” in order to provide the Government, LEGCO and Hong Kong people with a more reasonable choice. This was our proposal:

Slide #1 : Cover Page of our WKCD Pamphlet

Slide #2 : West Kowloon aerial view

How nice if this beautiful site, in its entirety, can be developed into a cultural green park, for the enjoyment of Hong Kong people.

We are grateful to LEGCO for giving us an opportunity to speak at the West Kowloon Sub Committee meeting in September 2005. We proposed five points including the following:- (Slide #3)

Slide #3 : Key Points of H.K. Alternatives' First Proposal

- 1) No land is to be sold at West Kowloon
- 2) 80% to be used as green park
- 3) 20% to be used as arts/culture facilities
- 4) No canopy
- 5) The establishment of a Hong Kong Cultural Authority

We are grateful to the government for accepting part of our proposals; they include:

- 1) The government decided to scrap the canopy, and redesign the WKCD project
- 2) Formation of a Hong Kong Cultural Authority soon
- 3) About half of the WKCD site will be designated open space

Unfortunately, the above announcements have some shortcomings, for example:

- The Hong Kong Cultural Authority should be established immediately and an entrepreneur should be appointed to be its head. The head of the Authority is to appoint outstanding members of the arts and culture sectors to the board. This Cultural Authority

shall be responsible for the design, construction and management of the WKCD project. This is because currently there is no one in the government who is qualified and experienced to lead such a project, as clearly demonstrated by the poor quality of all the WKCD proposals published up to now.

- In our understanding, the land usage guidelines for the latest Government WKCD proposal are as shown in Slide #4:

Slide #4 : Land usage guidelines:

- 1) Plot ratio : 1.81
- 2) 726,000 sq.m. will have the following usage:
  - 35% arts and culture
  - 16% retail
  - 15% office
  - 20% residential
  - 8% hotel
  - 6% others

Land must not be sold
- 3) 23 hectares open space, including
  - 15 hectares flat land
  - 3 hectares terrace
  - 5 hectares podium and roof

Clarification is needed

The guidelines given in this proposal certainly raise some serious questions, such as:

- It is wrong for the Government to sell the land before we have a Cultural Authority. Who is to be in charge of the money from land sales? The Government's offer to allot \$20 billion from land sales as an arts and culture fund is without any precedent in Hong Kong. Such practice must not be permitted to be set as a precedent for the future, as developers and officials may use it later to coerce nonprofit organizations to sell their land. We understand that the Honorable Under Secretary is not required to answer questions on or clarify this issue. However, we all know that, in good practice, the money received from all government land sales should go directly to the Government coffer with no strings attached whatsoever. The WKCD site should not be an exception.
- Hong Kong needs organic parkland, not tiled and concrete covered open space. We ask that the 23 hectares open space proposed by the government be made into a green park with trees, shrubs, flowers and lawns.
- All the terraces, podiums and roofs in urban Hong Kong are well paved. How are they different in WK?

Early last year, we asked the Public Opinion Programme of HKU to conduct a public opinion survey on WKCD. The results are shown below:

Slide #6 : News Coverage on WKCD

In September 2006 we were pleased to have another chance to speak at LEGCO, and we put forward the following points: (Slide #7)

Slide #7 : Key Points of H.K. Alternatives' Second Proposal

- 1) The entire 43 hectare of the WKCD site should be used as a "Cultural Green Park"
- 2) The government and LEGCO should invite a world renowned architect to be in charge of the conceptual design of the West Kowloon Culture Park
- 3) The government and LEGCO should authorize the formation of a HK Cultural Authority and the Authority should be given the responsibility to build the "WK Cultural Park" and the long term planning of arts and cultural development of Hong Kong
- 4) The Authority should be autonomous, and not an organization under the Government or LEGCO

We are grateful that the government and LEGCO once again sought our views at the beginning of this year. We submitted our views based on the following perspectives:

Slide #8 : WKCD Perspectives

- 1) Economic
- 2) Environmental
- 3) Social harmony
- 4) Physical and mental well being

Hong Kong's economic, environmental, social developments in the past two years have clearly indicated that our analyses are true and accurate:

- 1) From an economic point of view, Hong Kong does not need to sell the WKCD land for \$20 billion needed for the arts and culture fund. What Hong Kong needs is to continually improve its financial, work and living environment in order to attract more investment and talents to Hong Kong. In his latest address to LEGCO, **Mr. Donald Tsang said: "Hong Kong's economy is back on track, registering rapid growth over the past 15 quarters." and "We will invest more resources to implement key measures (of the WKCD)."**
- 2) From an environmental point of view, the "West Kowloon Cultural Green Park" will become the lungs of our urban center. As you can see, New York will not sell any land in Central Park, London will not sell any land in Hyde Park, and Chicago won't sell land in the Millennium Park. **Mr. Donald Tsang said: "While the economy powers ahead, we must take care of environmental protection and cultural conservation to offer our people a quality city life."**

- 3) From a social harmony point of view, we solemnly urge the Hong Kong arts and culture sectors and politicians not to accept, out of desperation, the land sale proposal put forward by a few property developers and senior officials. The proposal to privatize any part of WKCD site will create deep social disharmony. **Mr. Tsang said: “I will insist that development must bring about social harmony, with different strata of people sharing the fruits.”**
  
- 4) From the point of view of the health and well being of Hong Kong people: the urban areas of Hong Kong are the most densely populated concrete jungle in the world. Everyone in Hong Kong is in support of and long for a cultural green park in West Kowloon. **Mr. Tsang said: “They (the three guiding principles) will ultimately lead Hong Kong to become the most advanced and harmonious city of our country, as well as a global metropolis offering quality life.”**

We appeal to the property developers and senior government officials involved in this project, not to plot to sell the land in WK. You must above all consider the future development of Hong Kong as well as the well being of Hong Kong people. We hope that you will contribute more to Hong Kong’s arts and culture development. **In his latest policy address Mr. Tsang said: “The West Kowloon Cultural District (WKCD) represents a major investment in our cultural and arts infrastructure. ... We will invest more resources to implement ... key measures.”** We hope the Government and LEGCO will accept **Mr. Tsang’s vision, “to create a better future.”**

Respectfully submitted by:  
Hong Kong Alternatives