

Urban Forestry Advisory Panel (2023-24)
(Notes of the 3rd Meeting)

Date and Time: 23 April 2024 (Tuesday) at 10:00 am

Venue: Conference Room 2, G/F, Central Government Offices, Tamar

Present

Miss Kathy NG	Chairperson (H/GLTMS, DEVB)
Mr. Paul CHAN	Member (via video conferencing)
Prof. Leslie CHEN, JP	Member (via video conferencing)
Prof. CHU Lee-man	Member
Dr. DONG Hui	Member
Mr. Kevin ECKERT	Member (via video conferencing)
Dr. Billy HAU	Member
Prof. Anthony LEUNG	Member (via video conferencing)
Mr. Hincent NG	Member
Mr. Ken SO	Member
Mr. Chiky WONG	Member
Mr. YIU Vor	Member
Mr. Ryan LIN	Member (H/TMO, DEVB)
Mr. Eric LIU	Member (SConO(TS), AFCD)
Miss Eva LEE	Member (CLA, HyD)
Ms. Vince KOK	Member (SLA/TDC, HD) (via video conferencing)
Miss Annie FUNG	Member (CLM(PA), LCSD)
Ms. IP Lai-mui	Secretary (AS(TM)3, DEVB)
Mr. KUN Chong-meng	Note-taker (TMO5, DEVB)

Absent with apologies

Prof. CHAU Kwai-cheong, JP	Member
Prof. Wendy CHEN	Member
Mr. John HO	Member
Dr. SHI Shulin	Member
Prof. Charles WONG	Member

In Attendance

Ms. Vina WONG	H(GLO), DEVB
Mr. Franco NG	AS(TM)1, DEVB

UFAP Paper No. 03/2024

Mr. Nelson SO	TMO4, DEVB
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UFAP Paper No. 04/2024

Mr. Peter LAM

Ms. Carol LAW

Mr. Jimmy CHAN

Ms. Wayne LAW

SLA/VM(U&Is), HyD

LA/VM(HK)1, HyD

SE/G(U), HyD

E/SD-2, HyD

UFAP Paper No. 05/2024

Mr. Nigel TONG

Mr. LAM Chi-kin

LM(T)K, LCSD

LM(Arb)2, LCSD

UFAP Paper No. 06/2024

Mr. Isaac SO

AS(GL)1, DEVB

Action

1. The Chairperson welcomed Members to the third meeting of Urban Forestry Advisory Panel (“UFAP”) 2023-2024.

Item 1 : Confirmation of the notes of the last meeting

2. The notes of the last meeting were confirmed without amendment.

Item 2: Report on the Conditions of Old and Valuable Tree No. HYD CW/1 Maintained by Highways Department (UFAP Paper No. 04/2024)

3. The Chairperson invited SLA/VM (U&Is) and SE/G (U) of HyD to introduce the current condition of OVT No. HYD CW/1.
4. SLA/VM (U&Is), HyD thanked the Members for their attendance during the site visit and feedback regarding the deteriorating Old and Valuable Tree (OVT) located between Hospital Road and Bonham Road. The *Ficus microcarpa* OVT has been affected by Brown Root Rot Disease (BRRD) since February 2019. Despite efforts such as the implementation of a tree support system, pruning, and soil improvement, new cracks appeared in August

2023, worsened by Typhoon Saola. Displacement and compression in concrete blocks and steel frames were observed, with ongoing downward displacement since June 2019.

5. SE/G(U), HyD further explained that they assessed the supporting system and identified three failure modes: sliding or overturning of blocks and potential cable breakage. The tree's deterioration has increased its reliance on the support system, resulting in elevated cable tension. Moreover, the continuous deterioration of the roots still posed risk of failure, especially under extreme wind situation, even after substantial crown pruning.
6. SLA/VM(U&Is), HyD supplemented that recent observations indicated worsening root decay, with new cracks and cavities in the root zone. Irreversible displacement of the entire tree towards Hospital Road was noted. Considering the high risk of trunk failure and the limitation of the temporary support system to sustain the tree's weight, it would be doubtful that it could withstand the upcoming typhoon season in 2024. In view of the high hazard level and its threat to public safety and property damage, HyD proposed its removal OVT No. HYD CW/1. HyD would engage stakeholders and the community before then.
7. In responded to a Member's enquiry, SLA/VM(U&Is), HyD confirmed that the concrete blocks were not fixed to the ground to avoid affecting the stability of the slope in the case of tree failure leading to the overturning of the concrete blocks.
8. Members expressed their views on the proposal, which was summarized as follows:
 - The tree had a historical and community value. The tree provided shade, although its appearance was not too appealing recently;
 - The tree maintenance work done by HyD all along was commendable;
 - The tree's condition was beyond recovery, and removal would be the only viable option;
 - HyD could also sum up the lesson learnt in this case for future design work of supporting structure; and
 - to consider if compensatory planting would be

possible, in the nearby area.

9. The chairperson concluded that the discussion had been fruitful in providing valuable advice to HyD.

Item 3: Report on the Overall Conditions of Trees along Park Lane Shopper's Boulevard in Tsim Sha Tsui Maintained by Leisure and Cultural Services Department (UFAP Paper No. 05/2024)

10. The Chairperson invited LCSD to provide a comprehensive overview of the large trees along Park Lane Shopper's Boulevard.
11. LM(T)K, LCSD provided an update on the 32 *Ficus microcarpa* trees (OVTs) along Nathan Road, Tsim Sha Tsui. One tree had BRRD, seven were infested by *Phauda flammans*, and two had structural issues. The presentation focused on the declining condition of YTM/3, YTM/5, YTM/6 and YTM/35.
12. While Members in general agreed the removal of YTM/3 due to its poor structure and health and large number of targets nearby, Members advised the following:
 - the removal of YTM/35 at this stage might be premature based on the information provided, and close monitoring would be essential;
 - the need for soil analysis, individual tree management plans, and proper pest control measures;
 - to consider crown reduction to reduce weight and risk; and
 - to consider soil aeration with handtools to avoid damaging tree roots.
13. A Member provided his advice on his recent inspection of these trees. He emphasized the importance of avoiding excessive soil aeration and recommended conducting soil tests. He considered that *Ficus microcarpa* was the suitable species but had been planted there for too long and recommended considering the internationally recognized practice of tree rotation in urban forests and proposed implementing small-scale rotations to maintain a healthy tree population.

14. The Chairperson concluded the discussion by summarizing that Members did not oppose to the removal of YTM/3. Based on the information provided on YTM/35, further monitoring was necessary, and LCSD was requested to closely monitor its health and structural condition and promptly report to DEVB when sudden change and anomalies were observed. Crown reduction was also recommended.

**Item 4: Management of *Phauda flammans* and *Perina nuda*
(UFAP Paper No. 03/2024)**

15. TMO4, DEVB briefed Members of the latest infestation figures and distribution of *Phauda flammans*, as well as the strategies for managing the infestation this year. Members were also informed about another insect related to *Ficus* trees, *Perina nuda*, and TMO's current monitoring work.
16. A Member recommended conducting scientific studies to evaluate the effectiveness of different measures or involving academic institutions/universities for control experiments. He agreed that *Perina nuda* was not currently a significant problem. He further recommended to provide online information on the use of pesticide and enquired if there is a priority list of *Ficus* trees to be protected.
17. A Member considered in general that the knowledge about pesticide application was insufficient. He suggested future regulations to ensure awareness of the pesticides used and emphasized the need for proper training to improve proficiency.
18. H/TMO, DEVB supplemented that in general pesticide usage would be limited to urban areas and wildlife in the countryside would not be affected. Regarding the priority list, efforts were focused on suppressing, not eradicating, the moths. LCSD conducted a control study in Tuen Mun Park to evaluate pesticide effectiveness back in 2021. He emphasized that the use of pesticides was only one of the means, departments should use different methods, including physical removal of larvae or pupa, according to the life cycle of the moths.
19. H/TMO, DEVB would take over as the meeting host from

that point onward as H/GLTMS, DEVB had to attend to other commitments.

Item 5: Update on Consultancy Study on Suitability and Sustainability of Roadside Trees (UFAP Paper No. 06/2024)

20. AS(GL)1, DEVB provided an update on the Consultancy Study on Suitability and Sustainability (S&S) of Roadside Trees. The study aimed to develop a scoring system for assessing and prioritizing large roadside trees with S&S issues. The Consultant reviewed international best practices and conducted interviews with works departments. A draft scoring system was created, pending on-site inspections for validation. The next steps involved conducting testing/validation, recommending improvement measures, and submitting the final report.
21. A Member asked about the personnel responsible for using the scale and emphasizing the need for competent individuals. He emphasized the importance of concrete information for assessing belowground obstacles and defining space for tree growth. He also questioned how to differentiate between life expectancy, health, and species appropriateness, emphasizing the importance of carefully defining these functions and weighting.
22. AS(GL)1, DEVB responded that testing would be conducted with different types of trees and locations to determine appropriate scores. The usage of the scoring system would involve individuals with appropriate background, such as landscape architects and arborists. To address potential differences in interpretation, an explanatory note would provide as a reference for scoring. However, assessing belowground obstacles required more testing and consideration of utility plans.
23. A Member raised questions about the application of the system, whether it would be used for individual roadside trees or tree groups, and the implications of specific scores. He also pointed out the common problem of large trees being planted too closely. He was interested in understanding how the system would be used and whether it would lead to tree removal or thinning to address spacing issues.

24. H/GLO, DEVB responded that the criteria assessment system with a scoring mechanism was being refined. The implementation details and step-by-step process were being developed.
25. A Member was concerned about the design of the scale and scoring system, and the differentiation of the various criteria. He emphasized the importance of making the scoring system functional and unbiased in practical situations, suggesting the necessity for testing.
26. A Member commended the comprehensive work done and its potential benefits for urban forestry. She noted that the case studies were drawn cities in temperate zone, and suggested the inclusion of tropical cities like Singapore in the future. AS(GL)1, DEVB explained that the cities were chosen due to their experience in developing tree replacement strategies.
27. H/TMO, DEVB welcomed members' further advice for GLO's consideration before finalizing the criteria and scoring system.

Item 6: Any Other Business

28. A Member enquired about the OVT registration system and nomination of trees. AS(TM)1, DEVB explained that departments or their agents were responsible for identifying potentially registrable trees and making nominations to GLTMS. Public nominations/suggestions could be made via the government hotline, email, or other channels to tree maintenance departments or DEVB. Members were encouraged to nominate trees worthy of OVT registration to DEVB or relevant departments.
29. A Member suggested reviewing the OVT system, noting the poor condition of some OVTs. He advised to delist those OVTs with poor conditions and add new ones with higher sustainability.
30. In response to a Member's enquiry, H/TMO, DEVB replied that technical circulars would be updated as necessary, and emphasized only trees on government land are eligible for

nomination.

31. As there is no other AOB item, the meeting was adjourned at 13:08 pm.

**Greening, Landscape and Tree Management Section
Development Bureau
June 2024**