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15 April 2010

Secretary General of the Legislative Council Secretariat
Legislative Council Building
8 Jackson Road
Central
Hong Kong

(Attn: Mr. Daniel SIN)

Dear Mr. Sin,

LegCo Panel on Development

**Follow up on the discussion items of the Meeting between
Members of LegCo and Heung Yee Kuk on 14.1.2010**

**Development Strategy for Land to be released from
and Land within the Frontier Closed Area**

Thank you for your letter of 16 March 2010 relaying to us the concern of Members of LegCo and Heung Yee Kuk on the above subject. This serves as a joint response of Development Bureau and Security Bureau on the three points of concern raised by the Members.

To allocate resources to develop the land to be released from the Closed Area to balance the needs for development and conservation

The Frontier Closed Area (FCA) in Hong Kong along the border with Shenzhen is situated at a geographically strategic location. The Planning Department (PlanD) has embarked on the “Study on Land Use Planning for the Closed Area” to examine the development potential and constraints of the land to be released from the FCA, and to formulate the proposed Draft Development Plan (DDP) to balance the needs for conservation and development in accordance with the principle of sustainable development.

To capitalize on the strategic boundary location, appropriate developments along the major cross-boundary transport corridors linking Shenzhen and Hong Kong are proposed under the DDP to strengthen the link between Shenzhen and Hong Kong, with a view to achieving the long-term objective of promoting mutual economic growth of the two cities. The proposed Lok Ma Chau Development Corridor will have the potential to provide for commercial, shopping and entertainment facilities to support the development of the Lok Ma Chau Loop, and it will be further reviewed under the on-going “Planning and Engineering Study on Development of Lok Ma Chau Loop”. As for the proposed Man Kam To Development Corridor, which is located near the North East New Territories New Development Areas, it may be developed for various cross-boundary supporting services such as wholesale centre, showroom and commercial and service uses to meet the needs of both Hong Kong and Shenzhen residents. Similar uses may also be developed along the strategic road link leading to the new Liantang/Heung Yuen Wai Boundary Control Point (BCP) in the long term. Besides, apart from the land reserved for development of Small House by indigenous villagers, the vacant land or abandoned agricultural land can also be used for different levels and types of development, such as Kong Nga Po and Hung Lung Hang for comprehensive development and residential use, and the vicinity of Ta Kwu Ling and Heung Yuen Wai for recreation use.

In view of the fact that the Study Area is endowed with natural asset and rich in cultural heritage, it is proposed that resources of high

ecological, environmental and natural landscape values, such as wetlands, fish ponds, “fung shui” woodlands and sites of special scientific interest, should be properly preserved. Excessive development should be avoided to strive for a balance between development and conservation. This not only can make optimum use of the existing resources, but also preserve the surrounding rural environment. It is impossible to complete development in one go. When the time has come, for example, when development of the new Liantang/Heung Yuen Wai BCP has reached a certain level, we will re-examine the function of the area concerned and put it into wise use appropriate at its time, and put forward more effective proposals for development of the surrounding areas.

To listen more to the views of Heung Yee Kuk and the villagers to avoid conflict

During the course of the “Study on Land Use Planning for the Closed Area”, we have been maintaining communication with Heung Yee Kuk, the villagers and the local communities. We also carried out two stages of Community Engagement. Apart from organizing a number of public forums, we have also arranged briefing sessions for the relevant stakeholders including the Rural Committees, the District Councils and Heung Yee Kuk and consulted various parties/organizations concerned. We will, taking into account public views and suggestions received, revise and further formulate a planning framework to cater for both development and conservation needs, with a view to building a sustainable environment for the local community.

Not to refuse the opening up of the Closed Area on security grounds, and suggest opening up the Area and solving the security problem in a proactive manner

The FCA is an integral part of a package of measures for maintaining the integrity of the Hong Kong’s boundary with the Mainland and for combating illegal immigration and other cross-boundary criminal activities. The Security Bureau reviewed the coverage of the FCA in consultation with the LegCo Panel on Security

and other relevant parties¹ in 2006. The Administration announced the finalized coverage of the FCA in January 2008 that the FCA would be substantially reduced from the existing 2 800 hectares to about 400 hectares. The reduced FCA will comprise the re-aligned Boundary Patrol Road (BPR) and a narrow strip of land to its north, together with crossing points along the boundary (i.e. the BCPs and Sha Tau Kok Town) (See **Annex A**).

In order to maintain the integrity of the boundary after reducing the coverage of the FCA, the Administration will construct a Secondary Boundary Fence (SBF) along the BPR and new sections of the BPR and the Primary Boundary Fence (PBF) at certain sections, thereby enclosing the BPR and ensuring that the PBF and BPR would be protected from deliberate or inadvertent interference. In this connection, the Administration consulted the LegCo Panel on Security, Heung Yee Kuk and the relevant Rural Committees respectively on the construction works arising from the reduced coverage of the FCA between March and September 2009 and January and February 2010. The local communities generally have no objection to the construction project. The BPR, together with the Boundary Fence, form an effective barrier against illegal immigrants from entering the Hong Kong SAR. From the security perspective, it is necessary to retain the BPR and a narrow strip of land to its north within the FCA for effective management and maintaining the integrity of the boundary.

Under the reduced coverage of the FCA, Sha Tau Kok will remain within the FCA. Notwithstanding, the PlanD has commenced the “Study on the Enhancement of the Sha Tau Kok Rural Township and Surrounding Areas” in April 2009 with a view to formulating an Integrated Area Improvement Plan to enhance the physical environment of Sha Tau Kok Town and its surrounding areas. The Study will also assess the tourism potential of the area, taking into account the Closed Areas status of Sha Tau Kok Town, and examine the possibility of

¹ The relevant parties consulted include Heung Yee Kuk, the Town Planning Board, the Advisory Council on the Environment, North District Council, Yuen Long District Council, and Ta Kwu Ling, Sha Tau Kok, Sheung Shui and San Tin Rural Committees.

enhancing the connection of Sha Tau Kok Town with other tourist attractions in the North East New Territories.

At the end of 2009, the PlanD carried out the Stage 1 Community Engagement for the above Study to solicit public views on the visions and aspirations for enhancement of Sha Tau Kok rural township and the Linkage Area. The PlanD is now preparing the Draft Integrated Area Improvement Plan having regard to the public views collected. It is expected to carry out the Stage 2 Community Engagement later this year to listen to the public views on the Draft Integrated Area Improvement Plan.

We fully appreciate the concern of Members of LegCo and Heung Yee Kuk on the land use planning for the FCA. We would like to emphasize here that, throughout the process, the “Study on Land Use Planning for the Closed Area” has been conducted in an open and transparent manner with continuous community engagement. During the Study, we have conducted an extensive public consultation through various channels, taking into account the views of different parties on future development. We will continue to maintain communication with the relevant stakeholders and give due consideration to their views in formulating the planning proposals.

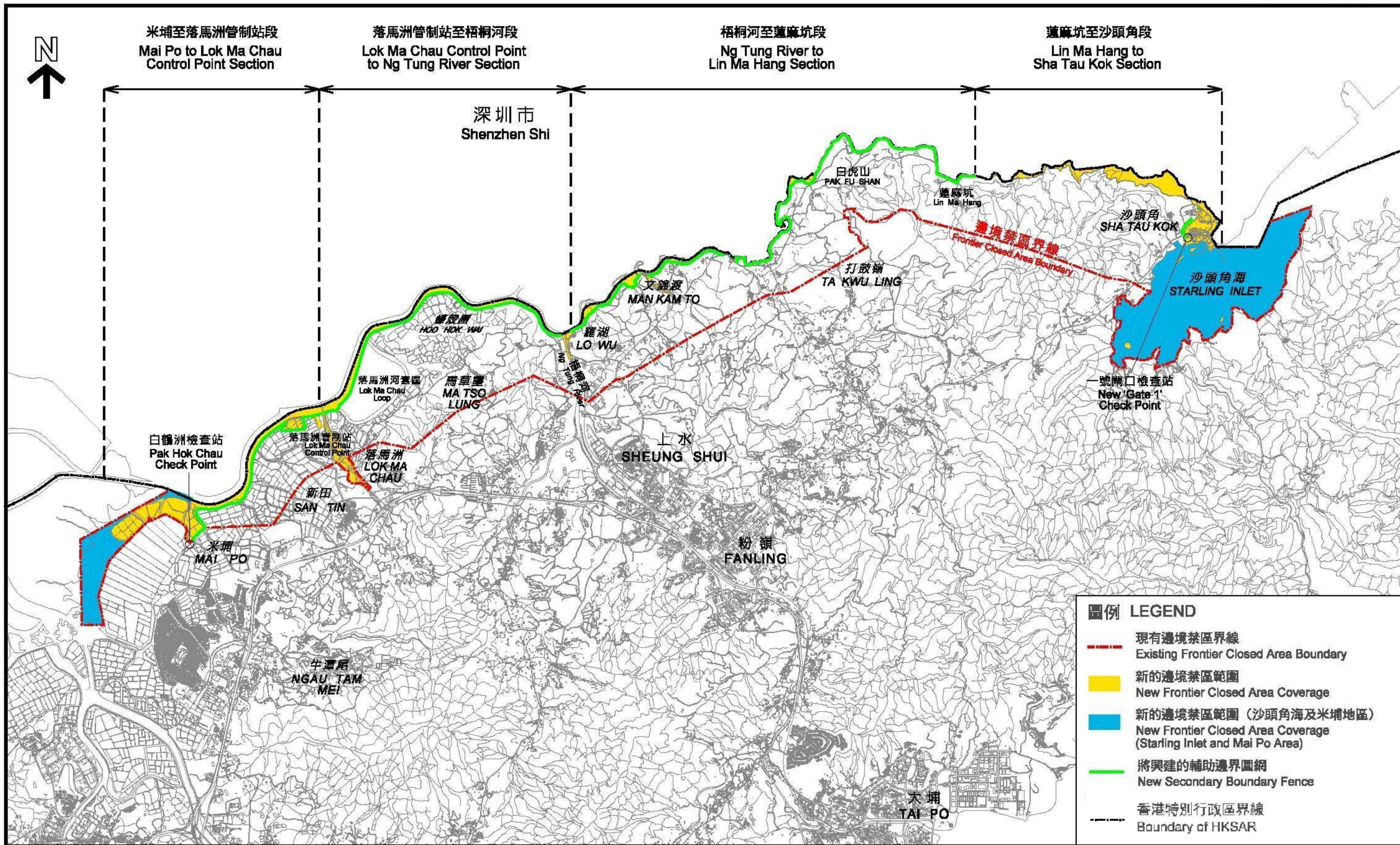
Yours sincerely,

(Raymond Lee)
for Secretary for Development

c.c.

Secretary for Security (Attn.: Ms. Veronica Wong)

Director of Planning (Attn.: Ms. Jacinta Woo)



現有的邊境禁區界線及縮減後的邊境禁區範圍

Existing Frontier Closed Area Boundary and Reduced Frontier Closed Area Coverage