

JOINT PRESS RELEASE

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***Plea to LegCo:
Don't be blinded by quantity, Focus on relevancy***

Government is not ready to ask LegCo to take any decision to support Tamar at the Planning, Lands & Works Panel tomorrow (Tuesday 7 March).

The right thing to do now is for LegCo to press government for the Central Outline Zoning Plan to be reviewed and improved.

The Panel must not allow itself to be blinded by the quantity of government information supplied. A careful reading shows many questions the Panel demanded answers to at its last meeting on 9 February have not been satisfactorily answered.

1. Office-usage shows enormous wastage

On the basis that the Tamar government office complex is to have GFA of 110,030 m sq (69,333 m sq), this equates to approximately 1.2 million sq feet of GFA (combined total of Exchange Square One and Two), and if it is to house about 3,000 workers, then each employee would have 400 sq ft of space, or 4 times the average in Hong Kong (which is 100 sq ft per worker).

2. CGO redevelopment studies not released

Past studies on *in situ* redevelopment options by Bailey & Levett in the 1990s have not been released but simply dismissed. Furthermore, no costs comparisons have been provided.

3. Traffic impact assessment too narrow

Comments on traffic impact are focussed on traffic contribution from an office complex at Tamar but not how it would relate to the other developments allowable under the Central Outline Zoning Plan (OZP). No effort is being made to reduce roads. The calls for review from the public are on reviewing the entire OZP and its traffic impact.

4. Air quality studies inaccurate

Likewise, comments on air quality are focussed on Tamar itself and not the total impact of roads and increase in density along the Central waterfront allowable under the OZP. The call

is for air quality assessment of the entire Central waterfront to be re-done taking into account allowable developments under the OZP. Air quality in Central is already very poor now.

5. Other options also generate employment

Government's claim that the building of a new office complex will generate 2,720 jobs is meaningless as labourer jobs can be created for many types of construction or improvement projects. Professional/technical jobs will also be created if a review and improvement of the Central OZP is to be conducted. We wish to emphasize this argument of number of jobs as a key justification of the Tamar project is inappropriate.

6. No justification for land use changes

Vital information relating to justification to change the Tamar site first from "commercial use" to GIC in 1998 and then the government's proposal to change the site from GIC back to "commercial usage" in 2000 have not been provided to legislators.

Overall, government information provides a picture of flip flop decision-making. The proposal to sell land to developers for commercial development just 5 years ago clearly indicates the Tamar site may not be needed for government offices at all. To move the seat of government requires the most careful thinking and long-term planning, whereas the information provided to date reveals whimsical and constantly changing decision-making over a vital public matter for Hong Kong.

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