

**For discussion
on 5.2.2001**

LegCo Panel on Planning, Lands and Works

**Study on South East New Territories Development Strategy Review -
Draft Recommended Development Strategy**

PURPOSE

1. This paper presents an overview of the draft Recommended Development Strategy (RDS) for South East New Territories (SENT) sub-region for Members' discussion and comments.

BACKGROUND

2. The current sub-regional plan for SENT, covering Sai Kung and Tseung Kwan O Districts, was completed in 1989 and has become out-dated. The Study on SENT Development Strategy Review was commissioned in March 1999 to formulate an up-to-date planning and development strategy for the sub-region up to year 2016, in particular to facilitate conservation, tourism and recreation development. Since Tseung Kwan O is already the subject of a separate on-going new town development study, the Study concentrates its investigation on the Sai Kung District and its interface with the New Town.

STUDY PROCESS

3. The Study has been conducted in four integrated stages, with the first three stages largely completed, as follows:
 - (a) **Stage 1:** Planning information and baseline data were compiled which provided the basis to identify constraints, opportunities and key issues of the Study Area.
 - (b) **Stage 2:** Concept plans were prepared for generation of three Initial Development Options with emphasis on conservation (upgrading), recreation (moderate development) and tourism (high growth). The "Recreation" option was found to outperform the other two options. While these options were not mutually exclusive, the "Recreation" option was further improved by incorporating beneficial components identified in other options.

- (c) **Stage 3:** Broad technical assessments on the aspects of traffic and transport, environment, landscape and conservation and infrastructure were conducted to ascertain the acceptability of the preliminary strategy.
 - (d) **Stage 4:** On the basis of the assessments in Stage 3, a Recommended Development Strategy would be prepared to provide an overall planning framework for SENT.
4. The following common **planning principles** have been applied to guide the formulation of the Recommended Development Strategy: -
- (a) *Consolidate existing urban areas* - avoiding opening up new development areas in the countryside.
 - (b) *Maintain the natural setting, ecology and heritage* - valuable assets to be protected so as to maintain the attractiveness of Sai Kung area.
 - (c) *Stimulate rural upgrading* - provide basic services and infrastructure to attract private sector development and improvement in the rural area.
 - (d) *Avoid overloading infrastructure* - new development proposals should be planned to optimise existing and planned infrastructure thresholds.
 - (e) *Minimise environmental impacts* - respect environmental capacity to safeguard the natural scenery.
5. This study process has included extensive **public consultation** to gauge the views of the community as input to the study. Two rounds of public consultation have been undertaken at the earlier stages. The first on Key Issues and Study Methodology, was conducted between May and June 1999; and the second on Initial Development Options, between October and November 1999, including public forums at local venue. The views gathered were consolidated in Public Consultation Reports, which were released in August 1999 and April 2000 respectively, including Planning Department web-site for wider promulgation. A gist of the key comments received is provided at Annex A.
6. Having completed the baseline investigations, evaluation of Initial Development Options and broad technical assessments, the Study has now reached the stage of strategy formulation. The Consultants have prepared a draft RDS, which is now put forth for public consultation. Most of the comments received in the previous public consultations have been taken into account in the formulation of the draft RDS.

7. The draft RDS is composed of the following three planning frameworks, the key proposals of which are presented in paragraphs 8 to 14 below:

- (a) A Land-Use Framework;
- (b) A Tourism and Recreation Framework; and
- (c) A Landscape and Conservation Framework.

LAND USE FRAMEWORK

8. Sai Kung District has been subject to tremendous pressures for development, especially for tourism and housing purposes. In order to achieve the vision of “Leisure Garden of Hong Kong” which was well supported by the community, much emphasis has been placed to protect and enhance its environmental and landscape attributes on the one hand; and, on the other hand, to accommodate appropriate developments at suitable locations to meet public and local aspirations in devising the land-use framework for the District.

9. The land use proposals are summarized in the following table:

PROPOSED USES	Area (ha)	%
New Country Park/Country Park Extension	407	3.4
Conservation and Landscape Protection Area	1,935	16.1
Village Development	172	1.4
Medium-density Housing	26	0.2
Low-density Housing	72	0.6
Recreation and Tourism	404	3.4
Additional District G/IC Facilities	15	0.1
EXISTING/DESIGNATED USES		
Country Park, Site of Special Scientific Interest, Special Area, Conservation Area	8,163	68.0
Developed Area, e.g. housing, community facilities, etc.	813	6.8
TOTAL	12,007	100.0

10. Some 2300 ha, or 19% of the land area of the District, are proposed for various conservation purposes, including extensions to existing country parks. The key proposals include Tung Lung Chau, which is being investigated by the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department, the woodlands at Ho Chung and the hillside woodlands stretching from Clearwater Bay South to Tai Mong Tsai which are rich in landscape values.

11. In terms of housing land provision, about 172 ha, mainly located within existing village environs, are included for village expansion. Most of these areas are already zoned for 'Village Type Development' on the statutory town plans. In addition, about 26 ha of

land, located at Sai Kung Town and Tai Po Tsai, are reserved for medium density housing. A further 72 ha of land, mainly located in Sha Kok Mei and Ho Chung, are designated for low-density residential development.

12. Some 404 ha of land are proposed for various recreation and tourism purposes. The key proposals are presented under the Tourism and Recreation Framework.
13. Should these land use proposals be realized, the population of the District could increase from its present level of about 64,700 to about 103,000. This level of increase has been tested to be sustainable in terms of the existing and planned infrastructural facilities including transport and sewerage, as well as the impacts on the environment.

TOURISM AND RECREATION FRAMEWORK

14. Given the size, configuration and diversity of resources of the District, existing and proposed tourist and recreation facilities and attractions are geographically rather dispersed. To provide a 'marketing focus' for these facilities and attractions, a 'Gateway Centre' strategy is proposed as the driving concept for the Tourism and Recreation Framework. The key proposals include:
 - (a) To develop a 'Gateway Centre' at Sai Kung Town to provide for tourists and visitors such facilities as a tourist information centre, retailing and dining outlets, public parking, public transport interchange with service routes to key tourist nodes and attractions, and possibly also hotel accommodation to promote extended stay in the District. The Gateway Centre would serve as the 'starting point' for tourists and visitors visiting the District.
 - (b) To enhance the attraction of Sai Kung Old Town, characterized by its old fishing village settlement and winding streets, it is suggested to designate pedestrianised precincts to improve streetscape, to promote alfresco dining and, possibly, to also provide a festival market.
 - (c) To extend the existing public golf course in Kau Sai Chau southwards to include additional facilities such as a golf academy, overnight accommodations, etc.
 - (d) To develop the former High Island Detention Centre into a holiday camp and, subject to a more detailed study, to provide non-polluting recreation outlets in the High Island Reservoir for compatible water sports activities.
 - (e) To upgrade the boatyards and retail/dining facilities in Hebe Haven to enhance its attractiveness for water sports and boating activities.

- (f) To provide an artificial beach to the south of the Clear Water Bay First and Second Beaches to relieve the overcrowding of these two beaches during summer seasons.
- (g) The coastal waters at Tsam Chuk Wan, Sha Ha, Hebe Haven to Silverstrand, Clear Water Bay and Sharp Island is proposed as an 'Inshore Water Recreation Area' for water-based recreation activities. To complement this proposal, location for a new water-sports centre has been identified at Sharp Island.
- (h) To investigate the feasibility of rationalizing and enhancing existing Kaito services to enable 'hopping' tours of the islands in the District.
- (i) Elsewhere in the District, proposals have also been put forward for optimizing the potential of abandoned farmland for such uses as specialized horticulture, market gardening and leisure agriculture, all of which are growing in popularity in Hong Kong.

LANDSCAPE AND CONSERVATION FRAMEWORK

15. The Landscape and Conservation Framework serves to articulate tourist facilities and attraction into key clusters, or nodes, with their own identity, as well as connections between them so that their tourist and recreation capabilities can be mutually enhanced. It also provides for the conservation of areas of ecological, landscape and heritage significance. The key proposals include:

- (a) *Landscape Planning*: Proposals include development of key vantage points, e.g. Razor Hill, Pak Fa Lam and Sai Wan Shan, etc. to be linked together by a network of walking trails. They should be provided with such facilities as rain shelters, sign posts, view compasses and information boards. In addition, landscape nodal points at Ho Chung, Ng Fan Tin and Pak Tam Chung have also been identified for enhanced landscaping.
- (b) *Terrestrial Conservation*: In addition to the proposed country park extensions and conservation areas mentioned in para. 10 above, measures have also been recommended for the protection of other resources of conservation interest including significant freshwater wetlands in Tai Long Wan and Ng Fan Tin, mangroves in Nam Wai and Tsam Chuk Wan, streams and some rocky islands such as Tung Lung Chau and Bluff Island where flora and fauna of ecological value are found.
- (c) *Marine Conservation*: The possible Marine Park site at Port Shelter is included and a Marine Conservation Area is proposed along the coastal areas of High

Island and Tai Long Wan and around Kau Sai Chau, Bluff Island and Sharp Island. The intention is to protect the marine habitat in these coastal areas.

(d) *Heritage Conservation*: Groups of heritage sites of cultural and historical significance have been proposed for protection and enhancement, including:

- ◆ the Tin Hau Temples at Sai Kung Town, Pak A and Tai Miu Wan;
- ◆ the Che Kung Temple at Ho Chung;
- ◆ the Sheung Yiu Folk Museum; and
- ◆ the Rock Inscription at Joss House Bay, Tung Lung Chau Rock Carving and Tung Lung Chau Fort.

INFRASTRUCTURE AND ENVIRONMENTAL ASPECTS

16. The draft RDS has been subject to various technical assessments including traffic and transport, environmental and infrastructure. The following points are worth highlighting.

Traffic and Transport

- (a) To many, the limited road capacity is a 'beauty' in that it has helped retain the many scenic features in the District; to others, it is a constraint to development which has to be addressed. Our fundamental objective is therefore to devise a transport framework for the District that would meet essential needs without inducing excessive development pressures, which could be detrimental to the environment.
- (b) To further manage transport demands, the Study recommends strengthening public transport connections between the District and the MTR Tseung Kwan O Extension as well as Ma On Shan Railway.
- (c) Hiram's Highway, the primary distributor road in Sai Kung District, is currently being widened along the section from Clearwater Bay Road to Marina Cove. However, even with the completion of the road widening scheme in 2005, the section between Ho Chung and Sai Kung Town is unable to cope with the demand by 2016. Highways Department is considering the feasibility of improving this section to further increase the road capacity.
- (d) To minimize car usage, particularly at weekends and holidays, the Study proposes as a key component of the Land Use Framework the development of a 'Gateway Centre' where parking facilities and public transport services to key tourist and recreation points are provided. This 'park and enjoy' facility would not only help

minimize parking requirements at individual recreation and tourist nodes, but also reduce traffic along scenic routes and preserve the natural character of the District.

Environmental Aspects

- (e) The Environmental Assessment, which has examined all relevant environmental issues including ecology, water, noise, air, waste and hazard, indicates that with sufficient mitigation measures, the draft RDS would be in principle sustainable. Detailed EIAs for individual development components of the draft RDS would be required when examining the feasibility of these possible projects.

Other Infrastructure Facilities

- (f) Separate studies are being undertaken to upgrade the capacity of Sai Kung Sewage Treatment Works and improve the drainage systems of the Sai Kung area. Extensions of the Pak Kong Au and Tai Po Tsai fresh water supply systems will also be required to serve future population growth. In general, no insurmountable problems are anticipated.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

- 17. A Consultation Digest setting out the proposals of the draft RDS is attached at Annex B. The consultation started with a Public Forum held on 6.1.2001 in the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology. Apart from presentation to Members, other public bodies that have been/will be consulted include the Town Planning Board, Planning Sub-Committee of Lands and Buildings Advisory Committee, Advisory Council on the Environment, Sai Kung District Council, Country and Marine Park Board, etc. The whole exercise is expected to last until March 2001.
- 18. The views collected from this round of public consultation will be taken into account in finalising the Recommended Development Strategy. These views and the responses of the study team will be included into a Public Consultation Report to be published and distributed in due course.

ADVICE SOUGHT

- 19. Members are invited to note and provide views on the key proposals of the draft RDS as summarized in the Consultation Digest at Annex B.

ATTACHMENT

- Annex A: Gist of Comments on the Study received in Stage 1 and 2 Public Consultation
- Annex B: Study on South East New Territories Development Strategy Review: Stage 3 Public Consultation Digest - Draft Recommended Development Strategy

Planning Department
January 2001

Agreement No. CE 40/98
Study on South East New Territories Development Strategy Review

Key Comments Received During Stage 1 and 2 Public Consultation

- i. Planning principles adopted in the preparation of the Initial Development Options supported.
- ii. Improvement to the livelihood of local community and tourism/recreation potential should not compromise the ecological, cultural and aesthetic value of SENT.
- iii. Conservation proposals for terrestrial, marine and heritage resources supported with suggestions for more proactive measures.
- iv. Need for more recreation opportunities to satisfy demand from the growing affluent population; though environmental and traffic impacts remain a major concern.
- v. Tourism development in SENT could help local employment opportunities and enhance the attraction of HK as a whole.
- vi. Sai Kung Town as a tourist hub supported. Apart from new tourist attractions, improvement to existing facilities, packaging and marketing efforts, would also enhance tourist visitation.
- vii. SENT is a good location for quality housing, but further development should be confine to areas in the vicinity of existing township.
- viii. Potential of education, research and high technology development in SENT should be highlighted.

- ix. Additional population growth will have implications on infrastructural and community facilities.
- x. Serious concern over a range of traffic and transportation issues, including road capacity, traffic impact and provision of car park.
- xi. Functions of Sai Kung and TKO should complement with each other.
- xii. Private initiatives should be encouraged to facilitate improvement to SENT.