

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(1)1787/12-13
(These minutes have been seen
by the Administration)

Ref : CB1/PL/DEV/1

Panel on Development

Minutes of meeting
held on Tuesday, 23 April 2013, at 2:30 pm
in Conference Room 3 of the Legislative Council Complex

Members present : Dr Hon LAU Wong-fat, GBM, GBS, JP (Chairman)
Hon Tony TSE Wai-chuen (Deputy Chairman)
Hon James TO Kun-sun
Hon CHAN Kam-lam, SBS, JP
Hon Emily LAU Wai-hing, JP
Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, SBS, JP
Hon Frederick FUNG Kin-kee, SBS, JP
Hon Cyd HO Sau-lan
Hon CHAN Hak-kan, JP
Hon CHAN Kin-por, BBS, JP
Dr Hon Priscilla LEUNG Mei-fun, JP
Hon IP Kwok-him, GBS, JP
Hon Mrs Regina IP LAU Suk-yeet, GBS, JP
Hon Alan LEONG Kah-kit, SC
Hon LEUNG Kwok-hung
Hon Albert CHAN Wai-yip
Hon Claudia MO
Hon Michael TIEN Puk-sun, BBS, JP
Hon James TIEN Pei-chun, GBS, JP
Hon WU Chi-wai, MH
Hon Gary FAN Kwok-wai
Hon CHAN Chi-chuen
Hon CHAN Han-pan
Dr Hon Kenneth CHAN Ka-lok

Hon CHAN Yuen-han, SBS, JP
Hon LEUNG Che-cheung, BBS, MH, JP
Hon Kenneth LEUNG
Hon Alice MAK Mei-kuen, JP
Dr Hon KWOK Ka-ki
Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG Chiu-hung
Dr Hon CHIANG Lai-wan, JP
Ir Dr Hon LO Wai-kwok, BBS, MH, JP

Member attending : Dr Hon Elizabeth QUAT, JP

Public officers attending : **Agenda item III**

Mr Jimmy CHAN Pai-ming
Principal Assistant Secretary (Works)³
Development Bureau

Mr WONG Ming-to, JP
Project Manager (New Territories North & West)
Civil Engineering and Development Department

Mr LI Wai
Chief Engineer / Project 1
(New Territories North & West)
Civil Engineering and Development Department

Agenda item IV

Mr Thomas CHAN Chung-ching, JP
Deputy Secretary for Development
(Planning and Lands)¹

Mr Raymond WONG
Assistant Director of Planning/Territorial

Mr YAU Ka-tai
Chief Town Planner/Cross-boundary Infrastructure and
Development
Planning Department

Mr IP Wing-cheung
Chief Engineer/New Territories 1
(New Territories North & West)
Civil Engineering and Development Department

Agenda item V

Mr WAI Chi-sing, JP
Permanent Secretary for Development (Works)

Mr HON Chi-keung, JP
Director of Civil Engineering and Development

Mr Frank CHAN Fan, JP
Director of Electrical and Mechanical Services/General
Manager

Mr LING Kar-kan, JP
Director of Planning

Agenda item VI

Mr Paul CHAN Mo-po, MH, JP
Secretary for Development

Mr WAI Chi-sing, JP
Permanent Secretary for Development (Works)

Mr HON Chi-keung, JP
Director of Civil Engineering and Development

Mr Robin LEE Kui-biu
Deputy Head of Civil Engineering Office
(Port and Land)
Civil Engineering and Development Department

Mr Raymond WONG
Assistant Director of Planning/Territorial

Clerk in attendance : Ms Sharon CHUNG
Chief Council Secretary (1)6

Staff in attendance : Mr Anthony CHU
Senior Council Secretary (1)6

Mr Fred PANG
Council Secretary (1)6

Ms Christina SHIU
Legislative Assistant (1)6

Action

I Information papers issued since the last meeting

(LC Paper No. CB(1)762/12-13(01) -- Administration's response to the letter dated 26 February 2013 from Hon Claudia MO expressing concerns about the impact of conversion of land use on the provision of public car parks and related issues (LC Paper No. CB(1)649/12-13(01))

LC Paper No. CB(1)797/12-13(01) -- Referral memorandum dated 27 March 2013 from the Public Complaints Office on issues relating to the policies/ordinances involving the handling of applications for rezoning made in respect of existing unauthorized columbaria

LC Paper No. CB(1)811/12-13(01) -- Administration's response to the letter dated 14 March 2013 from Dr Hon KWOK Ka-ki on the ownership of the roads for access to New Choi Yuen Village in Shek Kong (LC Paper No. CB(1)718/12-13(01))

- LC Paper No. CB(1)824/12-13(01) -- Letter dated 5 April 2013 from Dr Hon Kenneth CHAN Ka-lok on issues relating to the provision of a military pier at the New Central Harbourfront
- LC Paper No. CB(1)835/12-13(01) -- Administration's paper on the funding proposal for PWP Item No. 96WC -- Water supply to Pak Shek Kok reclamation area, Tai Po -- stage 2
- LC Paper No. CB(1)849/12-13(01) -- Administration's response to the letter dated 18 March 2013 from Dr Hon CHIANG Lai-wan, Hon Starry LEE, Hon CHAN Hak-kan, Hon LEUNG Che-cheung and Hon Christopher CHUNG on the redevelopment of civil servants' quarters developed under the Civil Servants Co-operative Building Society Scheme
- LC Paper No. CB(1)857/12-13(01) -- Administration's paper on PWP Item No. 159CD -- Reconstruction and rehabilitation of Kai Tak Nullah from Tung Kwong Road to Prince Edward Road East)

Members noted that the above information papers had been issued since the last meeting on 26 March 2013.

II Items for discussion at the next meeting

(LC Paper No. CB(1)862/12-13(01) -- List of outstanding items for discussion

LC Paper No. CB(1)862/12-13(02) -- List of follow-up actions)

2. Dr Kenneth CHAN pointed out that the Secretary for Development ("SDEV") had expressed views in his blog in response to public queries on

the Administration's proposed amendments to the Central District (Extension) Outline Zoning Plan in respect of the provision of a military dock at the new Central Harbourfront. He suggested that the Panel should discuss with the Administration on the subject. Dr CHIANG Lai-wan proposed that the Panel should discuss with the Administration the redevelopment of civil servants' quarters developed under the Civil Servants Co-operative Building Society Scheme. Members agreed to include these two items in the agenda for the next regular meeting scheduled for 28 May 2013 at 2:30 pm. There would be altogether four discussion items, the first two of which had been proposed by the Administration--

- (a) PWP Item No. 96WC – Water supply to Pak Shek Kok reclamation area, Tai Po – stage 2;
- (b) PWP Item No. 159CD – Reconstruction and rehabilitation of Kai Tak Nullah from Tung Kwong Road to Prince Edward Road East;
- (c) Redevelopment of civil servants' quarters developed under the Civil Servants Co-operative Building Society Scheme; and
- (d) Provision of a military dock at the New Central Harbourfront.

(Post-meeting note: At the request of the Administration and with the concurrence of the Chairman, "Tung Chung New Town Extension Study - Stage 2 Public Engagement" had been added to the agenda of the next meeting and the meeting was extended to end at 6:30 pm. Members were informed of the revised agenda vide LC Paper No. CB(1)1013/12-13 issued on 9 May 2013.)

3. The Chairman reminded members that the Panel would hold a special meeting on Saturday, 1 June 2013 at 9:00 am to receive public views on "Enhancing land supply strategy: reclamation outside Victoria Harbour and rock cavern development - Stage 2 public engagement". Letters would be sent out to relevant organizations to invite them to attend the meeting and an invitation for public submissions would be placed on the website of the Legislative Council ("LegCo").

III PWP Item No. 259RS -- Cycle tracks connecting North West New Territories with North East New Territories -- Tuen Mun to Sheung Shui section (Stage 1)

(LC Paper No. CB(1)862/12-13(03) -- Administration's paper on PWP Item No. 259RS -- Cycle tracks connecting North West New Territories with North East New Territories

LC Paper No. CB(1)862/12-13(04) -- Paper on the proposed cycle track network in the New Territories prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat (Background brief)

4. With the aid of a powerpoint presentation, Project Manager (New Territories North & West), Civil Engineering and Development Department ("PM(NTN&W)/CEDD") introduced the proposal to part upgrade PWP Item No. 259RS "Cycle tracks connecting North West New Territories with North East New Territories" to Category A for the construction of Stage 1 works of the Tuen Mun - Sheung Shui section at an estimated cost of \$295.4 million in money-of-the-day prices, including the provision of three entry/exit hubs ("the hubs") and five resting stations. Subject to the funding approval of the Finance Committee, the project would commence in September 2013 for completion by end-2016.

(Post-meeting note: A soft copy of the powerpoint presentation materials (LC Paper No. CB(1)914/12-13(01)) was circulated to members by email on 24 April 2013.)

5. The Chairman reminded members that in accordance with Rule 83A of the Rules of Procedure ("RoP") of LegCo, they should disclose the nature of any direct or indirect pecuniary interests relating to the subjects under discussion at the meeting before they spoke on the subjects. Under Rule 84 of RoP of LegCo, a member should not vote upon any question in which he had a direct pecuniary interest except under certain circumstances as provided for in Rule 84.

Policy on use of the bicycle

6. Mr WU Chi-wai pointed out that the bicycle was used by members of the general public as a means of transportation in some areas in the New Territories ("NT"), but under the policy of the Administration, cycling was a recreational activity. On the other hand, the cyclists who intended to use the bicycle for short-distance travel had no choice but to ride on the road because the design of cycle tracks did not facilitate short-distance travel. While the

bicycle was not classified as a road vehicle, there was concern about how cycling on the road could be regulated. He asked the Administration to review its policy in this respect to ensure the safety of the cyclists as well as other road users.

7. Ms Claudia MO asked whether the Administration had any plan to incorporate cycle tracks as part of the transport system and would consider in the long run installing automatic bicycle rental facilities, like those in Taipei, for the public to rent and return bicycles at different places along the cycle tracks. She pointed out that these facilities would be useful to those who used the bicycle as a means of transportation.

8. Principal Assistant Secretary (Works)3, Development Bureau ("PAS/DEVB(Works)3") explained that the proposed cycle track network was designed and intended for leisure and recreational purpose rather than as a means of transportation. As to Mr WU's concern about regulation of cycling on the road, he undertook to convey it to the Transport Department ("TD").

Development of a comprehensive cycle track network in the New Territories

9. Members noted that the Administration had been making efforts in constructing a comprehensive cycle track network in the NT. With reference to the delay in the completion of the Sheung Shui - Ma On Shan subsection, Mr CHAN Hak-kan asked about the latest progress of the works and whether the Administration had learnt any lesson from the delay. PAS/DEV(Works)3 advised that the delay was mainly due to difficult land issues and inclement weather. The Sheung Shui - Ma On Shan subsection was currently scheduled for completion in end-2013. Well aware of the public's aspiration for a comprehensive cycle track network in the NT, the Administration would take forward the works for the less controversial sections as soon as possible and implement the project in phases. He added that developing the cycle track network involved the provision of ancillary facilities, such as retaining walls and bridges across streams. The works progress might be affected in the event of occurrence of inclement weather.

10. Showing support for the proposed project, Miss Alice MAK said that the Hong Kong Federation of Trade Unions had proposed in 2002 the construction of a cycle track network covering the whole territory of Hong Kong to promote cycling tourism and development of local economy along the track. She expressed disappointment that the existing cycle tracks in Hong Kong were fragmented and asked about the Administration's overall

plan to join the various segments to form a continuous track. She opined that it was opportune to promote cycling tourism as cycling had become a popular sport activity in Hong Kong in recent years.

11. Miss CHAN Yuen-han shared Miss MAK's views about the need for an overall plan to implement a comprehensive cycle track network in Hong Kong. By way of illustration, she said that a continuous cycle track from Chai Wan to Sheung Wan by the waterfront in Hong Kong Island would be very attractive to the public, not only as a facility for recreational purposes, but also as a means for travelling to or from work or school. She suggested that a waterfront cycle track should be constructed while the works on the Central - Wan Chai Bypass and Island Eastern Corridor Link was currently in progress.

12. PAS/DEVB(Works)3 said that the Administration had a comprehensive plan to implement a continuous cycle track network in the NT from Tsuen Wan to Ma On Shan by connecting existing cycle tracks and constructing new tracks. The network would comprise the Tuen Mun - Ma On Shan backbone section, the Tsuen Wan - Tuen Mun backbone section and some branching-off sections. In view of the considerable length of 82 kilometres of the proposed network, the Administration was implementing it in phases. The less controversial sections would be constructed first. These sections would be opened for public enjoyment upon their completion. It was hoped that the opening of the completed sections could garner public support on the implementation of the remaining sections. The Administration had considered promoting cycling tourism when designing the alignment of the new tracks, the hubs and the resting stations. In this connection, the tracks would be located near scenic spots such as Nam Sang Wai and Ping Shan Heritage Trail.

The Tuen Mun - Sheung Shui backbone section

13. Mr CHAN Han-pan stated support for the proposed project and the Administration's implementation approach of developing the comprehensive cycle track network in phases. However, considering that no land resumption was required for the development of the cycle track network, he held the view that the project duration of three years was too long. He asked if the Administration could expedite the works, say, by engaging a few contractors to undertake the works at the same time.

14. PM(NTN&W)/CEDD replied that two portions of works to be constructed under the proposed project were located near ecologically

sensitive areas. After consulting the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department ("AFCD"), CEDD would require the contractor to refrain from using heavy construction equipment from April to September each year to minimize the impact of the works on the birds living in the areas. Three hubs and five resting stations amounting to 11 250 square metres and 1 230 square metres respectively and some building structures would be constructed. Given the substantial scale of the works and the site constraints, the Administration considered the three-year construction period reasonable.

15. Referring to paragraph 9 of the Administration's paper, Mr Tony TSE sought details of the Environmental Review ("ER") on the new cycle tracks and resting stations along Kam Tin River, Sheung Yue River and Shek Sheung River. PAS/DEV(Works)3 advised that the cycle tracks and the resting stations along those three rivers were designated projects under the Environmental Impact Assessment ("EIA") Ordinance (Cap. 499). The EIA for these works had been completed in 2009. Since then, there had been minor design revisions due to circumstantial changes, such as changes in landscape design, to suit the latest site situation. PM(NTN&W)/CEDD added that the ER would only involve minor technical amendments. The Administration was confident that the Environmental Permit for the concerned portions of the works would be granted soon.

16. Mr LEUNG Che-cheung expressed support for the proposed project as cycling had become a popular leisure activity. He asked the Administration to expedite the construction of the subsection between Yuen Long and Tuen Mun. He expressed regret about the deferment of the works for the subsection between Sheung Shui and Yuen Long due to environmental concerns about the impact of the works on the birds' habitat at Hop Shing Wai. He asked when the EIA for this subsection would be completed and suggested that, as an alternative alignment, the subsection could go through Castle Peak Road instead of Hop Shing Wai. PAS/DEVB(Works)3 said that the Administration would consider various mitigation measures including different possible alignments of the cycle track, to minimize the impact on the birds at Hop Shing Wai.

The Tsuen Wan - Tuen Mun backbone section

17. Mr CHAN Han-pan opined that the Administration should have taken forward the construction of the backbone section from Tsuen Wan to Tuen Mun during the widening of Castle Peak Road. Given that some local residents objected strongly to the alignment of certain portions of this

backbone section, causing delay in construction works, he asked the Administration about the plans to resolve the problem.

18. While supporting the proposed project and the Administration's efforts in providing a comprehensive cycle track network in the NT, Mr Albert CHAN considered that the works for the Tsuen Wan - Tuen Mun backbone section should have been undertaken earlier during the widening of Castle Peak Road. He condemned the former Secretary for Transport for not proceeding with the construction of a cycle track between Tsuen Wan and Tuen Mun, which should have been gazetted as part of the works for widening Castle Peak Road, on technical and financial grounds. He called on the Administration to expedite the works for the Tsuen Wan - Tuen Mun backbone section.

19. PM(NTN&W)/CEDD advised that objections had been received from local residents in respect of the proposed alignment of the cycle tracks near Sham Tseng and Gold Coast. A consultancy study to review the alignment was being conducted. Site visits had been made with some local District Council members to gauge their views on the alignment options. The consultant would assess the merits of different alignments and design options for formulating a proposal for public consultation, tentatively scheduled for the third quarter of 2013.

Branching-off sections

20. Dr KWOK Ka-ki asked about the progress of the branching-off section from Ma On Shan to Sai Kung and whether it would further be extended to Tseung Kwan O in future. PM(NTN&W)/CEDD said that the EIA on the proposed branching-off section from Ma On Shan to Sai Kung was being carried out and the alignment of the section along Sai Sha Road was being reviewed to minimize the environmental impact on the trees there. In view of the site constraints at the roundabout at Tai Mong Tsai Road, a cycle bridge over the roundabout had been proposed but there was concern about the visual impact of the cycle bridge. An alternative alignment was being examined. Hence, it would take some more time to complete the EIA.

21. Mr WU Chi-wai pointed out that the cycle tracks in Tin Shui Wai were fragmented and asked whether they would be joined up to form a continuous track under the present project. He stressed that a continuous track without any intersections with roads would be most welcome by the cyclists. PAS/DEV(Works)3 said that the works for developing a comprehensive cycle track network in the NT would not cover local sections inside Tin Shui Wai new town. PM(NTN&W)/CEDD added that TD had

commissioned a consultancy study in 2010 to review the existing cycle tracks in nine new towns, including Tin Shui Wai. The study would identify the deficiencies of these tracks, propose improvement measures with reference to overseas experience and local situations, and recommend an implementation programme for making the improvements. He expected that the study would address Mr WU's concern on the cycle tracks in Tin Shui Wai.

22. Dr Fernando CHEUNG expressed support for the project but was concerned that the development of a branching-off section to be constructed at the next stage might adversely affect the landscape at Nam Sang Wai. Moreover, he was worried that the construction works would cause damage to the wetlands in the area.

23. PM(NTN&W)/CEDD advised that an EIA had been conducted on the branching-off section at Nam Sang Wai. The EIA report had been made available for public inspection in March 2013. CEDD was working with AFCD and the Environmental Protection Department on the necessary follow-up actions to address the views and concerns expressed by the public on the EIA report. Under the statutory procedure, the Advisory Council on the Environment would, having regard to the feedback of the public, provide views to the Director of Environmental Protection on the report. It was envisaged that the way forward for the branching-off section at Nam Sang Wai would be clearer in the second half of 2013. PAS/DEVB(Works)3 added that the Administration would strive to develop a branching-off section at Nam Sang Wai to meet public aspiration, while ensuring that the requirements under the EIA Ordinance were complied with.

Entry/exit hubs and resting stations

24. Miss Alice MAK was disappointed that the design of the entry/exit hubs to be constructed under the present project along the cycle tracks in Tuen Mun, Yuen Long and Tin Shui Wai, as illustrated in the layout plans provided by the Administration, were no big difference from the existing hubs along the Tolo Harbour cycle track. In order to attract more cyclists to use the new cycle tracks, she suggested that stalls selling products with local characteristics should be set up at these hubs. Echoing Miss MAK's views, Miss CHAN Yuen-han proposed that the Administration should consult the local communities in the areas covered by the cycle tracks on the stalls to be set up at the hubs in order to give full play of the characteristics of these communities. Mr WU Chi-wai opined that the design of the hubs should allow flexibility to set up stalls.

25. Pointing out that the facilities at the hubs and resting stations should meet the present-day needs of cyclists, Mr Tony TSE enquired whether the Administration had consulted relevant cycling organizations on the preferred facilities to be provided at the hubs and the resting stations. In reply, PAS/DEVB(Works)3 said that the Administration had attached importance to public views and participation in the provision of new cycle tracks and had consulted some cycling organizations. In this connection, an open competition had been held on the design of bicycle parking racks. He stressed that the public were welcome to express their views on the facilities to be provided along cycle tracks and at the hubs.

26. Dr Fernando CHEUNG enquired whether the facilities on the cycle tracks, at the hubs and the resting stations would be barrier-free, friendly to wheelchair users and people with disabilities ("PwDs"). He emphasized that these facilities should be designed with PwDs in mind. PAS/DEV(Works)3 replied in the affirmative.

27. Dr KWOK Ka-ki showed support for the proposed project and sought details about the locations of the hubs and the facilities to be provided under the project. PAS/DEVB(Works)3 explained that three hubs would be provided along the existing cycle tracks in Tuen Mun, Tin Shui Wai and Yuen Long. At the hubs, various facilities, such as bicycle rental/repair kiosks, bicycle parking spaces, route maps, information boards, first aid stations, refreshment kiosks and toilets, would be provided where appropriate. He reiterated that the facilities would meet the barrier-free requirements. Besides, visitors could make use of the carparking spaces at the West Rail Stations near the hubs.

28. Mr LEUNG Che-cheung asked if cyclists could rent a bicycle at one hub/resting station and return it at another, and whether the facilities at the hubs/resting stations were intended to serve non-cyclists as well. If the answer to the latter question was in the affirmative, he suggested that the facilities at the hub should be enriched, such as to provide sufficient resting places for non-cyclists. PAS/DEV(Works)3 said that both cyclists and non-cyclists were welcome to make use of the facilities provided at the hubs. On the renting and returning arrangements for the bicycles, he undertook to convey members' suggestion to the Leisure and Cultural Services Department for their consideration as to whether relevant provisions could be included in the tender documents for the operation of the bicycle rental kiosks.

Bicycle parking spaces

29. Ir Dr LO Wai-kwok said that in view of the increasing popularity of cycling as a sport activity and as an environmentally friendly means of transportation, he supported the works project proposed by the Administration as well as the provision of a comprehensive cycle track network in the NT. Given that many residents in the NT would use the bicycle for making short trips as well as for daily commuting to and from a railway station, he expressed concern about the adequacy of supply of cycle parking spaces near the railway stations. He enquired about the Administration's measures to tackle the problems related to the management of bicycle parking spaces and enforcement against illegally parked bicycles,

30. PAS/DEVB(Works)3 said that 600 bicycle parking spaces would be provided at the hubs and the resting stations under the project. These spaces could be used by local residents who used the bicycle for short trips or "park and ride" purposes. He stressed that the Administration would try to provide sufficient bicycle parking spaces but site constraints had to be taken into account. PM(NTN&W)/CEDD added that the new parking spaces, together with some 1 200 existing parking spaces at the West Rail Yuen Long, Tin Shui Wai and Tuen Mun Stations, should be able to meet the demand of local residents. On the measures to tackle illegal parking of bicycles, he pointed out that the Lands Department could, under section 6 of the Land (Miscellaneous Provisions) Ordinance (Cap. 28), remove properties from unleased land after posting a notice for a certain specified period, normally two days. Joint enforcement actions would be taken by the Lands Department, the Home Affairs Department and the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department to remove illegally parked bicycles. In taking the enforcement actions, the Police's assistance would be sought if necessary.

31. Mr CHAN Han-pan expressed concern about the inadequate supply of bicycle parking facilities in Cheung Chau. He remarked that illegal parking of bicycles along the pedestrian walkways had become an eyesore and asked whether the Administration had assessed the number of bicycle parking spaces required in each district. In response, PM(NTN&W)/CEDD said that the Administration had incorporated the provision of cycle tracks and bicycle parking facilities in the planning and development of new towns. As community parking spaces for bicycles were beyond the scope of the present project, he undertook to convey members' views to the relevant bureaux/departments.

Cycling safety

32. While supporting the proposed project, Mr CHAN Hak-kan expressed concern about the increasing number of accidents involving cyclists and the inadequate emergency entry/exit points provided along the Tolo Harbour cycle track. In his view, the distance between the nearest two entry/exit points along a cycle track was generally too long. He asked if the design of the new cycle tracks under the proposed project would make improvements in this respect. In particular, he enquired whether the Administration had set any target time limits for an emergency vehicle to reach a location on a cycle track should an accident happen. PAS/DEV(Works)3 said that there were existing roads, such as Castle Peak Road, adjacent to the cycle tracks of the proposed project. In case of accidents at the cycle tracks, emergency vehicles could park on these roads. The cycle tracks would be designed according to the standards promulgated by TD.

33. Miss CHAN Yuen-han suggested that the Administration should work with local cycling organizations to educate the public about safe cycling. PAS/DEVB(Works)3 advised that the Administration had considered safety issues and had consulted the cycling organizations in designing the proposed project. The Administration would continue to consult local cycling organizations in respect of safety measures for cyclists during the detailed design stage.

34. Dr KWOK Ka-ki pointed out that some existing cycle tracks was too narrow to accommodate the large number of cyclists during public holidays and this might easily lead to accidents. He asked if the Administration would construct wider cycle tracks under new projects and widen some existing tracks. PAS/DEV(Works)3 said that the width of some existing cycle tracks in the areas covered by the present proposal might not meet the width requirement of the prevailing standard. These tracks were built many years ago and were less than three metres in width. Works would be undertaken to widen these tracks to 3.5 to four metres, subject to site constraints. PM(NTN&W) added that four metres was the current standard width of a cycle track and the width might need to be reduced to 3.5 metres or slightly less to cater for site constraints.

35. Mr CHAN Kin-por supported the proposed project and the provision of new cycle tracks to promote cycling as a sport and leisure activity. Given that more than 2 000 accidents involving cyclists had occurred in the first 10 months of 2012, he asked about the details of the Administration's plans to promote cycling safety, such as issuing guidelines, organizing courses for cyclists and undertaking inter-departmental enforcement actions. He also

asked whether the design of the new cycle tracks would take into account the safety of both cyclists and other road users.

36. PAS(Works)3/DEVB said that in designing cycle tracks, the Administration would take into consideration the need to ensure the safety of cyclists and other road users. PM(NTN&W)/CEDD advised that according to TD's stringent requirements on the design of cycle tracks, some features had been incorporated to reduce the speed of bicycles, such as maximum gradient of 3% where possible and limiting the lengths of long ramps. The Administration would convey members' views on cycling safety to TD.

37. Mr Albert CHAN asked the Administration to review the current legislation which required cyclists to alight at pedestrian junctions even when no pedestrians were passing by. He suggested that the Administration should implement appropriate road crossing design so that cyclists did not have to alight at these crossings. PAS/DEVB(Works)3 undertook to convey Mr CHAN's suggestions to TD.

38. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung urged the Administration to take effective measures to segregate cyclists from pedestrians at road crossings and prevent cyclists from riding on footpaths. He also suggested that the Administration should consider requiring roller riders to use the cycle tracks instead of pedestrian walkways. PAS/DEVB(Works)3 said that to help avoid accidents, bollards were installed at pedestrian crossings to ensure that cyclists would be alerted of the pedestrian crossings. Warning signs were placed wherever appropriate to remind cyclists that riding on footpaths would be subject to prosecution.

Other issues

39. Mr Abraham SHEK expressed appreciation for the Administration's acceptance of members' views on providing a comprehensive cycle track network in the NT for public enjoyment. He suggested that, to promote cycling, the Administration should provide convenient kiosks for the public to borrow bicycles for free. He said that, comparing with the costs for developing the comprehensive cycle track network, the costs for providing bicycles to the public for free for temporary use were not significant. PAS/DEVB(Works)3 noted Mr SHEK's suggestions but advised that the Administration had no plan to provide free use of bicycles at this stage.

40. Ms Claudia MO asked whether the Administration would consider holding large-scale cycling competition similar to La Tour de France.

PAS/DEVB(Works)3 responded that the width of the cycle tracks in Hong Kong would not be sufficient for cycling competition, whereas La Tour de France was held on the roads.

Submission of the proposal to the Public Works Subcommittee

41. In concluding the discussion on the item, the Chairman said that members in general supported the Administration's proposal to seek the recommendation of the Public Works Subcommittee for part-upgrading PWP Item No. 259RS to Category A.

IV Planning and Engineering Study for Housing Sites in Yuen Long South -- Stage 1 community engagement

(LC Paper No. CB(1)862/12-13(05) -- Administration's paper on Planning and Engineering Study for Housing Sites in Yuen Long South -- Investigation -- Stage 1 community engagement

LC Paper No. CB(1)862/12-13(06) -- Paper on planning and engineering study for housing sites in Yuen Long south prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat (Background brief)

42. Deputy Secretary for Development (Planning & Lands)1 ("DS/DEV(P&L)1") briefed members on the background of the Planning and Engineering Study for Housing Sites in Yuen Long South - Investigation ("the Study"). He said that in the 2011-2012 Policy Address, the then Chief Executive had announced that the Administration would explore the possibility to convert some 150 hectares ("ha") of agricultural land in Yuen Long and North District currently used for industrial purposes, temporary storage or which was deserted, into housing land. Exploring the development potential of the land in Yuen Long South ("YLS") was one of the measures mentioned in the 2013 Policy Address for increasing long-term land supply. In May 2012, the Administration had consulted the Panel on the scope and approach for the Study. Subsequently, the Administration obtained the relevant funding approval from the Finance Committee in July 2012 to carry out the Study. The Study included a three-stage community

engagement. The Administration had launched the Stage 1 community engagement in April 2013 to solicit public views on the development opportunities and constraints, key issues and guiding principles of the Study.

43. With the aid of a powerpoint presentation, Assistant Director of Planning/Territorial, Planning Department ("AD(T)/PlanD") briefed members on the issues, guiding principles and preliminary public views on development in YLS, the activities to be held as well as the stakeholders to be consulted during the Stage 1 community engagement.

(Post-meeting note: A soft copy of the powerpoint presentation materials (LC Paper No. CB(1)914/12-13(02)) was circulated to members by email on 24 April 2013.)

Development potential of the area covered by the Study

44. The Panel noted that the Study covered an area of about 1 500 ha in YLS ("the Study Area"). The Administration had preliminarily identified the Potential Development Areas ("PDAs") for investigation, which spanned over about 200 ha of land, located to the south of Yuen Long New Town and bounded by Yuen Long Highway, Kung Um Road and Tai Lam Country Park. Dr KWOK Ka-ki enquired about the development potential of the Study Area outside the PDAs. He was concerned that the consultancy fee for the Study was not justified if the Study covered a large area which was of low development potential. AD(T)/PlanD replied that whilst the Administration did not rule out the possibility that, after conducting the relevant technical assessments, some land in the Study Area outside the PDAs might be found suitable for housing development, a majority of the areas covered by the Study Area such as Yuen Long town centre and Ping Shan were already developed areas. The Study Area covered a much wider area including these developed areas so that the impacts of the proposed development in the PDAs on the neighbouring areas could be examined under the technical assessments of the Study, such as traffic and sewage impact assessments.

Impact of the proposed development on existing villagers

45. Dr Kenneth CHAN said that the Civic Party welcomed the Administration's initiative to explore the development potential of existing degraded brownfield land and to launch a community engagement exercise to gauge community views. He cautioned that, in making arrangements for resumption and clearance of land in YLS in future, the Administration

should prevent the recurrence of the Choi Yuen Village incident. He enquired whether the indigenous villagers would be affected by the proposed development.

46. DS/DEV(P&L)1 replied that the PDAs did not cover the villages which had long existed. These villages were usually inhabited by indigenous villagers. While quite a large proportion of land in the PDAs was currently occupied by open storage yards, workshops and warehouses, the Administration would not rule out the possibility that some residents would be affected by the proposed development. The Study would take into account the possible impact of the development on these residents. In response to Dr Kenneth CHAN's enquiry on whether the Study Area included any existing country parks, AD(T)/PlanD advised that the Study did not involve country parks.

Community engagement

47. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung was concerned about how the Administration would weigh the views of various sectors on the development of YLS. Given that the main objective of the Study was to examine and optimize the development potential of the land in YLS for residential development to meet the pressing demand for housing of Hong Kong people, he considered that the stakeholders of the community engagement exercise would include the general public, not only the land owners, farmers and users of open storage facilities, etc. in the area. Among the locals, who included land owners, tenants, farmers and business operators, there would be diverse views on the proposed development as well. He cautioned that the Administration should learn a lesson from the public engagement exercise for the planning of the North East New Territories New Development Areas ("NENT NDAs") and improved the existing approach for collecting and assessing public views on development projects.

48. DS/DEV(P&L)1 replied that as set out in the Administration's paper, the stakeholders of the Study included local residents, farmers, business operators, concern groups and professional institutes. To make local residents, farmers and business operators aware of the Study as well as the community engagement exercise, roving exhibitions would be arranged in YLS and publicity materials would be sent out by post to all addresses within the PDAs. Furthermore, a Study website had been launched to enable the promulgation of the community engagement materials as well as to collect public comments. A community forum would be organized to serve as a platform for the public to express and exchange views and concerns.

49. With reference to the preliminary public views on the Study as mentioned by AD(T)/PlanD, Dr Kenneth CHAN enquired about the channels through which such views had been collected, given that the Stage 1 community engagement was still underway. AD(T)/PlanD replied that before seeking the Finance Committee's funding approval in July 2012 for carrying out the Study, the Administration had consulted the Town Planning and Development Committee of the Yuen Long District Council and relevant Rural Committees.

Time required for conducting a planning study

50. The Deputy Chairman and Mr CHAN Kam-lam were of the view that it was important for the Administration to conduct the community engagement exercise for the Study in an effective way. The Deputy Chairman urged the Administration to draw reference to past experience in public consultation on development projects so as to seek improvement. He opined that the effectiveness of public consultation exercises did not hinge on the number of rounds of consultations conducted. In response, AD(T)/PlanD admitted that there was always room for improvement in light of past experience. He assured members that the Administration would strive to achieve a comprehensive and in-depth consultation for the Study.

51. Mr CHAN Kam-lam considered that the Administration should not embark the community engagement exercise from scratch but should have formulated a preliminary proposal for public comments. Amendments to the preliminary proposal could then be made in light of the comments received. He held the view that with proper land use planning, it should not be difficult to make better use of the sites currently occupied by open storage yards, warehouses and workshops and to release the development potential of the private land in the area. He urged the Administration to proceed with the proposed YLS development project in good time to address the pressing housing shortage problem.

52. DS/DEV(P&L)1 responded that the Administration would conduct the community engagement exercise in a focused and timely manner. He explained that based on the public views to be collected from the Stage 1 community engagement on the key issues and guiding principles for developing YLS, together with the results of technical assessments on the traffic, drainage, sewerage and other infrastructure facilities in the Study Area, the Administration would work out a Preliminary Outline

Development Plan for YLS for the Stage 2 community engagement, tentatively scheduled for end-2013.

53. Mr LEUNG Che-cheung said that the Administration had been conducting studies on the development of a number of sites in Yuen Long, including YLS, Hung Shui Kiu, Kam Tin South, etc. for quite some time in parallel. He considered it important for the Administration to have a better control on the timeframes for these studies to be completed and urged the Administration to clarify how such studies would help address the pressing housing problem in Hong Kong. The Chairman remarked that the Administration should devote Government resources to the sites which were practically suitable for development in order to achieve fruitful outcomes and ensure effective use of public money.

Land resumption/compensation arrangements and implementation approach

54. Noting that about 85% of the land in the proposed PDAs was under private and multiple ownership, Dr KWOK Ka-ki was concerned whether large developers had already started to acquire at low cost the land lots in the PDAs with a view to seeking compensation from the Government when the latter proceeded to resume the land to implement the proposed development. He enquired about the estimated amount of public money needed for land resumption and compensation in the area.

55. In response, DS/DEV(P&L)1 explained that the Study would focus on identifying housing sites in the PDAs for private and public housing developments and associated infrastructure improvement works. It would also examine the implementation approach for the proposed development. He advised that the Development Bureau did not have information about land areas in the PDAs owned by individual private developers, which was also not relevant to the planning study.

56. Mr James TIEN declared that he was engaged in property development business. He pointed out that there would be an acute shortage of housing land supply in Hong Kong starting from 2014-2015, after all the residential sites included in the 2013-2014 Land Sale Programme had been disposed of. Given that the Study comprised several rounds of community engagement, he was concerned that it would take years to complete and the development of YLS would not be able to start timely to meet the pressing housing demand. He held the view that, to accelerate land development, it was important to offer acceptable compensation arrangements to the residents to be affected by the development project. According to past

experience, the Administration took considerable time to resume and clear private land for development. He considered that if the large developers were allowed to pursue their own housing development projects in the PDAs with the land they purchased and aggregated through commercial arrangements, the development process might take a shorter time. In this connection, he enquired about the implementation approach to be taken by the Administration for the development of YLS.

57. DS/DEV(P&L)1 replied that the implementation approach for developing YLS would be one of the issues to be examined in the Study. Whether the development should be implemented by resumption of all the private land planned for development or there would be flexibility for some form of private-sector participation had yet to be considered. As regards Mr TIEN's concern about supply of housing land in the short-to-medium term, he said that, as announced in the Chief Executive's 2013 Policy Address, the Administration would strive to identify as many developed sites suitable for rezoning to residential use as possible so that housing development could start as early as possible at these sites. He assured members that the Administration would actively develop land resources to maintain a continuous and stable supply of land to cater for the housing need of Hong Kong people.

Private-to-subsidized housing ratio and development intensity

58. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung enquired about the planned private-to-subsidized housing ratio for the PDAs. He considered that if the development was predominated by private housing, it would not help resolve the housing shortage problem. DS/DEV(P&L)1 responded that the private-to-subsidized housing ratio for the PDAs was a subject to be examined in the Study.

59. Mr LEUNG Che-cheung held the view that in developing YLS, the Administration should take into account the need to preserve the characteristics of the localities. The proposed housing development should fit in with the surrounding environment. Given that Yuen Long town centre, which was near the PDAs, was already busy, he cautioned that the Administration should avoid over-provision of high-density residential buildings in YLS. It was also essential to maintain a balanced development with a view to retaining the rural characteristics of the PDAs and the nearby areas. He pointed out that the Administration would need to listen carefully to the views of residents of Ping Shan and Shap Pat Heung, which were near the PDAs, on the proposed development.

Existing conditions of the Potential Development Areas and the surroundings

60. Dr Kenneth CHAN was concerned whether there were cases of non-compliance with permitted land uses in the PDAs and enquired about the total area of land involved in such cases. He also queried about the measures to be taken by the Administration and the public expenditure to be incurred in dealing with such cases in the event that the land involved had to be resumed to implement the proposed development. AD(T)/PlanD replied that there were cases involving unauthorized use of land in the PDAs. He asserted that the Administration had all along taken enforcement action against such cases having regard to the established procedures and the relevant statutory powers under the Town Planning Ordinance (Cap. 131), but such action should not impede the progress of the Study. Dr Kenneth CHAN stressed that the non-compliant uses should not be regularized as a result of the Study.

61. The Deputy Chairman and Ir Dr LO Wai-kwok supported taking the opportunity of the Study to review the existing land uses in YLS to achieve an effective use of land resources. The Deputy Chairman pointed out that the proliferation of open storage yards, warehouses, workshops and industrial uses had resulted in deterioration of the environment, hence making it impossible for farmers to continue their agricultural practices. He considered that the Administration should not wait until the implementation of the development project to improve the land uses and environment in YLS. He suggested that, in taking forward the planning and development of the PDAs, the Administration should allow the existing industrial operations and economic activities to continue as far as practicable and put them on the right track. The Administration noted the Deputy Chairman's view. In response to the Deputy Chairman's enquiry about the amount of arable agricultural land in the PDAs, AD(T)/PlanD replied that such land made up about seven percent of the land in the PDAs.

62. Ir Dr LO Wai-kwok remarked that it might not be practicable for the Administration to consolidate the existing land uses in the PDAs on one hand and to avoid resumption of private land on the other. He opined that open storage, recycling yards and port back-up facilities had proliferated in the areas because it was difficult for the operations of some of these facilities to be carried out in the urban areas. He considered it a challenge for the Administration to allow such operations to co-exist with the existing

agricultural activities as well as the future residential development in a harmonious way.

63. DS/DEV(P&L)1 responded that 85% of the land in the PDAs was under private and multiple ownership and a certain amount of it was held by "Tso Tong (祖堂)". In view of the complex land ownership issues, the Study would carefully examine and recommend a suitable implementation approach for developing the PDAs with a view to striking a balance between respecting private land ownership and the need for development. AD(T)/PlanD supplemented that according to a preliminary study, 47% of the land was currently occupied by open storage yards, which was not an effective way of land utilization. As many of these storage yards were not container-related, the operations might be accommodated in multi-storey industrial buildings or warehouses. The Study would assess the socio-economic impact of the phasing-out of these uses. Based on the results of the assessment, the Administration would consider whether it should earmark some sites in YLS or other areas to consolidate these storage yards. The views of local warehouse and factory operators would be sought.

64. In concluding the discussion on the item, the Chairman urged the Administration to take note of members' views on the Study.

[To allow sufficient time for discussion, the Chairman directed that the meeting be extended to 6:15 pm.]

V Regrading of directorate posts in Development Bureau and its group of departments

(LC Paper No. CB(1)862/12-13(07) -- Administration's paper on regrading of directorate posts in Development Bureau and its group of departments)

65. With the aid of a powerpoint presentation, Permanent Secretary for Development(Works)("PS/DEV(Works)") briefed members on the proposed regrading of three directorate posts in the Works Branch of the Development Bureau ("DEVB"), one directorate post in the Planning Department ("PlanD") and one directorate post in CEDD; as well as the proposed change

of seven directorate posts in the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department from multi-disciplinary posts to designated grade to meet changing operational needs, and enhance staff planning and utilization of limited human resources. He said that the proposals were cost-neutral and would not result in the creation of additional posts. The Administration had consulted members of the professional grades in the relevant departments under the purview of the Planning and Lands Branch as well as the Works Branch of DEVB. The staff in general welcomed the proposals. Subject to members' support, the Administration would proceed to seek the recommendation of the Establishment Subcommittee and approval of the Finance Committee for the proposals in May and June 2003 respectively.

(Post-meeting note: A soft copy of the powerpoint presentation materials (LC Paper No. CB(1)914/12-13(03)) was circulated to members by email on 24 April 2013.)

66. Ir Dr LO Wai-kwok said that he supported the proposals given that they did not require additional funding and members of the professional grades in the relevant Government departments had raised no objection to the proposals. Noting that the Administration was facing increasing workload generated from its tasks to increase land supply and the large number of capital works projects as reflected from the soaring expenditure of over \$70 billion in each of the next few years, he stressed the importance for the Administration to look into its long-term manpower demand. In response, PS/DEV(Works) advised that the Administration had all along kept the manpower situation of Government departments under constant review and would continue to do so in future.

67. The Deputy Chairman expressed support to the Administration's proposals, which he considered would enhance staff planning and utilization of limited staff resources. Noting that the Administration had proposed to regrade a directorate post, namely Chief Town Planner/Cross-boundary Infrastructure & Development ("CTP/CID") (D1), to a Chief Engineer ("CE") post to be filled only by an officer from the Engineer grade, he enquired whether the post would be filled by in-service staff or newly recruited staff. PS/DEV(Works) replied that posting and transfer of staff to fill up a post was subject to the discretion of the relevant Head of Grade and would be governed by the established staff selection process.

68. The Deputy Chairman further enquired whether staff from the Town Planner grade would accept a CE to fill a directorate post in PlanD and whether the arrangement for filling the post would change. PS/DEV(Works)

replied in the affirmative. He added that since 1996, the CTP/CID post had been consistently filled by CEs.

Submission of the proposals to the Establishment Subcommittee

69. In concluding the discussion on the item, the Chairman said that members in general supported the Administration's proposal to seek the endorsement of the Establishment Subcommittee for the regrading of directorate posts in DEVB and its group of departments as well as the proposed change of seven multi-disciplinary posts to designated grade posts.

VI Enhancing land supply strategy: reclamation and rock cavern development -- Stage 2 public engagement

(LC Paper No. CB(1)862/12-13(08) -- Administration's paper on enhancing land supply strategy: reclamation outside Victoria Harbour and rock cavern development -- Stage 2 public engagement

LC Paper No. CB(1)862/12-13(09) -- Paper on increasing land supply through reclamation outside Victoria Harbour and rock cavern development prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat (Updated background brief))

70. The Secretary for Development ("SDEV") introduced the Administration's paper on "Enhancing land supply strategy: reclamation outside Victoria Harbour and rock cavern development – Stage 2 public engagement" (LC Paper No. CB(1)862/12-13(08)). He said that during the Stage 1 public engagement ("PE"), the respondents generally supported the Administration's six pronged-approach to increasing land supply and building up a land reserve. Based on the agreed site selection criteria, the Administration had identified some proposed sites for reclamation and rock cavern development. During the Stage 2 PE, which had commenced on 21 March 2013 and would end on 21 June 2013, the Administration would consult the public and relevant stakeholders on the proposed five potential reclamation sites, viz. Lung Kwu Tan, Siu Ho Wan and Sunny Bay, Tsing Yi Southwest and Ma Liu Shui; the proposed artificial islands in central waters; and the three pilot schemes for rock cavern development, i.e. relocating

Diamond Hill Fresh Water and Salt Water Service Reservoirs, Sai Kung Sewage Treatment Works and Sham Tseng Sewage Treatment Works to caverns. Further studies were necessary to confirm the engineering feasibility of the shortlisted sites and to address the relevant technical issues. He remarked that reclamation had been a major source of land supply in the past but reclamation works had substantially declined in the past 10 years due to the enactment of the Protection of the Harbour Ordinance. While reclamation within Victoria Harbour was legally constrained and there were limits and constraints with other sources of land supply, it was necessary to resume land production by reclamation outside Victoria Harbour at an appropriate scale. He welcomed members' views on the Administration's proposals.

71. The Chairman declared that he was a Village Representative of the Lung Kwu Tan Village, which was near one of the five potential near-shore reclamation sites proposed by the Administration.

Reclamation as a source of land supply

72. Dr KWOK Ka-ki pointed out that the reclamation at the five potential sites could make up land of a total area of more than 600 hectares ("ha"). However, according to the Administration, not all of the future reclaimed land, such as that proposed to be developed at Siu Ho Wan and Sunny Bay, would be suitable for housing development. The proposed site at Lung Kwu Tan, situated in the vicinity of perceivably unpleasant facilities, was also unlikely to be suitable for residential development. As such, he queried the amount of land that could be used for housing development, in particular public housing development, from the proposed reclamation works. He was concerned that the reclaimed land would eventually be used for luxury residential developments. As there were more than 2 000 ha of idle land lots and 1 000 ha of brownfield sites in the New Territories which could be developed in a short time, he had reservation about the need for reclamation. Moreover, the planning, construction and development processes for reclamation took a long time. Reclamation was not a quick solution to the problem of housing land shortage.

73. SDEV explained that the future reclaimed land at Sunny Bay and Siu Ho Wan could be used for accommodating the facilities relocated from the urban areas, thereby releasing land in the urban areas for other uses including housing development. While there were brownfield sites at Yuen Long South and Hung Shui Kiu, these sites could not be developed without the provision of adequate transport, drainage and other infrastructural facilities.

If these brownfield sites were to be developed, comprehensive studies and planning were needed. He clarified that the amount of vacant land in the territory as mentioned in the reply to a Council question earlier was simply arrived at by subtracting the leased or allocated areas under respective land use zonings from the total areas covered by such zones on the statutory plans. Many sites on the so-called vacant land were fragmented and considered not suitable for development or with low development potentials. Those sites suitable for housing development once identified and made ready, would be included in the land sale programme or used for public housing. In reply to Dr KWOK Ka-ki's enquiry on the costs for developing new land, Permanent Secretary for Development (Works) ("PS/DEV(W)") advised that the cost for reclaimed land was about \$5,000 to \$13,000 per square metre depending on the water depth of the proposed location, whilst the cost for new land on ground was about \$12,000 to \$23,000 per square metre including the cost for land resumption.

74. Mr CHAN Kam-lam said that Hong Kong had an acute shortage of housing land to cater for the future increase in population. He observed that there were strong objections to some of the Administration's proposed measures to increase land supply, such as the North East New Territories New Development Areas ("NENT NDAs") proposal, and that resumption of private land for development had often been criticized as a form of transfer of benefits to property developers. Such objections would stall Hong Kong's development and hinder the supply of new land to meet the imminent need of housing and other purposes. He supported the conduct of studies to ascertain the engineering feasibility of the shortlisted reclamation sites and to address the relevant technical issues. On the Administration's five proposed near-shore reclamation sites, he considered that priorities should be set for their development, taking in view the local environment. In his view, Lung Kwu Tan would not be suitable for housing development as there were some undesirable facilities nearby. Neither would Ma Liu Shui, where reclamation would affect the environment, be suitable. He suggested that the Administration should consider other sites with good accessibility, such as those in Sai Kung. He was in support of reclamation at suitable sites as a means to increase land supply in the long term. Taking into account that it would take a long time to complete a land development project, he suggested that the Administration should expedite the development process by compressing the timeframe of each stage, including the consultation stage. SDEV noted Mr CHAN's views.

75. Dr Fernando CHEUNG pointed out that as reclamation would have a significant adverse and irreversible impact on the natural habitat, the

Administration should first consider developing other available land sources, such as the idled sites in the New Territories, 800 ha of brownfield sites, 1 300 ha of land reserved for New Territories small house development and 1 500 ha of land zoned for industrial uses as well as the land designated as country parks. Justifications for the Administration's reclamation proposal were untenable given a decreasing natural population growth in Hong Kong. He noted that in 2012, the Administration had revised its estimate of Hong Kong's population in 2039 from 8.89 million downward to 8.47 million. Against a slowing growth in population, he considered that the Administration's reclamation proposal was in lack of a clear purpose and direction. Mr Gary FAN shared Dr Fernando CHEUNG's view and considered that the Administration should strive to develop vacant and under-utilized land before putting forward reclamation as an option of land supply.

76. In reply, SDEV said that even with a lower projected population of 8.47 million in 2041, there would still be a net increase of around 1 million. Even if NENT NDAs were to be proceeded as planned, the areas could only accommodate a population of about 150 000. To meet the strong demand for housing in future, the Administration had adopted a multi-pronged approach to increasing land supply. However, converting the country parks into housing land would require the consensus of society. To use industrial land for residential development would involve rezoning of private land. This would require the initiatives of the private sector and was beyond the control of the Administration in respect of the development timetable and scale. The reclamation sites proposed for the current (Stage 2) PE exercise were those considered to be causing less environmental impacts.

77. PS/DEV(W) added that in proposing the five near-shore reclamation sites and construction of artificial islands in the central waters for further studies, the Administration had taken into account the site selection criteria that the public considered more important. He advised that in the previous stage of PE (the Stage 1 PE), the public were consulted on the criteria for selecting sites for reclamation and cavern development. One of the criteria which the public considered very important was to lessen the impact on the environment. In this connection, the Administration had reviewed a total of 1,500 square kilometres of Hong Kong waters and considered that the central waters had the greatest opportunity for constructing artificial islands as the impact on the marine ecology could be minimized. Constructing artificial islands in the eastern waters would not be considered, having regard to the high ecological value thereof. The western waters were already constrained by a number of major infrastructure projects under planning or construction.

However, since the central waters was a navigation channel, further studies and assessments would be required to confirm the area's suitability as a location for developing artificial islands.

78. Ir Dr LO Wai-kyok said that during the Stage 1 PE, engineering professionals had already pointed out that the study had started too late as Hong Kong had an urgent need for land. In the past, major portions of land in Hong Kong, such as the airport platform at Chek Lap Kok, had been created by reclamation. However, since the establishment of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, reclamation works had slowed down. He agreed that Victoria Harbour was an important asset in Hong Kong and no reclamation should be conducted in the Harbour unless there were overriding public needs. As such, reclamation outside the Victoria Harbour should be considered. During the Stage 1 PE, he had expressed the view that the sites with artificial shorelines would be more suitable for reclamation than those with natural shorelines, taking into account the need to conserve the natural environment. He supported the Stage 2 PE and an on-going study on suitable reclamation sites. Pointing out that a long-term planning for land development to cater for the increase in population and other purposes was necessary, he was disappointed at the lack of such planning on the part of the Administration. He supported that reclamation should be adopted as one of the long-term measures for increasing land supply and asked the Administration to expedite the planning process for reclamation projects.

79. Mr CHAN Kin-por agreed to the Administration's proposal of conducting studies on the five proposed sites for reclamation and the construction of artificial islands. Citing that in some other countries and cities, such as Singapore and Macao, reclamation was a major source of land supply and had not made significant adverse impacts on the environment, he said that reclamation outside Victoria Harbour should not be excluded as a measure for increasing land supply in Hong Kong. As regards the opposing views to reclamation, he opined that the Administration should improve the communication with the public, including providing more information about the future uses of the reclaimed land, so that members of the public would understand more about the merits of the Administration's proposals. He considered that the construction of artificial islands was a preferable option that would have more public support than near-shore reclamation, as the former could generate a large piece of land, which could be connected to the urban areas, without altering the shorelines. In view of the potential benefits of developing artificial islands, the Administration should accord priorities to the studies on such projects. He asked the Administration to elaborate on the pros and cons of artificial islands.

80. PS/DEV(W) said that the central waters had great potential for developing artificial islands. Artificial islands had greater flexibility in planning and land use and could avoid encroaching on natural shorelines of high ecological value. It could be used for relocating facilities in the urban areas, hence releasing land for other purposes. However, an artificial island in the central waters could affect the navigation channel. The Administration would in due course seek funding approval from the Finance Committee for conducting a study on issues related to the construction of artificial islands in the central waters, including the impact on the operation of the port and ferries.

81. Mr Tony TSE supported reclamation outside Victoria Harbour as a strategy to increase housing land supply. He said that reclaimed land could be used for developing housing or accommodating public facilities relocated from the urban areas. In identifying suitable sites for reclamation, he suggested that apart from technical feasibilities, other factors should also be taken into consideration, such as environmental impacts, possible land uses, economic benefits and cost-effectiveness. To address public concerns about the future uses of reclaimed sites, the Administration should share the relevant plans and strategic considerations with the public.

Disposal of public fill

82. Ir Dr LO Wai-kwok pointed out that reclamation works would make good use of public fill which was at present either delivered to the Mainland for reclamation or stored at Tuen Mun and Tseung Kwan O. If public fill was used for reclamation, the storage space could be released for other uses. PS/DEV(W) said that since there had been no reclamation in Hong Kong during the past 10 years, starting from 2007, public fill had been delivered to Taishan for reclamation and 420 ha of land bank had been reclaimed there.

83. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung enquired whether there was any plan for the use of the sites in Tuen Mun and Tseung Kwan O now being used for storing public fill. AD(T)/PlanD explained that many years ago some land in remote areas had been designated for unpopular uses. Over the years, there had been more and more residential developments near these "remote" areas. If the unpopular uses were to continue at these areas, not only would the living environment of the nearby residential developments be affected, the development potential of these areas would also be constrained. The

Administration would study the future uses of these sites should they be vacated in future. He said that an example for reference was the proposed relocation of Sha Tin Sewage Treatment Works ("STSTW") to caverns. The use of the vacated site would require studies. But one guiding principle for the future use of the site was that it must be compatible with the land use of the vicinity areas. In response to Mr LEUNG's question on how long such studies would take, AD(T)/PlanD said that, for the vacated sites which were located at the periphery of the urban areas and supported by basic infrastructure such as roads and drainage systems, they would generally be more ready for rezoning for other development purposes. However, if these sites were to be used for housing development, a more detailed planning study would be required in order to ensure the adequacy of community facilities. SDEV said that the planning for such sites could start once it was decided that the existing facilities would be relocated. The planning studies would examine the housing mix, the number of population to be accommodated, the employment opportunities, community facilities needed and the layout of various facilities. He added that the relocation of STSTW was under public consultation, therefore the detailed plan for the use of the site was not yet available.

Cavern development as a source of land supply

84. Mr Tony TSE said that the Administration should consider the development costs, the land uses and energy consumption issues when exploring cavern development as a source of land supply. Considering that there was some consensus among the public on the benefits of relocating public facilities to caverns in order to release land in the urban areas, Ir Dr LO Wai-kyok urged the Administration to proceed with the formulation of concrete plans in this respect. He expressed support for the relocation of STSTW to caverns as it would improve the environment of the nearby areas. SDEV noted members' views.

Proposed sites for reclamation and public facilities for relocation to caverns

Ma Liu Shui

85. Mr CHAN Hak-kan declared that he was a resident of Ma Liu Shui. While supporting the Administration's efforts in increasing land supply, he highlighted the importance to minimize the impacts of reclamation works on the marine ecology, the local fishing industry and the living environment of the areas to be affected. He expressed concern that tall buildings built on the future reclaimed land at Ma Liu Shui would cause screen effect and

adversely affect the air ventilation in the inland. Given that there was already backward flow from Shing Mun River near Riviera Garden in Sha Tin during heavy rainstorm and high tide, he was worried that if the estuary of Shing Mun River was restricted by reclamation, the backward flow problem would aggravate and more areas in Sha Tin would experience flooding during heavy rainstorm. He also queried if the drainage system in Ma Liu Shui could cope with such situations and the future population increase.

86. Dr Elizabeth QUAT said that reclamation at Ma Liu Shui was bound to be contentious in view of the objections from local residents. Pointing out that the existing population of Sha Tin had already exceeded 600 000, she said that any housing development in the area would have great impact on existing residents. She was concerned whether the infrastructure facilities, such as road and railway networks, in the area could cope with the increase in population. She had reservation on reclamation at Ma Liu Shui and reminded the Administration that reclamation, which would have an impact on the environment, should be the last resort as a measure for increasing land supply.

87. Mr CHAN Chi-chuen declared that he was a graduate of the Chinese University of Hong Kong ("CUHK") at Ma Liu Shui. He commended the design of "Stage 2 Public Engagement Digest" but considered Question 1 on page 31 of the booklet misleading in that it asked the public on their views on the land uses in the proposed reclamation and rock cavern development sites, having excluded the option for the public to oppose to reclamation and/or rock cavern development and suggest alternatives other than the proposed sites. He also relayed the opposition of students and alumni of CUHK to reclamation at Ma Liu Shui. As no land use had been indicated for the future reclaimed land, he expressed concern that only luxurious residential units would be provided at the site. He asked whether the future reclaimed land at Ma Liu Shui would be reserved for use in the short-, medium- or long- term. Referring to media reports that if the detailed feasibility studies concluded that any of the proposed sites were not suitable for reclamation, the relevant sites would not be pursued, he sought confirmation from the Administration.

88. Mr Gary FAN declared that he was a Council member of CUHK. He and Dr Fernando CHEUNG expressed strong reservation about reclamation at Ma Liu Shui in view of the objections from CUHK and local residents on the ground of possible adverse environmental impact.

89. SDEV replied that by conducting the Stage 2 PE exercise, the Administration was collecting public views on the proposed reclamation and cavern development sites. At the next stage, the Administration would apply funding from the Finance Committee for detailed technical investigations on the extent and scale of reclamation and feasibility studies. Depending on the investigation results, the sites which were found not suitable would be removed from the list of proposed sites. He welcomed suggestions from members, stakeholders and the public on any other proposed reclamation or cavern development sites apart from those identified by the Administration.

90. PS/DEV(W) supplemented that in identifying potential sites for reclamation, the Administration had seriously considered a list of criteria, including the impact on the local community and the environment, especially the marine ecology. According to the results of the Stage 1 PE, these two criteria were regarded as most important by respondents. Ma Liu Shui was selected as a proposed reclamation site because, together with the land to be released from the relocation of STSTW to caverns, it could provide a large area of around 60 to 80 ha for residential development. On this vast piece of land, there would be much flexibility in planning and great opportunities to enhance the infrastructure of the area to accommodate a new population. Subject to the funding approval by the Finance Committee, detailed feasibility studies and technical assessments would be carried out for reclamation at the proposed sites, including Ma Liu Shui, before proceeding to working out the land uses and planning for the sites. The studies and assessments would cover the extent and scope of reclamation, impacts on the environment, air ventilation, traffic and the drainage systems, etc.

91. Ir Dr LO Wai-kwok said that reclamation at Ma Liu Shui would have synergy effect with the relocation of STSTW to caverns. He highlighted the importance for the Administration to address local residents' concerns in respect of these two proposals. SDEV said that in the eastern waters, Ma Liu Shui, where the water was comparatively shallow, was considered a suitable reclamation site in terms of cost-effectiveness and impact on marine ecology. The Administration noted the concerns expressed by the local residents and would take them into consideration in the further studies to be conducted.

Sai Kung Sewage Treatment Works

92. Dr Elizabeth QUAT enquired about the difference between option A and option B for relocating Sai Kung Sewage Treatment Works ("SKSTW") into caverns. Given that the traffic was very congested at Hong Kin Road in

Sai Kung during peak hours, she was worried that additional large-scale residential developments in the area would worsen the situation. She asked about the mitigation measures that the Administration would adopt.

93. PS/DEV(W) said that option A only involved the development of the site to be vacated by the relocation of SKSTW, whereas in option B, the opportunity would be taken to carrying out minor reclamation near the site for development, reprovisioning of affected facilities and at the same time satisfying the local demand for more boat anchorage spaces. The Administration would study and consult the public on the two options at the next stage.

Sunny Bay and Siu Ho Wan

94. Pointing out that various infrastructural works involving reclamation were being carried out in Lantau Island and in the western waters, Mr Gary FAN opined that reclamation at Sunny Bay and Siu Ho Wan would further damage the marine ecology and destroy the habitat of the Chinese white dolphins, the number of which had decreased in recent years. He expressed concern that if further reclamation in western waters were to be carried out, the Chinese white dolphins would disappear from Hong Kong waters forever. As reclamation would cause irreversible damage to the environment, he stressed that it should only be the last resort as an option to increase land supply.

Public engagement

95. Dr Fernando CHEUNG opined that the information about reclamation outside Victoria Harbour disseminated by the Administration for the current PE exercise was insufficient and the public consultation was not comprehensive. For instance, the Administration had not clearly explained why Ma Liu Shui and the other sites were selected as potential reclamation sites out of the 25 sites proposed at the Stage 1 PE. The public had no ideas about how these sites met the selection criteria. As the PE exercise would end on 21 June 2013, he was concerned that most members of the public, in particular those who would be affected by reclamation at the proposed sites, were not well informed about the Stage 2 PE and the Administration's plans, hence they could not provide feedback in a timely manner. He opined that the consultation and studies on reclamation outside Victoria Harbour should take a slower pace so that sufficient time could be allowed for the public to understand the Administration's proposals and express their views, and for the Administration to address stakeholders' concerns. In his view, the

Administration should refrain from carrying out reclamation works as far as possible. Dr CHEUNG urged the Administration to extend the Stage 2 PE to six months and to reach out to the affected residents to hear their views.

96. In response, SDEV said that the Administration would make use of various channels to publicize its proposals in the remaining two months of the Stage 2 PE. Roving exhibitions would be held in the relevant districts to reach out to the residents. He sought members' assistance to make the Administration's proposals widely known to the public. If required, representatives of the relevant Government departments would explain the proposals to residents concerned.

Population policy

97. Ms Cyd HO pointed out that under the Administration's proposal on reclamation and construction of artificial islands, a total of up to 2 000 to 3 000 ha of land would be generated. The area was equivalent to one-third of the Hong Kong Island and sufficient to accommodate a population of 400 000. Given that Hong Kong had low birth rates in recent years, she queried the need for such a vast area of new land and where the additional population would come from. She opined that the Administration should formulate a population policy and review whether it should accept passively the 150 single entry permits per day for immigrants from the Mainland. It was imperative for the Administration to be able to control the population growth in the next 10 years or so before determining on the amount of land needed for the future population.

98. Mr Gary FAN shared Ms Cyd HO's view that it was paramount for the Administration to formulate a population policy so as to set a clear direction and objective for supply of land. In his view, the large increase in Hong Kong's population in recent years was caused by the influx of immigrants from the Mainland. Without a population policy, the number of immigrants from the Mainland to Hong Kong would grow without control and the demand for land would never end. He was disappointed that at a recent special meeting of the House Committee, the Chief Secretary for Administration ("CS") had not had much to share with members on the progress of the Administration's work on population policy. It would be difficult to convince the public to support creating land in a large scale, making damage to the environment, for unclear purposes. He urged the Administration to work out who and how many people were the targets for the supply of new housing land in future.

99. SDEV stressed that reclamation outside Victoria Harbour and rock cavern development were proposed to bring benefits to Hong Kong people. The Administration attached great importance to the formulation of a population policy. The Steering Committee on Population Policy, chaired by CS, was studying the matter and would report the results to LegCo after the review. In the past, there had been an average increase of about 500 000 in the population for every 10 years, which was about the population in the Sha Tin New Town. In view of the ageing of the population and with the restructuring of Hong Kong's economy, it would be necessary to attract talents from other places to Hong Kong. He undertook to convey members' views on population policy to CS. As regards the current study on reclamation outside Victoria Harbour, he said that it would be irresponsible for the Administration to take no action in the meantime before a population policy was formulated, given that the demand for housing was huge, taking into account that the number of applicants on the waiting list for public rental housing was over 220 000 and a large number of people in Hong Kong were living under undesirable conditions in subdivided flats. Other than housing, the enhancement of community facilities also required land. As a long lead time, say, more than 10 years, was required to complete a reclamation project and develop housing on the reclaimed land, the Administration should not delay the preparatory work. He appealed for members' support for the Administration's funding applications in future for carrying out detailed studies on the proposed sites.

VII. Any other business

100. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 6:36 pm.

Council Business Division 1
Legislative Council Secretariat
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