

TAI HO - May Power point presentation.

INTRODUCTION

- The two companies represented here today, Sun Hung Kai properties and Swire properties have been concerned over the quality of the city and its future development for some time.
- We both believe there is the need for innovation and variety in developing Hong Kong if Hong Kong is to avoid becoming a sterile and monotonous place to live and work.
- Swire Properties alternative plans for South East Kowloon and central waterfront are evidence of this concern. We have no vested interest in either.
- Our central waterfront master plan has just this month received an honor award for urban design by the American Institute of Architects. International recognition of our efforts.
- The North Lantau Recommended Outline Development Plan (RODP) which was made available for public comment should reflect the objectives of the Southwest New Territories Development Strategy Review to:
 - Capitalize on tourist and recreation opportunities
 - Conserve the high quality natural environment
 - Accommodate population growth.
- Sadly the plan fails to offer any substantive tourism initiative, no practical conservation measures and offers nothing new in terms of housing provision. It is just more of the same — a 10 year old concept of new town development based primarily on reclamation — producing an almost continuous ribbon development of over 6 km.

TAI HO PRESENTS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR CHANGE

- Both companies started acquiring land in Tai Ho many years ago. We therefore have a vested interest in the quality of development of North Lantau.
- From various public consultation forums last year it was evident that Government's plan was under pressure from green groups and others. It is time for new ideas to create a world class gate-way to Hong Kong that the whole community can be proud of.
- We saw this as an opportunity to put our central waterfront and South East Kowloon vision into practice. Using the same mix of international and local experts, we prepared an alternative master plan for North Lantau and a specific development plan for Tai Ho.
- Our idea was to work with Government to try to avoid the formal objection procedures that have delayed implementation of both the Central waterfront and South East Kowloon plans.
- Government was not convinced that we could implement our proposed development at Tai Ho and has produced a revised RODP that took on board many of our ideas. This was presented for public consultation earlier this year.
- We have continued to develop our plan for Tai Ho to reflect comments and ideas from the various green groups we have been consulting, and it is this revised plan that we are pleased to present to you today.

Our approach to the planning of Tai Ho is quite different from the normal Government engineering led approach and was guided by the following sustainable development principles:

Ecology, Innovative Housing, People and Transit.

Firstly Ecology

- The need to preserve the existing ecology was adopted as the primary basis for planning Tai Ho.
- A study of Tai Ho Valley was undertaken to identify all areas of high ecological value.
- The identified areas included woodland, marshland, stream courses, mudflats, mangroves and the Tai Ho bay. A complete eco-system from the mountains to the sea- now rare in HK.
- In order to protect this complete eco-system, a single comprehensive development is required in which the development areas are located away from Tai Ho valley and the Bay.
- Our revised plan keeps all development out of Tai Ho valley, restricting development to either side of the valley in areas of low value habitat.
- We will establish an ecological park and ensure that the future park management is assured through the establishment of a non-profit making management trust.
- We propose over 50 hectares less reclamation than the Government's RODP. This will benefit the environment and provide a substantial view corridor.

- In our efforts to preserve the ecology we must not lose sight of the fact that North Lantau is a strategic growth area for the provision of new housing.
- The infrastructure is already in place and needs people to make it viable. This is of increasing importance with the delays to South East Kowloon (as Government seeks to revise its plan) and other strategic growth areas.
- Our proposed changes to the Government's reclamation based housing strategy maintain the same population target for Tai Ho with two areas of housing within the CDA — the town centre, linked to the relocated MTR station and at Pak Mong.
- We plan to bring the concept of sustainable development to reality in the Tai Ho CDA. At Pak Mong in particular we have an opportunity to create a unique form of housing in a park setting. The incorporation of innovative environmental design and construction methods will provide a world-wide precedent for developing medium density housing in a sensitive location.
- We have held initial discussions with founder of World Green Building Council and
- Amory Lovins of the world famous environmental think tank, the Rocky Mountain Institute has endorsed our CDA concept and expressed an interest in assisting us to develop green building designs.
- Priority on rail based transit is fundamental to our plan. We have consulted the MTRC who fully support our proposal to relocate the Tai Ho station and the principle of "double-loading" the station. This can only be achieved by our scheme.

- We have concentrated the population close to the MTR station to facilitate easy pedestrian access.
- An enclosed pedestrian bridge over the expressway will be built as part of the scheme incorporating pedestrian travelators as necessary. All of which will be managed and maintained by the residential development management.
- Both residential areas within the CDA will be designed to ensure people take precedence over vehicles.
- We will segregate traffic from pedestrian areas as far as possible. With easy walking access to the MTR and the provision of a non polluting shuttle bus service from Pak Mong, there will be less dependence on private cars, taxis and public buses.
- We have not over-looked the local villagers housing needs and with their agreement have proposed all new village housing be concentrated at Pak Mong.
- We are aware of the archeological importance of Pak Mong but through careful planning we will be able to ensure the more sensitive archeological and ecological areas will not be spoilt by typical village house development
- A preliminary assessment against selected sustainable indices clearly shows our scheme ranks higher than Government's revised RODP.
- With the creation of a single Comprehensive Development Area we will be able to develop Tai Ho according to these principles.

- Government's revised RODP has laudable goals but it cannot achieve the stated objectives through existing administrative mechanisms.
- Government's claim that there is no development south of the Expressway is misleading as it proposes 3 large areas for village development in the heart of Tai Ho valley which will create adverse impacts to the ecology of the valley.
- New village development will effectively destroy the valley as village housing and associated uses are not compatible with protecting the eco-system.
- It is also vital to recognize that Conservation Area zones are insufficient to protect the sensitive ecology. Passive neglect through the existing zoning system is not enough.
- Tai Ho valley can only be saved through a pro-active plan. Positive measures are essential now.
- Excessive reclamation resulting in continuous ribbon development with housing sandwiched between the North Lantau Expressway and the flight path is both unnecessary and unacceptable.
- Continued dependence of extensive road systems as is currently the case in Tung Chung will only add to air quality problems.

- Our plan, based upon a single comprehensive development area, offers clear advantages over the Government plan.
- The key is **IMPLEMENTATION**.
- We can accommodate all stakeholders' expectations.
- Only our private sector initiative can satisfy the villagers' expectations and preserve the valley because the Government mechanisms do not allow the flexibility to effectively relocate the existing villages
- We own or have options to purchase the private agricultural land within Tai Ho Valley.
- We have support from the villagers who will forgo any claims to build houses in the government's proposed village zones provided we deliver serviced land as part of the scheme.
- Without the support of the villagers there can be no scheme that can be implemented that will ensure the Tai Ho valley is preserved.
- The creation of a contiguous ecological park removes the need for passive ineffective Conservation Area zones and provides for the positive management that is essential if the ecology is to be preserved for future generations.
- The reduced reclamation provides significant environmental benefits, a better quality of housing and enhanced visual impact for residents of Tai Ho, users of the Ecology Park and visitors arriving in Hong Kong.

URGENT ACTION IS REQUIRED NOW

- Without our scheme the villagers will be able to proceed with the redevelopment of existing houses and the construction of new houses in accordance with the Small House Policy.
- It is essential to work within existing administrative arrangements so that delays do not lead to the destruction of the valley.
- The CDA concept is within existing planning and land policies and can be implemented without delay if Government so wishes.
- With clear policy support we can ensure the valley remains intact and we can start to implement protective works immediately.
- We can also provide housing in the shortest time-scale as we can develop the residential communities in parallel with any necessary infrastructure such as sewers, drains and water supply.
- We can even provide a ready source of fill for the reduced reclamation and if Government so wishes undertake the reclamation as entrusted works.

Our CDA scheme is not a compromise between conservation and development because we are seeking to INTEGRATE the ecology, the environment and the development to achieve the best. They are mutually reinforcing.

In conclusion we seek your support to persuade Government to permit us to provide a new innovative form of development that will enable Hong Kong to demonstrate that it is taking positive steps to protect the environment whilst at the same time improving the quality of housing.