

## **COUNTRY AND MARINE PARKS BOARD**

### **Proposed Improvement to Footpath at Pak Lap, Sai Kung**

#### **1. Purpose**

To seek members' advice on the proposed improvement works to a footpath at Pak Lap within the Sai Kung East Country Park (SKECP).

#### **2. Background**

2.1 Pak Lap is a country park enclave near High Island Reservoir surrounded by the SKECP. There is an existing footpath connecting Sai Kung Man Yee Road with Pak Lap Village, a large part of which falls within the SKECP. Sai Kung Man Yee Road is a restricted waterworks service road for vehicles allowed by Water Services Department and with permit issued by the Country and Marine Parks Authority. The footpath is the main access pathway constructed and maintained by the Sai Kung District Office (SKDO) for villagers commuting daily to and from the Pak Lap village. It is a paved footpath of about 650m in length and 1.0m in width with some steep sections and steps. Pak Lap is currently covered by the approved Pak Lap Development Permission Area (DPA) Plan under the Town Planning Ordinance. Any use except agriculture shall require permission from the Town Planning Board.

2.2 Pak Lap villagers have intermittently complained that the steepness of several sections of the footpath and the steps along it hindered their daily commuting, especially transportation of daily necessities to the village using carts or village-type vehicles. Upon villagers' request, SKDO proposes to re-align the relatively steep sections of the footpath and improve the pathway by providing ramps to facilitate the transportation of goods to Pak Lap.

#### **3. Scope of Works**

3.1 Apart from reinforcing and resurfacing the first 200m of the existing footpath, the proposed footpath improvement works involves re-alignment of the southern section of the footpath by providing a ramp of about 400m long. A map showing the existing footpath and the proposed re-aligned footpath is at the Annex 1. The proposed footpath improvement works is detailed in the paper prepared by SKDO at Annex 2.

3.2 It should be noted that the re-aligned ramp at the southern part of the footpath generally follows an unauthorized pathway that was previously built to bring in vehicles to Pak Lap. Although such alignment of ramp could minimize impact on the existing vegetation, it may invite public criticism on the government to regularize an illegal act and set an undesirable precedent to encourage similar illegal activities elsewhere in the territory. In this connection, SKDO has proposed to provide planters at the entrance of the footpath to prevent entry of vehicles into the footpath and to deploy hydroseeding and planting to make good the environment of the area.

#### **4. Country Park Consideration**

##### Ecology

4.1 The re-aligned footpath is planned to follow the illegally formed pathway which is currently a bare surface. The proposed works does not involve tree felling, hence the impact on the existing natural environment is considered minimal. However, the proposal from SKDO to demolish the existing footpath, i.e. 650 meter long and 1.0 meter wide, could generate a large amount of concrete waste. To avoid waste generation, it is considered that SKDO should retain the existing footpath as an alternative route.

##### Landscape and Visual

4.2 The ramp construction will increase the paved area at the site. SKDO proposed to provide planters and carry out planting to minimize the landscape and visual impact caused by the footpath, as well as hydroseeding and planting to restore the disused sections of existing footpath. The Authority considers that tree planting along the proposed footpath is more practical than hydroseeding to restore the natural environment.

##### Country Park Visitors

4.3 The existing footpath is connected with Sai Kung Man Yee Road, which is MacLehose Trail Section 1. The transportation of construction materials along the Sai Kung Man Yee Road may impose potential hazards to other road users, i.e. hikers and taxi driver/passengers. If the proposal is approved by the Authority, no work will be allowed on Sundays and public holidays during construction period.

4.4 The need of providing a ramp to facilitate villagers using carts or village vehicle/transporters bringing into their village daily necessities is considered justified. From the country park point of view, the extent of the proposed footpath improvement works is considered acceptable provided that the following mitigation measures should

be in place:

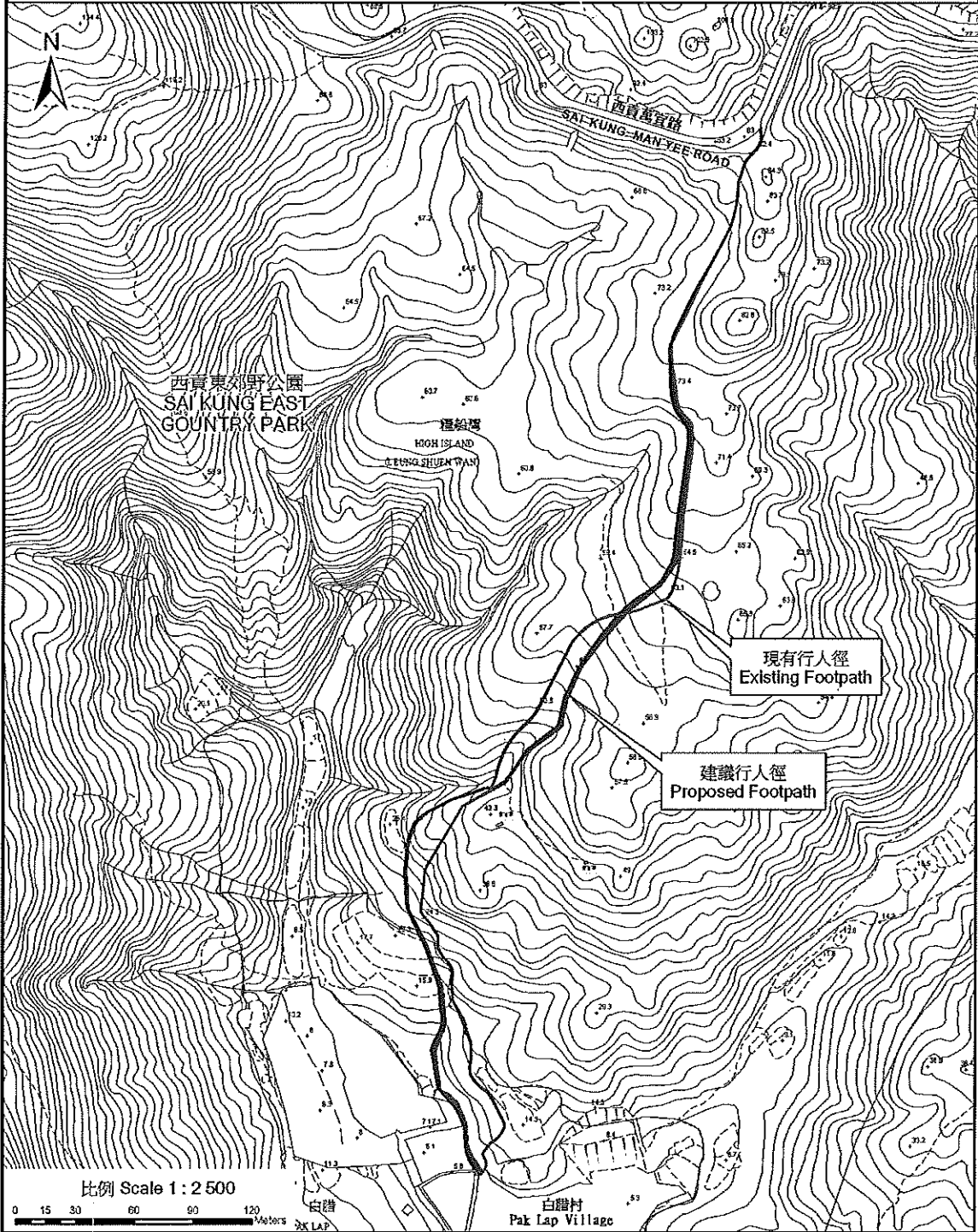
- (a) The width of proposed footpath should not exceed 1.2 metres (existing width is 1.0 metres), instead of extending to 1.5 metres;
- (b) To minimize the scale of paving, it is recommended that the proposed drainage channel along the proposed footpath should be provided on one side only and its depth should be increased to 150mm (instead of 75mm)
- (c) The proposed footpath has overlapped with the existing footpath at the starting section, i.e. CH 0 to CH 220. As this section is largely found in acceptable conditions, it is recommended only minor repairing works to be carried out in this section to minimize environmental disturbance;
- (d) The surface of the proposed new footpath should be paved by environmentally friendly materials, e.g. stone, and avoid using concrete paving as far as possible;
- (e) Hand-railing should be installed at selected sections of the footpath as a safety measurement;
- (f) There are certain retaining walls built along the existing footpath, SKDO should carefully assess the stability of these retaining walls and ensure that they would not be affected by the proposed works; in addition, SKDO should also carefully assess the need of a retaining wall along the proposed footpath built on the slope from Man Yee Road to Pak Lap village;
- (g) Although the Authority considered the use of village vehicles (VV) justifiable, any villagers in possession of or using these VVs should obtain a valid licence from the Transport Department and at the same time applies for a country parks vehicular entry permit from the Authority. No passengers are allowed to ride on these VVs.

## 5. Advice Sought

Members are invited to comment and advise on the acceptability of the footpath improvement proposal in the Sai Kung East Country Park. If acceptable, the Authority will work out in details conditions governing the proposed footpath improvement works.

# 位置圖 LOCATION PLAN

附件一  
Annex 1



西貢白腊行人徑建議改善工程  
Proposed Improvement to Footpath at Pak Lap, Sai Kung

## Proposed Improvement to Footpath at Pak Lap, Sai Kung

### **Purpose**

This paper seeks to present to CMPB members a proposal to improve the existing footpath at Pak Lap, Sai Kung, which is situated in the Sai Kung East Country Park.

### **Background**

2. Pak Lap is a village located at the south of the East dam of High Island Reservoir. As per our understanding, there were some 20-30 people ordinarily reside in the village, with a number of them being elders. During holidays, the number of people in the village could be doubled.

3. The existing footpath is the main access between Pak Lap and other areas, and is essential to the livelihood of the Pak Lap villagers. They rely heavily on it to bring into the village their daily necessities. Nonetheless, the steepness of several sections of the footpath and the footsteps along it hindered their essential daily commuting. Villagers, especially the elderly, have been calling for a better access.

4. In the light of the above, relevant government departments including Agricultural, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD), Lands Department (LandsD), Transport Department and Sai Kung District Office (SKDO) have studied the issue. We consider that it is justifiable for villagers in Pak Lap - especially for the elderly - to have a more accessible path to meet their daily essential needs.

### **The Proposal**

5. Our proposal is to make suitable improvements to the existing footpath. Under the proposal, the footpath will be re-paved with concrete blocks supported by a primer concrete layer. Steps along the first 220m of existing footpath will be replaced with a reinforced concrete ramp. Concrete kerbs and road-side drains made with masonry blocks will be provided along both sides of the footpath.

6. To facilitate better access for the elderly, we propose to construct a ramp on an alternative route from point CH.220 and thereafter (about 400m, see Annex) to replace the latter section of the existing footpath which is relatively steep. This alternative route is currently a walking trail and has no vegetation.

7. The proposal is not a designated project under the Environmental Impact Assessment Ordinance (Cap. 499) and is exempted from the requirement for an environmental permit. During construction, there is a need to use small motorized carts for transporting materials, but the use of such carts will be strictly confined to a need basis. Upon completion of works, we will suitably apply hydro-seeding along both sides of the footpath.

### **Impact on Country Park**

8. We see to the importance for preserving the beauty of the natural scenery of the Country Park. In this light, measures have been introduced to minimize impact to vegetation. There will be no tree-felling throughout the improvement works. Moreover, upon the completion of the alternative route, the original latter section of the footpath will be removed, and we will suitably apply hydro-seeding to it. We will discuss with AFCD regarding the need for the planting of trees.

9. We have also incorporated several features into our proposal to prevent general vehicles from accessing the footpath and affecting the environment. The proposed ramp along the footpath will be limited to about 1.5 meters wide, which makes it not sufficient for access of general vehicles. At both sides of the footpath entrance, planters for about 20 meters long will be added. We will work with AFCD to ensure the species planted are compatible with the surrounding environment.

### **Public Consultation**

10. In drafting the proposal, we have closely involved and consulted the Pak Lap villagers through a number of meetings and site visits. Support from members of Sai Kung District Council (SKDC) and Sai Kung Rural Committee (SKRC) have also been received.

## **Advice Sought**

11. We should be grateful to have CMPB members' support to the proposed improvement works to the footpath at Pak Lap, with a view to providing a better access for the villagers to meet their daily needs.

**Sai Kung District Office**

**October 2012**