

Town Planning Board agrees to the statutory plans for the San Tin Technopole

The Town Planning Board (TPB) on July 19 agreed to the draft San Tin Technopole Outline Zoning Plan (OZP), the draft Mai Po and Fairview Park OZP and the draft Ngau Tam Mei OZP, and agreed to submit these draft OZPs to the Chief Executive in Council for approval. The three draft OZPs provide a statutory planning framework and planning control for the development of San Tin Technopole (the Technopole) (except the Loop) and the Sam Po Shue Wetland Conservation Park (SPS WCP).

TPB heard the oral submissions of about 160 representers or their representatives and the responses from the Government team in the four-day hearing held in end-June and early-July, and conducted several hours of deliberation in the afternoon on July 19. TPB finally decided to agree to the draft OZPs, and agreed to adopt some suggestions from the representers and incorporate them into the Planning and Design Brief (PDB), which will subsequently be submitted to the TPB for approval. To enhance the planning and design of the Technopole, the project proponents of the information and technology (I&T) development will be required to comply with the relevant requirements under the PDB.

TPB acknowledged that most representers support the I&T development at the Technopole while some have differing views on the need to fill the ponds for some I&T land. Majority of members concurred that from the perspective of Northern Metropolis development, the Technopole is strategically located near the Loop and the Shenzhen I&T Zone, which can create synergy effect. Owing to geographical constraints (surrounded by mountains) and the need for the Technopole to be of considerable scale to achieve a cluster effect, pond filling in a reasonable manner is necessary for the provision of I&T land.

Members noted that the Environmental Impact Assessment Report was approved by the Director of Environmental Protection in accordance with the Environmental Impact Assessment Ordinance, and relevant government departments have to comply with the approval conditions in accordance with the law to achieve a balance between development and conservation. In order to compensate for the ecological loss due to pond filling and to take forward active conservation policy, the Government will construct the 338-hectare SPS WCP to ensure no-net-loss of the ecological function of the wetlands. In addition, the Government has committed to resume private land for the development of the WCP and start the pond filling only after the commencement of the works for the SPS WCP in 2026/2027. The Government will also implement various measures, including formulation of a Habitat Creation and Management Plan and setting up of an Environmental Committee.

Members agreed that while flexibility should be allowed for the I&T

sites, the detailed planning and appropriate control should be achieved through the PDB. The Government will prepare the PDB and submit it to the TPB for approval after consultation with relevant stakeholders. Apart from stipulating the planning, engineering and urban design requirements for individual I&T sites, the PDB will also cover the following aspects in response to the representations:

- while flexibility has been allowed for a number of always permitted uses, the I&T land must be used for purposes in line with its planning intention;
- improve the connectivity of wetland habitats;
- enhance the design of birds' flight paths;
- formulate design requirements for wildlife corridors and bird-friendly buildings;
- preserve historical monuments and respect traditional village culture, promoting urban-rural integration;
- lower building heights and provide setbacks for non-building areas, and the sites adjacent to the SPS WCP and "Village Type Development" zone;
- incorporate nature-based solutions and 'sponge city' concept to enhance flood resilience;
- adopt smart, green and resilient measures to address extreme weather conditions and climate change;
- integrate blue-green elements into the I&T land; and
- encourage urban agriculture and diverse landscape.

The PDB will be incorporated in the land leases or land grant documents for the I&T sites, requiring the project proponents to prepare Master Plans based on the PDB, which will be subject to approval by a committee under the Development Bureau.

Members agreed to revise the Explanatory Statement of the San Tin Technology OZP to incorporate the requirements of the PDB mentioned above and to ensure that the Government will maintain communication with local villagers on those village facilities to be affected by the project, with a view to working out the appropriate arrangements.

The TPB will convey other views or suggestions related to I&T, environmental and ecological planning, financial arrangement, road alignment (e.g. Road L6), etc. to the Development Bureau for follow-up.