

Draft Hoi Ha Outline Zoning Plan approved

The Chief Executive in Council has approved the draft Hoi Ha Outline Zoning Plan (OZP).

"The approved OZP provides a statutory land use planning framework to guide the nature and rural conservation and village type development within the Hoi Ha area," a spokesman for the Town Planning Board said today (March 26).

The planning scheme area, covering about 8.45 hectares, is located at the northern coast of the Sai Kung peninsula, and accessible by vehicles via Hoi Ha Road. It is encircled by Sai Kung West Country Park on three sides, with the remaining side fronting the scenic Hoi Ha Wan, which is a designated Marine Park as well as a Site of Special Scientific Interest.

Hoi Ha is predominantly a rural area with high scenic and landscape value. Hoi Ha Village is the only recognised village in the area.

The approved OZP has incorporated amendments shown on the draft Hoi Ha OZP No. S/NE-HH/3, which mainly involved the rezoning of a piece of land at the western part of the "Village Type Development" ("V") zone to "Green Belt(1)" and a piece of land at the eastern part of the "V" zone to "Coastal Protection Area". Opportunity is also taken to amend the Notes and Explanatory Statement of the OZP to reflect the above amendments and to update the general information of various land use zonings and the planning circumstances, where appropriate.

Other zonings shown on the OZP include "Conservation Area", "Government, Institution or Community" and "Other Specified Uses" annotated "Water Sports Recreation Centre".

The approved Hoi Ha OZP No. S/NE-HH/4 is now available for public inspection during office hours at the Secretariat of the Board; the Planning Enquiry Counters of the Planning Department in North Point and Sha Tin; the Sha Tin, Tai Po and North District Planning Office; the Tai Po District Office; and the Sai Kung North Rural Committee.

Copies of the approved OZP are available for sale at the Map Publications Centres in North Point and Yau Ma Tei. The electronic version of the plan can be viewed at the Board's website (www.info.gov.hk/tpb).

Draft So Lo Pun Outline Zoning Plan approved

The Chief Executive in Council has approved the draft So Lo Pun Outline Zoning Plan (OZP).

"The approved OZP provides a statutory land use planning framework to guide the nature and rural conservation and village type development within the So Lo Pun area," a spokesman for the Town Planning Board said today (March 26).

The planning scheme area (the Area), covering about 27.68 hectares, is encircled by Plover Cove Country Park on three sides and fronts the scenic coastline of Crooked Harbour (Kat O Hoi) to the north-east. There is no existing road network serving the Area, and it is accessible by walking trails or by boat. The Area not only offers a unique geographical setting but is also an integral part of the landscaped terrain, and comprises a diversity of natural habitats and an Ecologically Important Stream.

So Lo Pun is a rural area of rich landscape and ecological value. So Lo Pun Village is the only recognised village in the Area, which is currently largely uninhabited.

The approved OZP has incorporated amendments shown on the draft So Lo Pun OZP No. S/NE-SLP/3, which mainly involved the rezoning of two areas to the north-east and south of the village clusters at So Lo Pun from "Village Type Development" to "Agriculture". Opportunity is also taken to amend the Notes and Explanatory Statement of the OZP to reflect the above amendments and to update the general information of various land use zonings and the planning circumstances, where appropriate.

Other zonings shown on the OZP include "Green Belt" and "Conservation Area".

The approved So Lo Pun OZP No. S/NE-SLP/4 is now available for public inspection during office hours at the Secretariat of the Board; the Planning Enquiry Counters of the Planning Department in North Point and Sha Tin; the Sha Tin, Tai Po and North District Planning Office; the North District Office; and the Sha Tau Kok District Rural Committee.

Copies of the approved OZP are available for sale at the Map Publications Centres in North Point and Yau Ma Tei. The electronic version of the plan can be viewed at the Board's website (www.info.gov.hk/tpb).

Government announces class arrangements after Easter holidays

The Education Bureau (EDB) today (March 26) announced the arrangements for face-to-face classes for all kindergartens (KGs) and primary and secondary schools after the schools' Easter holidays.

A spokesman for the EDB said, "The EDB has all along been progressively increasing the time for face-to-face classes in a pragmatic, gradual and orderly manner, as far as the epidemic situation allows, striving to strike a balance between meeting the learning needs of students and preventing and fighting the epidemic, with a view to allowing students to have more learning time on campus. Hence, the EDB, after taking into account the latest developments of the epidemic, the advice of health experts and the preparedness of schools, has decided that all KGs and primary and secondary schools (including special schools and schools offering non-local curriculum) as well as private schools offering non-formal curriculum (commonly known as "tutorial schools") will be allowed to arrange for more students to return to campuses on a half-day basis in accordance with school-based circumstances after the schools' Easter holidays, with the number of students capped at two-thirds of the schools' total number of students.

"We expect that schools can arrange for students of each level to take turns to return to school for face-to-face classes so that all students will have the opportunity to have on-campus schooling, receive education through face-to-face classes, and have interactive learning with other students so as to enhance their physical and psychosocial development."

As for the lesson times each day, secondary schools can arrange for students of individual levels to attend face-to-face classes either in the morning or in the afternoon for no more than a half day. Schools should not arrange for students of the same level to attend face-to-face classes for a whole day and should avoid having students eat out for lunch. Primary schools can arrange for students of individual levels to attend face-to-face classes in the morning only for no more than a half day. For KGs, those operating morning sessions/afternoon sessions can arrange for students to return to school for half-day lessons in the morning/afternoon respectively. KGs operating whole-day sessions can arrange for students to attend face-to-face classes either in the morning or in the afternoon for no more than a half day. Regarding the above arrangements for KGs as well as primary and secondary schools, the number of students returning to campus should be capped at two-thirds of the schools' total number of students for each session. The EDB will issue a letter to inform schools of the detailed arrangements next week.

The spokesman continued, "The EDB is thankful to schools for putting in place the epidemic preventative measures properly. In accordance with the existing arrangements, for an individual school that can arrange for all its

teachers and staff to take regular virus tests, the EDB will, taking into account the school's actual situation, consider allowing the school to arrange whole-school resumption of half-day face-to-face classes. We encourage schools to continue to actively participate in the scheme. At present, the Government is offering multiple locations and modes to facilitate virus testing. In addition, the fees for the testing services at the Community Testing Centres for teachers and staff have been waived."

In addition, following the launch of the COVID-19 Vaccination Programme, the EDB encourages teachers and staff of schools to get vaccinated so as to protect the health of themselves, staff and students of schools as well as the community and help all to return to normal life early.

The EDB reminds schools that before the full resumption of face-to-face classes and school activities, they should take appropriate preventive measures and use various learning modes flexibly to sustain the learning of students at home. During this period, schools should remain open to take care of those students who have to go back to school because of a lack of carers at home.

During the schools' Easter holidays, parents should continue taking precautionary measures for COVID-19 as well as pay close attention to the health conditions of their children. They should avoid taking their children to crowded places with poor ventilation. Students should maintain a balanced diet, exercise regularly, and take adequate rest in order to strengthen their immunity. If students are feeling unwell (even if the symptoms are very mild), they should seek medical advice promptly to receive appropriate diagnosis and treatment.

Effective Exchange Rate Index

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Friday, March 26, 2021 is 102 (up 0.1 against yesterday's index).

TD arranges new round of free COVID-19 voluntary testing services for taxi and public light bus drivers and

employees of local ferry operators

The Transport Department (TD) announced today (March 26) that starting from Monday (March 29), a new round of COVID-19 voluntary testing services will be arranged for taxi and public light bus (PLB) drivers and employees of local ferry operators.

Testing is an integral part of the strategy in preventing and fighting the virus. The TD will continue the free voluntary testing services for taxi and PLB drivers for a new round covering a period of two weeks from March 29 to April 11. The locations, opening dates and hours of the five designated testing centres are detailed in the Annex.

Taxi and PLB drivers may make an appointment via the dedicated online booking system of the TD (covidtest.td.gov.hk) starting from tomorrow (March 27). When booking an appointment, drivers should provide their Hong Kong identity card number, select a time slot and designated testing centre, and fill in a contact number for receiving SMS notifications. Upon completion of registration, the system will display the booking confirmation and issue an SMS notification that confirms the date and time of the booking, the name of the testing centre and the booking number.

Taxi and PLB drivers who have made an appointment should bring along the original Hong Kong identity card used for booking, a valid taxi driver identity plate or public light bus driver identity plate, and the booking confirmation SMS, and visit the selected testing centre during the appointment time slot. Duty officers of the testing agency will assist drivers with the registration, and collect the specimen of the combined nasal and throat swab test. The testing agency will deliver the specimens collected to the laboratory for testing. As no personal information will be indicated on the specimen bottles, the testing agency will only have records of the barcode number of the specimen bottles and will not collect personal information. Drivers who have a negative test result will receive an SMS notification, while cases with positive test results will be relayed to the Centre for Health Protection of the Department of Health for follow-up.

Taxi drivers who have completed the testing will be given the Participation Tag for Taxi Drivers at the testing centre and may display the tag at a prominent position inside the taxi compartment for passengers to check.

As for employees of local ferry operators, the ferry operators have already notified their employees to bring along their valid staff identity cards or letters issued by the ferry operators during specific time slots from March 29 to April 1 to undergo testing at specified locations.

The TD strongly appeals to taxi and PLB drivers and employees of local ferry operators to participate in the testing with a view to achieving "early identification, early isolation and early treatment", and cutting the

transmission chains in the community as far as possible.

For details of the testing services, please visit the website of the TD (www.td.gov.hk).