

Green Lantau Association
House B12, Leyburn Villas
Cheung Sha
Lantau

22 May 2007

Mr Lau Wong Fat GBM, GBS, JP
Chairman
LegCo Panel on Planning, Lands and Works

Prof. Patrick Lau Sau Shing, SBS, JP
Deputy Chairman
LegCo Panel on Planning, Lands and Works.

Dear Sirs,

Lantau Concept Plan
Lantau North (Extension) Country Park)

We are given to understand that the administration will be presenting its revised *Lantau Concept Plan* to your panel on 29 May.

The original “Concept Plan” was released for public consultation by the Lantau Development Taskforce in November 2004. As befits its remit, it focussed in that time of economic depression, on development projects. ‘Conservation’ principles were enunciated but no commitments were made, and it was clear that ‘development’ in the form of extensive capital works would be the over-arching priority.

As may be expected, the ‘Concept Plan’ was roundly panned. For most Hong Kong people, Lantau is synonymous with conservation. As the Financial Secretary, Henry Tang, himself said, “Lantau is the biggest and most beautiful island in Hong Kong.” A coalition of some 18 groups pressed government to first undertake a Conservation Plan to ensure that the priceless environmental heritage that comprises much of Lantau was not lost to hastily conceived and inappropriate development projects.

The Task Force, in its digest of public submissions, acknowledged the extensive pressure to conserve.

You are about to be presented with the administration’s revised Concept Plan. We expect that it will acknowledge the enormous conservation value of Lantau and contain numerous conservation statements. **However, we would strongly caution the Panel on accepting these at face value.**

We would suggest that you put the sincerity of the administration to test before accepting any promises which may be included in the revised Plan. That test is simple. In 1999, the then Chief Executive announced in his Policy Address that he would implement the Lantau North (Extension) Country Park, promised in mitigation for the damage to Lantau brought about by the Airport Core Programme works. The estimated cost of implementation is some \$10 million. The boundaries of the Park were gazetted in 2001 but never implemented. The Lantau Development Task force acknowledged this whilst holding out a conditional prospect only, for implementation.

We are now in 2007, some 8 years after the CE's announcement. Hong Kong is enjoying substantial budget surpluses, and financial means are not an issue. Notwithstanding, the long promised park has not materialized.

We in Green Lantau Association, our co-signatories to the joint submission, and the public at large, will not accept any conservation promises which may be made in the revised Lantau Concept Plan whilst the implementation of the Lantau North (Extension) Country Park remains subject to administrative whim.

We would ask your Panel to view the revised Lantau Concept Plan with critical eyes, and establish as we have suggested above, the true extent of the administration's will to conserve our environmental heritage. If there remains no evidence of past undertakings being honoured, and no 'bankable' commitments to conservation, we strongly suggest that that the Plan be rejected.

Yours sincerely

Clive Noffke
Green Lantau Association