

THE IMPORTANCE OF PEDESTRIANISATION AND PLACEMAKING

Des Voeux Road Central in the heart of Hong Kong's Central Business District, is a perfect "proof of concept for a more walkable and liveable city". Currently the road is one of Hong Kong's most polluted, decaying and least people-friendly areas on Hong Kong Island. The road's rich history is lost.

Greening and streetscape improvements such as public seating with shading, access to free drinking water and wi-fi will enhance the pedestrian experience and promote walkability as an alternative to driving.

Rigorous street management will ensure the needs and concerns of the community at large are met. Urban walkability bolsters the overall wellbeing of a city's citizens by promoting healthier lifestyles. Placemaking attracts and maintains important talent and positions Hong Kong amongst other world-class cities who have given back public space to their citizens.

A NEW AND IMPROVED DVRC



A fairer sharing between cars and pedestrians – through the removal of three lanes of vehicular traffic. These three "recovered" lanes would be given back to the public. One lane would be kept open for deliveries and emergency vehicle services



Streetscape improvements – paving enhancements, street furniture provision, shade and drinking water, better wayfinding to upgrade the walking experience



Creation of neighbourhoods – improving the accessibility and attractiveness of the routes connecting DVRC, the major transport hub, to the historical and cultural sites that surround it



Technology on the streets – air pollution and traffic monitoring, access to free wi-fi

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Walk DVRC Ltd.

Walk DVRC Ltd., established as an NGO in January 2017, has a vision for a more walkable and liveable Central Business District that begins with the revitalisation of a decaying Des Voeux Road Central. Walk DVRC aims to transform a key 1.4 km stretch of road -- from Pedder Street to Western Market -- into a dynamic public realm through a series of pedestrianisation and placemaking projects.



WHAT WE DO

Walk DVRC makes presentations, conducts workshops and charrettes, organises events and holds competitions to inform, collaborate and partner with the public. Walk DVRC also undertakes research for community education and outreach.

The goal of these engagements is to showcase the real benefits of moving from a car-oriented urban planning approach to a people-friendly one. This shift demonstrates how our streets can be transformed into vibrant and useful public spaces that are inclusive and captivating for all population demographics.

Walk DVRC's mission includes linking this critical transportation artery to the cultural and heritage sites that surround it -- Tai Kwun, PMQ, Man Mo Temple, dried goods purveyors -- and in the process, creating neighbourhoods.

A FOOT-LOOSE AND FUME-FREE DVRC
Walk with Walk DVRC and reimagine a vibrant and inclusive Central Business District

THE RIGHT TIMING



Since the year 2000, professional, community and concerned citizen groups have advocated for a more liveable Central Business District through the pedestrianisation of Des Voeux Road Central.



Over HK\$10M has been invested in research, public engagement and staffing. Various infrastructure projects, such as the Central/Wanchai bypass, along with a groundswell of government, property developer, community and media support, make this project viable now.



DVRC was once the waterfront where dried seafood vendors, chop makers, traditional costumes and general Chinese entrepreneurship was evident. Now it is impossible to find and appreciate these cultural landmarks because DVRC is a place to pass through, not a destination.

Air Quality

Compare the statistics of DVRC, Connaught Road Central (CRC) and Queen's Road Central (QRC). The air pollution of CRC and QRC is near 4,000 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ while DVRC is over 5,000 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$, the most polluted

Building

Unfriendly building facades dwarf walkers and pollution from vehicular emissions abounds

Public Amenities

No trees for shade. No public seating. No access to free drinking water. Public amenities are not easily accessible

Pedestrian Space

The pedestrian space has now been marginalized around DVRC. Sidewalks have narrowed to make space for private cars, taxis and buses

Street Signage

Directional signage is confusing. Infrequent road crossings lead to jaywalking. People on foot must fight for space, which has become dangerous for the elderly and children

Social Inclusion and Public Space for All

Creating and linking together existing public spaces can improve neighbourhood access and create a friendly environment for the elderly, children and the disabled

Traffic

Traffic speed in Central is extremely slow. Vehicle speed is 10km per hour vs. a human speed of 5km per hour vs. tram speed of 8km per hour

DES VOEUX ROAD
CENTRAL
AT A GLANCE

A WALKABLE FUTURE - THE NEXT STEPS

The Sheung Wan Fiesta

As evidenced by other great placemaking and pedestrianisation projects around the world, trial schemes are necessary to take walkability initiatives forward. To this end, Walk DVRC has proposed The Sheung Wan Fiesta as a perfect place to begin.

This project will close a two-block stretch of DVRC, from Western Market to Hillier Street, to vehicular traffic for 90 days.

The closure will be a programmed and curated event that includes examples of sitting out and greening, sustainable street furniture, indigenous plant and herb displays, local performances and a local food and craft beer market.

Recent market research conducted by the Nielsen Company demonstrates a high level of support and enthusiasm for the project from the street-level businesses in the area.



International Design Competition

Walk DVRC Ltd. launched an International Design Competition in April 2018 to invite top-tier teams of urban planners, architects, traffic consultants and designers to submit proposals for re-imagining a decaying Des Voeux Road Central.

Submissions featured strong placemaking and pedestrian schemes as well as highlighting neighbourhood connectivity and cultural sites. In addition, projects incorporated HK's iconic trams

Projects from the five finalist teams portray a vision for a fantastic car-free zone with numerous facilities on DVRC in the heart of Hong Kong's Central Business District. To see the five finalists' visions of a future DVRC, please visit our website.