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Submission from RICS (Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors) on Hung Shui Kiu New Development Area (Stage 3 Community Engagement)

Background

RICS (Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors) is a global professional body. We promote and enforce the highest professional qualification and standards in the development and management of land, real estate, construction and infrastructure. Our name promises the consistent delivery of standards – bringing confidence to the markets we serve. The work of our professionals creates a safer world: we are proud of our profession’s reputation and we guard it fiercely.

Preamble

RICS, in its capacity as a professional body, upholds the public interest. We draw on our wealth of global experience to offer the best practical advice to Governments; our aim is to support sustainable land, property and construction markets. Hong Kong is home to the largest RICS membership outside of UK, and hence our vested interest in submitting our views and recommendations.

This submission is prepared in response to the Stage 3 Community Engagement for the Hung Shui Kiu New Development Area (HSK NDA) - Planning and Engineering Study.

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1 Strategic role of HSK NDA

HSK NDA is right at the key position of the Hong Kong – Shenzhen – Zhuhai Corridor. The provision of land for “Service Industry” would be convenient to both local residents and users. It can also act as a cross-boundary/transit oriented hub which could provide a regional shopping centre cum hotels and offices and other commercial activities to users. With the help of proposed HSK MTR Station, large volume of pedestrian traffic can circulate within the greater catchment area facilitated by good connectivity and integration design of public transport facilities. The future implementation of Northern Link could enhance its connectivity with the Lok Ma Chau Spur Line and East Rail Line. This can allow in general a

development with higher density and help relieve the pedestrian traffic/shopping demand of Mainland visitors in Sheung Shui and Fanling that Hong Kong is now facing. To achieve this role, HSK will need to demonstrate good connectivity between all parts and excellent linkages to the adjacent primary infrastructure.

2 Townscape and transportation

Under the latest Recommended Outline Development Plan (RODP), the HSK Town Centre is planned around the proposed HSK station, a mix of commercial and residential developments are designated within 500 metres catchment of the railway station. While local residents could enjoy convenient access to railway services, there is concern in worsening the already-existing traffic congestion of West Rail Line and Tuen Mun Highway, particularly during the busy hours. Improvements on transportation and alternative options for travelling are needed. More importantly, supporting infrastructures and feeding services should be inter-connected. Public transport services should also cover areas outside the 500 metres catchment in order to enhance the accessibility within HSK NDA.

3 Employment and economic vibrancy

One key objective of the recommended development proposal is to make HSK a “Regional Economic and Civic Hub” supported by the proposed HSK station, with offices, hotels and other commercial uses at the HSK Town Centre, “Logistics, Enterprise & Technology Quarter” and Industrial zone at the northwestern part of the NDA. An estimation of about 150,000 job openings would be created to cater for the North West New Territories (NWNT). If 150,000 jobs would be generated, this could be particularly beneficial for Tin Shui Wai where there is a large concentration of public housing with limited job opportunity for local residents. HSK NDA provides a variety of economic land uses to balance the distribution of homes and jobs and to reduce the travel needs.

Being strategically located in close proximity to Shenzhen with other infrastructures, namely Kong Sham Western Highway and Tuen Mun – Chek Lap Kok Link, the planning concepts of creating “Logistics, Enterprise & Technology Quarter” and Industrial zone at the northwestern part of the NDA is generally appropriate. While the “Logistics, Enterprise & Technology Quarter” is planned for modern logistic facilities and other non-polluting industries, it is located next to Ha Tsuen which is historically a logistics hub creating employment opportunities for local residents. The plan for new industrial land to meet the future demand for industrial use is in line with the newly released “Report on 2014 Area Assessments of Industrial Land in the Territory” by the Planning Department in August 2015.

4 Sustainable development

The HSK NDA would be developed into a multi-functioned development node. This comprises a comprehensive development of the HSK area, from Yuen Long Highway in the

south to the coastal area in the north, as a mixed use sustainable community. The scheme would also aim to retain the existing special village communities and the essential employment areas. A mixed density of residential development that focuses on providing a residential hub to serve the wider Hong Kong area together with a good balance of business, community, education, and open space uses will enhance the development of a sustainable NDA and reduce outward travel. Substantial upgrading of the area will take place to enhance the living environment. Sustainability will be at the heart of the planning, design and management of the area.

Most of the villages are to be preserved, therefore careful consideration is required in planning in terms of social sustainability. As economic activities at the “Economic & Employment Node” increase and expand, it may alienate villages and put other unique cultural heritage in HSK at risk of being replaced. The integration between culturally rich villages and the proposed modern developments would be a challenge.

In terms of long-term developments in HSK NDA, it is necessary to ponder on the role of HSK to Hong Kong-Pearl River Delta (PRD) relation, flexibility should be incorporated in the planning process so as to accommodate uncertainty and adapt to the growth of Hong Kong-PRD relation.

5 Conclusion

HSK represents a unique opportunity for Hong Kong to solve not only the real local problems of land supply, housing demand, and pressure on employment and economic growth but also an opportunity for Hong Kong to facilitate the linkage of the existing and proposed new towns in the North East and North West New Territories and to showcase its continued commitment to creating livable and sustainable city as a showcase to the world. Timely implementation of the HSK NDA and infrastructure developments to facilitate early population intake shall be the key goal of the project.

- End -

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