

**Town Planning Amendments Bill 2003**

**(By Mr. Tony Tse)**

1. On behalf of The Hong Kong Institute of Surveyors I would first give the key general comments on the proposed Bill.
2. The existing Town Planning Ordinance was first enacted in more than 60 years ago (1939). To meet the needs of the changing social and economic environment in Hong Kong, the Hong Kong Institute of Surveyors fully supports a comprehensive review of the Ordinance and the introduction of a new piece of planning legislation.
3. When the Town Planning Bill was introduced into the Council in year 2000 last time, a number of fundamental issues outside the scope of the Bill had been identified. These include the Town Planning Board's role in strategic planning especially road and railway planning, its openness and public accountability, compensation for planning blight etc. However, we are disappointed that these fundamental issues are either not addressed or considered at great depth in the Bill this time. The Hong Kong Institute of Surveyors noted that due to the complexity of the issues involved, the Administration proposes to amend the Ordinance in stages and priority is given to those amendments which the Administration considers to be less controversial. Our Institute, however, believe that if amendments to the Ordinance have to be introduced by stages priority should be given to those important and fundamental issues and leaving the amendments proposed this time which bear no great urgency at a later stage. Anyhow, it would be in the interest of the public that the Administration should set down a timeframe for completing the other amendments proposed in later stages.

In considering amendments to the Ordinance, there is a general consensus that public participation is one of most important factors to the success of a town planning system. Whilst the amendments proposed by the Bill this time enable the public at large to make representation and comments on draft plans and planning amendments, we urge that amendments should aim to encourage public participation rather than promoting public awareness at large. The success of the proposed change of the hearing process from the current three stages to single stage hinges a lot if there will be enough level public participation. More resources should therefore be allocated to encourage public participation particularly in plan making process. As this important issue not ensured in the Bill, our Institute objects to the change of the hearing process from three stages to single stage as proposed.

**HONG KONG INSTITUTE OF SURVEYORS**  
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