



North East New Territories New Development Areas Planning and Engineering Study

Stage Three Public Engagement Report

JULY 2013



土木工程拓展署
Civil Engineering and
Development Department



規劃署
Planning Department

ARUP

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第三階段公眾參與報告

Stage 3 Public Engagement Report

ARUP

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Executive Summary

Foreword

The North East New Territories New Development Areas Planning and Engineering Study (the NENT NDAs Study) commenced in June 2008 to formulate a planning and development framework and a development programme with implementation strategies for the Kwu Tung North (KTN), Fanling North (FLN) and Ping Che/Ta Kwu Ling (PC/TKL) New Development Areas (NDAs). We have conducted three stages of public engagement to solicit the public views on the existing condition of the NDAs, vision for the NDAs, the Preliminary Outline Development Plans (PODPs) and the Recommended Outline Development Plans (RODPs) of the NDAs. The Stage Three Public Engagement (PE3) exercise was carried out between mid June and end September 2012. A Stage Three Public Engagement Digest was prepared outlining the RODPs and the key topics of the NDA proposals including implementation arrangements and the results of the traffic and technical assessments. Thirty-five briefings/meetings (including 1 public meeting and 1 public forum) were held during PE3 with over 10,000 written comments received. The public comments received in PE3 and our responses to the comments have been summarised in this report.

Revised Recommended Outline Development Plans

After taking into account the public views and the technical assessments on the planning and engineering feasibility, we recommend to revise the RODPs of the KTN and FLN NDAs. This report encloses the Gist of the Revised RODPs (Appendix 34), outlining the amendments to the RODPs. KTN and FLN NDAs are an extension to the existing Fanling/Sheung Shui new town, which will have a total population of about 460,000 upon full development comparable to other new towns such as Tuen Mun and Tseung Kwan O. The Fanling/ Sheung Shui/ Kwu Tung new town will be an integrated community providing wide-ranging employment opportunities as well as commercial, community, recreation and cultural facilities given the more significant population scale. KTN and FLN NDAs will accommodate some 174,900 new population in about 60,700 housing units, of which about 60% will be public housing units (including HOS flats). Some 37,700 job opportunities will also be created in the area. In view of the absence of mass transit and other supporting infrastructures, PC/TKL NDA was originally planned for special industrial and lower density residential developments. According to the 2013 Policy Address, the development potential in New Territories North (NT North) is to be explored. In this context, PC/TKL will be replanned in the proposed study for NT North in order to comprehensively review relevant considerations, including the development potential afforded by new railway infrastructure.

The Stage Three Public Engagement Exercise - Comments and Responses

Overall Comments on the NDA Proposals

We have received comments both supporting and objecting to the NDA proposals. The individuals/organisations which were in support of the NDA proposals considered that the NDAs would be a major source of land supply for Hong Kong in medium to long term, while the NDAs would also provide employment opportunities and community facilities. Some of those who were against the NDA proposals believed that the Government failed to offer satisfactory rehousing and compensation arrangements for the affected parties; that the NDA proposals were intended for the “Unification of Hong Kong and Shenzhen”. Some also question the need for the NDAs and the criteria for site selection. Some local residents expressed strong demand for “no removal no demolition”.

According to the latest projections of population and household unit, there will still be an increase of about 1.4 million people and 680,000 household in the coming 30 years. Moreover, with the decline in the average household size, escalating social aspiration for better living environment, continuously active economy and increasing demand for public housing, it is expected that the demand of land for housing and economic activities will still be intense in the future. Thus, it is necessary to proceed with the development the NENT NDAs, as the planning and development of the NENT NDAs is intended for meeting Hong Kong’s medium- to long term demand for housing and providing employment opportunities.

Development Intensity and Housing Mix

There were comments suggesting the Government to further increase the development intensity and extend the development area of the NDAs in order to increase the supply of housing units, especially for public housing. There were also views demanding the Government to review and formulate long term housing strategies, as the NDAs might not be able to resolve the current shortage in housing supply in Hong Kong. Many members of the public requested for an increase in public housing supply and providing land for Home Ownership Scheme (HOS), but at the same time, they cautioned that over-concentration of public housing should be avoided. The NDAs should provide small- and medium-sized flats, and should take forward the policy of “Hong Kong Property for Hong Kong People” in the NDAs to ensure that the housing units would be affordable to the Hong Kong people.

After review and conducting detailed planning and technical assessments, taking into account infrastructural capacities, environmental constraints, urban design, etc., we have maximized the development intensity and increased the supply of public housing units in the NDAs. The total number of new housing units of the KTN and FLN NDAs will be increased to about 60,700 units and will accommodate around 174,900 people, of which 60% will be public housing units (including HOS flats). The Government is prepared to implement the “Hong Kong Property for Hong Kong People” measures on the private housing sites in NDAs, taking into account the real estate market situation and other relevant considerations at the time of land sale.

Employment and G/IC Facilities

At the briefing sessions, many members of the public had queries on the types of industry that the proposed “Special Industry” and “Research and Development” sites in the NDAs were intended for and they doubted the viability and whether the job opportunities created by

these industries would be suitable for local residents. There were views hoping the NDAs would provide more appropriate employment opportunities, especially for the residents living in public housing, in order to reduce the need for the future residents to commute to work across districts. It was expected that there should be adequate facilities and infrastructures in the NDAs, such as different types of community, educational and recreational facilities, of which schools and medical facilities are currently the most in need in the North District. These facilities should be timely provided taking into account of the changing population profile.

The KTN and FLN NDAs can capitalise on their proximity to Fanling and Sheung Shui New Town. Synergising with the existing developments and supported by railway and new road network, the NDAs can be developed as the extension of Fanling/ Sheung Shui with residential/commercial developments and adequate facilities. In the planning of the KTN and FLN NDAs, sufficient land has already reserved for the timely provision of transport, health and community facilities, schools, and employment and recreational uses. These facilities and infrastructures not only will serve the future local population, residents in the neighbouring developed areas can also enjoy the benefits of the NDA development. The two NDAs will provide around 37,700 jobs, including working opportunities in the research and development, commercial and retail, and community service sectors with an average job-to-population ratio comparable to the existing Fanling/Sheung Shui. The “Special Industry” zone will be reviewed at a later stage under the separate study for NT North. The “Research and Development” sites proposed in the KTN NDA have the potential to be developed for various types of office and research and development uses to support the overall development of Hong Kong and the industries in the Lok Ma Chau Loop. Flexibility should be provided in the detailed planning of these sites in making available space for different industries.

Agriculture

We have received many comments demanding conserving more agricultural land within the NDAs, although there were also comments suggesting to utilise the farmland for urban development.

Agricultural land should be conserved for agricultural activities where appropriate. The Government will endeavour to ensure that the affected farmers will be offered with reasonable arrangements. Land potentially suitable for agricultural rehabilitation/ agricultural resite has been identified with a view to assist affected farmers to re-establish their farming practice. In addition to Long Valley Nature Park and the “AGR” zones in the NDAs and the vicinity of NDAs, the Government has assessed 103 hectares of land suitable for agricultural purpose in Kwu Tung South, of which 34 hectares are potentially suitable for agricultural rehabilitation/ agricultural resite. The Government will introduce a special agricultural land rehabilitation scheme to facilitate genuine farmers affected by NDAs to re-establish their farming practice. Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) will actively contact the landowners of the identified areas, particularly those in Kwu Tung South, giving priority to match those landowners who are willing to lease out/sell their land to the affected farmers.

Compensation and Rehousing

There were many members of the public, especially some of those affected local residents, were concerned with the issues of land resumption, compensation, clearance and rehousing. Many were of the view that the Government had not been offering acceptable compensation and rehousing/re-provisioning options; that the planning scheme did not allow the existing land owners to participate; and that the affected parties were being forced out by compulsory land resumption.

While the planning of the NENT NDAs has minimised the impacts on the existing residents as far as possible, it is unavoidable to resume the land for the provision of road infrastructure, public housing, public facilities as well as residential and commercial developments. In response to public requests and after review, to help maintain the social fabric of the existing communities, a public housing site each at the KTN and FLN NDAs will be reserved to provide units for local rehousing. Part of the sites may be designated for HOS development. Public housing units in Fanling/ Sheung Shui and elsewhere could serve the rehousing purpose more flexibly to meet the needs of clearers. A special ex-gratia compensation package has been devised for affected qualified households to assist their removal.

Implementation Programme

Some members of the public requested the Government to announce the detailed implementation programme as early as possible. However, some were sceptical that whether the Government would be able to implement the NDA proposals on schedule and worried that this might delay the land supply in Hong Kong. Many members of the public were of the view that the demand for housing was urgent and urged that not only should there be no further delay in NDA development, the implementation should be expedited by developing the areas adjoining the existing new town first. However, there were views considering that the population growth might not reach the figure estimated by the government and there was no urgency in developing the NDAs.

To meet the pressing need for housing land, especially for public housing, the development at KTN and FLN NDAs will be implemented as soon as possible in accordance with the revised RODPs. According to preliminary estimates, the first batch of residential units will be available as early as 2023, while it is anticipated that both of the NDAs will be fully developed by 2031.

Implementation Approach

Many members of the public were concerned about the implementation approach for the NDA proposals. They demanded the Government to explain the rationale behind the change of recommended implementation approach from the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) approach in Stage 2 Public Engagement to the Conventional New Town Approach (CNTA) proposed in PE3. Members of the public from different sectors held different views and opinions towards the implementation approach of the NDA proposals. Some landowners welcomed the proposal to resume their land for NDAs development. Some existing tenants residing on private land also preferred clearance by the Government rather than by private developers as there were established compensation and rehousing arrangements for land resumption and clearance. However, there were comments objecting to the CNTA as a

means to implement the NDA proposals. The Government had been urged to allow land exchange and/or issue land exchange entitlements to the affected landowners other than compensation. There were comments (including a large amount of standardised letters) stating that the Government should not set an undesirable precedent in resuming all the private land as it would be unfair to the landowners and obviously against the core values of Hong Kong for disrespecting private property rights, and that the Government should only resume land for public uses such as providing infrastructure and public housing, hospitals and other community facilities. Some comments suggested that the Government should adopt a hybrid implementation approach combining the CNTA and the PPP approaches. Some members of the public also suggested that the Government should consider to implement PPP at certain development sites.

With a view to achieving comprehensive planning and timely provision of housing, infrastructure and community facilities, the Government will adopt the Conventional New Town Approach (CNTA) as the primary mode for implementing the NDAs proposals. The Government will take the lead and resume private land for various developments in accordance with the plans. In the new towns development in the past, besides implementation by Government land resumption, there were cases of granting applications for modification of lease (including in-situ land exchange) for private developments. As such, the Government will process similar application in KTN and FLN NDAs. Whilst ensuring that the planning and development programme for NDAs will not be compromised, the Government will adopt stricter requirements in allowing applications for modification of lease (including in-situ land exchange) by owners of land planned for private development meeting the specified criteria. Such applications should comply with the specified criteria and requirements, in order to ensure comprehensive planning, timely provision of housing and other facilities as well as safeguarding fair treatment to tenants/occupants. This approach will enable early delivery of land and housing through allowing applications for modification of lease, whilst ensuring comprehensive planning, timely provision of housing, infrastructure, community and other facilities, as wells as safeguarding fair treatment to tenants/occupants, without compromising planning and balanced development.

Specific Comments

We received a number of comments on the planning, land use, urban design, transportation, environmental protection, ecology, heritage conservation, infrastructure and village development aspects of each NDA. We have assessed these comments one by one and responded accordingly.

Way Forward

The EIA Ordinance procedures have commenced and the amendment of relevant statutory Outline Zoning Plans will proceed with in the latter half of 2013. Moreover, other preparation work associated with the development project will follow.

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

Northeast New Territories New Development Areas

Territorial Development Strategy Review was conducted by the Government as early as 1990 and the review suggested to study the potential for strategic growth in the North East New Territories. The Planning and Development Study on North East New Territories (NENT Study) launched in 1998, identified Kwu Tung North (KTN), Fanling North (FLN) and Ping Che/Ta Kwu Ling (PC/TKL) as New Development Areas (NDAs), and public consultation on the proposed development proposals was carried out during 1999 to 2000. However, in 2003, having considered the housing demand at the time, the Government has decided to shelve the New Development Area Proposals, awaiting for the “Hong Kong 2030: Planning Vision and Strategy Study” (the HK2030 Study) to comprehensively review the planning of the whole territory.

The “HK2030 Study”, completed in 2007, revisited the need for strategic development areas in the New Territories and recommended proceeding with the NDA developments to address the long term housing demand and to create more employment opportunities.

In the 2007-2008 Policy Address, the Chief Executive announced the planning for NDAs as one of the ten major infrastructure projects for economic growth.

To kick-start the NDAs project, the Civil Engineering and Development Department (CEDD) and Planning Department (PlanD) jointly commissioned the North East New Territories New Development Areas Planning and Engineering Study (NENT NDAs Study) in June 2008 to formulate the planning and development framework as well as the development programme and implementation strategy for the Kwu Tung North, Fanling North and Ping Che/Ta Kwu Ling New Development Areas.

In order to allow the public to participate in the planning of the NDAs and ensure timely incorporation of public views into the planning and design of the NDAs, the Study includes three stages of public engagement:

Stage One Public Engagement: Existing Context and Formulation of Visions for the NDAs;

Stage Two Public Engagement: Preliminary Outline Development Plans (PODPs);

Stage Three Public Engagement: Recommended Outline Development Plans (RODPs).

Stage One Public Engagement

The Stage One Public Engagement programme was launched in November 2008 for 3 months, which aimed to engage members of the public in discussions on key issues relating to the development of the NDAs. To facilitate more focused discussions, the key issues/concerns were categorized under four topics, namely: Strategic Roles of NDAs; People-Oriented Communities; Sustainable Living Environment; and Implementation Mechanism. The Stage One Public Engagement activities included a community workshop and a series of briefings to relevant boards/committees (including the North District Council and relevant Rural Committees), professional institutes and other concern groups. A

Community Workshop was held at Luen Wo Hui Community Hall, Fanling on 20 December 2008. Discussion groups were arranged for the four major topics in the workshop. About 200 people (including local residents, North District Council Members, relevant District Rural Committee Members, as well as representative from relevant institutes and organizations) attended the Community Workshop. As of March 2009, PlanD and CEDD received over 90 individual written comments. The public comments, suggestions and responses are set out in the Stage One Public Engagement Report. We have uploaded it onto the Study website (<http://www.nentnda.gov.hk>).

Based on the public comments received on the four focus topics during the Stage One Public Engagement, we had set out a series of guiding principles and formulated the PODPs.

Stage Two Public Engagement

The Stage Two Public Engagement programme commenced in November 2009 and lasted approximately two months. The main purpose of the Stage Two Public Engagement was to collect comments from the public, relevant organisations and stakeholders on the PODPs through an open exchange of views, and seek consensus on the land use planning and development framework for KTN, FLN, and PC/TKL NDAs so as to prepare the RODPs and Layout Plans in the next stage of the Study.

A range of activities, including a number of briefing sessions and public forum, were held during the Stage Two Public Engagement in order to collect public comments and to outreach to different sectors of the community. Press briefings as well as press and radio interviews were also held to distribute information through the media.

A public forum was held at Luen Wo Hui Community Hall, Fanling on 12 December 2009 with approximately 500 attendees, including local residents, North District Council Members, relevant Rural Committee Members, as well as representatives from relevant organizations and parties. Video clips of the public forum have been uploaded onto the Study website.

The Study Team attended the meetings with villagers of Kwu Tung Village on 29 November 2009 and villagers of Fu Tei Au Village, Tin Ping Shan Tsuen, Shek Wu San Tsuen, Ma Shi Po and Ling Shan Tsuen on 23 January 2010. Over 300 villagers participated in the meetings.

The Study Team also consulted relevant statutory committees, local organizations, professional institutes and stakeholders through more than ten briefing sessions on the proposed PODPs. As of March 2010, PlanD and CEDD received 257 written comments. The public comments, suggestions and responses received in the Stage Two Public Engagement programme as well as opinions expressed in the relevant activities are set out in the Stage Two Public Engagement Report. We have distributed the Report to relevant parties and uploaded it onto the Study website.

1.2 Stage Three Public Engagement

The Stage Three Public Engagement programme was conducted from the middle of June to the end of September in 2012. With reference to comments received in the Stage One and Two Public Engagements coupled with further study, we formulated the RODPs for KTN,

FLN and PC/TKL NDAs. Recommendations for the specific land uses were listed out to collect public comments on the RODPs.

By means of different channels including newspaper advertisements, invitation letters and posters distributed to different sectors of the community, we publicised the details of the Stage Three Public Engagement. Moreover, roving exhibitions were held at the North District, Sha Tin and North Point Government Offices. Information relating to the background of the Study as well as public consultation documents, video clips and executive summaries of technical reports were uploaded onto the Study website for public viewing. During the Stage Three Public Engagement programme, the Study Team attended 35 briefing sessions and meetings (including 1 public meeting and 1 public forum), including Legislative Council (Legco) Development Panel, Town Planning Board (TPB), Heung Yee Kuk New Territories (Heung Yee Kuk), North District Council, relevant Rural Committees, Advisory Council on the Environment (ACE), Housing Authority, Land and Development Advisory Committee (LDAC), professional institutes, local groups, and other stakeholders (such as green groups).

A public meeting and a public forum were held at Kwu Tung and Fanling on 29 July and 22 September 2012 with over 600 and 5,000 attendees respectively. We have consulted different representatives of village and residents as well as affected local villagers. Public opinions expressed in these activities/ briefing sessions are set out at Appendices 1 to 32. During the three and a half month public engagement exercise, PlanD and CEDD received over 10,000 written comments (according to our record 10,532 comments) and subsequently up to 31 December 2012, 12,161 comments received, including those from individuals, local residents and various organizations (e.g. Rural Committees, academic institutes, professional institutes, green groups and other local organisations). After the completion of the Stage Three Public Engagement activities, we still welcomed further public comments on the NDA development and kept close contact with the stakeholders in the hope of having a more comprehensive consideration when collating and analysing the comments on the NENT NDAs Study. All written comments were uploaded onto the Study website for public viewing. The list of written submissions from the public is at Appendix 36.

Below is a list of the Stage Three Public Engagement activities.

Date	Organisations/Occasions	Appendix
28 June 2012	Briefing to the Legislative Council Development Panel	Appendix 1
11 July 2012	Briefing to the Ta Kwu Ling District Rural Committee	Appendix 2
12 July 2012	Briefing to the Sheung Shui District Rural Committee	Appendix 3

13 July 2012	Briefing to the Town Planning Board	Appendix 4
16 July 2012	Briefing to the Advisory Council on the Environment	Appendix 5
18 July 2012	Meeting with the Real Estate Developers Association of Hong Kong	Appendix 6
19 July 2012	Briefing to the Heung Yee Kuk New Territories	#
23 July 2012	Briefing to the Environmental Concern Groups	Appendix 7
24 July 2012	Meeting with the Representatives of Home of Loving Faithfulness	#
26 July 2012	Briefing to the North District Council	Appendix 8
26 July 2012	Meeting with the Representatives of Sheung Shui Community Sports	#
29 July 2012	Public Meeting with the Kwu Tung North Residents	Appendix 9
30 July 2012	Meeting with the Village Representatives of Tsung Pak Long and Tai Tau Leng	Appendix 10
30 July 2012	Meeting with the Village Representatives and Residents of Sheung Shui Heung	Appendix 11
1 August 2012	Meeting with the Concern Group for Squatter Occupants in Fanling North New Development Area (Translation)	Appendix 12
3 August 2012	Meeting with the Village Representatives of Tong Hang	Appendix 13
8 August 2012	Briefing to the Fanling District Rural Committee	Appendix 14
9 August 2012	Meeting with the Members of Hong Kong Institute of Planners, Hong Kong Institute of Landscape Architects and Hong Kong Institute of Urban Design	Appendix 15

11 August 2012	Meeting with the Owners' Committees in Kwu Tung North and Fanling North	Appendix 16
15 August 2012	Meeting with the North District Wholesale Market Operators	Appendix 17
21 August 2012	Meeting with the Residents of Kwu Tung Village (North) , Village Representative of Kwu Tung Village (North) and Vice-chairman of North District Council	Appendix 18
21 August 2012	Meeting with the Residents of Lung Yeuk Tau, Siu Hang San Tsuen and Shung Him Tong	Appendix 19
23 August 2012	Meeting with the Members of Hong Kong Institution of Engineers	Appendix 20
24 August 2012	Briefing to the Housing Authority	#
6 September 2012	Briefing to the Planning Sub-Committee of the Land and Development Advisory Committee	Appendix 21
15 September 2012	Meeting with the Representatives of Fanling North Villages including Fu Tei Au, Tin Ping Shan Tsuen, Shek Wu San Tsuen and Ma Shi Po	Appendix 22
21 September 2012	Meeting with the Residents of Sheung Shui, Fanling, Sha Tau Kok and Ta Kwu Ling	Appendix 23
22 September 2012	Public Forum	Appendix 24
24 September 2012	Briefing to the Strategic Planning Committee of the Housing Authority Committees	#
25 September 2012	Meeting with the Members of Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors	Appendix 25
26 September 2012	Meeting with the Representatives of Kwu Tung North Development Concern Group (Translation) and NT North East Strategies	#

26 September 2012	Meeting with Legislative Councilor, HON. Chan Yuen-han.	#
27 September 2012	Briefing to the Land and Development Advisory Committee	Appendix 26
27 September 2012	Meeting with Concern Group for Squatter Occupants in Fanling North New Development Area (Translation), the Representatives of Kwu Tung Village (North) and Kwu Tung Village (South)	#
28 September 2012	Meeting with the Representatives of Yin Kong Village	Appendix 27

#Participants unwilling to publish meeting records / minutes not for public viewing

After the Stage Three Public Engagement activities, the briefings and meetings listed below were conducted:

Date	Organisations/Occasions	Relevant Gist
4 October 2012	Briefing to the Hong Kong Council for Testing and Certification	Appendix 28
11 October 2012	Meeting with the Professional Commons	#
30 October 2012	Briefing to the Legislative Council Development Panel (Initial Response to major public comments received from Public Engagement Stage 3)	Appendix 29
8 November 2012	Meeting with Mr. Wong Sing Chi and the Operators of the Elderly Care Homes at Drills Corner Garden	#
23 November 2012	Meeting with Some Sawmill Owners/Tenants in Kwu Tung North	Appendix 30
8 December 2012	Legislative Council Development Panel Special Meeting 1	Appendix 31 (under preparation by Legislative Council Secretariat)

15 December 2012	Legislative Council Development Panel Special Meeting 2	Appendix 32 (under preparation by Legislative Council Secretariat)
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#Participants expressed unwillingness to publish meeting records / minutes not for public viewing

Verbal comments/ suggestions collected at the public forums and briefing sessions, as well as written comments collected by Comments Collection Forms and emails have been incorporated in the analysis of the study. A Gist showing the changes made to RODPs is attached to this report (**Appendix 34**).

1.3 Purpose and Structure of this Report

This Report documents the Stage Three Public Engagement and contains a summary of the public comments received (including suggestions relating to the RODPs) as well as the relevant responses provided by the Study Team.

The public comments on the NDA proposals and RODPs were mainly related to whether the NDAs should be implemented, agricultural policy, the impacts of NDAs on local residents and land resumption, compensation and clearance/rehousing arrangements. There were also specific comments on land use planning and development proposals.

Chapter 2 of this Report summarises the comments received during the Stage Three Public Engagement (up to 31 December 2012) and sets out the overall responses of the Study Team to the public comments.

Comments received from the Stage Three Public Engagement are categorised in broad terms as follows:

- Overall comments on the NDAs proposals;
- Comments on the feasibility of the recommended development proposals and their implementation arrangements; and
- Comments on various aspects of the three NDAs.

Chapter 3 of this Report introduces the way forward.

2 Overview of Public Comments

2.1 Overall Comments

2.1.1 Overall Comments on the NDA Proposals

There were diverse views, including comments for and against the NDA proposals.

Supportive Comments

Those supporting the NDA proposals include members of public, District Councilors, members of Fanling/ Sheung Shui/ Ta Kwu Ling District Rural Committees, Owners' Corporations of neighbouring estates, Housing Authority, Land and Building Advisory Committee, professional institutes and organizations (such as Hong Kong Institute of Planners, The Hong Kong Institution of Engineers, The Hong Kong Institute of Architects, Hong Kong Institute of Urban Design and Hong Kong Institute of Real Estate Administrators) and The Hong Kong General Chamber of Commerce etc. Some believed that the NDAs would be a major source of Hong Kong's land supply in medium to long term, which could enhance the land supply for both public and private housing in order to help different sectors of the society, particularly for those in the waiting list of public rental housing. The NDAs could address the housing shortage in medium to long term and some hoped to implement the project as soon as possible. There were also some supporting views that the planning proposals of the NDAs were comprehensive with regards to public and private housing mix, provision of local employment opportunities for future population, and timely provision of community facilities and green initiatives, etc. Some members of the Legislative Council appreciated the commitment of the Government to organize various public engagement activities to reach out to the public and made appropriate amendments to the development proposals and implementation arrangement of the NDAs in response to the public and stakeholders' comments. These include optimizing the use of land resources by increasing the development intensity of the NDAs, preserving the natural environment, balancing the public and private housing mix and reserving part of the Long Valley with high ecological value for the development of the Nature Park. Some supporters pointed out that the past experience of new town developments in Sha Tin and Tai Po were very successful and believed that the NDAs would be beneficial to the overall long term social and economic development of Hong Kong. Some supporting views welcomed the NDAs to set aside land for the development of special industries and opined that this could encourage Hong Kong companies to relocate their research and development branches to the "Commerce, Research and Development" zone of the KTN NDA. The property prices of residential and commercial land had been persistently high which did not only increase the operating costs of enterprises but also hindered the growth of employment opportunities, and also undermined the long term economic development and competitiveness of Hong Kong. The NDAs would provide land to meet the growing land demand.

There were views supporting the NENT NDAs in-principle, but subject to the following conditions, including the Government investigating the feasibility of Public Private Partnerships for the NDAs, the NDAs mainly dedicated for public housing, adoption of "Hong Kong Property for Hong Kong People" measures as appropriate, provision of

adequate employment opportunities and community facilities, increase of development intensity for more housing units and timely provision of comprehensive transport facilities etc.

Opposing Comments

In addition to a large number of written objections received, opposing views from different sectors of the public during various public engagement activities were gathered. They mainly included the local residents affected directly and some concern groups from both inside and outside the NDAs. Among them, many villagers currently residing within the NDAs lodged strong objections to the NDA proposals in the Public Meeting with the Kwu Tung North Residents on 29 July 2012 and demanded “no removal and no demolition”. Some expressed discontent that the Government who had not provided clear response to queries of rehousing and compensation arrangements. Some resident groups disagreed with the development in Kwu Tung Village on the grounds that the current development approach and proposals in this consultation were unfair and unreasonable. In their written submissions, many non-indigenous residents and local concern groups strongly opposed the NDA proposals and requested “no removal”. In addition to local residents, some members of the public expressed their opposition to the NDA development at the public forum held in Sheung Shui on 22 September, 2012. Among the participants (such as members of Legislative Council, non-governmental organisations and individuals) who objected to the NDA development in the public forum, most of their grounds for objections were based on the critical views that the NDA development was intended for “Unification of Hong Kong and Shenzhen”. Many members of the public were against the NDA development which was dubbed as “North East New Territories Integration Proposal”. They were questioning that the NDAs would be a plan integrating Hong Kong with Mainland China and the New Territories would become the back garden for the rich Mainlanders in future. They were even worried that the NDAs would be reduced to a colony of Mainland China, and therefore refused to accept the integration of Mainland China and Hong Kong which would eliminate the local characteristics of Hong Kong and deprive the autonomy of Hong Kong people. Other opposing views also indicated that there was land more suitable for development elsewhere, such as increase in development density of Kai Tak development as an alternative to the NDA development. Furthermore, some concern groups accused that the whole development proposals were full of collusion between the Government and the developers who would have exhausted all means to acquire land, hence affected many residents. Thus, there were requests not to develop the NDAs and to retain the existing rural landscapes. Some were opposing the proposals and demanded not to develop the NDAs and preserve rural landscapes. They opposed the conversion of valuable agricultural land and village areas in the New Territories to new town areas as they were not convinced that the NDA development was driven by “need” in the absence of a clear population policy. In addition, some local non-indigenous residents also opposed to the NDA development and opined that the Government was intended to divide the indigenous and non-indigenous villagers. Some opponents were of the view that the Government had never genuinely given public the right to know and participate in the NDA development and therefore urged the Government to immediately withdraw the proposals and refused to accept any "minor amendments" in the proposals.

Other Comments

Except the supporting and opposing views, many members of the public urged the Government to re-examine and refine the NDA proposals, such as increasing the ratio of high-density residential development, provision of local rehousing sites, more affordable housing for Hong Kong people and addressing the accusation of developing the NDAs for the rich Mainlanders. There was a chamber of commerce recommended that a steering committee and a dedicated team should be established under the policy bureau to coordinate the interdepartmental work in order to expedite the development and achieve a more comprehensive development of the NDAs. Other concern groups, Legco members, District Council members and members of Heung Yee Kuk suggested that the Government should set up an independent expert commission or a development panel of diversified background, formed by accredited independent persons who would be responsible for the formulation of RODPs covering provision of infrastructures, community facilities, and development schedule of respective land parcels. This would absorb the wisdom from the community and foster a sustainable development that takes into account agriculture policy, humanity, villages, history and economic development and thus derive long term benefits.

Response

In order to meet the increasing demand for housing in Hong Kong and the demand for land required for economic development, there is imminent need to develop the NENT NDAs. The planning and development of NENT NDAs is aimed to meet the medium- to long-term housing demand of Hong Kong and provide employment opportunities. After review, there will be approximately 60% of housing units dedicated for Public Rental Housing (PRH)/ Home Ownership Scheme (HOS) for Hong Kong residents in the NDAs. In terms of private residential development, the Government will implement “Hong Kong Property for Hong Kong People” measures on private housing sites in NDAs, taking into account real estate market situation and relevant considerations at the time of land sale. We have also reviewed and amended the RODPs appropriately with reference to the public views. The details of the public comments and our responses are explained in the following sections of the report.

2.1.2 Overall Strategic Development Concept

Strategic Roles of the NDAs

The NDAs could play a strategic role in collaborative development with the Pearl River Delta. There were mixed views from the public on the strategic role of NDAs. Of these, many of the members of Planning Sub-committee of Land and Development Advisory Committee and Legco Development Panel opined that the three NDAs should capitalize on their geographical advantage of being located at the Hong Kong-Shenzhen border by strengthening their ties and interactions with Shenzhen. The NDAs should take advantage of the opportunity brought about by the increasingly frequent economic ties between Hong Kong and the Mainland in order to spur economic development. Some members of the public even held the views that the Government must support NDAs development by means of various policies, such as immigration and taxation measures that facilitate the mobility of Guangdong and Hong Kong talents. The Government should formulate clear strategy for

economic development through upgrading the industrial structure and enhancing employment opportunities, in order to materialize the strategic role of the NDAs. Taking into account the integration with Shenzhen, the Government should further strengthen road infrastructures in all directions (especially northward direction) of the NENT NDAs to cope with the various needs as the cross-boundary interaction increased. Moreover, representatives of professional institutes opined that the NDAs should reinforce the integration between Hong Kong and Shenzhen in terms of urban planning and design, and particularly make use of and enhance the linkage between the NDAs and Lo Wu and other Boundary Control Points (BCPs). In addition, some members of the Legco Development Panel suggested that the NENT NDAs should be properly connected to the adjacent areas, including the land vacated by the Frontier Closed Area (FCA) and Shenzhen Futian commercial centre area. A professional institute queried and concerned whether there would be any strategic linkage between the NENT NDAs with development in Qianhai, Lok Ma Chau (LMC) Loop and Hung Shui Kiu NDA etc.

In contrast to the Stage One and Two Public Engagements, there were a number of comments made in the light of “integration” of the NDAs with Shenzhen during the Stage Three Public Engagement. There was an accusation that the proposed NDAs development is mainly for “Hong Kong-Shenzhen Unification”, saying that the Government is planning to integrate the NENT NDAs with Shenzhen into a boundary zone with a view to serving the Mainlanders who do not need an entry permit. Some even allege the Government of “selling out Hong Kong”, believing that the NDAs are planned by or for the Mainland, which undermines the principle of “One Country, Two Systems” and high degree of autonomy as stipulated in the Basic Law. Some comments mentioned that the NDAs would mainly be used as residential areas that “serve the rich Mainlanders”, claiming that the Mainlanders would be the main buyers of the private housing units in the NDAs. Hence, the NDAs would become the rich Mainlanders’ place of residence. In the public forums and written comments, many members of the public described the NDAs as “Shenzhen-Hong Kong City for The Doubly Non-Permanent Residents and The Rich Mainlanders” and “Shenzhen-Hong Kong Integration Proposal” etc and expressed their concerns and resentments with this integration with Shenzhen. Some members of the public also highlighted that as revealed by the government officials in different media interviews, the NENT NDAs will become another “Canton Road” with the provision of shopping malls, cinemas and residential development etc. They demanded the Government to explain if above-mentioned idea is valid. Many opponents to the idea of integration with Mainland speculated that the NDA proposal might be intended for providing convenience for the Mainlanders to consume and receive education in Hong Kong, and the Government did not consider the needs of Hong Kong people. They urged that the Government was accountable for explaining clearly “development for whom” to the Hong Kong people before proceeding with the plan. They also strongly requested that the NDAs must be fully implemented for the interests of Hong Kong people and against all development concepts like “Hong Kong-Shenzhen Unification”, “City for the Doubly Non-Permanent Residents” and “A SAR within a SAR”.

On the other hand, there were local concern groups against the criticisms that the NDA development was “selling out Hong Kong” and “back garden for the Mainlanders”. They believed that as long as the NDAs was mainly for public housing development with introduction of “Hong Kong properties for Hong Kong people” measure appropriately, the NDAs would benefit the Hong Kong people and solve the problem of housing demand. There were also suggestions that the special industry development in the PC/TKL NDAs should be cancelled first, then further minimizing the portion of low density private

residential and commercial in KTN NDA to reduce the “integration elements”; to focus on solving the local housing demand; and removing the public sentiment against the so-called “Shenzhen-Hong Kong Unification”. There were members of the public worried that the “Border Special Administrative Region” would bring in the problem of illegal works and thus increasing the unemployment rates of the local grassroots.

Response

The Government has not proposed to integrate the NENT with Shenzhen by opening up the boundary area, and building up a residential area for the Mainlanders is not a guiding principle for the NDAs. The NDAs are Hong Kong’s new towns and is the extension of Fanling/Sheung Shui new town, which are planned and developed for meeting the long term housing demand in Hong Kong, and also for the development need. Therefore, there are some misunderstandings in the comments suggesting the development of NDAs as “Shenzhen-Hong Kong Integration Proposal”, “Shenzhen-Hong Kong City for The Doubly Non-Permanent Residents and The Rich Mainlanders” and “A SAR in SAR”. The development intensity, public-private housing ratio and development schedule have been revised and will be discussed in the following sections. In fact, during the PE1 exercise, some considered that attention should be drawn to the long term development of the whole Pearl River Delta, which includes Hong Kong, when planning the NDAs. Therefore, when formulating the planning proposals for the NDAs, apart from providing housing land supply, we also considered the strategic location of NDAs being in proximity to the boundary district, which can provide land for the development of Hong Kong industries. The concept has been reflected on the PODPs under the PE2 as well as the RODPs in the PE3. Land is reserved in the NDAs for commercial/research and development uses to boost economic development of Hong Kong and to provide employment opportunities in the North District.

Need or Urgency for the NDAs

Some people were of the view that there was no imminent need for the NDAs due to slower population growth. As pointed out by a member of the North District Council that given the projected population growth would slow down, the Government should not disturb the residents and should shelve NDA proposals and delay the implementation for a decade. There were also members of the public who considered that the population projection figures released by the Census and Statistics Department were not reliable as the actual population growth might be overestimated, and thus, demanded to withdraw any unnecessary development proposals. On the other hand, others were of the view that there was actually a large quantity of vacant land in the developed areas of Hong Kong, which could be used for residential development. For instance, there was more than 600 hectares of vacant residential land in urban areas which would be sufficient to accommodate population growth in over 30 years should they be made good use of. Hence, there was no need nor urgency for developing the NENT. In particular, in the public forum and special meetings of Legco Development Panel, many members of the public cited the paper submitted by the Development Bureau to the Legco, highlighting that there was 2,100 hectares of land zoned for residential use among over 4,000 hectares of vacant land. There were views suspecting that and questioned why the Government could not firstly develop residential land elsewhere but affect many people’s homes and agricultural land in the NENT. Some people pointed out that there were more than up to 1,200 hectares of land zoned for “Village Type Development”(“V”) (mainly for the construction of low density Small House) in the existing

planned residential land. Therefore, they questioned that the Government's claim to develop the NDAs in order to meet the shortage in residential land was impractical and recommended to first rezone government land within "V" zone. Furthermore, some green groups and some members of the public pointed that there was more than 800 hectares of brownfields land (such as open storage and car park, etc,) of which priority for re-planning should be given to, rather than the agricultural land. Besides, some members of the public questioned why the Government did not review the existing development density for the residential development in Kai Tak and believed that that could be an alternative to the development of NENT. Other alternatives proposed by the public, including housing development on the hilly terrains along the road connecting to the Hong Kong Disneyland; conversion of existing industrial buildings to public housing; redevelopment of under-utilised public facilities and vacant schools, etc. Many members of the public agreed that a detailed long term housing strategy was needed to assess the development needs of the NDAs. Other views opined phased development could be considered in the NDAs in order to speed up the development and better accord with the societal development.

Response

According to the latest projection on population and number of household, there will still be an increase of about 1.4 million people and 680,000 housing units in the coming 30 years respectively. Despite the slowing growth in terms of population and number of households, there will still be continued growth. In the meantime, with the decline in the average household size (from 3.3 people per household in 1996 to 2.9 people in 2011, and would further be projected to decrease to 2.7 people in 2031), escalating call for better living environment from the society, continuous active economy and increasing demand for public housing, it is expected that the land supply for housing and economic development will still be intense in the future. Furthermore, it is necessary to remove the impediment of inadequate land supply for social development and build more residential units, in order to cater for future needs of the younger generations and response to the social request for alleviating the congested living conditions. Therefore, we believe that it is necessary to exhaust every possible means to open up new land for development. The Government has also made a full account of the vacant government land. As shown on the map and information on the webpage of Development Bureau in October 2012 concerning unleased/unallocated government land, deducting road/passageways, man-made slopes, Simplified Temporary Land Allocation and sites which are smaller than 0.05 ha, there is 391.5 ha of government land in "Residential" and "Commercial/Residential" area. The 391.5 ha includes irregular shape (e.g empty spaces between buildings, backlanes and narrow strip of lands alongside existing developments adjacent to existing development, highways and other utilities), which may not be suitable for housing development. Existing land immediately available for large-scale housing development is therefore limited. Hence, it is necessary for the Government, through conducting various planning and engineering studies (including that for the NENT NDAs), to develop additional land to meet the medium-to-long-term housing, economic and social development needs of Hong Kong. In fact, after completion of a feasibility study, the formation and development of land often takes 10 years, including procedures for Environmental Impact Assessment and the formulation of statutory plans (1 year), land resumption, clearance and rehousing for the affected people according to the relevant regulations gazetted (4 years), then commencement of land formation (2-3 years) and the subsequent building construction work (3 years) . It is hence impossible to wait and commence development only when the population reaches the projected threshold.

Regarding effective use of brownfield sites, the Government has consolidated the open storage/port back-up and offensive industrial uses through comprehensive planning and refine land utilisation to achieve an effective use of land resources and improve the rural environment. However, open storages and container yards are part of the economy of Hong Kong and provide support services for the logistic industry. Moreover, most of the uses mentioned above are licensed and currently operating under the specific land use zonings. Some of their operations are not suitable for multi-storey buildings. Moreover, many open storages and container yards in the New Territories are operated on private sites, time-consuming clearance and rehousing exercises as well as complicated land resumption and compensation issues will also be involved in implementation. Nevertheless, the Government will consider to rezone land suitable for other uses when appropriate in order to effectively utilise this type of brownfield sites. Among the current land uses in the Hung Shui Kiu and Kwu Tung North NDAs, there are many open storages and rural workshops.

After review, we recommend that the KTN and FLN NDAs should be implemented as soon as possible, whereas PC/TKL NDA should be replanned in the context of the study of NT North development potential, to consider various factors, including development opportunities brought about by new railway infrastructure.

Site Selection for the NDAs

There were concerns and questions received with regard to the site selection for the three NDAs. Some members of the public were of the view that selecting other sites, such as the villas of the Chief Executive nearby the KTN NDA and the golf course in Fanling owned by Hong Kong Golf Club, were more suitable locations. These comments were made based on the grounds that these lands were owned by the Government with large site area and low usage rate, and thus the number of affected people would be less and should be first developed and set aside as sites for rehousing. In the Special Meeting of Legco Development Panel, relevant concern groups and members of Legco stated that developing the whole or part of the Fanling golf course would be sufficient for housing supply as the NENT NDA. Some local residents proposed to develop NDAs in Sandy Ridge so as to reduce the impacts on the residents. Besides, some members of the public also queried why the proposed development in NENT were comprised of three NDAs and would like to know why they could not be developed as a whole.

Response

The Territorial Development Strategy Review undertaken in the early 1990s had already proposed that the potential for strategic growth in the NENT areas be examined. The Planning and Development Study on NENT, commenced in 1998 conducted detailed studies regarding the siting and development proposals of the NDAs. The main factors for consideration include the development potential, geographical constraints, environmental ecology and landscape resources, economic benefits as well as making good use of the railway transport. Based on the above considerations, the study identified KTN, FLN and PC/TKL as suitable for NDAs development. The public was consulted and generally agreed with the site selection. The “HK 2030 Study” completed in 2007 recommended proceeding

with the KTN, FLN and PC/TKL NDAs as well as the Hung Shui Kiu NDA to address long term housing demand and to provide employment opportunities. Taking advantage of the geographical proximity to existing Fanling/Sheung Shui, together with the surrounding railway and road network such as the connecting road to Liantang/Heung Yuen Wai Boundary Control Point (BCP), KTN, FLN and PC/TKL NDAs can be developed collaboratively with the potential of comprehensive supporting facilities for both commercial and residential uses.

The Fanling golf course has been used by the Hong Kong Golf Club since 1930. It is on private recreational leases which will be expired in 2020. Over the years, the Hong Kong Golf Club has invested a considerable amount of resources to achieve the scale nowadays. According to the Home Affairs Bureau, the Hong Kong Golf Club, through the provision and maintenance of golf courses, organizes international golf tournament and has made a significant contribution to sports development in Hong Kong. The public can also have some access to the facility. Viewed from the perspective of land development, the Government can resume the private land for public purposes such as for new town or infrastructure development. Nevertheless, the Government currently has no plan to resume the land covered by private recreational leases. The Government will conduct a comprehensive policy review of the private recreational leases, taking into account various factors such as land use, sports development and public needs, etc. With regard to whether the Fanling golf course can entirely take the place of NENT NDAs, we need to note that even if the land lots can be dedicated for other uses, we have to carry out detailed feasibility study on the suitability of high density development, by conducting environmental impact assessment, traffic impact assessments, in order to ascertain the suitability of the site for development and the supporting engineering works. Even if the golf course can be opened up for development, it cannot replace the KTN and FLN NDAs in terms of development programme.

In terms of enhancing land supply, the Government has continued to adopt a multi-pronged approach and step up its efforts to meet housing and other needs and build up “land reserve”, including a number of studies for NDA development such as NENT NDAs study as a way to open up land for development and reviewing different land uses such as “Government, Institution or Community” (GIC), Industrial and Green Belt sites in hope of releasing more land for residential and commercial uses. We are also exploring the option of reclamation on an appropriate scale outside Victoria Harbour and cavern development to enhance land supply mode.

Cost of Development

Some individual members of professional institutes, district councillor and members of the public expressed their concerns with regard to the cost of development. Some worried that the construction of infrastructure facilities would be costly, in particular the proposed various “green design” elements, such as district cooling system. They were of the view that the proposal would spend a large sum of public money and the Government should adhere to the principle of financial prudence and avoid wasting the taxpayers’ money and affecting the long term development of Hong Kong. There were views objecting land resumption for NDAs because of the vast amount involved. The views suggested that as 50% of land were owned by the Government, the government land should be developed first.

Response

The NENT NDA Study plays a very significant role in the housing supply and future development of Hong Kong. Through revising the plans to be more cost-effective, Kwu Tung North and Fanling North NDAs will together provide about 60,700 public and private residential units and accommodating more than 174,900 people, which have been significantly increased from the 47,300 residential units and a population of 134,000 as proposed under the previous plans.

We agree that the implementation of the NDA proposals should adhere to the principle of prudent financial management. According to the latest cost estimates, the proposed “green design” elements including infrastructure such as the district cooling system will account to about 4% of the total development costs. Moreover, in order to avoid the waste of public money, separate viability studies will be conducted for such facilities to confirm their viability prior to construction. Furthermore, more than 30% of the project development costs will be spent on the construction of infrastructure, public housing, public green spaces, government facilities, etc., to increase public housing supply and to provide more open spaces and facilities for the public.

Due to the importance of increasing land and housing supply to the future development of Hong Kong, we consider that it is necessary to allocate resources for the development of NENT NDA. Based on the prevailing procedures in careful budgeting and detailed auditing of individual projects, and the funding procedures of Legco, we are confident to properly manage the financial commitments of the project.

Guiding Planning Principles

The public generally agreed with the overall planning and design direction of “sustainable development” in NDAs. Some professional institutes and member of the public were of the view that the planning of NENT NDAs had incorporated a considerable amount of environmental elements such as carbon reduction strategies and had achieved a reasonable balance between the new development and existing landscape. They believed that the NDAs could help reduce the impacts of global warming and become an attractive healthy community. On the other hand, some green groups considered that the RODPs had not taken the urban agriculture into full account in developing a sustainable city, which ran counter to the concept of sustainable development. The NDAs was located relatively far away from the urban areas and therefore considered to be difficult in attaining sustainable development. The proposed high-rises were also contradictory to the concepts of sustainable development. The proposed low carbon/carbon reduction strategies were not comprehensive.

Concerning the “people-oriented” guiding planning principle advocated in the NDA proposals, many members of the public held skeptical views about whether it could be achieved in the NDAs. Some members of District Council criticized that the Government failed to do so and there was a gap between the request from the affected residents and the planning and arrangement proposed by the Government. They also pointed out that only when there were fierce resistance from the residents or enormous pressure from public opinion then the Government would be willing to make concessions. They believed that if the NDA proposals could achieve common development benefits to the existing North District residents and improve their livings, the proposals would be able to get support rather than opposition. Some members of the public, especially the village representatives of the Kwu Tung Village and villagers, reflected that the “people-oriented” guiding planning

principle was only for the future population, without considering the non-indigenous residents currently residing there. They hoped the Government could take the interest of existing residents into account during the development and achieve a win-win situation. Meanwhile, they believed that the Government must also be accountable to the public by explaining how the NDAs would benefit existing residents. Some concern groups also would like the Government to reconsider the planning that respects the rural environment, community relations and local history, without extinguishing the non-indigenous villages and agricultural land.

Many of members of the public suggested a number of recommendations for the overall planning direction for the NDA proposals. In a number of briefing sessions and meetings, participants and other members of the public urged the Government to prudently plan the NDAs and not to repeat the experience of Tin Shui Wai by timely provision of supporting facilities and employment opportunities. Also, attention should be given to the distribution of different segments of population and avoid same-class population concentration in the NDAs. The NDAs should not be a shelter for new immigrants or resort district for the doubly non-permanent residents and the rich Mainlanders, or else, the local residents would be labelled, like Tin Shui Wai was labelled as “a city of sadness” some years ago. Moreover, the development of NDAs should not follow the same path as Tin Shui Wai development when the Government and the private developers signed agreements which permitted the developers to monopolise the commercial activities in the new town. Some members of the public and political parties stressed that the NDAs should mainly provide public housing and infrastructure and improve the living environment of citizens. Some members of the Land and Building Advisory Committee pointed out that, in response to the keen demand for housing in the society, there was a need to re-examine the planning of the NDAs as it had been carried out as early as 2008. In addition, some members of the Housing Authority and ACE also highlighted that consideration should be given to the future needs, especially the needs of young families as the NDAs was planned for the future. A District Council member also raised that the population growth for the NENT NDAs would be 150,000 people, which would increase the population from 300,000 to 450,000 in North District. In view of the huge impacts brought about by the new population, the Government ought to formulate detailed planning with serious consideration of various social issues such as transport and medical facilities, schools and jobs opportunities etc to create a peaceful and pleasant living and working environment for the North District residents.

Response

The NDAs proposal follows the agreed guiding planning principles in Stage One Public Engagement. It can bring new development opportunities to the North District in New Territories including population growth, industrial and commercial development, community facilities, infrastructure and traffic improvement. These will benefit the residents of the North District. A considerable amount of land is reserved for the use of transport and medical facilities, schools, employments and leisure activities in FLN and KTN. In addition to the local population, residents of the neighbouring developed areas can also enjoy these facilities. With regard to the employment aspect, the NDAs will provide about 37,700 job opportunities, with an average ratio of job to population at about 22%, comparable to that currently in Fanling/Sheung Shui New Town. See 2.1.12 for details of employment opportunities. Learning from the past experience of previous new town developments and other places, the principle of people-oriented was adopted for the planning of NDAs. The Government commissioned the University of Hong Kong to conduct an independent study to

review the causes of problems in Tin Shui Wai and to make relevant recommendations for the reference of the NDAs. These recommendations include constructing a balanced community (balanced housing mix), developing an economically vital community, providing employment, timely provision of community facilities and planning for an NDAs that is adaptive to life cycle of community. In the preparation of the RODPs of NDAs, we have made reference to the recommendations of the above study and plan the NDAs as a harmonious and balanced community.

In terms of planning, we must balance different land uses, the NDAs will not only provide residential and commercial sites, a total area of 58 hectares was reserved for “agriculture” zones to provide some land for the existing residents to maintain their existing lifestyle. The core area (about 37 hectares) of Long Valley will be planned as a “nature park” with the aim to strengthen the protection of the ecology at Long Valley.

The NDA proposals has minimized the affected populations to be relocated. However, it is inevitable that some residents will be affected due to the implementation of NDA development. The Government will make appropriate arrangements for rehousing and compensation for the affected residents. Concerning resumption, compensation, site-clearance and rehousing, please refer section 2.2.1. A number of villages in NDA area will be entirely or partly retained. To match the overall planning, the Kwu Tung Village is situated around the proposed railway station which is a suitable location for town centre and high density development. It is therefore necessary to include the area of Kwu Tung Village as core part of the KTN NDA, in order to provide land for commercial, residential and leisure uses. Ma Shi Po is located at the core part of FLN NDA and therefore clearance is necessary. To minimize the impact to the affected residents, land has been reserved in both KTN and FLN for constructing public housing units for local rehousing purpose. Rehousing the eligible affected residents in Fanling/Sheung Shui and public housing units elsewhere may also be considered by the Government.

Overall Development Direction

On the other hand, there were mixed views from the comments and suggestions received regarding the development concepts of the NDAs. There were views that as the cross boundary activity of the Hong Kong and Mainland residents were becoming frequent, the Government should simplify the clearance procedures, thus indirectly promoting both tourism and commercial development on two sides. Some members of the public, however, doubted whether the integration of the NDAs with the Pearl River Delta and proposed industrial development would be beneficial to the residents in Hong Kong.

In terms of economic development, some concern groups advised that the Government should seize the opportunity to transform its conventional new town development mode of “emphasizing on housing supply”. Instead, diversified industries should be developed to address the past mistakes of new towns due to the lack of employment consideration.

Some professional institutes and a political party expressed that a certain degree of flexibility should be ensured in the planning of NDAs in order to meet any future needs in the society, such as opening up more rural land for development. Some members of the public believed that the NDAs had the potential to be developed as a “elderly/retirees community” in the hope to resolve the issue of ageing population, and at the same time, free up the properties currently occupied by elderly in the urban areas for the working population in order to solve the housing problem in Hong Kong. Moreover, people who yearn for the rural environment

of North East New Territories (NENT) considered that the NENT was suitable to be developed as a recreational region where, for example, a nature themed park could be considered.

In terms of the connectivity between the NDAs and surrounding development, some members of the public agreed that the NDAs should be connected to the surrounding areas. In particular, members of the Heung Yee Kuk and Rural Committee commented that the Government should consider the compatibility of the NDAs with the villages in their vicinity to coordinate and orchestrate the development of both and provide the opportunity to accelerate development of the rural villages. On the other hand, regarding some development projects adjacent to the NDAs, including LMC Loop, FCA, proposed LMC Development Corridor to the west of KTN NDA, Science Park, existing universities, relevant industrial area in Shenzhen and the Liantang/Heung Yuen Wai BCP in progress, the public was of the views that the impacts of these developments on the NDAs should be taken into account in the planning of the NDAs. A professional institute pointed out that all developments in the NDAs should correspond with the mass transit development of the whole territory, instead of going for scattered and random development.

There were suggestions that the Government should take the opportunity of implementing the NDA proposals to deal with issues related to the Small House policy. Some local residents hoped that the Government would provide additional land in the surrounding areas of NDAs to ensure that there would be adequate land for the construction of the New Territories Small House.

Response

The NDA development is intended for meeting the need of housing demand and economic development in Hong Kong. We agree that the planning of land use in NDAs should be flexible and allow different industries and residential development models to taken place on the land provided in NDAs. The KTN NDA is adjacent to the cross-boundary transport facilities and the LMC Loop. To tie in with the future development of the Loop, the NDAs will be connected to the Loop and land is earmarked within the district to support the development of the Loop. In addition, part of the land in the area will be reserved for the purposes of commercial, research, office and hotel to provide space for developing various industries in Hong Kong.

The planning of the NDAs have taken the surrounding areas in consideration, including the linkage with and synthesizing development of various villages so that the villagers living in the NDAs or neighbouring villages can use the facilities of the NDAs. They can also enjoy the enhanced external transportation as a result of the road network provided in the NDAs and the future railway station in Kwu Tung North NDA.

2.1.3 Development Scale

Development Boundaries of the NDAs

There were concern groups queried how the study boundary was defined and suspected whether the development area of the NDAs was designed to facilitate the transfer of benefit

to the developers who owned land there. The planning and layout of the NDAs might not be the one that tally with the principles of sustainability the most. Some suggested the Government to enlarge the scope of NDAs and other surrounding researches. A member of the Heung Yee Kuk considered that the study boundary should be expanded to further review the potential of increasing land supply in the area. For instance, the KTN NDA could be extended to the LMC BCP and the areas along San Sam Road in San Tin near the Loop. The area west to the KTN NDA could be considered to make full use of the land along the railway line for development to address the housing shortage issue. In addition, in the briefing sessions to members of the Rural Committee and local people, some local residents suggested that the Government should incorporate the area of Sheung Shan Kai Wat and Ha Shan Kai Wat, two villages surrounding PC/TKL NDA, and Sha Tau Kok into the development area of the NDAs. At the same time, some Tin Ping Shan villagers expressed their desires to be included in the NDAs in order to protect them from forced relocation because of land acquisition by the private developers. However, some other villagers of Tin Ping Shan village requested to minimize the scope of area affected by the NDA developments. They reflected that the boundary line of the NDAs was unclear which the villagers found it hard ascertain whether their homes were part of the development area or not. There is also residents in Wa Shan Tsuen and PC/TKL want the place they are living in to be excluded from development area.

Response

Major considerations of land use, urban design, environment, ecology, transport, rural characteristics, etc., have been taken into account in the delineation of the development area of the NDAs. The Study Team has made small-scale amendments to the boundary of the NDAs in response to the public comments received in Stage Two Public Engagement. The development of NDAs requires a long and comprehensive planning and engineering study, as well as an environmental impact assessment. Therefore, making substantial increase to the development area of NDAs at this stage will severely affect the implementation schedule of the NDAs.

After thorough consideration of the comments received in Stage Three Public Engagement, the Study Team recommends to replan PC/TKL NDAs at a later stage in the context of NT North study, in order to comprehensively consider various planning factors.

Development Intensity

In various briefing sessions, a considerable amount of comments received suggested the Government to further increase the overall development density of the NDAs on the grounds of increasing housing provision to meet the urgent housing needs. Many members of the Housing Authority urged the Government to strike a balance between environment and housing demand and recommended that the plot ratio of residential land could be further increased after conducting the environmental and traffic impact assessments in order to alleviate the problem of housing shortage. Other members of the Housing Authority mentioned that although the plot ratio of 6.5 was considered to be too high in the previous public engagement activities of Planning and Development Study on NENT, given the current urgent needs for housing, the feasibility of plot ratio 6 should be explored. Moreover, some members of the public held the views that as long as there was air ventilation assessment support and avoidance of walled buildings or large-scaled podium base design, it

was suggested that the development intensity of NDAs could be raised to plot ratio 6 or above to provide more housing supply.

Furthermore, some members of the Legco Development Panel pointed out that the projected 150,000 population increase might not provide sufficient justification for the resources invested in the NDA development. Review was needed to investigate the enhanced development intensity particularly for the PRH, in view of the public opposition and problems of utilizing reclamation and cavern development as enhancing land supply strategies in the current optimizing land supply study. They also pointed out that while the population of Hong Kong was projected to reach 8.4 million people, the NENT NDAs could only accommodate about 150,000 people. The Government should consider expanding the overall development scale of the NDAs, which not only helped to meet the housing needs in the future, but also create more job opportunities for Hong Kong.

Some members of the TPB, LDAC and professional institutes agreed that the proposed plot ratio in the NDAs was relatively low and the development density should be increased. Particularly, in the briefing sessions for the LDAC and its Planning Sub-committee, some members recommended to raise the plot ratio in order to avoid the future need to develop more NDAs or open up other land. They noted that more infrastructure facilities would be needed to support additional population yet the development costs per capita would be lower as the development intensity increases as well. A member of professional institute remarked that a large number of lower density residential development would only attract Mainland and overseas buyers, which would not be helpful for housing provision for Hong Kong people. Furthermore, the member was also of the view that land resumption would involve a large sum of public fund. Increasing the plot ratio of NDAs could reduce land acquisition while provide a similar number of residential units and hence making it more cost effective. Besides the density of residential land, members of professional institutes considered the proposed plot ratio and gross floor area for the commercial use in NDAs might not be adequate to attract more high-end retailers and help disperse urban economic activities to the NDAs.

On the other hand, there were a few members of the public expressed that the Government should reduce the population and residential density of the NDAs and preserve the characteristics of New Territories. They suggested that the NDAs should be positioned as a leisure and tourist area, such as providing a venue for equestrians or stargazing station.

Response

As pointed out by a member of the Housing Authority, the members of public previously believed that the development density of NDAs should not be too high. Therefore, in the planning for NDAs, in addition to meeting the housing and employment needs as the population grows, we need to take into account public aspirations for a quality living environment, environment conservation, urban design, and many other considerations. The planning in NDAs will be balanced with residential and commercial/industrial developments with conservation area, agriculture and various open spaces. In response to suggestions in development the PE2 exercise, the plot ratios of the “Residential Zone 2” (“R2”) and “Residential Zone 3” (“R3”) sites in the KTN and FLN NDAs had already been increased from 3 to 3.5 and from 1 to 2 respectively in the RODPs, with an increase of about 8,000 units in flat supply.

In view of the comments received regarding the development density of NDAs during the Stage Three Public Engagement programme, we have balanced different factors (including efficient use of scarce land and financial resources, sufficient supporting infrastructure for more housing units, growing public aspirations for a quality living environment, as well as good urban design etc) and decide to increase the development density of KTN and FLN appropriately after conducting technical assessments. This includes recommendation to rezone the majority of the residential development in R3 zone to R2 zone with higher plot ratio in KTN and FLN NDAs and increase the plot ratio of the high density residential development zone (Residential Zone 1 (with commercial) (“R1c”) zone) from 5 to 6. According to the revised RODPs, the supply of flats will be increased from 47,300 to 60,700 in KTN and FLN NDAs, with public to private housing ratio revised as 60:40. The population will increase from 134,000 to 174,900 people. The provision of supporting facilities, including schools and other public facilities, will be adjusted in line with the new target population as well. As for the planning of PC/TKL NDA, it is recommended to be reviewed at a later stage.

2.1.4 Housing Supply

Housing Policy

There were views that the Government should comprehensively review the long term housing strategy, considering the needs and relevant factors. Professional institutes agreed that there was a need to increase land supply in Hong Kong, along with a long term strategy and implementation program. As mentioned by the members of professional institutes, the population of Hong Kong would increase by 1.4 million people by 2040 yet the NDAs could only provide 54,000 residential units and accommodate 150,000 people, it was of interest to know how the rest of population growth would be accommodated properly. The NDAs were considered not able to resolve the inadequate supply of housing in Hong Kong now. For the housing supply in the long run, professional institutes advised the Government to formulate long term policy for housing reviewing the housing demand, population growth, public and private housing ratio, etc., for the next 30 years. In addition, there were comments received advocating restrictions on hoarding of vacant residential units, help Hong Kong people to purchase property as well as avoiding the development of existing agricultural land for residential development. Members of the professional institutes pointed out that the living standard of Hong Kong was low and there was a large number of sub-divided units and cage homes. The NENT NDAs should balance the quality and quantity in housing provision, and should be prioritized for improving the poor living conditions of the estimated over 100,000 sub-divided units and cage homes.

Regarding the policy of “Hong Kong Property for Hong Kong People”, many members of the public requested to introduce flats that only allow Hong Kong people to buy in the NDAs. Some even suggested the Government should consider to set aside at least half of the area for the policy. Nevertheless, some groups indicated that based on the free market principle, the Government should properly introduce such policy and should not apply this to all the private housings in the NDAs. Furthermore, there are organization and political parties of the

view that the size and types of private housing units provided must be generally affordable by the middle class in Hong Kong to meet the objective of the “Hong Kong Property for Hong Kong People” policy.

Response

The Hong Kong 2030 Planning Visions and Strategy recommends that the future development direction of Hong Kong should be “do more with less” by optimizing the use of the developed areas and new town and appropriate development of New Territories. It was recommended that priority should be given to develop KTN, FLN, PC/TKL and Hung Shui Kiu NDAs. As pointed out in the Policy Address 2013, the Government has adopted a multi-pronged approach to enhance land supply strategies, including converting “Industrial”, “Green Belt” and “G/IC” sites, increasing the development density of unleased or unallocated residential sites as far as allowable in planning terms, developing the ex-quarry sites, exploring vigorously the residential development potential of land along existing and planned railways, and exploring the option of reclamation on an appropriate scale outside Victoria Harbour and cavern development in order to build up “land reserve” to ensure a sustained and stable land supply.

There are complex factors affecting the population capacity of a city (including the area of land available for development, development density, population density, investment in infrastructure and community facilities, demand management policies and resources that society is willing to pay, etc.). Through managing and regulating growth and multi-pronged approach to enhance land supply strategies, it will help us to meet the future population growth.

The Long Term Housing Strategy Steering Committee is assessing the long term demand for housing, the public/private housing ratio and formulating long term housing policy.

We agree that the NENT NDAs cannot solve the problem of short-term housing supply shortage. The Government has proposed a number of measures in increasing the short-term housing supply in the Policy Address. However, we need to plan for the development of Hong Kong in the long term and the NENT NDAs development is one of the sources of land for the medium to long term development of Hong Kong. As time is required for planning, conducting various engineering/environmental impact assessments, resumption and construction, it is necessary to implement the NDA project as soon as possible. Moreover, we noted that there are comments requesting “Hong Kong Property for Hong Kong People” developments in the NDAs. The aim of the policy of “Hong Kong Property for Hong Kong People” is to give priority to the housing need of the permanent residents of Hong Kong and it will be pilot tested at two sites in the Kai Tak Development Area. The Government is prepared to implement the “Hong Kong Property for Hong Kong People” measures on private housing sites in NDAs, taking into account the real estate market situation and other relevant considerations at the time of land sale.

Public Housing

Many people including members of Heung Yee Kuk, local residents and other members of the public requested the Government to increase provision of public housing in the NDAs. Among them, members of the Housing Authority were inclined to the Government increasing the supply of public housing in the NDAs, in order to meet the urgent public

needs for public rental housing and address the objective to keep the average waiting time target for general applicants at around three years. A member of the Housing Authority noted that public housing only accounted for a small portion of the NDAs land area which are mostly concentrated in the KTN NDA. There appeared room for increasing proportion of public housing. Previous new towns like Fanling/ Sheung Shui in the northern New Territories had a higher ratio of public housing and could be served as precedent to support the increase in proportion of public housing provision in the NDAs. Hence, there were comments from the concern groups, political parties and members of public expressing that the NDAs should be mainly for public housing and its proportion should be adjusted to 50% or even higher, in response to the practical problems of increasing public housing demand and shortening the waiting time for PRH. Members of the North District Council pointed out that currently the Waiting List applicants for PRH in NT East were usually allocated to other districts such as Tuen Mun when they were allocated with a unit. Therefore, they hope the Government could further raise the number of PRH units in NDAs so residents in NT East could be allocated with a unit in the same district. Some members of the public pointed out that the proposed public housing units was only accountable for 40% of the overall figure and hence considered that the Government was using Conventional New Town Approach (CNTA) to resume land for luxurious residential development. The Government should increase the public housing ratio. Members of the Housing Authority suggested that the potential locations for PRH would be adjacent to the proposed Kwu Tung railway station to provide more convenience for the PRH residents. They also hoped that the Government should consider providing HOS in the NDAs and suggested to convert part of the land planned for private residential use into HOS sites. Provision of PRH and HOS in PC/TKL should be considered. Moreover, members of professional institutes urged the Government to take the opportunity brought about by the NDAs to study the feasibility of partnership with private sectors in providing public housing in the future.

On the other hand, members of the Strategic Planning Committee under the Housing Authority reminded that the provision of PRH and private housing should be balanced to avoid negative impacts of oversupply of PRH in a particular community. Members of Planning Sub-committee of the LDAC noted that as the future population will share the community facilities with the existing new towns population in the same district, the proportion of public and private housing and the provision of community facilities should be considered at the same time.

Response

A balanced mix of public and private housing with timely provision of community facilities and diversified employment opportunities would help establish balanced and harmonious communities⁽¹⁾. In view of the public aspiration for more public housing the NDAs as discussed in section 2.1.3, we recommend an appropriate increase in the development density of the NDAs, in order to optimize the use of land resources and to meet the needs of the public. The NDA proposal will provide approximately 4,400 and 9,100 PRH units in KTN and FLN NDAs respectively to allow more people to reside in PRH flats in NDAs. The ratio of public-private housing is revised from 49:51 (excluding PC/TKL NDAs) in the originally proposed RODPs to 60:40 to increase supply for public housing. However, we

¹ The balanced community mix concept is considered as a major consideration in the planning of new development areas located farther away from the main urban core under 'A study on Tin Shui Wai New Town' carried out by the University of Hong Kong in 2009 (www.pland.gov.hk/pland_en/p_study/comp_s/index.html).

need to avoid the excessive concentration of public housing, while we increase its proportion. The revised proportion of 60:40 for public and private housing is similar to that of Fanling/Sheung Shui (59:41). Besides providing public rental housing, sites has been reserved for HOS. We will maintain the flexibility and make adjustments to the actual proportion in the light of circumstances during implementation to increase the number of HOS units.

We must endeavor to ensure the provision of adequate employment opportunities and various types of GIC facilities to cope with population growth. Existing provision of community facilities in Fanling/Sheung Shui are generally in line with the standards stipulated in the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines (HKPSG). The NDAs will also provide corresponding community facilities and larger area of District Open Space (such as Riverside Park) for the residents of NDAs as well as Fanling/Sheung Shui. The NDAs will provide hospitals and public clinics to relieve the pressure of the North District Hospital. Therefore, the residents of Fanling/Sheung Shui and nearby villages will benefit from the new facilities in the NDAs.

Private Housing

There were views that there was a lack of small- and medium-sized residential units in the NDAs and therefore proposed to provide flats of such type and taking forward the policy of “Hong Kong Property for Hong Kong People” in the NDAs. A lot of comments advised the Government to provide small- and medium-sized flats that were affordable by the general public in the NDAs. It was also suggested that the housing provided in the KTN and FLN NDAs should target and be affordable to the middle class and the sandwich class. Besides, there was a suggestion that the private housing should be restricted to first-time buyers in Hong Kong and adding in restrictive terms for the flat size at land auctions in order to ensure that the private housing in the NDAs would benefit the general public. In addition, many members of the public, including local residents, concern groups and individuals regarded the proposed density of private residential development too low and alleged that they would be built for the rich and could not help resolve the housing problem. They questioned the proposed low density development if the NDAs are intended to increase housing supply. Some others worried that the proposed low density residential areas would become the high end housing sites similar to Kwu Tung South and urged the Government to clarify their planning intention for this.

Response

The NDAs are Hong Kong’s new towns, which are planned and developed for meeting the medium- to long-term housing demand in Hong Kong, and also for providing employment opportunities.

In the RODPs from Public Engagement Stage 3, most of the low-density development areas were designated in PC/TKL NDA as there would be a lack of railway transportation in the area. After review, we recommend to implement FLN and KTN NDAs as soon as possible and to re-plan the PC/TKL NDA at a later stage in the context of NT North study in order to comprehensively consider various factors, including development opportunities brought about by new railway development.

To develop a harmonious community, we plan for different types of residential developments for different social classes of people to reside in the NDAs. After review, FLN and KTN NDAs will only contain small amount of low density development sites which are designated taking into account planning and transport considerations (accounting for 1.3% of the residential land), whereas other planned private housing developments will mostly be small- and medium-sized flats. The Government will implement measures for “Hong Kong Property for Hong Kong People” on private housing sites in NDAs, taking into account real estate market situation and relevant considerations at the time of land sale.

2.1.5 “Special Industries Area” and “Commercial, Research and Development Zone”

A number of comments were concerning about the “Special Industries Area” in PC/TKL NDA and “Commercial, Research and Development Zone” in KTN NDA. Some members of the Housing Authority suggested Government to formulate policies to attract research & development industries to develop in the NDAs. Also, members of Heung Yee Kuk pointed out that the Government should clearly define which were the industries Hong Kong enjoy a clear advantage and should establish relevant supporting policies. In the briefing session, the Hong Kong Council for Testing and Certification indicated their hopes to see the proposed “Special Industries Area” and “Commercial, Research and Development Zone” would be reserved for industries where Hong Kong enjoyed clear advantages. A political party urged the Government to utilize the land in NDAs to develop high value-added industries. It pointed out that since Hong Kong had no competitive advantages in low value-added services, the new industries must be knowledge-intensive, in particular those employed new technology, patents or branding to create value such as information technology services (data centre, cloud computing service) and supporting services for commercialization of intellectual property. There were members of the TPB, professional institutes and public wanted to know the planning intention of these two uses, including the definition of non-polluting industries and considerations for their site selection etc. Some members of the Planning Sub-committee of LDAC expressed their concerns over the “Special Industry Area” in PC/TKL NDA and worried that whether it will ultimately be serving the Mainland, and concerned whether the local residents could find in the “Special Industry Area”. Members of the public further pointed out that there were several existing industrial villages/areas along the boundary with low efficiency despite a high occupancy. The Government could enhance and make better use of existing resources. By planning, optimizing and integrating various industrial zones and developing a quality business area at lower cost and achieving better efficiency than what was proposed in the KTN and PC/TKL, without damaging the existing landscape and residents’ livelihood in the northeastern New Territories. In addition, there were members of the public urged the Government to clarify how the proposed high value-added industries would benefit Hong Kong people, especially the grassroots in the area. Some green groups questioned whether the development of area for industries where Hong Kong enjoyed clear advantages implied that the Government would focus on dealing with the scattered open storage sites and improving the rural environment, or it was just a kind of policy without considering that the open storage problem might transfer to other rural areas.

Many comments regarding the proposed “Special Industries Area” and “Commercial, Research and Development Zone” were related to the feasibility of developing these

industries in the NDAs. A lot of views doubted the proposed industrial area might not attract investors because of its relatively large site area. Some professional institutes pointed out that the proposed industries in the “Special Industries Area” was similar to that in LMC Loop and therefore doubted whether there would be redundant land resources. On the other hand, however, some members of the public and Planning Sub-committee of the LDAC commented that the utilization rate of the existing Science Park was almost saturated and the proposed industries in NDAs could provide more diversified employment opportunities to the local residents and facilitate same-district employment. It was suggested that the Government to consider expanding the area of “Special Industries Area”. Meanwhile, some members of the Hong Kong Council for Testing and Certification and TPB were of the view that the land uses for both areas should be flexible as it was difficult to decide on what types of industries to be established in the area at this moment. Also, there were supporting views that clustering of relevant industries in the same area could achieve synergistic effects which can encourage the Hong Kong-owned manufacturing industry based in Mainland to relocate their research and development part into the proposed “Special Industries Area” and “Commercial, Research and Development Zone” in the NDAs. Relevant supporting industries and different combination of industrial should be considered. Specifically, members of the Hong Kong Council for Testing and Certification would like to know if the Government would reserve land in the NDAs for the construction material testing industry.

Response

In the previous public engagement exercise, the Government proposed promoting the industries where Hong Kong enjoyed clear advantages. The proposal gained support from the community. For the economic development of Hong Kong, a diverse range of industries should be developed to meet the needs of Hong Kong residents for starting business, investment, business operation and employment. The Policy Address has pointed out that Hong Kong has to increase the volume and diversity of industries. The NDAs being in proximity to numerous existing and new BCP connecting to Shenzhen can take advantage of its strategic location to provide for different strategic land use requirements. In the KTN NDA, the “Commercial, Research and Development Zone” along the Fanling Highway (about 14 hectares) has the potential to develop into a wide range of office and R&D purposes as well as provide space for developing and supporting Hong Kong's competitive industries. In the northwestern part of the KTN NDA, about 8 hectares of land are reserved for R&D uses to support the development of the LMC Loop. These land uses should provide flexibility and development space for all kinds of industries.

Considering the public comments received from the Stage Three Public Engagement and after review, the Study Team recommends to re-plan the PC/TKL NDAs at a later stage in the context in NT North study in order to comprehensively consider various factors. The planning of “Special Industries Area” will be reviewed.

2.1.6 Urban Design and Land Use

Urban Design

With regard to the overall urban design concepts and elements of the three NDAs, members of the public expressed different views and suggestions. A member of the North District Council considered the Government's planning blueprint attractive with elements such as

modern development and landmark building. Some professional institutes were supportive towards the low density design concept of the NDAs but recommended that the city centre should be developed on top the Public Transport Interchange (PTI) with higher density of development. Some members of the ACE agreed that the NDAs brought about opportunities to incorporate more innovative design and planning concepts, in which the architectural design should be more creative and unique and different from monotonous building design in the existing new towns. The Hong Kong Institute of Urban Design (HKIUD) recommended that the proposed buildings and urban form in the NDAs should be original and flexible. Proposed building height should be more dynamic and allow diversified and adaptive plot ratios/ building height restrictions to avoid walled buildings design. Quality urban spaces and characteristic community focal points and landmark buildings were important in creating local character and sense of place. On the other hand, large-scale construction of identical buildings with no particular features and design should be avoided. Concerning the street environment, there were comments suggesting that the land use planning in the NENT NDAs should seek to provide a more diversified livelihood and create a vibrant street environment. Small business should be encouraged in the sidewalks of residential area. The developments in the NDAs should be based on small plots to increase penetration between buildings and create a more diversified and interesting street environment. Suitable measures and financial assistance should be offered to small businesses for their co-existence with the larger ones in mixed-use development. Concerning the “Residential Zone 2” sites, there were comments suggesting flexibility in allowing commercial uses on the lower floors. They considered the proposed pedestrian network followed too much on the alignment of road networks and the “walkability” should be emphasized in planning to encourage people to walk. The proposed development should foster at-grade pedestrian circulation, supported by elevated footbridges to create a vibrant street. In addition, there were opinions recommending that the design of the NDAs should fully take their own unique characteristics into account. For instance, a member of the Town Planning Board suggested that NDAs should take advantage of the nearby rivers to create character. Some members of the public suggested that the rivers within the NDAs should be used as the focal points of communities and the possibility for water parks or introducing water transport on the rivers, etc. In terms of landscape design, professional institutes advised the Government to formulate holistic strategies for the green spaces and avoid channelising existing rivers as much as possible in order to preserve the original landscape of the river.

On the other hand, members of the ACE was worried about the potential impacts of the proposed PTI on the residents, making reference to a previous study that pointed out higher health risk exposed to the residents near transportation node. Therefore, there should be designs to lessen the impacts in the further study. In view of the relatively high-rises development in NDAs, some members of the public requested the Government to consider the air ventilation issues in the NDAs.

Other comments suggested that placing various street furniture such as benches in the station to create a more relaxed atmosphere. It was recommended that trees and flowers planting should be encouraged along the existing highways, new roads, junctions and roadside as much as possible in order to maintain the original ecology and protect the environment.

Response

The urban design of the NDAs has fully considered the natural landscape, water features, mountain and farmland, etc., of the area. The design layout provides view corridors and green corridors to connect the major development and landscape zone with a convenient and pleasant pedestrian environment. The proposed building heights echoes the density of the development and allows a certain degree of flexibility to the architects to design building groups with height variations. The stepped building heights and development intensity concepts will enhance spaciousness and enrich the urban profile. It will also have positive effects on visual amenity, natural lighting and air ventilation. Taking into consideration of the physical environment and prevailing wind directions, the tallest buildings in the KTN NDA are at the town centre with the building heights gradually descending towards the peripheral areas. In the FLN NDA, the building heights reduce gradually from the eastern and western fringes towards the centre and from the south to Ng Tung River in the north. The maximum building height of the KTN and FLN NDAs will not exceed 35 storeys. We agree that flexibility should be allowed in implementing the stepped building height concept to allow innovative and landmark buildings. This can be achieved by incorporating a minor relaxation clause for building height restrictions in the relevant Outline Zoning Plans (OZPs). The proposed building heights have been determined with reference to the Air Ventilation Assessment, Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines (HKPSG) and Urban Design Guidelines for Hong Kong. We agree that the creation of lively streetscape in the NDAs is important. At the town and district centres of KTN NDAs and FLN NDAs, pedestrianised retail streets with street fronting shops, cafes and restaurants will be the local focal points. Having diversified and vibrant urban design is also one of the planning objectives of the NDAs. This can be further examined in the detailed planning and design.

The urban design of KTN NDA follows the sustainable development principles and the Transit Oriented Development approach, pedestrian circulation and activities will be concentrated around the public transport nodes to create vibrant town and district centres. The natural landscape at the periphery will be retained and the ecological habitats of Long Valley conserved. Taking into account the protection of landscape, view corridors will be introduced to avoid screening off the surrounding important landscape. The view corridors will also enable the public to see the hilly terrains of Pak Shek Au and Fung Kong Shan in a distance, as well as the Long Valley Nature Park and its surrounding rural landscape. The FLN NDA will make best use of the natural scenery of Ng Tung River and the surrounding hills, the NDA will be developed into a vibrant riverside community in a linear layout. Four green spines stretching from Fung Kai Secondary School, Tin Ping Shan Tsuen, Luen Chit Street and Wo Tai Street to the promenade along river. The banks of Ng Tung River will be developed into a unique riverside promenade connecting the Central Park and major developments within the NDA. Pedestrian walkways and cycle track will connect the major activity nodes, community and recreational facilities within the NDAs as well as the neighbouring communities through open spaces and promenades covering the entire NDAs. See the comments regarding the land use and urban design of the NDAs in sections 2.3.4 , 2.4.3 and 2.5.2.

As for air ventilation, we have conducted AVA and established relevant good design elements, including primary and secondary breezeways, penetrative building design and building setbacks to ensure air ventilation.

Roadside facilities or signs in the NDAs will be designed to meet the requirements of urban environmental design and transportation design. Three meters wide roadside green belt are generally reserved for the planting of trees and flowers along local roads.

Green Design and Carbon Reduction Strategies

There were views that innovative concepts such as low carbon strategy, sustainable development and comprehensive pedestrian walkways/cycle track network could be a major selling point of the NDAs. However, more efforts were required in the design and planning of the NDAs to make it a model for sustainable development in Hong Kong, for instance, encouraging waste reduction at the source. Many members of the public made suggestions on green designs, and suggested incorporating green technology in the design of NDAs, including the use of electric vehicles, developing renewable energy, recycling of potable water, rainwater collection facilities, sustainable urban drainage system and waste recycling etc, to cope with future urban development. In particular, there were opinions suggesting that innovative and district-based infrastructure should be considered to harness the use of recycling technologies and appropriate space at strategic locations should be reserved for waste collection and recycling. There were recommendations that the waste collection points should include food waste separation and treatment facilities to promote conversion of food waste into resources like biogas and compost, and reduce demand on landfills. In the residential areas, design measures that maximize solar and wind energy use, as well as pipelines that facilitate waste separation and classification could be introduced. Some members of the public hoped the Government to study the feasibility of planting flowers and trees on residential rooftops in order to relieve the heat island effect. On the other hand, some members of the public were concerned over the proposed green design elements might not be implemented by the developers of private developments.

Regarding the proposed green design elements in the NDA proposals, some members of the TPB considered these green infrastructures, such as district cooling system, landscape design or concrete-layered river, were actually just "gray infrastructure". Genuine green infrastructures should be organic and able to reinstate the land and water body to their natural state and enhance their ecological values.

Response

We understand the community aspirations for quality living environment, the planning concept of the NDAs therefore focuses on "green design". The highest plot ratio in the NDAs is 6 and various urban design elements are adopted, including stepped building heights design, views corridors and breezeways. A considerable amount of area is reserved for "green" space and comfortable pedestrian environment in the NDAs. Residential developments, workplace, leisure/entertainment and public service facilities will be concentrated within 500m of the public transport nodes to minimize the need for commuting and therefore reduce carbon emission from public transport. Comprehensive system of pedestrian walkways and cycle track network will be provided and electric bus is suggested to connect the NDAs to the existing communities in order to encourage residents to use railway as the main mode of transportation and hence reduce the demand for vehicles and roads. See the details of proposed transport facilities in NDAs in section 2.1.12. The view corridors and breezeways will bring positive visual and ventilation effects optimising on natural resources such as mountains and rivers and introduction of continuous green space to mitigate heat island effect. In order to create a sustainable living environment, we recommend using a number of energy-saving measures, including the use of reclaimed water for non-potable purposes, district cooling system and the use of renewable energy, and adoption of green building design. Regarding waste collection and processing measures, the Government encourages waste reduction measures in addition to waste reduction at the

source. Also, we encourage the use of environmentally friendly materials and application of environmentally friendly building facilities to reduce carbon emission from buildings.

Land Use

Regarding the overall land use of the three NDAs, some members of the public expressed their suggestions. Some members of the public were of the view that the land usage rate was seriously inadequate as only a small amount of the 780 hectares of land in the NDAs was designed for public housing which could accommodate nearly 70,000 people already. Some members of the professional institutes mentioned that the low density residential development (“R4”) and agriculture land near the centres of the NDAs were not efficient use of land resources. A more appropriate location should be identified for low density accommodation and arable lands for rehabilitation for farmers affected by the NENT NDAs. Another professional institute criticized the development approach of “Comprehensive Development Area”(CDA) arguing that it often resulted in isolated development pockets that offered the least integration and connectivity with the town and hamper the urban environment and quality of street life. Some members of the public suggested that more green space should be developed in the NDAs; reserve land for green industries, and providing more commercial uses which would create more employment opportunities in the areas and allow in-district employment. Members of the Housing Authority reflected that there had been a lot of criticisms on the operation of the Link and thus recommended the new housing estates should contain a wide range of commercial facilities, especially to enable sufficient survival space for the small- and medium-sized merchants. It was further suggested that some of the shops would be exclusively for small- and medium-sized merchants and rent concessions could be granted to small-sized operators to provide more options for the public. It would, optimise market competition, prevent monopolization by the large developers and cater for the needs of different classes. The difficulty for non-profit making organizations to lease office space was also pointed out and hence there were suggestion to set aside land for them.

Response

The planning of the NDAs is constrained by geographical, ecological and other factors. The total developable area of the three NDAs is only 533 hectares. KTN and FLN NDAs have a total developable area of 333 hectares, amongst which some areas are for commercial, community facilities and open space uses, etc. A comprehensive and balanced land use planning is one of the key planning concepts of the NDA proposals.

After review, the revised RODPs will reserve more land for public housing, different types and amount of commercial facilities, including retail and dining facilities within the lower floors of residential development, as well as freestanding commercial buildings. In addition to the large shopping malls, we also propose to put shops fronting major pedestrian walkways and provide different types of shopping experiences and choices. The planning intention of the “Comprehensive Development Area”(“CDA”) is to ensure comprehensive planning and design for the development sites. The implementation will not render developments isolated. The proponent of the development project is required to submit master layout plan to the Town Planning Board and the proposed development’s connectivity to and compatibility with the surrounding areas is a key consideration to the Town Planning Board. The planning intentions of the two “CDA” sites located near the

proposed Kwu Tung Station and along the Fanling Highway are respectively to, through planning control measures, ensure proper design of the Public Transport Interchange (PTI) within the first site and its connectivity to Kwu Tung Station as well as the surrounding residential developments and to ensure the conservation of the to-be-reprovisioned Home of Loving Faithfulness building, and providing appropriate pedestrian facilities within the site linking government uses to the west of the second site.

2.1.7 Cultural Heritage Conservation

As for the cultural heritage conservation, comments generally agreed that the development of the NDAs should take into account the conservation of monuments and heritage, balance the economic and social development and the demand for conserving the natural and historical culture and formulate appropriate measures and programmes without hasty demolition. It was suggested that proposed new development should be in harmony with the surrounding monuments and heritage, such as extending the Lung Yeuk Tau Heritage Trail to connect to the locations of the historical and cultural value in Kwu Tung and Fanling.

In terms of local characteristics, there were views that the NDA proposals were not humanized and did not retain the local characteristics of the existing North District. There were concerns that the NDAs would become the same as other new towns, losing the traditional rural culture and customs. Some also worried that as the villages become NDAs, the distance among people would increase and the existing community cohesion would disappear. Some members of the public were particularly worried about the several CDA sites might become large shopping malls. Members of the Heung Yee Kuk recommended to retain the old-fashioned shops and local culture, such as organizing village-styled bazaar, establishing museum to reflect the traditional culture of the indigenous inhabitants of the area, as well as creating Pai Fongs and road signs that capture the local characteristics and commemorate the history and culture of the indigenous people. Members of the Housing Authority suggested constructing memorial parks and museums to preserve the cultural traditions of the indigenous people and appreciate the contribution of the existing residents.

Response

It is one of the key guiding principles to strike a proper balance between development and heritage conservation. The Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) has been included in the EIA conducted for the NDAs to ensure that heritage conservation and development can be properly coordinated. The Study has completed the baseline survey of built heritage. Many of the traditional rural cultural heritages will be kept in the NENT NDAs. Monuments and graded historic buildings such as Earth God Shrine of Kam Tsin (Grade 2 Historic Building) & Enchi Lodge (Both Grade 2 Historic Building). In KTN NDA, Yeung Garden and Yan Wah Lo (Both Grade 3 Historic Building) located in the KTN NDA, as well as the area where Man Ming Temple (Grade 3 Historic Building) currently located in FLN NDA will be included in “Open Space” zone to achieve the conservation purpose.

Regarding the suggestion for village-styled bazaar, memorial park and setting up Pai Fong/special road sign, etc., to reflect local culture. It will be reviewed during detailed design stage.

2.1.8 Ecological Conservation

Concerning the principle of ecological conservation for all NDAs, members of the public demanded the Government to have an overall planning for the agricultural land and ecological conservation. The development of NDAs should be strictly monitored safeguarding against any damages to the existing natural environment because the rural areas would not recover once damaged. Some doubted whether the planning of the NDAs had considered the existing rural environment and commented that only 0.1% of the land was proposed to be zoned as "Conservation Area", which was not sufficient to conserve the ecology. A professional institute questioned if there were other land use planning options considered to minimize the negative impacts of the NDAs on the areas with high ecological values. Furthermore, a number of green groups believed that a comprehensive nature conservation policy, integration of biodiversity concept into the main policies and strategies of various policy bureaux, and compliance with "Convention on Biological Diversity" were essential to formulate effective measures to enhance the privately owned sites with ecological values. Many members of the public hoped that the NDAs could take care of the needs of environmental protection, conservation and agricultural land without ignoring the severe housing problem that we were facing. The two considerations should be appropriately balanced.

Members of the ACE and green groups were worried about that the development of the NDAs would affect the flight path of the birds and recommended to conduct careful assessment of the development impacts on the birds. To minimize the impacts of NDAs on birds, it was suggested to make use of high-tech equipment and to formulate holistic Avian Protection Plan (APP) for the birds, such as establishing bird-safe building design criteria. Some were of the view that the area proposed for ecological compensation was too small and the proposed Nature Park in Long Valley for wetland compensation was not appropriate due to its already high ecological value. They were concerned that the compensated wetland in the Nature Park would relocate the existing wet farming and it would be more effective if an area of lower ecological value was used as a compensation for the wetland. They urged the Government to explain the concrete figures to the public to justify that the proposed Nature Park would be adequate to compensate the ecological environment affected by the NDAs. There were requests that the wetland compensation area should be provided in the locality and it was unacceptable to re-provide the lost wetland of PC/TKL in KTN. Some green groups noticed that the proposed temporary wetland compensation area could not effectively compensate the loss ecological habitat. The area was considered too close to the existing shooting grounds and firing ranges and the area would be affected by noise and air pollution. In addition, with regard to the proposed riverside promenade in the NDAs, some environmental concern groups opposed to the idea of building a riverside promenade covered with concrete as it would affect the ecological environment along the river and caused the loss of habitat and foraging places of the migratory birds. They hence suggested that the whole river bank should remain intact as nature heritage trails. They pointed out that bird-watching had become a popular activity in eco-tourism and could be developed properly to generate more job opportunities. A professional institute urged that all trees should be preserved as far as practicable. Comprehensive tree preservation, compensatory planting proposal and greening scheme should be carried out together with the preservation of registered Old and Valuable Trees (OVTs) within NDAs. Further investigation and assessment of the OVTs should be carried out to minimize the impacts from development.

There were other opinions suggesting that information such as amount of trees, area of forestry and wetland, etc., should be included in the public engagement digest for easier public reference. For the comments on the ecological conservation of respective NDAs, see Sections 2.3.3, 2.4.6 and 2.5.3.

Response

Ecological conservation is one of the key study topics in the planning of the NDAs. During the planning process, we are devoted to find the right balance between development and conservation. Ecological surveys and studies were conducted and identified the conservation area from the ecological conservation point of view. In addition to Conservation Area, we have reserved 119 ha of land (Approx. 20% of the overall area) as Green Belt and undisturbed by the development. On the other hand, the Study recommends that the core part of the Long Valley to be developed as “Nature Park”(about 37 ha) which will become an integral part of the NDA plans. This will enhance the ecological value and functions of Long Valley wetland, and also provide a natural green lung to the residents of the NDAs. The Study has also assessed the flight path of the birds in detail to ensure that the proposed development will not pose impacts to the birds. As for the proposed ecological compensation area, we believe that centralizing all the compensatory wetland in one location will bring more ecological benefits than having small-scaled and scattered compensations for the affected wetlands. The proposed Long Valley Nature Park can ensure continuous conservation of the existing wetland in-situ. Despite that the high ecological value of Long Valley wetland which has been well recognized, there is still room for enhancing its ecological value. Details and related data are listed in the EIA report. The Study proposes appropriate mitigation measures to avoid and reduce the ecological impact of the NDAs.

Whilst the NDAs development would retain some of the trees in-situ, 5 numbers of old and valuable trees affected by the widening of Fanling Highway will be retained in-situ. it is unavoidable for some trees to be removed during the development. We will look for suitable locations to replant new trees as compensation. Details will be listed in the EIA report.

Regarding the concern of the green groups that the concrete covering the riverside promenade will destroy the ecology, related concerns will be addressed in the detailed design stage. According to the preliminary design concept, a continuous riverside promenade will be provided along the banks of Ng Tung River and along the western riverbank of Sheung Yue River to allow residents to enjoy the scenic views of the river and hilly backdrop and along the western riverbank of Sheung Yue River.

2.1.9 Environmental Protection

Some professional institutes expressed supportive views towards the proposed carbon reduction strategies and measures in the NDAs. A green group proposed a series of long-term carbon reduction strategies that could be implemented in the NDAs, including employing local residents as far as practicable, providing economic incentives and technical support, encouraging domestic and business users in the NDAs to develop green economies and creating a low carbon community. Members of the ACE remarked that there should be a specific renewable energy target in the NDA plans. A green group suggested that the NDAs

should develop solar energy, rather than wind energy for the high density development areas because of the potential adverse impacts of wind energy on the environment.

For environmental impacts of the NDAs, some members of the public were worried that the NDA development would have adverse environmental impact(s), such as air pollution, and cause health problems for existing residents. Thus, there were views to urge the Government to re-evaluate the NDAs by adopting more stringent air quality standards. Members of the green groups and Hong Kong Institution of Engineers (HKIE) expressed their concerns over the long term environmental impacts of the 20-year long NDA developments, especially the construction wastes and carbon emissions of buildings and infrastructure during the construction work.

For the comments on the environmental protection of respective NDAs, see Section 2.3.3, 2.4.6 & 2.5.3.

Response

We understand the community aspirations for quality living environment. Sustainable development is also a key study topic in the planning of the NDAs. Green design is the main concept in the planning of NDAs. The Study carried out carbon audit to estimate the amount of greenhouse gas emissions of NDAs. It recommends energy saving and emission reduction strategies to reduce carbon emissions and create green living space from all aspects, including planning, urban design, transportation and green infrastructure, etc. In terms of green urban design, a considerable amount of area is reserved for “green” space and comfortable pedestrian environment in the NDAs. Residential developments, workplace, leisure/entertainment and public service facilities will be concentrated within 500m of the public transport nodes to minimize the need for commuting and therefore reduce carbon emission from transportation. Planning for mixed land uses provide diversified employment opportunities and reduce traffic demand generated by cross-district employment. It is proposed to adopt green building design (such as green roof and vertical greening), reserve breezeways and view corridors and provide extensive tree planting to minimise changes in micro-climate.

In terms of environmentally friendly transport network, the NDAs will follow the railway-based development approach and concentrate the population near the proposed railway station and public transport interchanges to encourage the residents to walk. Comprehensive cycle track network is provided to encourage cycling for short-distance travel.

We recommend to encourage the use of low-emission/low-fuel consumption vehicles, electric vehicles etc. In addition, we are investigating in adopting various basic energy-saving facilities in the NDAs, including the use of reclaimed water, adopting District Cooling System for non-domestic developments (subject to detailed feasibility study) and using renewable energy in public areas. We agree with the suggestion of environmental concern groups in using solar energy in the area.

In terms of long-term carbon reduction strategies and financial incentives to encourage the development of green communities, Hong Kong is constrained by its natural and geographical environment, to establish the related facilities and lacking the renewable energy sources. For the sake of environmental protection, the Government has been proactively promoting the application and development of renewal energy through various measures. For example, since 2008, tax incentives were introduced for the installation cost of renewal energy generation facilities for private properties. The two power supply companies were

required to provide standard arrangements to provide back-up power supply for the clients who install renewable energy systems in Hong Kong. The statutory procedures have been simplified for installation works involving small-scale renewable energy equipments. In the planning and design stages, various measures have been considered to minimize the generation of construction waste as much as possible. For example, the proposed ground level will be similar to the existing ground level to balance the amount of cut and fill. Those fill materials up to an acceptable quality will be recycled and reused in the development project or other public works construction to minimise the inert construction waste to be disposed. In order to further reduce the generation of construction waste, we will encourage the contractors to maximize the use of recyclable/reusable inert construction waste, and the use of material other than timbers for formwork. In the construction phase, we will request the contractors to submit a plan listing out the waste management measures for the approval from the relevant department(s). The Waste Management Plan must include appropriate mitigation measures to avoid and reduce the production of inert construction waste, as well as to reuse and recycle the uses of these wastes. We will ensure that the day-to-day operations on site are consistent with the approved plan. We will require the contractors to separate the inert and non-inert construction waste as far as possible at the site and transport the waste to the appropriate facility for disposal. We will make use of the trip-ticket system to monitor the inert construction waste, inert and non-inert mixed construction waste, as well as non-inert building materials were transported to public fill reception facilities, screening sorting facilities and landfills respectively.

The NDA development is a designated project under the EIA Ordinance, and therefore must comply with the statutory EIA procedures. The EIA for the NDAs is comprehensive and in-depth. It ensures that there are adequate and feasible mitigation measures to minimize the environmental impacts and to meet relevant environmental standards. The EIA includes the following impacts or matters that may arise from the project:

Gaseous emissions

Dust

Odour

Noisy operations

Night-time operations

Traffic generation

Liquid effluents, discharges, or contaminated runoff

Generation of waste or by-products

Manufacture, storage, use, handling, transport, or disposal of dangerous goods, hazardous materials or wastes

Risk of accidents which would result in pollution or hazard

Disposal of spoil material, including potentially contaminated material

Disruption of water movement or bottom sediment

Unightly visual appearance and landscape impacts

Ecological impacts

As for the air quality assessment, the EIA of this Study will ensure that the proposed new developments in the NDAs will be in line with the air quality indicators in the EIA Ordinance.

2.1.10 Transport Facilities

External Transport Network

Some members of the public believed that transport facilities would be needed for the population increase of over 100,000. Regarding the external transport network, the public was particularly concerned about the connection between the NDAs and the urban areas. Some members of the public were worried that the existing transport facilities in the NENT was not adequate to cope with the new population as there was already serious traffic congestion in various road networks to the urban areas. Since NDAs were rather distant from the urban areas, the Government should improve the transport planning, dovetail it with the development programme of the NDAs, and allow timely provision of cheap and convenient transport means in order to enhance the mobility of local residents. The Government should encourage provision of sufficient employment opportunities in the districts so as to reduce cross-district employment and residents' travel expenses. Furthermore, some members of the public opined that the proposed land uses such as "Special Industries" and "Research and Development" would pose great opportunity to attract working population from various districts. Thus, the NDA proposals must provide sufficient transport facilities in order to meet the future commuting needs. In addition to the connection to the urban areas, some local residents and members of public were worried about the transport connection between the NDAs and the existing new towns and urged the Government to improve transport facilities in this regard. Some comments pointed out that the Government should take into account the traffic demand generated from the neighbouring developments of NDAs. On the other hand, some members of the Legco Development Panel and Planning Sub-committee of LDAC had concerns over transport connection of the NDAs to Shenzhen. They believed that the Government should further strengthen different development directions of road infrastructure (especially northward direction) of the NENT NDAs to cope with the various needs as the cross-boundary interactions increase. Some members of the Rural Committee and the public were concerned about the connection between the NDAs and future LMC Loop and other BCPs such as Sha Tau Kok in terms of road and public transportation system. Some members of the public pointed out that the proposed road network in NDAs emphasized on linking up with Shenzhen, such as the proposed Link Road between PC/TKL and Liantang/Heung Yuen Wai BCP. They doubted whether the Government was paving the way for the Ad Hoc Quota Trial Scheme for Cross-boundary Private Cars and intends to achieve "China-Hong Kong Integration".

Some comments pointed out that the existing roads connecting to the urban areas (including the Fanling Highway and Tolo Harbour Highway) did not have sufficient capacity to cope with the peak hour traffic. It was suggested to connect the PC/TKL NDA with a connecting road to San Tin Highway to serve the residents using Route 3 to travel to the urban areas. There were comments requesting improvements of the existing road network connecting to the urban areas such as providing one more tunnel connecting to the urban areas.

Response

The traffic and transport assessment adopts a 2-stage transport modelling approach. A strategic transport model is developed to provide quantitative input for highway capacity analysis of the major highway corridors, whereas local transport models are developed to support the local network and junction design. Traffic demand of different land use types is considered for road design and improvement recommendations. The NDAs will provide comprehensive transportation system and connections to various districts in Hong Kong. The Study Team has been coordinating with relevant government departments on strategic roads. The Government is studying on optimizing the strategic roads and railway development such as the widening of Fanling Highway and the provision of Northern Link in order to enhance the connectivity between North District and urban areas. The Study Team has proposed road improvement schemes to connecting Fanling/Sheung Shui and the NDAs to improve traffic congestion.

The KTN NDA adjacent to the Fanling Highway will implement appropriate road improvement works (including widening of Fanling Highway Kwu Tung Section) to meet the external transport needs and reduce the impact of traffic to the living environment. In addition, we propose to build an outer ring road in KTN NDA with its east and west ends connecting to the Fanling Highway. Land will be reserved for the construction of connecting road to the LMC Loop. The railway station in Kwu Tung North is proposed to provide convenient public transport service for the residents in the NDA.

In FLN NDA, one public transport interchange will be located in the eastern and western part respectively to connect to the existing Fanling and Sheung Shui MTR Stations. In addition, we will strengthen the external road connections of FLN NDA, including widening of Fanling Highway and construction of Fanling Bypass linking Man Kam To Road and Sha Tau Kok Road. The Fanling Bypass not only supports the external transport needs of the NDA but also serves the residents of existing Fanling/Sheung Shui to go to the urban areas and help relieve the traffic burden of the existing road network. As for the cross-boundary road facilities, the KTN and FLN NDAs as same as Fanling/ Sheung Shui, will be connected to existing and proposed cross-boundary facilities through the main roads.

The PC/TKL NDAs will be replanned later in the context of the study on the New Territories North study. This will include a detailed review on its external transport network.

Regarding the improvement of road network in North District, upon the completion of the widening of Fanling Highway/Tolo Highway now underway, the traffic congestion will be improved. As for the suggestions of an additional tunnel to improve the existing external road network with urban areas, we consider that the newly completed Sha Tin Heights Tunnel is with rather low utilization and will be able to accommodate future commuting demand between New Territories and urban areas.

The traffic and transport impact assessment has confirmed that with the proposed highway improvement, the highway network can accommodate the traffic demand from the NDAs. Flexibility for environmentally friendly transport mode is allowed. Proposals for public transport, cycling and pedestrian networks have also been put forward. It is concluded that the NDAs Development is technically feasible from traffic and transport point of view.

Public Transport Network

Some members of the public expressed concern about the public transportation network and put forward a series of suggestions. A number of comments agreed that the Government should provide a series of public transport means to connect the three NDAs. In particular, on railway development, some members of the public pointed out that the external mass transit system in North District was reaching its capacity and the Kwu Tung railway station was connected to the nearly saturated East Rail Line. If the Government failed to establish a new mass transit system in 20 years and most newly added population would need to work across districts, the transport network would be unable to bear the traffic load. A new mass transit system such as a new railway line should be considered. There was suggestion that a new railway station to be added between Sheung Shui and Lo Wu Stations to serve the NDAs residents. A member of the Housing Authority urged the Government to provide rail services in the NDAs to serve the first batch of public housing residents moving into the NDAs in a timely manner.

In relation to the above concerns on the external public transport network, many members of public would like to know the timetable of the proposed Northern Link. They supported and suggested early implementation of the proposal to complement the NDA development. They considered that the Northern Link would help connect Hong Kong and Shenzhen's economic cluster along the line, as well as solving the current traffic problem between the east and west parts of New Territories. Some suggested the Government to revise the proposed railway alignment of Northern Link with Liantang/Heung Yuen Wai BCP as the starting point via Ping Che, FLN, Sheung Shui, San Tin, and connected to Kam Sheung Road Station. This diverted the patronage from East Rail Line which connected the urban areas and northern New Territories, while would meet the public needs of commuting between various NDAs and existing new towns. In addition, some suggested that consideration should be given to developing a medium-capacity railway system with an exclusive right-of-way serving the NDAs and connecting to the existing railway network, in order to reduce traffic congestion and air pollution while making it more convenient for commuters in the NDAs. On the other hand, some members of the public considered that the proposed transport network was too heavily relying on railway transportation and were skeptical that the proposed transport facilities would promote "MTR monopoly".

In addition to the railway traffic, many were concerned about the commuting time travelling to the urban areas and recommended that the NDA should have direct public transport services to urban areas, with adequate bus and minibus services. There was suggestion to establish integrated transport interchanges in the three NDAs, including the construction of covered interchanges above the proposed Kwu Tung railway station, provision of shuttle bus services to transport interchanges and allowing the public transport companies to develop new routes.

Response

According to the traffic and transport assessment, the Study recommended a series of road and railway proposals, including Kwu Tung railway station and Fanling Bypass. In KTN NDA, about 80% of the population will reside within 500 meters from the proposed Kwu Tung railway station. This will encourage residents to use mass transport system to reduce the traffic demand on road. With regard to strategic roads and railway development, the Study Team has been coordinating with relevant government departments. The Government is studying and undertaking construction of roads to optimize the strategic roads such as

widening of Fanling Highway to enhance the connectivity between North District and urban areas to cater for the population growth. In terms of public transport, the development of NENT NDAs is in line with the “Comprehensive Transport Study” which states that railway will form the backbone of the future passenger transport network. Bus services will be provided in the NDAs to connect the existing railway stations and proposed Kwu Tung stations so that residents can use the existing East Rail Line and Northern Link (under study) to go to urban areas. Public Transport Interchanges (PTIs) will be established in the NDAs and feeder bus will provide service to the railway stations. In addition, environmentally friendly buses (EFTM) will connect the NDAs and existing community in order to encourage the use of rail-based transport mode.

Highways Department is now conducting a study to review and update the Railway Development Strategy (RDS) 2000, including the assessment of potential bottleneck locations in the future railway. The Study Team has been maintaining close coordination and communication with the Highways Department in this regard. The Northern Link under study will divert passengers in East Rail Line and can accommodate additional population along the railway line, including the population of the NDAs. Based on the preliminary concepts developed in the first stage of that study, one of the options is that the Northern Link under study will connect Kwu Tung with Kam Sheung Road. We will continue to liaise with the Highways Department and discuss how to co-ordinate the NDAs development with Northern Link.

Road Works and Transport Facilities in the NDAs

Regarding the transport network in the NDAs, there were opinions that public transport-only lanes should be included in the detailed road layout and design to make the future public transport services more efficient. Some proposed the provision of park-and-ride facilities in the NDAs, especially at the railway stations, in order to further encourage the use of public transport. Some members of the public suggested the Government to consider to create a “car-free environment” in the NDAs and provide large car parks at the outskirt of the NDAs for cars to park outside of the NDAs.

In particular, many members of the public were concerned and supported the proposed pedestrian and cycle track network as well as related ancillary facilities for cyclists. They were of the view that various transport strategies should be considered to encourage the public to utilize environmentally-friendly transport modes such as cycling, and minimise their reliance on vehicular traffic. Some members of the Planning Sub-committee of LDAC and organisations pointed out that the design of NDAs should focus on the grade separation for vehicles and pedestrians, setting up street-front shops, provision of well connected pedestrian walkway and cycle track network with the surrounding areas, and improving the existing cycling track in Fanling/Sheung Shui to further foster the linkages of NDAs with the existing new town. On the other hand, some members of the ACE believed that cycling should not only be regarded as a recreational activity and should be developed as a transportation mode by taking advantage of the NDA development as it provided sufficient space for creating comprehensive cycle track network. Some members of the ACE and the public were concerned about the cycle parking facilities especially there were currently shortage of cycle parking facilities in Sheung Shui. In order to encourage the use of bicycles, there were views that street design guidelines should be formulated to ensure the provision of high quality cycle tracks and parking facilities. Public parking and park-and-ride facilities for bicycles should also be included within residential development, railway stations and

PTIs. Some green groups also raised their concerns over the construction materials of cycle tracks in the NDAs.

Concerning the environmentally-friendly transport network proposed in the NDAs, some members of the ACE and other public suggested that adequate charging stations and parking facilities need to be provided in the detailed design stage for the proposed electric buses in the NDAs. In anticipation of the electric vehicles to become the main transportation mode, adequate charging facilities is fundamental to encourage the use of electric cars. There were views that the use of electric vehicles should be encouraged. Members of the Housing Authority queried about the operation mode of the electric buses and would like to know whether the electric buses will be operated by the bus companies or individual housing estates.

Response

Based on the study on public transportation and facilities, bus-only lanes are generally used in heavily-used road sections in the urban areas. There are rooms for the provision of bus-only lanes in the NDAs. Detail design subject to further feasibility study.

Park-and-ride facilities are primarily intended to attract motorists residing in low-density rural communities to drive to the interchange, and then use the railway or other public transportation modes to travel to the urban areas. Since the majority of the residents in the NDAs will live within the service catchment area of railway stations and thus park-and-ride is not considered to be a necessary transport facility.

We agree with the planning principles of reducing vehicles in the NDAs and the concept of pedestrian priority. In the planning of NDAs, we design a comprehensive network of pedestrian walkways and cycle track and attach great importance to the grade separation of vehicles and pedestrian as well as linkages with the existing community and connecting the cycle track outside the NDAs to encourage residents to walk and cycle. Land will be put aside for the cycle parking facilities and other related facilities. The Hong Kong Planning and Standards and Guidelines (HKPSG) also requires the provision of certain number of bicycle parking spaces in the residential developments. Accessible and proper cycle tracks with direct connection to railway stations are to be planned to serve residential development. We will carefully consider how to improve the cycle network and other related facilities in the detailed design. However, it is necessary to have roads connecting different sites to cater for demands like loading/unloading and emergency vehicles, etc.

The Study comes to view that environmentally friendly buses complementing the railway network is the most suitable transport model for the NDAs. The technology of environmental-friendly buses has been rapidly developed in recent years. The Government is undertaking trial tests of operating electric buses in Hong Kong. A site has been reserved in the FLN NDA for the operation of environmental-friendly buses.

As for the electric vehicles, the planning of NDAs allows flexibility for the provision of basic infrastructure to support electric vehicles, such as electric vehicle parking spaces and charging station, etc. The indoor parking spaces will have to follow the latest requirement in HKPSG and reserve a portion of them for electric vehicles. Space will be reserved on road for flexible installation of electric vehicle parking space. The RODPs have reserved spaces for petrol filling station/electric vehicles charging station.

Impacts of Proposed Transport Facilities to the Existing Residents

Some members of the public urged the Government to minimize the impacts of proposed road network to the existing residents [See Section 2.4.5 for detailed discussion]. In addition, village representatives of Tai Tau Leng strongly opposed to the construction of flyovers in Po Shek Wu Road and considered the proposed elevated road would affect the “feng shui” and air ventilation of the village. In the meeting with the village representatives of Tsung Pak Long and Tai Tau Leng, representatives made some suggestions as follows: if new roads were needed to solve the congestion in Shek Wu Road Interchange, it was suggested to construct the road to the west of FLN NDA near the northeast of the KTN NDA, and divert the traffic on Man Kam To Road to Yuen Long westward along the KTN NDA to avoid passing through Sheung Shui and Fanling districts.

Response

In order to solve the traffic congestion in Po Shek Wu Road Interchange, we need to build one additional road to connect Fanling Highway and roads in Sheung Shui. The current proposal is formulated based on the previous comments of residents and technical considerations. In various public engagement activities, the residents expressed strong concerns of the traffic issue of Po Shek Wu Road. The traffic analysis of this Study shows that the carrying capacity of Po Shek Wu Road Interchange will be exceeded its carrying capacity in the Phase Two Development of FLN NDA. Therefore, improvement works is needed to alleviate traffic congestion. In the Stage One traffic and transport assessment, the Study explored the feasibility of extending the west section of Fanling Bypass, connecting to the Yuen Long direction from Man Kam To Road via KTN NDA. The assessment revealed that this road alignment would cross the ecological sensitive area in Long Valley and in proximity to Ho Sheung Heung Village, posing ecology concerns and impacts on residents. The traffic analysis also revealed that the road alignment would fail to alleviate the congestion problem in Po Shek Wu Road Interchange effectively and therefore was not recommended. In the traffic and transport impact assessment, the study recommended improvement Option 1 which involved the new feeder passing through the Green Belt in Tsung Pak Long and Tai Tau Leng, in order to solve completely the traffic problems in Fanling Highway and Po Shek Wu Road Interchange area. During the Stage Two Public Engagement programme, we recognized the strong public objection to improvement of Option 1 and related concerns of village development, environmental impact, “feng shui”, etc. In the Stage Two traffic and transport impact assessment, we further investigated other possible improvement options in depth. To solve the traffic congestion in the Interchange and balance various residents’ views, the Study recommended a more simplified option 2A and consulted the public again in the Stage Three Public Engagement. Due to other concerns and difficulties of other alignment options, the current proposal has minimized the impacts on residents. Taking into account the results of the EIA as well as the public concerns of the landscape and noise impacts from the roads, the Study recommends adoption of landscape and noise barriers, incorporating green design elements.

In line with the principles of traffic safety and road functioning, the proposed road network is already located as far away as possible from the residents. The Government will implement relevant mitigation measures in accordance with the recommendations of the EIA. Currently, the vehicles passing through Man Kam To Road are mainly cross-boundary traffic. Since the construction work of Liantang/Heung Yuen Wai BCP will commence this year, the cross boundary vehicles from the Man Kam To BCP will be diverted upon completion of the

new BCP at Liantang/Heung Yuen Wai, and thus the number of vehicles traveling between Po Shek Wu Road Interchange and Man Kam To Road will be reduced. After the opening of new BCP, we will review the traffic conditions of the Po Shek Wu Road Interchange to determine the need for road improvement plan. The Study Team will continue to liaise with residents in developing a better solution.

2.1.11 Community Facilities

The public had different aspirations towards the provision of community facilities in the NDAs. Many opinions stressed that the NDAs must have comprehensive facilities. In addition to housing, hospitals, schools, community centres, sports grounds, parks, wet markets, shopping malls and other facilities are needed. They also urged the Government for timely provision of various community and public facilities. A member of the North District Council pointed out that in the past, the Government would only plan and construct public facilities when the population reached a certain threshold. The Government must change this mindset and should first develop the community facilities and infrastructure of NDAs. This would demonstrate the benefits of development to the existing North District residents and thus help implementing the proposal. Members from Housing Authority and Legco Development Panel agreed with the importance of phased development and viewed that the Government should take into account the changing population structure over time to provide appropriate community facilities at different phases. They indicated that even in the early stages of implementation, the Government should provide adequate community facilities to the PRH residents to prevent social problems resulted from lack of facilities.

On the other hand, many members of the public, the Housing Authority and Fanling District Rural Committee expressed their requests for more primary, secondary schools and medical facilities. A member of the North District Council pointed out that the existing population of North District was over 300,000 but there was severe lack of medical and education facilities. There was shortage of primary and secondary school places. The North District hospital service had also reached saturation. Thus, he worried that the North District residents would face the problem of inadequate health care and education facilities. There were professional institutes demanding the Government to carry out impact assessment on the existing community facilities in the North District in view of the new population. Many residents were worried about the shortage of schools in North District and would like to know whether the Government would consider provision of new schools. Some paid special attention to the issues of cross-boundary students and hoped that the Government could provide sufficient schools in the NDAs in order to meet their demand for school places in North District and avoid the need for cross-district schooling. There were requests from the public demanding the Government to provide international schools and higher educational institutes in the NDAs, in particularly for the non-Cantonese speakers. But on the other hand, there were numerous public comments questioned whether the proposed schools in the NDAs were planned for the children from the Mainland as in recent years many schools were closed down in Hong Kong due to low admission rates. Thus, the intention of reserving several sites for schools in the NDAs were being questioned.

Apart from schools, there were concerns about the planned provision of medical facilities might not be sufficient to meet the needs of the future. There were views considered that the additional population in the NDAs would be younger and there should be adequate facilities such as nurseries and playgrounds provided for them. In face of aging population in Hong

Kong, the needs of the underprivileged and the elderly should be taken care of, such as provision of affordable quality homes for the aged. There were suggestions for other community facilities in the NDAs and their surroundings areas, such as funeral parlours, grave yards, columbaria, crematoria, etc. to meet the long-term demands. There were suggestions to provide wet markets in the NDAs for the convenience of the residents to buy meat and vegetables.

Regarding some less welcomed social facilities, such as incineration facilities and mental patients rehabilitation centres and other social welfare facilities, some members of the public enquired whether the Government would provide such facilities in the NDAs, and the planning guidelines for these facilities.

Response

We agree that timely provision of various G/IC facilities enables a balanced development of the NDAs. The number of these facilities will be provided according to the relevant standards of the HKPSG.

At the south-western part of the KTN NDA, a new hospital will provide medical services to meet the residents' needs. In accordance to the proposed increase in the future population intake of the NDAs, a total of 7 secondary school sites, 12 primary school sites and 20 kindergartens are reserved in KTN and FLN NDAs to address the educational needs of future population. Although there is currently no site reserved for any wet market in the plans and the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) does not have any plans for a wet market in the NDAs, the Housing Department can possibly provide wet market within the proposed public housing estates for the convenience of the residents. We will keep in touch with the Labour and Welfare Bureau, Education Bureau, Food and Health Bureau Department of Health and the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department to ensure adequate provisions of relevant facilities to meet public needs.

With regard to the construction of community facilities that are less welcomed by the community, we will look for suitable locations and adopt proper design to minimise the impacts on the residents according to the HKPSG. However, these facilities are needed and provision of these facilities does not necessarily have adverse impacts on the residents and it is very important to have understanding from the public. In the planning of these facilities, the relevant government departments will definitely consult various stakeholders.

2.1.12 Employment Opportunities

Members of the public were in hope of more employment opportunities in the NDAs and expected that they would boost local economy. Nonetheless, many members of the public were worried that the NDAs might not provide sufficient new jobs for the increased population and failed to be self-contained. Others were concerned about the employment opportunities in PC/TKL which might not be enough to meet the needs of future NDA as the future population may not work in the proposed "Special Industry Area". Members of the LDAC and the Housing Authority questioned whether the proposed "Special Industry Area" would provide any employment opportunities for the PRH residents and opined that there was a need to provide the suitable type of jobs, such as logistics industry, for them. At the same time, there were views that the employment ratio in the areas might not be sufficient.

Number of middle class/professional jobs should be increased. Tax concessions, financial arrangements, might attract the return of industries, which would promote local employment and reduce cross district employment. Some viewed that there was few commercial land in the NDAs. They worried that the potential problem of cross-district employment would incur huge amount of travelling expenses and thus urged the Government to handle this issue with care to avoid various social problems. Among them, many members of the public were particularly concerned about the proposed 50,000 population growth in FLN NDA which will only provide 6,000 employment opportunities. They suggested solving the underemployment and transportation issues before gradually increasing the population in the area. Members of the Planning Sub-committee of Housing Authority Committees commented that considering the non-local population from the adjacent areas might work within the NDAs, sufficient job opportunities were necessary to meet the needs of local population. Some members of the public were concerned that the investors of the proposed “Special Industry Area” would mainly be large corporations from mainland, and locals might not be able to find employment there. Some members of the TPB and public pointed out that the NDAs should provide job opportunities for the first movers to the NDAs as soon as possible to avoid the social problems of Tin Shui Wai New Town.

In addition, many members of the public raised questions regarding the employment opportunities brought about by the NDAs, including whether the figures of new job creations mentioned in the PE digest include the short term job positions, as well as the specific number of jobs created from the proposed “Special Industry Area” among the 52,000 new jobs.

Response

As the planning of PC/TKL NDA will be reviewed at a later time, the originally planned “Special Industry Area” will be reviewed in the future New Territories North study. We agree that there should be adequate provision of employment opportunities for the residents in the NDAs. This can promote the comprehensive development of the NDAs and to some extent reduce transportation needs. A sizable area of land has been reserved for industrial and commercial development in the NDAs. After review, KTN and FLN NDAs will provide 37,700 jobs. The population-to-job ratio is about 1:4.6 (about 22%) on average, comparable to those in Fanling/ Sheung Shui (about 1:5 or 20%) and Tuen Mun (about 1:4.7 or 21%) and better than that in Tin Shui Wai (about 1: 12.5 or 8%). In the KTN NDA, the “Commercial, Research and Development Zone” will provide a variety of industrial and commercial jobs for the residents of the NDA and nearby new towns. The economic and social facilities such as retail, service industry and community facilities, which support residential development, will be available to provide different types of job and a large amount of employment opportunities, including some with lower skill level requirements. Together with employment opportunities that will be created in the Lok Ma Chau Loop Development, it is believed that these economic activities will help promote the local economy and provide a certain amount of job opportunities for the additional population in the future.

2.1.13 Agricultural Development

Agricultural Policy/Local Agricultural Development

Some members of the public including local residents, farmers' groups, green groups and concern groups expressed views on the agricultural policy and development in Hong Kong. They generally supported local agricultural development and urged the Government to recognize the overall value of agriculture land and formulate long-term policies for the rural and agricultural development, in order to sustain the livelihood of farmers in Hong Kong. This could promote ecological conservation and organic farming as well as developing food production industry, where every city should maintain a certain portion of self-produced vegetables. Some concern groups advised the Government to set up an agricultural development fund to establish institutions to nurture more young farmers, and to study the feasibility of urban farming in Hong Kong. Some members of the public and green groups requested the Government to affirm the comprehensive social value of agriculture in the three NDAs, from the perspectives of community, economy, ecology, landscape, waste reduction and food autonomy, etc. Their comments included: the suggestion of formulating a comprehensive policy on agriculture, supporting agricultural production and activities on arable agricultural land, making use of the diversified social functions of agriculture, maintaining the livelihoods of farmers and ensuring no net loss of agricultural land. They also pointed out that the agricultural land in Hong Kong has diminished 30% in 20 years. Among less than 6,000 hectares of agricultural land, about 4,000 hectares of it were being hoarded by developers. They thereby demanded the Government to stop this downward trend, to increase the sources of arable land in the long run and to avoid developing agricultural land as much as possible.

A member of the public suggested that the NENT had the potential to develop into a low density “agricultural town”. As Hong Kong had the endowments to produce quality agricultural products, which could be sold not only in Hong Kong but also be exported to the mainland. This development direction of “agricultural town” would be beneficial to the ecology, environment and economy of Hong Kong. He also pointed out that other than serving as a kind of economic activity, there were other values, both tangible or intangible, attached to agriculture. Some members of the public urged the Government to support local agriculture by providing support and consultation services to farmers for farming and quality testing technology for farm produce, and assist the farmers to output better quality farm produce. Some green groups pointed out that community farms established in Ma Shi Po village in recent years could create a model of mutual support between the urban and rural communities. This type of “community farming” concept was recommended together with the introduction of community engagement and food waste management concepts into the FLN NDA. Some environmental concern groups on the other hand requested the Government to adopt more stringent regulations on illegal land filling on agricultural land.

Some people suggested to use the upper two floors of the buildings for indoor agricultural purposes. Some members of the public suggested to develop “vertical farming” in the NDAs in order to be self-sufficient in food supply and to establish a farming theme park, etc. However, some local villagers believed that the development concepts of conservation and agricultural development were incompatible and contradictory to each other. There were villagers of the view that agriculture in Hong Kong had been gradually declining and we could not solely rely on farming to maintain Hong Kong's economic growth. Given the precious land resources of Hong Kong, it was suggested that the Government could only

respond to the farming needs as far as possible. The area zoned “Agriculture” (“AGR”) in KTN NDA should be used for urban development.

Response

It is the Government's existing policy to facilitate agricultural development through the provision of basic infrastructure and technical support, as well as low interest loans to farmers. The objectives are to facilitate the further development of local agriculture, enhance the productivity and business viability of agriculture practice, develop modern and environmentally-friendly farming technologies to produce quality, safe and high-value agricultural products. In keeping with the free-market principle, the Government does not set any targets for local agricultural production. Nor does the Government provide any direct financial subsidy to the sector or protect the price level of local agricultural products.

With regard to promoting and supporting farmers to develop organic farming, the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) actively encourages and supports local farmers to develop organic farming. Through the Organic Farming Support Service, the Department provides technical advice and support to those farmers who wish to switch to organic farming from traditional farming practice. In addition, AFCD promotes the production and sale of local organic agricultural products jointly with the Vegetable Marketing Organisation (VMO) and the Federation of Vegetable Marketing Co-operative Societies Ltd. Besides, AFCD supports the Hong Kong Organic Resource Centre in its endeavours to educate the public on organic farming and promote the certification of organic products.

As mentioned in the manifesto of the Chief Executive, there is aspiration to turn agricultural land into a unique and lively rural development model. We intend to establish an agricultural and fisheries research centre, integrating scientific, biotechnical and ecological research efforts to sharpen the competitive edge of our local agricultural, fisheries and poultry sectors.

We received many comments in the hope of retaining more agricultural land in the NDAs, despite others voices that supported to make use of agricultural land for urban development. We believe that in order to balance the needs for development and conservation, agricultural land should be preserved for farming use under appropriate circumstances. In addition to the two pieces of land (about 45 hectares) to the north and south of the Nature Park in KTN NDA, as well as a piece of land (about 9 hectares) in FLN Fu Tei Au to be reserved for “AGR” zone as proposed in the Stage Three Public Engagement, we propose to extend the “AGR” zone in FLN Fu Tei Au to about 12 hectares, hence retaining more farmland and sustaining the existing farming practice.

Regarding land filling works on land zoned “Agriculture”(“AGR”) covered in the Development Permission Area (DPA) Plans or the OZPs replacing the DPA plans in the NENT, the TPB has stipulated stringent restrictions since 2005. According to the “Guidelines for Enforcement Action Against Unauthorized Developments” issued by the PlanD, those unauthorised developments involving filling of land/pond within “AGR” zone falling within the category requiring priority enforcement actions.

Animal Husbandry Centre

There was a member of Legco suggesting the establishment of pig and poultry farms and developing them into an animal husbandry centre complementing with organic farming, this can supply live poultry and food for the residents in Hong Kong.

Response

Hong Kong is experiencing rapid urbanization and land resources are becoming scarce. In conducting the feasibility study of establishing animal husbandry centres, the Government is particularly concerned about several important aspects including public health, land utilization, cost-effectiveness and views of residents.

In terms of disease prevention and control, as large numbers of animals being concentrated in the husbandry centre, it may shorten the distance between the farms and the farms may use shared roads and facilities for livestock trading as well as collection and treatment of livestock carcasses. This increases the risk for spreading of disease and infection, inducing the possibility of large-scale outbreak of animal diseases, and hence significant economic losses. The Government may need to conduct large-scale animal culling and immigration and quarantine control on goods and pedestrian flow to control epidemics which may even jeopardize public health.

Livestock farms may bring the risk of zoonoses outbreaks and environmental pollution and nuisance problems. These are issues of public concerns and the location should be carefully chosen and be supported and accepted by the neighbourhood.

The establishment of animal husbandry centre will need considerable capital inputs on the infrastructure, bio-security, livestock carcasses and waste treatment, ancillary facilities and daily operation, etc. The capital cost invested will be doubled if the centre is a sealed design which involves construction of effective large-scaled ventilation system, hence increasing the operation costs in the future.

The site area needs to be large enough to accommodate the existing pig farms and chicken farms. As the relocation of all the existing pig farms and chicken farms to the husbandry centre cannot be ruled out, at least 30 hectares of total area is required alone for the pig farmhouse and agricultural storerooms. About 15 hectares of land is also needed for chicken farmhouse and agricultural storerooms. The centre also needs at least about 10 hectares of land reserved for the construction of large-scaled central waste treatment facilities in order to deal with the large amount of livestock waste and sewage properly. If the centre is an open-air design, certain buffer zone should be planned outside the centre to alleviate the odour and nuisance of livestock to the nearby residents. In addition, the centre is required to have additional land for the construction of other supporting infrastructure and amenities. Given the current intensive land demand the general public has to be convinced to free up at least 55 hectares of vacant land for the construction of a husbandry centre.

Impacts of the NDA developments on affected farmland and farmers

Many members of the public expressed their concerns over the affected farmland in the NDAs and urged the Government to clarify the amount of active and abandoned agricultural land in the NDAs and its vicinity. They hoped that the Government would set out the boundaries for arable farmland for future planning reference and avoid any suspicion of

closed-door arrangements. Some members of the public and green groups held the views that the NDA developments should consider the needs of farmers affected. The planning of NDAs should be committed to protect the local agriculture and rural environment as well as giving consideration to the integrity of the farmlands as the farmlands in each of the NDAs had their unique characters which sustained the local squatter culture, ecology of the farmland and community cohesion. Some opposed to any development proposals which were at the expense of agricultural land and affected livelihoods of existing farmers. Thus, they demanded that sufficient amount of land should be kept for agricultural purposes, especially for the non-indigenous residents to allow them to continue farming. The agricultural land falling within the development area of NDAs were ideal for farming and in active use, and therefore requested the Government to retain the agricultural land. Most of the existing agricultural land in FLN was of high quality under the rating system of AFCD. There were still a large area of active agricultural land in Tai Po Tin and to the east of Ha Shan Kai Wat and dozens of certified organic farms within the area. There was also potential for rehabilitating the agricultural land that was dry, fallow and abandoned less than one year at the north of Sing Ping Village. Some green groups suggested the Government to promote the development of eco-agriculture in Long Valley and Ho Sheung Heung so existing farmers could farm in-situ or had other option. Moreover, there were members of the public proposed that the Government could allocate land in green belt areas, such as the Country Parks for the affected farmers to continue farming.

Regarding the proposed farmland rehabilitation policy, some held the views that although the Government proposes to retain some of the agricultural land in the NDAs, they were not sufficient in supporting agricultural development because of their locations, quality of soil and the lack of associated supporting infrastructure. It was thus hoped that the Government would undertake comprehensive review of the agricultural land and rearrange their locations and sizes. A number of concern groups and environmental organizations commented that the proposed rehabilitation measures are unrealistic, such as neglecting the existing active agricultural area in Long Valley, the arable agricultural land and squatters in Tin Kwong Po in the south. Also, the planned “Agricultural” zones in Fu Tei Au Village were occupied mostly by fish ponds and squatters and so it was not possible to spare land for agricultural rehabilitation in the three NDAs. The proposed locations of “Open Space” zone were not suitable for farming, as sites were rather small and already contained squatters, heavily-polluting industrial uses, warehouses or sitting on lands which were former landfill sites, slopes frequented by forest fire, or in the middle of buildings, etc. It was believed that considerations for farming including the soil requirement, microclimate, water sources, etc., were neglected in the site selection for farmland rehabilitation. On the other hand, some professional bodies indicated that the current proposals were only acceptable if there was no other viable option and better planning and design proposals could avoid relocation of affected farmers to the Long Valley wetland. Other environmental groups suggested the Government to retain the existing farmland instead of converting existing brownfields or polluted land for agricultural purposes. Other public comments expressed that the current farmland rehabilitation measures might not be helpful as most of the farmland had been bought by the developers or used as open storage and not suitable for farming. One green group cited media reports by pointing out that the developers had already acquired over half of the land in the NDAs and guessed that the land had been left/would be left vacant gradually. In view of this, they expected the Government to encourage the land owners to rent out land for farming. Some members of the public suggested the Government to implement vacant land tax to prohibit idling land. This could stop the agricultural land from being abandoned, and also allow the villagers to continue their existing living styles. In

addition, members of the Planning Sub-Committee of the LDAC proposed to retain the agricultural land in the NDAs for agricultural production. They considered that the affected farmers might continue farming and the NDAs could become their agricultural markets.

Some local farmers requested for reasonable compensation be provided to the land owners should the Government resumed agricultural land for development. Reasonable compensation fees for crops and open plowing as well as proper resettlement arrangements were needed for the affected farmers. Some green groups were concerned about the compensation packages for the affected farmers currently practicing farming under their schemes and urged the Government to announce the details regarding compensation as soon as possible. Some members of the public commented that the Government should allow flexibility in providing different options of subsidies to meet the needs of farmers. Farmers should have the right to choose to remain in the same district for farming. Farmers could keep part of their farmland or obtain compensation for their loss of farmland but the agricultural land should be restricted to agricultural use only and future rezoning into other uses should be not entertained. The Government should protect the livelihood and income of the farmers, provide satisfactory compensation and supports, respect their choices, re-provision quality agricultural land as well as arrange specific measures for farming rehabilitation.

Response

The impacts on existing residents have been minimized in the NDA proposals. It is inevitable that some of the existing farmers would be affected by the NDA development. The Government will endeavour to ensure that the affected farmer will be offered reasonable arrangements. The affected farmers could purchase and lease farmland at suitable locations for agricultural rehabilitation under the prevailing land policy. Based on the current revised RODP and latest findings from site inspections, about 28 hectares of agricultural land are affected by the development of KTN and FLN NDAs.

Not all the farmland in the NDAs will be used for development. In KTN and FLN NDAs, we reserve about 58 hectares of land for agricultural use. The Study recommends two pieces of land (about 45 hectares) to the north and south of the Nature Park, as well as a piece of land (about 12 hectares) in FLN Fu Tei Au to be reserved for “AGR” zone for agriculture purposes, farmers in these area will not be affected. In addition, the KTN RODP designates the Long Valley as Nature Park (about 37 hectares) in order to conserve and enhance its ecological values and functions. Currently, there have been farming practices under the management agreement signed by the Government and Conservancy Association as well as Hong Kong Bird Watching Society. As to whether more farmers should be allowed to rehabilitate farming inside the Nature Park managed by the Government, it will depend on the detailed arrangements of the management plan for Long Valley in the future. The Government has identified 34 hectares out of 103 hectares agricultural land potentially suitable for agricultural rehabilitation/ agricultural resite.

With regard to the farmers who are interested in agricultural rehabilitation. The Government will introduce a special agricultural land rehabilitation scheme to facilitate genuine farmers affected by NDAs to re-establish their farming practice. AFCD will actively contact the landowners of the identified areas, particularly those in Kwu Tung South, giving priority to match those landowners who are willing to lease out/sell their land to the affected farmers. The Government will also consider to grant short term license of adjoining vacant government land to affected farmers. The Government will endeavour to assist the affected

farmers to rehabilitate farming and to offer them with reasonable arrangements and compensation under the current mechanism.

After review, the Study Team recommends that the planning of PC/TKL NDA will be reviewed at a later time. Relevant consideration regarding farmland and agriculture will be investigated in the planning exercise.

Re-provisioning of North District Wholesale Market for Agricultural Products (Open Bazaar) and Kwu Tung Vegetable Marketing Credit Co-operative Society Limited (Kwu Tung Vegetable Co-operative)

In the meeting with operators of the North District Wholesale Market for Agricultural Products, a number of farmers and operators demanded the Government must first handle the resettlement issues before relocating the market. They hoped that the Government could provide some reasonable allowance/subsidy to the affected farmers/operators. Many of them indicated their requests relating to the internal layout of the market and urged the Government to carefully consider the details of the relocation process and to have more consultation with them, in order to minimize the impact on their operations. There was an individual operator proposed to find another piece of land near the present location for the new site for the permanent market, so as to reduce the impact of the phased relocation of the farmers/operators. They expected the Government to provide sufficient amenities and shelters and increase the area of the market. However, there were also some affected operators strongly opposed to the relocation of the market, and demanded a permanent wholesale market in-situ with basic facilities. On the other hand, some members of the public objected the reprovision of the market in view of the market would degrade the hygiene of surrounding environment.

The Kwu Tung Vegetable Marketing Credit Co-operative Society Limited (Kwu Tung Vegetable Co-operative) urged the Government not to stifle agriculture development and hoped that the Government would offer in-situ reprovisioning for the co-operative. They also suggested relocating the society to the government land in the intersection of Yin Kong Village or the vacant land next to Tung Koon District Society opposite to the Kwu Tung Market.

Response

Due to the construction of Fanling Bypass, the Open Bazaar will inevitably be relocated. We have considered minimizing the impacts on the operation of Open Bazaar through a phased construction mode for Fanling Bypass. The delineation of Open Bazaar will be adjusted, of which the western part will be moved to the north of the remaining part, in accordance with the Fanling Bypass alignment. The new market site will provide sufficient amenities and shelters, and the environmental and hygienic condition will improve. In the process of adjustment of the market position, there will be temporary arrangement to ensure the operation of vegetable vendors unaffected. We will continue to liaise with the operators to gather their views on the relocation process.

It is considered that the Kwu Tung Vegetable Co-operative is needed to continue to serve the farmers in the district. With the policy support from AFCD, we recommend to reserve land in the eastern part of KTN NDA near Long Valley for the reprovisioning of the co-operative. The location of the reprovisioning site is considered suitable as it is close to the agricultural

land in Kwu Tung North and Kwu Tung South and is connected to the Castle Peak Road Kwu Tung Section. It is also considered satisfactory by the Kwu Tung Vegetable Co-operative.

2.1.14 Public Engagement

Some members of the public requested the Government to consult affected residents as soon as possible in order to relieve their worries on the NDA development and reach consensus. A concern group recommended that the relevant government departments should promote the NDA proposal together to allow a better public understanding of the entire plan which would help to lessen the opposing voices and conflicts in society.

Apart from the local residents, many people outside the area considered that as the NDA proposals were of the interest to all Hong Kong people, they urged the Government to conduct a territory-wide consultation and consult more parties of the society, such as local academics, NGOs, chambers of commerce, professional institutes, etc., to enhance the planning proposals. There were green groups that would like the Government to allow them to participate in the planning of NDAs, especially in the formulation of long-term management plan for the Long Valley Nature Park. Some North District Councilors, Rural Committee members and local residents expected that the Government would keep in touch with them and considered that there was a need to establish a task force to facilitate in-depth discussion among stakeholders to reach consensus. Moreover, some local residents raised that the channel for public participation should be more extensive and not to be confined to the briefing sessions and be more open and interactive. Some professional bodies and members of public recommended that the Government should formulate relevant policies and innovative mechanisms as well as provide incentives to encourage stakeholders' participation and step up the implementation of the NDA proposals. Reference provided for public engagement activities and channels included focus group meetings, social media, mobile apps and online promotional activities. This opened up more channels for participating in the planning without geographical and time constraints in addition to public forums and workshops.

Many members of the public, especially the local residents requested the Government for detailed explanations on the implementation, compensation and resettlement arrangements (for details please refer to Section 2.2.1) and were in the hope of more consultation to be conducted with the affected residents during the formulation of relevant arrangements and policies. Some members of the public suggested that the local elderly organisations, concern groups should first be introduced with the compensation/rehousing packages to pre-empt the worries from the elderly regarding these issues. Moreover, members of the Land and Development Advisory Committee suggested to organise additional public engagement activities for these issues. Some concern groups for local residents and members of public demanded that before any revision of the plan, the Government must negotiate with the local residents, paying due regard to their rights to choose and provide different options, including land exchange, resettlement, relocation and compensation etc.

Regarding the original two-and-a-half-month long Stage Three Public Engagement programme, a lot of opinions suggested that the Government should extend the consultation period and allow the public to participate in the planning of the NDAs more proactively, so as to fully assess the community aspirations towards the plan, and give the public, especially

the affected villagers, more time to be involved in the planning in a bottom-up manner. Among them, a Legco member pointed out that as some owners were residing overseas and advised to extend the consultation period of Stage Three Public Engagement to allow landowners to express their views. Longer consultation period would allow more in-depth discussions between the stakeholders and Government on controversial matters such as compensation and rehousing arrangements, as well as to prepare for smooth implementation of the NDAs. There were a lot of people requesting to re-launch the consultation to take more people's views into account, rather than determining the entire NDA plan by two or three times consultation, and let the public fully participate in the decision making of the planning and development of the NDAs. However, some members of the public were discontented by the arrangements of public participation activities and speculated that it was a closed-door arrangement that did not consult all people genuinely and people were not truly engaged in the process. They questioned the Government for ignoring public opposition to the NDA proposals and were dissatisfied that the Government had indicated not to withdraw the development before the end of the consultation. Many of them asked the Government to consult different stakeholders from bottom-up, especially the villagers affected in the NDAs, so that all Hong Kong people and local residents could participate in the entire development process. The Government should communicate with the local residents before planning, rather than consultation after planning. Others agreed that it should be more proactive to enable the public to participate in the planning of NDA and operate bottom-up planning. They believed that the comprehensive planning of NDAs would be wasted if there was no consensus building among different stakeholders in the community. In addition, a number of people affected by the NDAs, especially those from Wa Shan Tsuen, Kwu Tung Village Tung Fong District, PC/TKL District, criticized that they only learned about the NDA development plans until recently, and that the Government did not make appropriate arrangements to allow them to participate in the planning process. The consultation was obviously inadequate and failed to meet the purpose of the three stages of public engagement. They hoped that the Government would seriously review the current consultation system and introduce a mechanism that allows real public participation, especially for stakeholders. Some green groups even doubted the entire consultation process as closed-door arrangement because they were only notified in the final stage of public engagement. Some local villagers were dissatisfied that the senior government officials did not really go to the villages to observe and understand the problem, and failed to provide justification for and the explain the implementation strategies. Therefore, they were in the hope of the Government to take initiative to contact the affected residents and have face-to-face communication, and consult each family in the villages in order to avoid unnecessary conflict. Some people expressed their views in the previous public engagement exercise, but there had been no substantial improvement or reply from the Government and therefore urged official responses as soon as possible and acceptance of opposing views. Some members of public pointed out that many people asked the Government to shelve the plan, but the Government insisted with no intention of shelving the plans. Some were dissatisfied with the opposing views of “no removal and no demolition” being ignored. On the other hand, some local residents revealed that many people who voiced their opinions in the public engagement activities were not those affected persons living in the area, thus urging the Government to negotiate with the affected local community directly. Furthermore, they hoped that the Government to consult not only District Councilors or the rural representatives, as their views did not represent all views of the residents. There were individual comments recommending written communication to be prioritized and be taken care of and responded directly to the affected persons and handled separately from the ones

not directly affected to reduce face-to-face confrontation and heated debates. In addition, there were comments that considered the official engagement channels failed to help the government to consult people's view and most of the affected villagers did not have adequate channels to reflect their views. The comment raised were not addressed previous engagements in the following stage of public engagement. It was considered that the time between two stages of public engagement was too long and the public had changed their aspiration towards NDAs. There were policy concerns of the public that fell out of the scope of study. There was concern that the current public engagement exercise was the last round of engagement exercise and afraid that there was no channel to express views after the end of exercise.

Some members of public complained the arrangement of public forum held on the 22 September 2012 more time was allocated to those on the stage than on the floor and the location of the forum was not convenient as well as having inadequate facilities nearby. They criticized the Government being having no sincerity in consulting the public. There was resentment towards the arrangement for various meetings with the residents on the grounds that the Government did not release information to the public and arrange sufficient seats for the public preventing those who wished to attend the meetings to participate. In addition, people were of the view that the information provided in the public engagement activities had room for improvement, for example, detailed development programme should be announced. The plans for public inspection failed to clearly indicate the specific locations. The renderings should be more in line with the theme of NDAs. Baseline information about the agricultural land/ecology, as well as more data regarding the proportion of public and private housing, should be provided to increase the transparency of the relevant information to facilitate effective public discussion. There were also comments that the public engagement digest could only be obtained from Sha Tin and North Point, and its amount was insufficient for all affected households, rendering the arrangements defective.

In the Special Meeting of the Legislative Council Development Panel, some members of the public criticized that the TV advertisement for NDAs were misleading and pointed out that the proposals had not been endorsed in the Legislative Council, thus requesting the Government to put the advertisement off the air immediately.

Response

We publicised the three-stage public engagement exercises through different channels in the study process. We have tried our best to publicise the development proposals and consult the local community through the existing district consultation mechanism (including the North District Council and concerned Rural Committees). The three stages of public engagement activities were completed in February 2009, January 2010 and September 2012 respectively. We have proactively organised meeting with the local residents and attended public meetings when invited by local residents (including but not limited to Kwu Tung Tsuen, Fu Tei Au Tsuen, Tin Ping San Tsuen, Shek Wu Sun Tsuen, Hung Kiu Sun Tsuen, Ma Shi Po Tsuen and Sheung Shui Heung) to collect their views and opinions. We have organized a workshop, forums, etc. to allow the public to participate in the planning of NDAs. The public views were taken into consideration when we were preparing the RODPs. Moreover, after the Stage Three Public Engagement activities, we have actively responded to the public views and amended the RODPs accordingly. The major revisions include increasing the proportion of public housing, providing the local rehousing option at FLN NDA, providing sites for the new HOS, amending the development area to minimize the impacts on the existing residents,

etc. (please refer to Appendix 34 for major amendments). Although the Stage Three Public Engagement exercise has already ended, we are willing to listen to any further views on the NENT NDAs and to communicate with the stakeholders. The NDA proposals are currently at the planning stage. Nevertheless, when the proposals are to be implemented, the stakeholders will be consulted further, including on the formulation of the management plan for the Long Valley Nature Park.

With regard to the release of information, in addition to the Study website, we prepared several public engagement digests which outlined the major proposals under the Study, and these were sent by mail to the respective groups as well as being distributed and available to the public at the North District Office, North Point and Sha Tin Government Offices and the Civil Engineering and Development Department Offices in Ho Man Tin and Sha Tin. At the time when Stage Two and Stage Three Public Engagement activities launched, we have also informed the members of the public who had expressed views and comments previously to invite their views once again. Moreover, we have set up exhibition panels to promote and introduce the NDA proposals to the public at North District Office, North Point and Sha Tin Government Offices.

The public forum for the NENT NDA Study held on 22 September 2012 was originally planned to be held at the HHCKLA Buddhist Ma Kam Chan Memorial English Secondary School, 9 Yuen Yick Street, Luen Wo Hui, Fanling. Due to an unexpected large number of people registered for the forum and the original venue could not accommodate all the participants, the venue of the public forum was changed in order to allow all the registered participants to attend. Relevant departments were consulted when selecting a venue which could accommodate about 10,000 people. We had to carefully consider many factors such as traffic, public safety, etc. When the venue was finally chosen, we had informed the public regarding the change of venue for the public forum as early as possible through various means, including issuing press release through the Information Services Department and uploaded the press release on to the Study Website as well as via newspaper advertisements, notices in the concerned villages, emails or SMS notification to inform the people who had registered to attend the forum. We acknowledge the comments regarding the arrangements of the public forum and will improve in organizing similar activities in the future.

During the Stage Three Public Engagement exercise of the NENT NDAs Study, there were comments that in addition to consulting local residents and relevant stakeholders, the Government should raise public awareness of the planning of the NENT NDAs. Moreover, during the public engagement exercise, there were quite a number of misunderstandings in the community about the planning intention of the NENT NDAs (e.g. the allegation that the NDAs will become the “city for rich non-permanent residents of Hong Kong” or “backyard of Shenzhen”). The Government has clarified time and again publicly that the objective of implementing the NDAs is to meet the future housing demand of Hong Kong people and to cater for our economic and social development needs. Relevant APIs to show the past experience in new town development were launched to allow the general public to have a better understanding of the planning concept and intention of the NENT NDAs.

2.1.15 Technical and Engineering Considerations

Some members of public urged the Government to address the problem and the impacts of the proposed development, including noise, drainage, security, as well as transportation and

other ancillary facilities. They hoped that the Government would improve the flooding problem in the North District when planning and designing for new drainage systems. Some professional institutes of the engineering field recommended that the Government should try to avoid putting the community facilities in the locations exposed to landslide hazards.

Furthermore, some members of the public expressed concerns about various technical assessments of the projects undertaken in the NENT NDA Study. Particularly for Transport Impact Assessment (TIA), some comments enquired whether the information about pedestrian and vehicular flow used for assessment was the existing or projected data. Whether the Government had conducted detailed TIA for the existing railway system, etc. [also discussed in 2.1.10]. In terms of EIA, some concern groups considered that it was an upside-down procedure to determine the development plan before the EIA and inconsistent with the principles of conservation. Professional institutes further urged the concerned bureaux to decide on how sustainability assessment would be conducted and documented and discuss carefully the assessment criteria in EIA. Furthermore, some members of the Town Planning Board demanded for explanations by the Government on how the “Special Industries” would be assessed in the EIA. Also some members queried whether the ecological impacts on other areas outside the Long Valley wetland were included in the EIA. Some environmental groups were dissatisfied with the Government for not providing ecological baseline information even at the final stage of public engagement. Additionally, concerning the arsenic found in the soil of KTN, some members of the Planning Subcommittee of the Housing Authority Committees would like to know the impacts of arsenic during the construction and in future estate management.

Individual members of the public expressed concern about the engineering work of the NDA development and urged for appropriate measures to be undertaken during the construction period of the NDAs development such as setting up of noise barriers and hoardings, etc. Some green groups suggested that in the engineering of the NDAs, construction materials should be carefully selected to minimize environmental impacts. As for the proposed road works, members of the public urged the Government to implement a series of traffic control measures and set the order and programme of new road construction to minimize the impacts of projects on existing residents. Some existing North District residents also inquired whether the NDAs as well as existing Fanling/Sheung Shui would use seawater for flushing to reduce the consumption of potable water.

Response

A drainage impact assessment has been conducted for the NDA proposals to review the conditions of the NDAs and the upper and lower catchment areas and the existing drainage system as well as analysing the risk of flooding, in order to calculate and assess the potential impacts of the NDAs on the draining systems and to derive corresponding mitigation measures. Parts of the NDAs and the surrounding areas are currently threatened by flooding in times of rainstorm. To improve the existing drainage conditions, necessary site formation works will be carried out for the NDAs and an independent drainage system will be established to provide 1 in 50 years flood protection for the NDAs. Moreover, those existing draining systems within the NDA development area not complying with the prevailing flood-protection standards will be enhanced by the new drainage systems, which will reduce the risk of flooding.

As described in 2.1.10, regarding the TIA, firstly, the Study has adopted the latest population projection data to assess the background traffic flow. Moreover, the transportation strategies proposed under the Study have already adopted the principle of railways as the backbone of development and railway transport will be complemented with the development of other public transport services, in order to fully assess the future transport demand of the NDAs. The TIA results also demonstrate that the NDA development will not cause insurmountable impacts on existing traffic.

The environmental impacts assessment (EIA) conducted for the KTN and FLN NDAs (the PC/TKL NDA is subject to re-planning at a later stage) have covered assessments on the potential ecological impacts for all proposed developments, and proposed corresponding mitigation measures accordingly in order to remove or minimise the potential impacts on the ecology.

The EIA conducted has included the health risk assessment on the arsenic found in the soil and proposed treatments for the arsenic soil. The treated arsenic soil will not have any impacts on the future management of the housing estates.

In the hope of reducing water consumption, we are actively studying to use seawater or treated effluent (i.e. recycled water) in the NDAs instead of using fresh water for flushing. The Water Services Department advises that the Government is currently reviewing the feasibility of using recycled water for flushing and other non-potable purposes.

The “Special Industry” proposed in the PC/TKL NDA will be environmentally friendly, non-polluting trades/industries and will not cause any industrial pollution to the environment. Moreover, PC/TKL NDA will be subject to re-planning at a later stage and the planning of “Special Industry” area in the NDA will be reviewed under the New Territories North study.

2.2 Feasibility of the Recommended Outline Development Plans and Implementation Arrangements

2.2.1 Resumption, Compensation, Site Clearance and Rehousing

General Comments

Many members of the public, especially some of the affected local residents, were very much concerned about the issues of resumption, compensation, site clearance and rehousing. In particular, the amounts of compensation and rehousing arrangements provided for the affected residents were of greatest concern. In general, the concerned persons were of the view that the Government should make proper arrangements regarding the compensation and rehousing issues for the affected residents before further discussion on other issues. Some opined that if the compensation/ rehousing arrangements in the NDAs plan were supported by the general public, it could serve as a role model for the future development along the Northern Link. They suggested that the Government should establish a comprehensive compensation/rehousing mechanism for future developments in Hong Kong so that future developments could follow that mechanism. Many affected local residents and some members of the public urged the Government to announce the details of land resumption and compensation as soon as possible. Besides, some opinions suggested the Government setting

up a task force to liaise with affected parties, providing them with information on land resumption, compensation and rehousing issues. A task force could also be established to discuss implementation details with developers and affected parties to avoid conflicts between the Government and those affected.

Some individuals stated that the Government had not proposed a compensation and rehousing/re-provisioning package that was acceptable to them. They criticized the Government of lacking a comprehensive mechanism on compensation, resumption and rehousing, while the compensation rate failed to reflect the value of the resumed lands as brought about by future development opportunities. They were upset for being subject to planning and forced to move as the current planning scheme did not involve the stakeholders of the land. Regarding the compensation arrangement, there were opinions that the Government should protect property rights, provide fair compensation to affected landowners and relocate affected residents in a fair and reasonable manner to ensure smooth development. Apart from the general compensation, some members of the public requested the Government to provide reasonable removal fees. Regarding the compensation to landowners, there were members of Legco commented that the potential development value of the land should be considered. Besides, some members of the public requested the compensation amount to be calculated uniformly based on the ex-gratia compensation rate for Zone A when the Government resumed private land. However, there were opinions that, applying the same land resumption rate on different lands would result in social conflict and confusion. On the other hand, there were concern groups worried about the pledge of Government about the increased compensation for the affected residents, which might raise the cost of land and hence hinder the future land use from reflecting the actual social needs. There were professional institutions commented that to enhance the re-provisioning and compensation arrangements for a group of stakeholders for the sake of fairness to another group of stakeholders might lead to controversy and social polarization and therefore needed to be considered cautiously.

As for rehousing of the affected villagers, some members of the public questioned that Government only retained the indigenous residents' houses but with no regard to the non-indigenous residents living in squatters. Some other members argued that the existing policy was unfair to non-indigenous residents, and the Government must review and optimise the removal arrangements, sort out the policy, and pave the way for future redevelopment and development. Some members of Sheung Shui District Rural Committee expressed views that the Government should treat both indigenous and non-indigenous residents in a fair manner in all aspects. There were professional institutions believed that the Government should, through proper distribution of land, make sure that all the affected residents and landowners in the NDAs could choose whether to continue their existing lifestyle or not. Some members of the District Council believed that the Government should, through redevelopment, allow the residents to stay near their original districts and maintain their social networks in order to reduce the difficulties of adapting to the new environments. Hence, many people from the community and members of public requested the Government to rehouse the affected non-indigenous villages within the same district. That meant to provide land for them to build houses legally, relocate their villages and at the same time offer them reasonable compensation. Some members of the public suggested to adopt the "vertical village" development mode so as to preserve the existing villages and their characters while to accommodate more population as well as having improved infrastructure and environment. In addition, many squatter residents in the NDAs and the surrounding areas expressed views that many of them were forced to leave as the private developers purchased their lands. They

hoped the Government could take care of these residents and provide them with rehousing and compensation arrangements, and protecting the existing residents from land acquisition by developers. Some of the residents requested the Government to do registration for the villagers immediately, and conduct population survey before public consultations, so as to avoid the developers to expel the farmers. They also asked the Government to reserve 10% of the land and provide ex-gratia allowance for squatter residents to relocate their homes. They urged the Government to regulate the method of land acquisition by developers. Some believed that no matter which development mode to be adopted, the Government should relocate the affected residents in the NDAs to public housing as soon as possible. In addition, local residents requested that all the NDA area should be resumed by the Government, including "Agriculture" and "Conservation Area" etc, with Zone A compensation.

Apart from the different views regarding compensation and rehousing/re-provisioning arrangements, we had received opinions of increasing crop compensation and removal/rehousing fees for local farmers. The Government was asked to provide lands for affected business operators for relocating their operations elsewhere. Some members of the public strongly urged the Government to preserve the soy sauce factories and organic farms and were worried that the closing down of these businesses would lead to unemployment of many local residents. They considered that the soy sauce factories and organic farms had business opportunities and preservation value, as they were some of the special industries with local characters. Some affected business operators strongly objected that the Government only provided pecuniary compensation that could hardly help them to find new lands. They pointed out that the land resumption compensation nowadays had been much more generous, such as those offered to residents in Pak Heung Choi Yuen Village and Ta Kwu Ling Chuk Yuen Village. However, industrial workshop operators did not get equal treatment. Therefore, they hoped that the Government could, on top of pecuniary compensation, proactively find land for industrial workshop operators to continue their business.

Response

While the planning of the NENT NDAs has minimised the impacts on the existing residents as far as possible, it is unavoidable to resume the land for the provision of road infrastructure, public housing, public facilities as well as residential and commercial developments.

The existing general compensation and rehousing arrangements are applicable to clearees affected by the NDAs project. The Government has reviewed the existing Ex-gratia Allowances (EGAs) and rehousing arrangement and recommends enhancements to four existing EGAs, including EGA for Permitted Occupiers, Domestic Removal Allowance, EGA for Shops, Workshops, Godowns, Slipways, Schools, Churches, and Ornamental Fish Breeding Undertakings, and EGA for the Clearance of Graves, Kam Taps (urns) and Shrines. The proposed enhancements are applicable to those eligible clearees affected by the KTN and FLN NDAs. The proposed enhanced general C&R arrangements are subject to the approval by the Finance Committee (FC) of the Legislative Council.

Given the two NDAs is a major development critical to the supply of land for housing development, in particular subsidised housing development, the Government considers that a special ex-gratia compensation package should be offered to eligible households affected by the project to better assist their rehousing needs to deliver the project as soon as possible. A special ex-gratia cash allowance (SEGCA) of \$600,000 would be offered to qualified

households living in either a licensed or surveyed domestic structure. The proposed Special Ex-gratia Compensation Package is also subject to the approval by the FC.

To help maintain the social fabric of the existing communities, one site in each of the NDAs has been reserved for construction of public housing for local rehousing purpose. Part of the sites may be designated for HOS development. Public housing units in Fanling/Sheung Shui and elsewhere could also serve the rehousing purpose more flexibly to meet the needs of clearerees.

Regarding the reprovisioning requests from the affected business operators, according to the existing mechanism, there is no reprovisioning arrangement for the affected business operators. The Government will compensate the eligible affected parties under the existing mechanism. Affected parties can seek alternative sites for rural industrial and open storage uses with their own resources. Currently, the New Territories have a certain amount of vacant “Industrial (Group D)” and “Open Storage” sites. In cases that the affected individuals have special needs, the Government will consider to offer assistance.

Local Rehousing

Some members of the public supported the proposed site in KTN NDA for “local rehousing”, indicating that the existing local rehousing arrangements in this Stage was more comprehensive than those proposed under Stage 2 Public Engagement. Some hoped that the affected residents could be given higher priority in the allocation of public housing in the same areas to help maintain their social network. However, some members of the public worried about the relocation and rehousing in the period between houses being demolished after resumption and before “local rehousing” flats available. On the other hand, many of the local residents and members of the public urged the Government to consider local rehousing in FLN NDA for the affected residents in those two NDAs to choose, and the affected villagers outside KTN could move to places closer to their original home and the impacts on them could be reduced.

The proposed “local rehousing” was to provide public housing for “eligible individuals”. Many members of the several public demanded a detailed explanation regarding the eligibility criteria to be rehoused locally. Among them, some of the affected individuals in the district requested for Non-means-tested arrangement for the allocation of public housing under the “local rehousing” policy. Some villagers said applying means testing for the “local rehousing” flats was not reasonable and even they could pass the first round of the test and get the flats, they might still fail in the second round of the test and need to pay double rent. The living cost would increase after moving to the public housing. They hoped the Government not to change their current way of living, especially in terms of living cost and financial conditions. Many members of the public and locals expressed that there were many villages yearned for rural life, keeping their custom and networks. Most of them had become accustomed to rural life, thus moving the villagers to public housing might not be suitable for all, especially for the elderly who might not be able to adapt to the new living environment.

Response

In response to the public requests, and after review, it is recommended to reserve a public housing site each in KTN NDA and FLN NDA to provide local rehousing for eligible

affected households. The Government can also consider providing other public housing units to rehouse the eligible affected residents. As social resources are limited, we need to allocate the resources to people with a genuine need. Therefore, means testing is necessary to determine the eligibility.

Generally speaking, the eligibility criteria for squatter clearerees to be rehoused in public rental housing are set as below: the affected persons must be genuine residents of a 1982 surveyed domestic structure/ a licensed domestic structure and covered by the pre-clearance survey; affected persons must be covered by the 1984/85 Squatter Occupancy Survey; or affected persons with proof of two-year residence in a 1982 surveyed domestic structure prior to the date of announcement of squatter area clearance. Affected persons who have satisfied the above-mentioned criteria will be allotted a notional Waiting List application number for public rental housing. If their application is to be due for allocation within 12 months, advance action will be taken to handle the application. All the squatter clearerees who wish to be rehoused in public rental housing also need to satisfy other eligibility criteria of Waiting List for public rental housing, such as satisfying the 7-year residence rule, not owning any domestic property and satisfying a comprehensive means test covering both their income and net asset, etc.

For residents with special needs, the Government is recommended to endeavour to assist them and consider to offer them compassionate rehousing.

2.2.2 Development Programme

Some members of the public were concerned about the development time table of the NDA, hoping that the Government could announce the details of the programme as soon as possible so that the private developers could respond to the Government's planning and had sufficient time to decide the development of their lands. Many members of the public questioned that whether the Government could implement the NDA plan on schedule. Considering the possible difficulties in land resumption, lengthened time for site formation and land auction, they worried that the land supply in Hong Kong would be delayed. Some worried that the Government, due to different reasons, might not be able to implement all the planned construction works.

Some Legislative Council Members and some supporters of the NDAs plan wished to see the implementation of the NDAs as soon as possible. Many members of the public believed that there was an urgent need for housing. They urged the Government not to delay the development of the NDAs anymore and even to speed up the progress, in order to increase housing supply. Some District Council members opined that since the programme was rather long the Government should speed up the development progress after completing consultation and achieving general consensus, with a view to achieving the desired results of the plan as soon as possible which would also help gain continuous public support. Besides, some political parties and members of the public hoped that the development programme could be compressed as much as possible to fit into the development needs in Hong Kong. They suggested giving priority to the development sites adjacent new towns, as those sites were already equipped with infrastructure facilities which could shorten the time for housing supply. A site near Luen Wo Market proposed for Residential Zone 2 development was particularly suggested to be included in advance works, and allow the private developers to

develop the land first with a view to speeding up housing supply. Besides, some views opined that land resumption process could be advanced. It was suggested that land resumption could be commenced once after the statutory town plan was prepared in order to speed up housing supply in the NDAs. Moreover, some members of the public believed the time needed for developing the NDAs was affected by the bureaucratic planning procedures but not the land resumption. Some professional institutions opined that the existing public housing development procedures were too complicated, and urged the Government to streamline the existing procedures for planning and construction approval.

Some members of the public suspected the future population growth might not reach the number projected by the Government, and thus the Government did not have the urgency to develop the NDAs. They hoped the Government to postpone the development plan for at least 10 years and reconsider the actual needs for population growth. The opined that the plan should not be implemented until the projected population reached 8.4 million.

There were some opinions on the importance of developing in phases and providing infrastructure at appropriate time. The Government should consider the population changes over time and provide appropriate community facilities. They pointed out that the old “transportation follows houses” mode for new town/NDA development was not desirable. Transport infrastructure should be completed before people moving in for the convenience of their daily commuting. However, some professional institutions opposed the phased development of the NDAs, viewing that it was contradictory to the mode of comprehensive planning and design for NDAs and would have long-term impacts on the NDAs in future. Some suggested to complete community infrastructure and public facilities in the NDAs first before moving residents in. It would also make the residents more willing to move into the new town, and hence increased the recognition and support for the NDAs.

Responses

According to the latest population forecast, the number of residents and households in Hong Kong will increase by 1.4 million and 680,000 respectively in coming 30 years. Despite the growth of population and households has been slowing down, the numbers of both figures are still increasing. Meanwhile, the average household size has reduced (from 3.3 persons in each household in 1996 to 2.9 in 2011 and projected to be 2.7 in 2031). As the need for improving living environment keeps increasing, and the service industry and the economy continues to thrive, the demands for land for housing and economic development will still be very intense in the future. We must employ every possible measure to sustainably explore land for new development. Therefore, the Government indeed needs to explore alternative means of land supply through different planning and development studies and developing the NDAs including the NENT NDA, to meet the medium to long-term needs of housing, economic and social development in Hong Kong.

The NENT NDA development will be one of the major land sources to meet the medium- to long-term housing and development needs in the society. As development takes time, from completion of the planning stage until the first batch of residential units completed requires a period of about 10 years. Thus, it is unrealistic to plan and implement the NDAs when the population growth reaches the target level. We should take effective measures as early as possible to cope with the needs in the society.

Large-scale development projects including the NDA proposals require development to be implemented in phases. While implementing the NDA proposals, we will adopt different measures to ensure the integrity and consistency of the proposals. According to the 2013 Policy Address, the development potential in New Territories North is to be explored. The PC/TKL NDA will be replanned in this context and in consultation with the public again, in order to comprehensive review relevant considerations, including the development opportunities brought about by new railway development.

The development at Kwu Tung North and Fanling North NDAs should be implemented as soon as possible after the RODPs have been revised. According to preliminary estimates, the first batch of residential units will be available as early as 2023, while it is anticipated that both of the NDAs will be fully completed by 2031. The implementation schedule of road works will correspond to the population intake timetable. We will endeavour to ensure that the future residents will be served with adequate infrastructure and facilities at the time of moving into the NDAs, and the implementation will be phased to provide sufficient community facilities at each development phase.

2.2.3 Development Approach

Many members of the public were concerned about the development approach of the NDAs. Among them, issues including how the Government assembled the lands needed for the development of the NDAs and how much land within the NDAs was owned by private developers were of greatest concern. The Real Estate Developers Association of Hong Kong and some of the members of the public urged the Government to explain the rationale for the change from the Public-Private-Partnership Approach (PPPA) that was a possible approach being considered by the Government in previous Stages of Public Engagement to the Government-dominated Conventional New Town Approach (CNTA) in the current Stage. Some members of the public believed that the switching of development approach would confuse affected residents. Some Legislative Council Members urged the Government to explain to the public the pros and cons of different approaches with a view to easing public concern on collusion between the Government and individual or groups of developers. Some members of the public requested the Government to make an assessment on both approaches to compare their impacts on land resumption, housing supply and government finance, etc. Members of Legco Panel on Development and members of The Real Estate Developers Association of Hong Kong opined that the Government should ensure the implementation process to be fair and transparent, and should announce the timetable of land resumption, with details on phased or one-off land resumption.

Different parties had different views on the development approach of the NDAs. Some supported the Government to adopt CNTA proposed in this Stage, while some opined that PPPA was more appropriate for the NDAs projects. Among them, some supporters of CNTA believed that this approach could protect squatter residents and farmers who lived on others' lands, and could protect them from being forced out due to land acquisition by private developers. It could protect the rights of small landowners. Some members of the Planning Sub-committee under the LDAC and some other members of the public opined that CNTA could promote a more comprehensive development and avoid private developers developing sporadic projects individually. It would help to make sure the whole development of the NDAs to be accomplished on schedule, and the public and recreational facilities could be

provided at an appropriate time to align with the development programme. Besides, some opinions indicated that under CNTA the Government could progressively resume valuable land from landowners to expand the Government land reserve, allowing the Government to play a more active role in land supply management, helping the Government control the supply of new land and avoiding land speculations. The CNTA was relatively more suitable for development of lands with various problems and small sized land parcels with complicated property ownership, as these lands might affect the development programme of the NDAs. Small sized land parcels with complicated property ownership should be resumed by the Government to ensure for a comprehensive and orderly development. Other than that, some members of the public suggested the Government giving priority to lands which were easier to resume such as Long Valley.

Some local residents complained that private developers were still forcing the villagers to move out even after the Government announced to adopt the CNTA, so that those villagers were not entitled to any rehousing or compensation arrangements and became homeless. However, there were opinions (including a large number of standardised letters with same content) that the Government should not set a bad precedent of wholesale land resumption. They were of the view that the Government auctioning the resumed land at a higher price for private housing development was unfair to landowners, which violated the core value of Hong Kong respecting property rights. Therefore, they worried that the CNTA might face legal challenge, thus hindered the progress of the development of the NDAs. Heung Yee Kuk was worried that the CNTA might provoke the opposing sentiment of local residents, similar to the case of Choi Yuen Village, which created many political and social resistances and resulted in serious delay and heavy social cost. This delay might largely increase the development cost, which would not be in line with the Government's principle of "orderly, controlled and earliest implementation". It was also pointed out that the CNTA did not allow landowners to share the profits of the future developments. On the other hand, the basis of compensation did not reflect the potential value of the lands. Therefore, it was expected to encounter opposition from landowners. Regarding this, some professional institutions suggested the Government to review the existing "Land Resumption Ordinance" section 12(c) to ensure the potential development value could be reflected in the compensation assessment. Meanwhile, many members of the public, including District Council Members, suggested the Government to assign the resumed land for public use such as infrastructure, public housing, HOS, hospital or other community facilities. If the Government resell the resumed land to private developers, it would go against the benefits of the general public. There were opinions stating that the Government stocking up lands for business use rather than for the public interest would violate the Hong Kong's free market principle. Heung Yee Kuk opined that if the Government wholesale resumed the land for resale, the original development plan of private developers and their expected profit would be deprived. Thus, the Government would go against the benefits of developers who would not agree to the development plan of the NDAs. Moreover, if the developers found that there were less investment opportunities resulting from the Government's intervention in business activities, they might invest their money outside Hong Kong, hence causing an economic recession. Government intervention in private commercial sectors violated its policy, and indirectly reducing the opportunities for the business organizations who were interested in developments. Besides, some members of the public were worried that as the Government had made it clear about compulsory land resumption, indigenous residents' rights to build small houses would be deprived. On top of that, some developers and other members of the public believed that many developers had purchased lands in the NDAs to prepare for the PPPA which was mentioned in the previous stage of public engagement. It would be unfair

to developers if the Government now decided not to adopt the PPPA. Besides, some landowners had commenced advance works on the lands within the NDAs, their investments would be wasted if the Government resumed were their lands.

Some members of the public worried about the large-scale land resumption might affect the progress of the NDAs and the implementation of the project would fail to meet the schedule. The CNTA would freeze the lands in the NDAs and waste the valuable land resources. Some Legislative Council Members questioned if the CNTA could speed up the implementation of the NDAs development, stating that Hong Kong had gained every success through government-private sector cooperation since early city development. The hard-earned free market economy would be sacrificed just for the sake of administrative expedience in the NDAs. Meanwhile, some opinions requested the Government to provide a clear and detailed financial report to the public to explain the cost for land resumption and the revenue made by the land auctions, since the land resumption would involve a huge amount of public money. Some worried the huge expenditure would increase the Government's financial burden. Some suspected that the Government was following the Mainland to nationalise lands as it was spending \$40 billions on buying up land reserve. Moreover, some wondered why the Government prefers to use \$40 billions on land resumption rather than on other social problems. Some professional institutions suggested that it was necessary to ensure a certain degree of the development density and land use to achieve cost effectiveness, as the cost for land resumption was very high, and stated that the proposed development approach for the NDAs violated the existing diversified and bottom-up principle for urban redevelopment.

Some developers and many members of the public supported the PPPA due to the above disadvantages of the CNTA. Some Legislative Council Members opined that the Government should aim at keeping a balance between private and public interests. With respect to the property rights laid down in the Basic Law, the Government should liaise with stakeholders/ landowners to understand their expectations on the development of the NDAs, and conduct a feasibility study of allowing private developers to participate in the NDAs projects. Some believed that the PPPA was better than the CNTA in making better use of the market and market resources, reaching the target with highest efficiency. It would not be cheaper for the Government to resume the land on its own than under PPPA. Some members of the public and some professional institutions believed that the CNTA might not be able to develop the NDAs orderly, suggesting the Government studying the feasibility of the PPPA again in next stage. Besides, some Legislation Council Members and some members of the public opined that PPPA could speed up the NDAs plan since many lands inside the NDAs were ready for immediate development. Private developers and individual landowners should be allowed to develop their lands to speed up the development of the NDAs and to increase housing supply. Moreover, there were some opinions indicating that PPPA allowed private development and public housing to be completed at the same time, providing job opportunities and supporting facilities for the first batch of residents, which was very important especially at the early stage of a development. Some views suggested "Package Development Approach" (the Development Area was composed of many packages; infrastructure and development could be implemented independently in each package. Priority for the development of different packages was based on the consideration of feasibility and cost etc.) that used to be adopted in the development of new towns and the PPPA to speed up the development of NDAs. On the other hand, an entrustment model was proposed for the Government's consideration, letting the private developers to provide public facilities for the NDAs to further speed up the development progress. Besides, some supporters of the PPPA expressed a view that although some tenants were worried about

being forced to move, the concerns over land acquisitions by private developers could be solved. Some members of the public did not agree that that PPPA was collusion between the Government and the business sector since land sales and purchases were common in Hong Kong and land use had been constantly reviewed and revised. As long as there was a fair and open arrangement allowing public oversight, they deemed public-private partnership was the fastest and appropriate way to implement the NDAs development. Some suggested that, for those lands larger than 1 hectare with sole ownership and planned as private housing developments in the RODP, the Government should allow the landowners to develop on their own in order to speed up the development of the NDAs, saving the time and resources for the Government and private organizations. They proposed adopting PPPA in an appropriate manner, and suggested the Government resuming land and implementing programme based on the established ratio of public and private housing (43% : 57%). Sole owners of large-sized land parcels could develop the land on their own after paying the premium in accordance with planning requirements. While for those individuals with small-sized land and lacking opportunities and the ability to develop, the Government could resume their lands at the farmland price plus removal fees with a view to getting land for public housing and other supporting facilities. The Government could also resume some of the large-sized land parcels from individuals based on the master planning.

However, many local residents, especially the squatter residents, strongly opposed to the PPPA. They argued that the PPPA was in favour of the interest of developers. They worried that the existing squatters residents would be forced out by developers. They requested the Government to lead the development of the NDAs. That meant to adopt the CNTA.

Apart from supporting or opposing the above two development approaches, many members of the public suggested the old approach of land resumption adopted in the past new town developments, which provided Land Exchange Entitlements for affected landowners to make the land resumption more efficient. Some professional institutions suggested adopting arrangements similar to Land Exchange Entitlements, but limiting the exchangeable lands within the NENT NDA, without fixed land exchange ratio. The Government could recall the Entitlements in certain period of time, and the Land Exchange Entitlements could also be traded in the market. Heung Yee Kuk proposed the Land Exchange Entitlements that used to be effective in the past new town developments, so that the landowners could have options. The landowners would support if they consider the Government respected their property ownership and offered appropriate arrangements, for example landowners could be allowed to take a half of monetary compensation and a half of Land Exchange Entitlements. Some professional institutions pointed out that if the Government, opted for the Land Exchange Entitlements, it could start discussion with landowners about the land exchange at the stage of formulating OZP to allow earlier development of the developable lands, rather than wait until the land resumption process completed. It could help reduce the opposing voices of the landowners and the development cost for the Government.

Some members of the planning sub-committee under the LDAC suggested the Government adopting a mix of the above two development approach. Some suggested considering applying PPPA on individual lands in a flexible way. Some members of Rural Committee and locals advised that the Government should aim at minimising land resumption to reduce the impact on existing residents. The Government should first develop existing lands and abandoned lands in phases. Some developers expressed a view that the Government should allocate lands for private developments in phases after land resumption, to avoid oversupply of residential lands at one time which would affect the property market.

Responses

Taking into account public views received in the Stage 3 Public Engagement, the Government will adopt the Conventional New Town Approach (CNTA) as the primary mode for implementing the NDAs proposals. The Government will take the lead and resume private land for various developments in accordance with the plans. In the new towns development in the past, besides implementation by Government land resumption, there were cases of granting applications for modification of lease (including in-situ land exchange) for private developments. As such, the Government will process similar applications in KTN and FLN NDAs. Whilst ensuring that the planning and implementation programme for NDAs will not be compromised, the Government will adopt stricter requirements in allowing applications for modification of lease (including in-situ land exchange) by owners of land planned for private development meeting the specified criteria. Such applications should comply with specified criteria and requirements, in order to ensure comprehensive planning, timely provision of housing and other facilities as well as safeguarding fair treatment to tenants/occupants.

This approach will enable early delivery of land and housing through allowing applications for modification of lease, whilst ensuring comprehensive planning, timely provision of housing, infrastructure, community and other facilities, as well as safeguarding fair treatment to tenants/occupants, without compromising planning and balanced development.

2.3 Kwu Tung North New Development Area

2.3.1 Rehousing for Affected Villagers and Implementation Mechanism

In a number of public engagement activities, such as the meetings with residents in KTN and Special Meeting of Legco Development Panel, the villagers of Kwu Tung Village strongly requested to retain Kwu Tung Village and demanded “no removal and no demolition”. Some villagers stated that they opposed to any development in Kwu Tung Village before a proper arrangement was available. Similarly, representatives of Ma Tso Lung Village (South) residents also proposed “no removal and no demolition” such that the existing houses could not be demolished and the land surrounding the houses needed to be retained. The villagers also urged the Government to ensure daily lives of residents and traffic, etc, not to be affected by the construction works. In addition, there was a 90-year historical site for Chan Yiching Tso in Kwu Tung Fung Kong Village and its descendants/tribes expressed that it was unacceptable for the Government to resume the land for redevelopment and took away the origin of Chan Yiching Tso. Some of the villagers were discontented that the Government had not provided direct reply to the request of villagers from Kwu Tung Village regarding resettlement and reasonable compensation. They mentioned that the development of KTN should be on the premise to enhance the living quality of existing residents. They did not expect large sum of monetary compensation but hoped to share the fruits of development, yet they would not be benefited from the development of KTN NDA. The Government had spent an extra \$2 billion in the tunnel option of LMC Spur line for protecting the habitat of Long Valley. It would be reasonable to arrange proper resettlement for the thousands of villagers of Kwu Tung Village. In the residents’ meeting held in KTN, some villagers expressed that constructing the NDA at the expense of the Kwu Tung Village and interests of existing residents to solve the problems due to the Government's mistakes in

housing policy and doubly-non permanent residents policy was unfair to the villagers. Nevertheless, some members of Rural Committee on the other hand indicated that most of villagers of Kwu Tung Village were willing to move out but the Government must arrange “village resite” and provide reasonable compensations for the land and relocation.

Several villagers voiced their request for “village resite” in numerous public engagement activities and expressed their anger about the Government turning a deaf ear to their demand. They considered that Kwu Tung Village was a recognized village by the Heung Yee Kuk and therefore strongly objected that there was no resiting arrangement of Kwu Tung Village. They urged the Government to provide suitable location for reprovisioning of the village before development so that affected residents could live and work in peace. Some villagers pointed out that Kwu Tung was very barren in the past and the current environment was built all by the villagers. In various public engagement activities, villagers requested for similar compensation measures as Choi Yuen Village and Chuk Yuen Village. They pointed out that Choi Yuen Village was not a recognized village but still got resiting of the entire village or ex-gratia compensation whereas the Chuk Yuen Village being affected by the Liantang/Heung Yuen Wai BCP also received "Cottage House Option" for them to build two-storey houses on new land. They requested the Government to be thoughtful and provide special arrangements for them. Resident representatives of Kwu Tung Village proposed to resite the village to the west of Kwu Tung railway station (covering the proposed local rehousing sites and surrounding areas). Some suggested reserving Kwu Tung Village Office and Kwu Tung Vegetable Co-operative as the locations for resiting Kwu Tung Village to maintain the features of existing rural life.

Concerning the local rehousing site in the KTN NDA, some residents in Kwu Tung Village supported this idea but thought that the proposed land area at this stage did not meet the needs of the residents. They suggested the Government to enlarge the local rehousing area which should be away from the hospital. Moreover, some villagers from the Kwu Tung Village were of the view that the proposed multi-storey development in the local rehousing site was not in line with the request of the villagers and pointed out that the villagers enjoyed the rural life and hence might not be adapt to the living in the PRH.

As pointed out by some villagers from Kwu Tung Village, there were many traditional industries such as soy sauce factory, warehouse and timber factories and other operations such as kindergartens and restaurants in Kwu Tung Village. They provided more than a thousand jobs and solve the employment problem of many local residents by providing many jobs demanding low educational attainment. The resettlement of these businesses should also be arranged. The Government should not only pay monetary compensation but should arrange the affected factories to move into the industrial zone of PC/TKL with priority. They urged the Government to announce the relevant compensation options or relocation arrangements as soon as possible to prepare them. Some suggested the construction of a complex to accommodate businesses in KTN NDA and affected industries in the Tit Hang area in KTN. At the same time, a recycling yard operating in Ma Tso Lung expressed that they did not oppose to land resumption by the Government for development but they would like the Government to find a suitable location for them to continue operation as well as provide reasonable compensation. In addition, some NGOs within the KTN NDA requested the Government to provide them with suitable resite locations. There was a religious institution demanded the Government to resume the land they were renting from the land owner, and then lease the land to them to continue their operation.

Response

In response to the requests of residents of Ma Tso Lung Village (South) and minimizing the impact on existing residents, we suggest to move the part of the proposed road in southwestern KTN slightly eastward. The proposed location of the stadium is also shifted from Fung Kong Shan to the northwestern part of the NDA, to the west of Lok Ma Chau link road.

As in the past, land resumption and clearance are inevitable for the development of new towns and would affect some of the existing residents. We have reserved a site in the KTN NDA to provide local rehousing for eligible affected households. As for residents with special needs, we suggest the Government to consider to provide assistance. As Kwu Tung Village is located in the heart of the KTN NDA, this area is suitable for high-density development. Thus, there is a need to clear Kwu Tung Village and in terms of planning, the KTN NDA is not considered suitable for the reprovisioning of low-density village houses.

According to the prevailing land policy, rural industries, open storage yards, etc., affected by the NDA developments will not be reprovisioned. Instead, the Government will provide compensation to the eligible affected parties under the prevailing mechanisms. Affected parties can find replacement sites for open storage and rural industrial uses by themselves. Currently, there is a certain amount of vacant "Industrial (Group D)" and "Open Storage" sites. The Government will also endeavour to provide assistance to those affected persons with special needs.

We have been in contact with the affected Non-Governmental Organisations and understood their aspirations.

2.3.2 Village Development

Some of the villagers such as those from Yin Kong Village worried about the future NDAs would limit the expansion of their village. They pointed out that the area of Yin Kong Village was already small and the surrounding areas being planned as agricultural land and Nature Park had largely restricted the expansion area of "Village Type Development" ("V") zone. They requested the Government to rezone the surrounding land uses such as "Open Space" and "AGR" in the vicinity and the northeastern part of Yin Kong Village respectively as "V" zone, for their construction of small houses in the future. Similarly, village representatives of Kam Tsin Village also demanded the Government to reserve land in the proposed Nature Park and "AGR" zone to the east of Yin Kong Village in order to meet their demand for small houses.

In addition, village representatives of Ho Sheung Heung requested to extend the "V" zone of Ho Sheung Heung northwards as the proposed KTN NDA would limit the village's potential to develop further south in the future.

Response

The existing "V" zone of Yin Kong Village is sufficient to meet the projected demand in the coming 10 years. Therefore, in formulating the RODP for the NDA, only minor amendments

have been made to that “V” zone to reflect the actual distribution of the existing Small Houses and domestic structures.

Regarding Ho Sheung Heung Village, according to the assessment by the Consultants, additional land is needed outside the existing “V” zone of Ho Sheung Heung Village for meeting its 10-year Small House demand. Therefore, when preparing the RODPs for the NDAs, the Consultants have proposed to reserve around 2.2 hectares of land mainly within the Village environ to be zoned as “V” zone.

2.3.3 Ecological Conservation and The Long Valley Nature Park

There were many members of the public supported the proposed Long Valley Nature Park, including local residents, members of the Heung Yee Kuk, TPB and green groups. Some members of green groups and villagers of Yin Kong Village were in favour of the idea of Government to resume the wetland in Long Valley for the farmers to continue farming. However, there were views suggesting to further clarify the justifications for the proposed Long Valley Nature Park and objected to zone the core area of Long Valley as “Nature Park”, which should be designated as “Conservation Area” or “Long Valley Nature Conservation Park” instead. Some considered that Long Valley should be zoned as “Site of Special Scientific Interests” (“SSSI”) in order to emphasize its function for nature conservation. Others pointed out that the Government should set a clearer boundary of the Long Valley Nature Park. A member of the ACE also reminded the Government to take into account the ecology and rural character of Long Valley and to retain them as much as possible. Some considered that no active recreational activities should be allowed in Long Valley, therefore “Park” was not an appropriate zoning, and the best way to protect Long Valley was to maintain the existing land use (i.e. active wet agriculture). Some environmental organizations suggested that in order to preserve the ecology of Long Valley properly, Long Valley and its associated agricultural land should be zoned as “OU (Eco-Agriculture Protection)” instead of “Nature Park”. They considered that the planning intention of Long Valley should be conserving ecology and maintaining local agriculture. The ecological value of Long Valley was arisen from its agricultural activities which constituted the valuable ecological environment attracting different kinds of birds including bunting.

A number of opinions (including those from green groups and members of the ACE) expressed that adequate buffer zone should be set aside around the Long Valley and recommended to change the “AGR” zone adjoining to the Long Valley Nature Park to “Nature Reserve” or “Green Belt” as they could effectively ensure that there would not be any development in the strip and to be more in line with the planning intention of conserving rural areas surrounding the Nature Park. Furthermore, some green groups pointed out the importance of agricultural land in the south and north of the Long Valley Nature Park to the ecological corridor/flight paths of wetland birds. It was recommended to extend the proposed Long Valley Nature Park northward in order to preserve the “AGR” zone with ecological value in the northern part. Some suggested to incorporate the mentioned agricultural land into “Ecology and Agriculture Conservation Area” because the existing “AGR” zone failed to provide adequate protection and some illegal dumping of construction waste and village development had encroached upon the agricultural land. In addition, some environmental concern groups expressed concern about the proposed Long Valley Nature Park. They regarded that the proposed high rises and future traffic flow would interfere the wildlife

habitat and posed adverse impacts to the flight path of birds. In particular, the proposed “Commercial, Research & Development” Area and main distributor roads were located in the “Important Bird Area” and “Priority Sites for Conservation”. They asked the Government to account for the planning intentions of relevant proposals. Some other green groups mentioned that the Long Valley wetland was of high ecological value already and questioned why the Government had to establish the Long Valley Nature Park to enhance its ecological value.

Concerning the future management and operation mode of the proposed Long Valley Nature Park, there were views urging the Government to formulate a long-term management plan for the Long Valley Nature Park by recommending ecological conservation alongside the agricultural activities to highlight its unique ecological value. The green groups were concerned that if this zone was managed in a similar manner to the Wetland Park at Tin Shui Wai and worried that holding capacity of the area would not be enough to accommodate the significant increase in potential population in KTN. The future population might utilize the proposed Nature Park for leisure uses and hence destroy the ecological integrity of the area as a whole. They requested to be involved in the formulation of the management plan and to regulate the number of visitors in the future to avoid interference to the ecological environment. They recommended ecological conservation alongside with agricultural activities to highlight its unique ecological value. The planning intention of the proposed "Nature Park" should be for conservation and educational purposes, and should not be tourism-oriented. With regard to the establishment of visitor areas and public area in the core area of Nature Park, some green groups were worried that it would attract pedestrian traffic and not necessarily protect the ecological integrity of the area. Hence, the tourist areas and public area should be taken out and the tourist centre should be altered to “Eco-Agriculture Education Centre” and putting ecological education in the first place. They were of the view that Long Valley should provide the opportunity for eco-education but not in the traditional ways of sectorised management. Rather, all educational activities should be carried out in the form of a guided tour and limit the flow of visitors and places reachable, in order to retain the management flexibility and avoid the visitors visiting freely the protected areas. In addition, concerning the proposed rehabilitation policy for agriculture in the NDA development, some environmental groups believed that if other farmers operating non-wet farming were resettled to Long Valley, it might transform the existing wet farmlands into non-wet ones and thus reduce the existing ecological value of Long Valley. The Government was urged to evaluate any proposed agricultural activities in the area to ensure that the relevant activities would be compatible with the wetland ecological environment in Long Valley.

On the other hand, some villagers of Yin Kong Village would like the Government to reduce the scope of the Nature Park to minimize the restrictions on future development of Yin Kong Village. Some of them reflected that birds attracted by wetlands would destroy the crops and affect the financial return of farmers, hence requesting the Government to balance the interests of birdwatchers and farmers in nature conservation. There were views that the Government could develop the proposed "AGR" zone in the north and south of the Long Valley Nature Park for the community and recreational facilities and also for road uses. However, some were of the view that it was impracticable to use if the KTN NDA including Tin Kwong Po in the northern part was for agricultural purposes as a way to meet the farming needs of green groups and entertain their members. Flocks of migratory birds often destroyed crops when they foraged, and this affected the livelihood of farmers. The organic

agricultural products were considered too expensive and unpopular to meet the public needs to improve the quality of living nowadays.

Apart from the Long Valley wetland, many green groups suggested to designate the entire Ma Tso Lung River (including its tributaries) and its embankment areas as zones with conservation intention, such as “Conservation Area” with a 30-metre buffer for conservation of the stream and the surrounding areas to avoid any possible legal or illegal development. In addition, environmental groups were concerned about the proposed link roads of KTN NDA and LMC Loop and associated developments along the roads would directly affect the ecologically important fish ponds in Hoo Hok Wai.

Response

An ecological survey conducted in mid-2008 to mid-2009 confirmed the high ecological value of Long Valley. In response to the public comments received during Stage Two Public Engagement programme, we decided to zone it as "Nature Park" which constitutes an important component of the NDA plans. This will not only provide a natural green lung for the KTN and FLN NDAs to help achieving the goal of quality living environment, it will also conserve and enhance the ecological value of the area, as well as compensate the impacts of NDAs development on local wetlands.

As regards the view that the "AGR" zone in the north and south of the Long Valley Nature Park should be zoned as "Green Belt", we recommend to include in the Explanatory Notes of the respective Outline Zoning Plan that, the “AGR” zone in the north of the Long Valley Nature Park serves as the buffer zone where any development posing potential adverse impacts to the ecological environment should not be approved in order to strengthen the planning control of the "AGR" zone. As the “AGR” zone in the south of Long Valley Nature Park has mixed with building structures and hence has a lower ecological value, we maintain that it is more appropriate to continue to designate the area of “AGR” zone to reflect its current agricultural use.

The Long Valley wetland is a diversified ecological habitat and preservation and enhancement of its ecological value are of top priority. To ensure that the proposed development will not have impact on the birds, the study has conducted detailed assessment of the flight path of the birds and proposed appropriate mitigation measures accordingly. The original plan for the site adjacent to the Long Valley Wetland has been revised from maximum 16-storey buildings to maximum 10-storey high with a building setback of 30 metres at the northeastern edge of the site. With trees planted along, it will be compatible with the environment of the Long Valley Nature Park. The future management and operation plans of Long Valley Nature Park are important components of the park. Upon the implementation of NDA proposals, the Government will consult stakeholders, particularly the nearby residents and green groups, etc., and undertake study to establish the management and operation plans.

2.3.4 Land Use and Urban Design

In terms of urban design, some members of the public considered that sufficient district and local open space should be provided for the residents in the district to accommodate the needs of increasing population in the area. Yet there were opposing views that the proposed

sunken plaza near Kwu Tung railway station was not conducive to grade pedestrian circulation. Some local residents pointed out that the development intensity of residential land around the proposed Kwu Tung railway station was too high that it would affect the landscape and air ventilation in the area; hence proposing that the plot ratios should not be higher than 3 and the building height should as well not exceed 20 storeys. More open space should also be provided there to make the area less compact. Nonetheless, there were suggestions proposing to increase the plot ratios of private and public residential land from 4 to 5 and 6.5 respectively, comparable to that in FLN NDA. Some members of the public suggested to rezone the proposed “Residential Zone 3” and “Residential Zone 4” to “Residential Zone 2” and “Residential Zone 3” respectively to take advantage of their proximity to the rail transport and increase development density. Some comments received suggested the Government to take the lead and expand the KTN NDA to incorporate Tin Kwong Po in the north and enlarge the development of Tin Kwong Po plain in order to improve the living environment of the local residents and increase housing provision.

Regarding the land uses of KTN NDA, many members of the public expressed their concerns especially about the land for public housing. Members of the Housing Authority hoped to see more public housings next to the proposed Kwu Tung railway station. Some members of the public even held the view that there should be no private residential land within KTN. On the other hand, others expressed their anxiety about the large-scale public housing clusters and did not want KTN be developed into another Tin Shui Wai. They urged the Government to give an in-depth account of the details of relevant amenities to be provided in the area to ensure that there would be adequate community facilities for the future residents of the area. There were opinions suggesting that the Government should consider adopting a 30:70 ratio between public and private flats, instead of the proposed 55:45. Some local residents were also dissatisfied with the absence of land for HOS flats in the KTN NDA. There were other voices requesting to retain Kwu Tung Village in-situ and construct new houses behind and next to the two sides of the Kwu Tung Village Office. In addition, some members of the public expected the strip next to the proposed Kwu Tung railway station would be very prosperous and thus, proposed to have more land for commercial development instead of the open space as proposed on the RODP. On the proposed “Commercial, Research & Development” zone in KTN NDA, some professional institutes were concerned about how these land uses would be developed and what types of industries would be included. They suggested to set themes, such as high-tech zone, environmental demonstration area or service industries, for development. Furthermore, some members of the public suggested the Government to greatly increase the commercial land uses in KTN in order to provide more employment opportunities for the population of NDAs as well as existing population in the North District to minimise the problem of cross-district employments. However, there were concerns that the proposed commercial development might affect the existing commercial districts. There were a considerable number of opinions recommending the provision of municipal services buildings in the NDAs for the relocation of affected businesses and attainment of self-sufficiency for the future residents. Some concern groups recommended establishing schools and churches within the proposed local rehousing sites in preparation for future development. A professional body noted that the proposed sports ground in the northern part of KTN NDA was rather isolated from the future residential area and it should be situated in accessible locations. Local landowners suggested the Government to reconfigure the planned southern area of Kwu Tung railway station (including the proposed “CDA”, “Education”, “Government” and “Residential (1)”) into a “CDA” site.

A green group suggested the Government to retain the existing condition of the piece of land proposed as a recreation centre as “Green Belt” to act as a buffer zone separating the proposed “R&D” zone in support of the LMC Loop. Members of the Planning Subcommittee of LDAC were concerned about the noise impacts of the proposed schools along the Fanling Highway in the KTN NDA.

Some members of the public were doubtful about why the Government had to resume such a large amount of land for development despite that the central residential area in the KTN NDA would accommodate 80% of its population. They also reflected that the NDA development should avoid the burial grounds in Fung Kong Shan and their ancestors burial place. Another local concern group queried whether the Lutheran Church in Tong Kok Village would be demolished and provided with resettlement arrangement. Some members of the public mentioned that the proposed reservoir was located in Tai Shek Mo which might affect the existing burial grounds of the nearby villagers.

Response

The planning concept of the NDAs focuses on "green design". Residential developments, workplace, leisure/entertainment and public service facilities will be concentrated within 500m of the public transport nodes. In view of the public aspirations for more public housing, we propose an increase of 4,400 residential units in the provision of public housing including HOS flats within 500m of the public transport node in KTN NDA. Development density also moderately increases. However, we must also take into account the overall development and balance various factors when there is an increase in public housing units. There will be open space and commercial facilities on the two sides of the proposed Kwu Tung railway station, making it an attractive and pleasant environment. The stepped building height and development intensity concepts will enhance spaciousness and enrich the urban profile. It will also have positive effects on visual amenity, natural lighting and air ventilation. Taking into consideration of the physical environment and prevailing wind directions, the tallest buildings in the KTN are at the town centre with the building heights gradually descending towards the peripheral areas. The maximum building height of the KTN and FLN NDAs will not exceed 35 storeys. We agree that flexibility should be allowed in implementing the stepped building height concept to accommodate innovative and landmark buildings. This can be achieved by incorporating a minor relaxation clause for building height restriction in the relevant OZPs. The proposed building heights have been determined with reference to the Air Ventilation Assessment (AVA) of the NENT NDAs Study, HKPSG and Urban Design Guidelines for Hong Kong.

Major developments of the KTN NDA will be concentrated around the proposed Kwu Tung railway station and Town Park. The sunken plaza located at the centre of the Town Park is designed to integrate with the entrances of the railway station. The 1.2km long Town Park will serve as the major public open space in the NDA with two-storey terraces on both sides lined with retail shops, coffee shops and restaurants, which will add vibrancy to the town centre. Creating a vibrant town centre, the natural landscape at the periphery will be retained and the ecological habitats of Long Valley conserved in the KTN NDA. The proposed railway station will serve as the focal point of the NDA. The cruciform green corridors will run through the town centre to connect the entire NDA for convenient pedestrian circulation. View corridors from the riverside of Sheung Yue River to Ma Tso Lung and from Long Valley to Tai Shek Mo will provide unobstructed views across the NDA. The east-west and north-south open space forms cruciform green corridors linking up the residential areas and

major activity nodes. These corridors will also bring positive visual and ventilation effects and enable the public to see the hilly terrains of Pak Shek Au and Fung Kong Shan in a distance, as well as the Long Valley Nature Park and its surrounding rural landscape. A stepped building height and density design is adopted with gradual reduction in building heights and density from the town centre towards the periphery of the NDA to create a varied urban profile. Major breezeways are designed in a northeast-southwest direction to facilitate wind penetration into the inner part of the NDA. A comprehensive pedestrian and cycle track network covering the entire NDA will be developed to connect major activity nodes, community facilities and open spaces as well as the FLN NDA. With regard to the suggestion from landowners to rezone a piece of land south to the Kwu Tung station to a “CDA” site for low density residential development, this is not in line with the planning principles of high density residential use with provision of community facilities in the town centre of the KTN NDA. We have sought to minimise impacts on the existing residents as much as possible, for instance, the burial grounds in Fung Kong Shan will be retained. However, it is inevitable that some residents and burial grounds would be affected by NDA development. The Kwu Tung Village Office cannot be kept at its original location because of the road widening works. In addition to residential land use, we still need to provide different commercial, government and community facilities to meet the needs of the residents. For the industries to be included in future “Commercial, Research and Development” sites, flexibility should be allowed for providing development spaces for all kinds of industries in support of industrial development in Hong Kong.

To reduce the impact on the existing residents, we recommend to relocate the two sites reserved for recreational centres from its originally proposed location in Ma Tso Lung Village to a “Government” site to the east of Lo Wu Firing Ground. The sports ground would be moved to the northwestern part of the NDA at one of the sites previously zoned as “R&D” in support of the Loop development. The sports ground will be linked by strip of open space connecting with the open space network. The Ma Tso Lung Village and surrounding area will remain as the “Green Belt” to maintain the status quo. Several proposed schools along the Fanling Highway in the KTN NDA will be protected by noise barriers and hence not subject to the noise nuisances. Appropriate detailed design will ensure the environmental quality of the proposed schools.

2.3.5 Road Works and Transport Facilities

Some members of the Heung Yee Kuk were concerned that the scale of development in KTN NDA were too huge that the existing roads might not be able to cope with future needs. In addition, some villagers of Kwu Tung Village hoped that the Kwu Tung railway station could commence as soon as possible to serve the residents. Some further suggested developing KTN into a railway hub, connecting the Northern Link, Lok Ma Chau Spur Line and Shenzhen Metro, as well as an additional railway station in the eastern part of KTN to cope with the additional traffic. However, there were public opinions urged the Government to reduce reliance on rail-based transport as the major mode of transport and should encourage the use of other means of transport. There were local residents suggesting improvements to the cycle track from Fanling/Sheung Shui to Ho Sheung Heung and the construction of a cycle track from Yin Kong Village to the town centre of KTN NDA. In terms of road network, some members of the public pointed out that the proposed roads

passing through KTN were interrupted at the town centre, which might affect bus services in the future. Having bus services throughout the eastern and western parts of the KTN NDA was recommended.

A number of villagers from Yin Kong Village expressed their hopes that the Government would pay close attention to the future traffic demand of the Long Valley Nature Park and address the issue. They worried that the existing roads and parking facilities were not sufficient to cope with the future traffic demand generated by the visitors to the Nature Park. Moreover, some villagers pointed out that as most of the coaches were usually parked near the visitor centre, particularly those carrying people with reduced mobility, they were concerned that the additional pedestrian pathways/cycle track might not be able to divert the pedestrian and vehicular traffic to the visitor centre. Therefore, there were some suggestions to move the proposed Nature Park visitor centre to the riversides or across the Sheung Yue River, so as to reduce the pressure on the roads in Yin Kong Village. Regarding the proposed roundabout connecting the KTN NDA and Fanling Highway, some villagers considered that this might not cope with the traffic and they could not benefit from the new roundabout as the vehicles could not go to the Fanling Highway directly via the roundabout. Some proposed to adopt the sunken design for the proposed roundabout as that in Fairview Park.

There were views that the road network in the northwest of KTN NDA heading towards Ma Tso Lung Village and Liu Pok Village should be carefully planned with consideration of the LMC Loop. On the other hand, some green groups mentioned that they could not accept the proposed road connection in Ma Tso Lung and alternative solutions should be considered, such as through the use of tunnel or road realignment to keep away from the marshes and streams near the Ma Tso Lung New Village and avoid separating the natural ecological habitat.

Response

The KTN NDA has conducted a comprehensive feasibility study, including detailed transport and traffic planning and impact assessment. To address traffic demand in KTN, there will be a number of improvements in transport facilities, including widening of Fanling Highway Kwu Tung Section, construction of link roads and adding new railway station to cope with the additional population in the future. Hence, the NDA will not cause traffic congestion but improve the traffic in the area. The CEDD is now undertaking the design of cycle track network connecting the Northeast New Territories and Northwest New Territories, including the cycle track from Fanling/Sheung Shui to Ho Sheung Heung. The cycle track in the NENT NDA will connect to the strategic cycle tracks.

The Highways Department is conducting a study to review and update the Railway Development Strategy (RDS) 2000, including the investigations into local enhancement schemes for existing railway lines (including constructing parallel lines, extensions or spur lines, adding new stations, etc). We will actively coordinate with concerned departments to provide relevant information to assist in the railway development study. Upon the completion of the review and update of the Railway Development Strategy 2000, the Government will make reference to the final recommendations of the consultancy and explore the way forward for different railway projects.

The design and operation mode of Long Valley Nature Park will focus on conservation as the primary purpose and public education is supplementary. Hence, it will not bring large numbers of visitors. However, having regard to the concern of Yin Kong Village villagers

about the additional burden caused by Long Vally Nature Park on Yin Kong Road and inadequate parking facilities, we recommend relocating the visitor centre of the Long Valley Nature Park to the western shore of Sheung Yue River so that the visitors will not enter Yin Kong Road. The proposed “Research & Development” site adjacent to the proposed Long Valley Nature Park will provide adequate parking facilities for visitors. The proposed roundabout next to Yin Kong Village is an elevated design and not connected to Yin Kong Road. However, vehicles can still use Castle Peak Road to connect to Fanling Highway. Since the vehicles will pass through the proposed roundabout on the eastern and western sides connected to Fanling Highway in the KTN NDA, the vehicular flow on Castle Peak Road will be reduced, and that is beneficial to the Yin Kong Village villagers.

The proposed Kwu Tung Interchange is different from that in Fairview Park. Due to the fact that the Kwu Tung Interchange is a new roundabout above the existing highway in operation, the design of an elevated roundabout is adopted. It will have less impact on road users as compared to cut-and-cover sunken design.

The roads in the northwestern part of KTN will connect to the existing Ma Tso Lung Road, and a new link road is planned to connect to the LMC Loop. The road alignment has taken into account the ecological environment of the area and strives to reduce the ecological impacts. That section is mainly for connection with the eastern link road of the LMC Loop. The road alignment design had undergone public consultation in the LMC Loop study and has considered the feasibility of various options including tunnels, and the results showed the current alignment is more desirable after balancing various considerations. The alignment of LMC Loop connecting road has also taken into account the need to avoid the existing streams as much as possible and proposed “animal underpass” in suitable locations connecting both sides of the road.

2.4 Fanling North New Development Area

2.4.1 Rehousing for Affected Villagers and Implementation Mechanism

Some local residents expressed their hopes of preserving rural life and strongly demanded to reserve not less than 10% of land for village resite in the FLN NDA. The villagers indicated that it was unacceptable to them to be relocated to the KTN NDA. Therefore, there were requests from numerous villagers of Fu Tei Au Village, Shek Wu San Tsuen and Wa Shan Tsuen etc. to urge the Government to put aside land for village resite in the same district. Ma Shi Po Tsuen villagers asked the Government to issue licenses for agriculture rehabilitation to the affected farmers based on the land resumption model established by Choi Yuen Village due to the Express Rail Link, to provide assistance to rebuilding the village houses, to arrange a detailed timetable for relocation, to safeguard their original livelihoods and habits, as well as to retain part of the quality agricultural land in the NDA for the reconstruction of villages. Echoed the views of the local villagers, some green groups suggested that the Government should allow the affected parties, especially the non-indigenous local villagers in FLN to continue farming activities, to retain the continuous green belt of FLN and to provide additional choices for the existing farmers apart from residing in PRH. On the other hand, there were views that the Government should provide a wide range of resettlement and compensation packages for the affected villagers. For some affected persons who were willing to move into PRH, the Government should earmark some residential units in the local re-housing sites to allow them to choose to return and live in the area in the future. In addition, as for Ling Shan Tsuen which was not affected by the NDA development, some villagers from there reflected the poor living conditions in the squatters and hoped that in developing the FLN NDA, the Government would provide them with local rehousing residential units.

Response

While the planning of the NENT NDAs seeks to minimise impacts on the existing residents as much as possible, it is inevitable that some residents would be affected by NDA development and face land resumption and clearance. After reviewing, we have reserve a site in FLN for public housing development for local rehousing. However, due to the fact that the NDA is planned for medium- and high-density urban development, it is not suitable for reserving the land in the NDA for village resite.

2.4.2 Village Development

Some Sheung Shui Heung villagers mentioned that they were actually supportive towards the NDA plans, but asked the Government to take care of the villagers' requests of the expansion of village development zone. They pointed out that there was a demand of more than a thousand small houses, but there was no land reserved for the expansion of Sheung Shui Heung in the NDA. Furthermore, currently there were slaughterhouse and sewage treatment works in the north of Sheung Shui Heung. They found it unfair to the villagers because the Government had reserved no land for small houses but had planned to resume large amount of land for the extension of the sewage treatment works in the planning of

NDA. The villagers required to rezone the land north of Sheung Shui Heung, currently zoned as “Green Belt” and “AGR” land uses in the current OZP, into “V” zone; and hoped the Government would allow the Sheung Shui Heung villagers to build small houses in the “V” zone in Tin Ping Shan Tsuen. Also, there were suggestions proposed to reserve land in the “Residential Zone 3” within Wa Shan Tsuen for its villagers to build small houses.

Response

We understand the requests of Sheung Shui Heung and Wa Shan Tsuen for additional land for the construction of small houses. However, as the suggested locations are not overlapped with recognized village environs, they cannot be used for the construction of small houses. About the extension of the Shek Wu Hui Sewage Treatment Works, please refer to Section 2.4.4.

2.4.3 Land Use & Urban Design

There were existing owners’ incorporations just outside the FLN NDA expressed full support for the FLN NDA and considered that the current RODP had incorporated their comments raised in the previous stages. Some owners’ incorporations of private housing estates adjacent to the NDA indicated no objection in-principle to the development direction of FLN NDA but opposed to any planning that would destroy the existing ecological environment and green belts, as well as any amendments that would cause damage to the quiet environment of the housing estate, including the construction of high-rise buildings. In view of the fact that the location of FLN NDA was contiguous to the existing Fanling/Sheung Shui, some members of the TPB were of the view that the FLN NDA should not be considered as an individual NDA, but an extension of the existing new town. Some members of the public hoped that the NDA development can achieve community cohesion. There were requirements from the concern groups that the development parameters and urban topologies of the NDA should be compatible with existing new towns, with more focus on development of street activities than large-scale podium development.

Moreover, having regard to the FLN NDA being the extension of Fanling/ Sheung Shui, new town the comprehensive amenities and infrastructure could support more population. Some members of the public suggested to raise the plot ratios of public housing to 6.5 while that of private residential from 4 to 5.3, especially the private housing neighbouring Luen Wo Hui town centre. Concerning the ratio of public and private housing, some views expressed that given the considerable amount of population living in the public housing in the existing Fanling/Sheung Shui, the proportion of private housing should be increased to 70% (instead of the proposed 39:61 public and private housing ratio) to introduce more economic activities to the existing community and promote sustainable community development. Some members of the public pointed out that the proposed housing along the riverside were private developments whereas public housing was sited far away from the river. The existing agricultural land in Ma Shi Po was also planned for low density residential developments. They questioned whether it was the Government’s intention to allow private developers to develop housing along the channelized river and suspected collusion of government and the private sector.

Some local residents and residents' representatives commented that the Government had only considered the views for new population but had not taken into account the impacts of new high-rise buildings which would block the existing village landscape and air ventilation. Some members of the public expressed the need to minimise the impacts of construction works of NDA development on the existing community. Local residents were concerned that the proposed schools in the NDA would bring noise impacts and requested the Government to provide noise mitigation measures, such as the installation of noise barriers. On the other hand, some public comments opined that there was a lack of commercial land use in the FLN NDA and worried that the residents would need to go to work in the urban areas and not self-sufficient. They suggested to change the existing "Industrial" land use in Luen Wo Hui for commercial purposes. Some were of the view that the industrial sites along Sha Tau Kok Road should be replaced by residential developments. In terms of urban design, there were suggestions to establish riverside promenade on both sides of Ng Tung River with addition of a jogging trail for sport and leisure uses by the public. In this regard, members of green groups and professional institutes suggested that the proposed riverside promenade could be developed into a natural ecological trail with lush natural vegetation cover with different elements of landscape design. This could improve the existing landscape and ecological value of the river, and attract birds to make Ng Tung River as a landmark of the FLN NDA, and also with educational significance. Adequate width of green buffer zone should be set aside on both sides of the river to provide more riverside public space. Some local residents suggested deepening the river and extending it to Starling Inlet (Sha Tau Kok Hoi) to become one of the unique features of Hong Kong. Others suggested feeding the water from the river to the artificial lake in the Central Park as venues for water sports. Other members of the public suggested that the proposed Central Park could adopt a design theme of natural ecosystems and agriculture, etc., and integrated into the surrounding rural natural environment. There were suggestions that the pedestrian network in the NDA should be connected with and integrated into the Lung Yeuk Tau Heritage Trail. Some concern groups pointed out that Fanling was used to be the agricultural centre of Hong Kong, accounting for 40% of the agricultural production. Ma Shi Po, being the agricultural centre of Fanling, had over a hundred years of history and an inseparable relationship with Lung Yeuk Tau. The establishment of Luen Wo Hui relied on the agricultural products of Fanling, especially that from Ma Shi Po. The area formed by Lung Yeuk Tau, Ma Shi Po and Luen Wo Hui was one of the rare culture landscape area in Hong Kong and should be preserved. It was mentioned that there was a stele with carved inscription which marked the hundred-year history of agriculture in Lung Yeuk Tau and Ma Shi Po.

Within the scope of FLN NDA and its surrounding villages, many residents commented and made suggestions on the RODP of FLN NDA. In particular, some of the Lung Yeuk Tau Tsuen villagers were dissatisfied with the planning for the NDA development, especially in terms of provision of community facilities, recreational facilities, as well as the development density of neighbouring area. First, they found that there was shortage in the provision of various community facilities such as post office, and it is incomprehensible to further increase for population near Lung Yeuk Tau. As for parks and recreational facilities, they noted that while there was no large-scale parks surrounding Lung Yeuk Tau but there was sufficient provision of these amenities in the rather northern part of Sheung Shui area. They expressed that it was unreasonable to establish Central Park in that particular area of NDAs. The proposed Central Park was too close to the existing North District Park. Locating it next to the private housing triggered the suspicion of government-business sector collusion. Furthermore, some villagers voiced out their concerns over the proposed public housing sites south to the Lung Yeuk Tau in proximity to the FLN NDA. They worried that the future

public housing would bring about impacts on landscape, “feng shui”, air ventilation and serious light pollution. They also criticized that the planning by the Government ignored the existing villages, for example the construction of public housing next to the villages like Lung Yeuk Tau and provision of large-scale parks adjacent to the private housing estates. This arrangement was unfair to the villagers. Some villagers further cited page three of public engagement digest where it mentioned “rezone the originally proposed PRH site in the immediate north of Ma Sik Road to “R2” with lower development intensity and building height to enhance the spaciousness”, and the villagers considered that the Government only took into account the landscape impact on private housing estates without considering the villagers. In this respect, they suggested to swap the public housing sites next to Lung Yeuk Tau with the Central Park in the NDA in hope of developing lower-density residential flats for public housing, or relocating the public housing sites southward to reduce its impacts on nearby villages.

On the other hand, there were many villagers from Sheung Shui Heung against the extension of the Sheung Shui Shek Wu Hui Sewage Treatment Works on grounds that the plan would affect the health and safety of the villagers (For more comments of the Sheung Shui Heung villagers on the extension of the Shek Wu Hui Sewage Treatment Works, see paragraph 2.4.4 of this Report). In addition, some villagers of Sheung Shui Heung and representatives expressed their concerns over the public vehicle depot nearby Sheung Shui Heung, for fear that the vehicle emissions would affect the health of Sheung Shui Heung residents. They would like the proposed public housing in the FLN NDA to be sited as far as possible from Fung Kai School to ensure a quiet learning environment for the students. They requested to move the public housing sites northward closer to the Ng Tung River.

Some villagers of Tin Ping Shan Tsuen worried about the medium- and high-density buildings would obstruct air ventilation and increase risks of flooding and the potential health impacts on villagers especially the elderly when the construction work of NDA commenced.

Some of the villagers from Fu Tei Au Village to the north of Sheung Shui Heung and Ng Tung River offered some comments on the RODP of FLN NDA. They objected the proposed police facilities in Fu Tei Au for there was no need for these facilities in the NDA and the relevant proposal was not in line with the development theme of “Riverside Township”, the proposed development was incompatible with the proposed “Conservation Area” in the vicinity and would affect about 40 households of residents. It was suggested to relocate these facilities to the proposed poultry slaughtering centre or San Uk Ling Firing Ground and expand “Conservation Area” in Fu Tei Au (For more comments of some villages from Fu Tei Au Village on the environmental impacts of proposed police facilities, see 2.4.6 of this Report). Besides, there were local residents hoping of resiting the residential area (to the north of Ma Sik Road) to the area of Ling Shan Tsuen and police station to vacate the land for the resettlement of villagers and the police facilities, so that the residential buildings will be located between Fanling and Sheung Shui, facilitating the linkage of two sides and providing greater convenience to the residents.

Some villagers of Wa Shan Tsuen were of the view that the Government carrying out land resumption of villagers’ homes in the name of population growth but forcing residents to make way for low-density residential development was contradictory. They did not accept that the Government should forcefully destroy the homes and burial grounds of residents in order to develop low-density housing. They demanded the Government to review the proposed “Residential Zone 3” in Wa Shan Tsuen to avoid the impacts on seven households

of the village and burial grounds. Some members of the public also urged the Government to plan the burial grounds on Wa Shan and would like to know whether there was any regulatory measure for these burial grounds.

Response

After the Stage Three Public Engagement and taking into account the public comments, we propose to increase the proportion of public housing. Under the current planning, a number of the riverside residential site are designated for public housing while the planning concept of riverside open space remains unchanged. We agree that the FLN NDA is an integral part of Fanling/Sheung Shui. Being incorporated into a large-scale NDA, the existing landscape will inevitably change. The FLN NDA will be developed into a “Riverside Community” with comfortable living environment and sufficient community facilities. In the FLN NDA, the building heights reduce gradually from the eastern and western fringes towards the centre and from the south to the north towards Ng Tung River. The maximum building height of the FLN NDA will not exceed 35 storeys. We agree that flexibility should be allowed in implementing the stepped building height concept to accommodate innovative and landmark buildings. This can be achieved by incorporating a minor relaxation clause for building height restrictions in the relevant OZPs. The proposed building heights have been determined with reference to the Air Ventilation Assessment (AVA) of the NENT NDAs Study, HKPSG and Urban Design Guidelines for Hong Kong. View corridors have been introduced to avoid blockage of important views to the surrounding areas.

To make the best use of the natural scenery of Ng Tung River and the surrounding hills, the NDA will be developed into a vibrant riverside community in a linear layout. Continuous green spaces will be provided to connect the Fanling/ Sheung Shui with the riverside of Ng Tung River. The NDA will be built along Ng Tung River, with four green spines stretching from Fung Kai Secondary School, Tin Ping Shan Tsuen, Luen Chit Street and Wo Tai Street to the open space alongside the river. The banks of Ng Tung River will be developed into a unique riverside promenade connecting the Central Park and major developments within the NDA. The two residential areas in the eastern and western parts are the focal points of the NDA, which will provide a variety of retail shops, community facilities and PTIs. A Central Park, indoor recreation centre and other community facilities will be located between the two residential areas, which they will serve both new and existing residents. Different types of community facilities and open spaces will be provided in the Eastern residential area where existing residents in neighbouring villages will be benefited as well. Residential buildings in FLN NDA will be built along the river, there will be some distance between the public housing in the east and Lung Yeuk Tau, and should not cause severe landscape impact to residents of Lung Yeuk Tau. Building heights and development intensities gradually descending from the east and west ends towards the Central Park and the riverside to create an interesting, undulating urban profile. The riverside parks along Ng Tung River and the associated green areas not only provide distinctive open spaces within the NDA, but also serve as the major view corridors to Sheung Shui Wa Shan and Cham Shan as well as the major breezeways for the adjacent Fanling/Sheung Shui. As for the construction of relevant infrastructure, we will adopt appropriate mitigation measures to reduce the visual and landscape impacts of new roads to the nearby residents. For details, please see the relevant chapters on visual and landscape impacts assessment conducted in EIA. After review, the proposed police facilities in Fu Tei Au are re-planned. Land is set aside for “AGR” zone to provide a buffer for the “Conservation Area”. The “Residential Zone 3”(which has been

rezoned to “Residential Zone 2” after review) adjacent to Wa Shan Tsuen is amended to avoid the villagers’ houses and burial grounds.

We understand that some farmers wish to maintain the existing farming life. However, the NDA development will inevitably affect some the existing agricultural land. Adjoining to existing Fanling/Sheung Shui New Town and to optimise the use of valuable resources, Ma Shi Po will be developed into the district centre for FLN NDA. Ma Shi Po is planned for medium- and high-density residential development to satisfy medium- to long-term housing needs of Hong Kong. As mentioned in Section 2.1.13, we will endeavor to provide assistance to the farmers who are interested in agriculture rehabilitation.

As regards the concern about the vehicle emissions from the public vehicle depot, the use of that area is for the parking and operations of electric buses, which we believe that the problem of vehicle emissions should be minor.

2.4.4 Extension of the Shek Wu Hui Sewage Treatment Works

Many of the Sheung Shui Heung villagers did not accept the extension of the Shek Wu Hui Sewage Treatment Works (SWH STW). They were of the view that the odour and biogas combustion from the SWH STW would threaten the safety and health of villagers and worried that the extension work would bring traffic and pollution problems. In addition, some villagers of the Sheung Shui Heung pointed out that there had been a number of obnoxious facilities such as slaughterhouse and sewage treatment works built near them. They had caused many disturbances to the nearby residents who had suffered from hygiene problems such as a bloody sewage and odour for many years. The villagers were concerned that the proposed land area for the extension of the SWH STW was not enough to meet the future demand and worried that a piece of land zoned currently as “Green Belt” to the north of Sheung Shui Heung would be used for further extension in the future to cope with additional population of Fanling/Sheung Shui. Therefore, based on the above rationale, they considered that the site selection for the extension of the SWH STW was not appropriate, treating the Sheung Shui Heung residents inhumanly. Villagers of Sheung Shui Heung were of the hope that the Government could relocate the existing SWH STW to reduce the impacts on residents and to meet the future demand of sewage treatment. They suggested to resite the SWH STW near to the Lo Wu MTR Station or the abandoned fish ponds and agricultural land in Sandy Ridge, and urged the Government to study relocating SWH STW to cavern or underground space.

A member of the North District Council was pleased about the increasing sewage treatment capacity of the SWH STW. However, only in-situ upgrading works was acceptable and he did not want any extension or increase in site area. He stressed that if there was any extension of SWH STW, this would result in protests.

Response

As the population of the Fanling/Sheung Shui area increases, as well as to cope with increasing sewage flow in village sewerage, the Government needs to undertake phased extension of the SWH STW as soon as possible, to provide treatment for the sewage collected in Sheung Shui, Fanling and the surrounding areas. To further improve the water

quality in Deep Bay, the Government decides to adopt new technology to upgrade the SWH STW to tertiary treatment level, that is the highest level of sewage treatment. Treatment facilities that will produce odour will be fully covered and the gas will be discharged only after treatment. The SWH STW will incorporate comprehensive landscape design, increased greenery ratio, and enhanced architectural façade, to integrate with the surrounding environment.

In response to the comments received from Sheung Shui Heung residents regarding the extension of the SWH STW during the Stage Two Public Engagement process, the Government decided to refine the extension work to the government land to the north of Chuk Wan Street in addition to its original site. After technical assessments, we hold the views that other site suggestions, such as Sandy Ridge and cavern, are not suitable for relocation of the SWH STW at this juncture. The land zoned as “Green Belt” to the north of Sheung Shui Heung in the current OZP will not be used for the future extension of the SWH STW. To further optimize the facilities extension in the piece of government land to the north of Chuk Wan Street, the Government will actively study the feasibility of reducing the height of relevant facilities, and cover them with a large amount of green elements such as tree planting, vertical greening and green roof etc.. With addition of green elements, it does not only beautify the sewage treatment facilities, but also can enhance the surrounding environment and improve the ecology.

2.4.5 Road Works and Transport Facilities

Many local residents expressed concerns that the new population brought about by the NDA development may worsen the traffic conditions in Fanling /Sheung Shui area. They urged the Government to take into account the saturated traffic flow and shortage in parking spaces in the main roads of the area such as Jockey Club Road, roads within Luen Wo Hui and Sha Tau Kok Road and consider planning for relevant mitigation measures such as road widening etc. Some local residents mentioned that the existing links connected to the urban areas were saturated already, so the FLN NDA would not be a desirable location for large-scale residential development. The Liantang/Heung Yuen Wai under construction would only add burden on the highway and the notion of “increased accessibility” was not justified. Some members of the public worried that the traffic generated by the proposed police facilities in Fu Tei Au and extension of SWH STW would affect the traffic in Man Kam To Road and its vicinity.

Majority of the views concerning on the road network of FLN NDA touched on the proposed Fanling Bypass. Some of them enquired about the detailed design and alignment of the Fanling Bypass and the residents affected. A number of views from the local community, especially representatives from the villages along the proposed Fanling Bypass, expressed that they did not object to the NDA development but objected to the proposed Fanling Bypass on the grounds that it was too close to the existing villages. Representatives of concerned villages such as Lung Yeuk Tau Tsuen, Shung Him Tong, San Uk Tsuen and Tong Hang Tsuen, as well as residents living in vicinity of the northern section of Ng Tung River, all considered that the elevated design of that bypass would bring adverse impacts on visual, noise as well as feng shui aspects; so they opposed to any flyovers near the villages. They demanded the Government to provide detailed information and amend the road alignment to avoid affecting them or to consider adopting the form of underpass to pass

through the villages. In particular, some village representatives pointed out that the proposed alignment of Fanling Bypass as a pair of bow and arrow pointing towards the villages and feared that it would have negative consequences on various villages. Other local residents would like the Government to install noise barriers and plant bamboos, to minimize the impacts of the proposed elevated roads to the feng shui of nearby villages. Among them, some representatives questioned if other sections of the Fanling Bypass could be in the form of underpass, it was difficult for them to understand why not adopting the same approach for the sections passing by their villages. They pointed out that the Government used the form of underpass in the LMC Spur Line for the conservation of wetlands in Long Valley. They hoped that the Government could consider allowing underpass option for the Fanling Bypass and suggested extension of the sunken section of the proposed Fanling Bypass southward to the Fanling Highway, in order to reduce the impact of the overhead bridge of proposed Fanling Bypass to the nearby villages. Some villagers of Siu Hang San Tsuen hoped that the Government could provide entrance in the Fanling Bypass in connection with the Siu Hang San Tsuen. In addition, villagers from Wa Shan Tsuen also hoped that the Government could modify the Fanling Bypass to connect to Wa Shan Tsuen and reduce land resumption. Some professional institutes considered that the proposed elevated highway would destroy the local landscape and mountain views of the Ng Tung River posing negative impact to the value of riverside residential development in the FLN NDA.

On the other hand, the representatives of Tong Hang Tsuen supported the improvement works at the intersection of Jockey Club Road to facilitate convenient access of the residents of Tong Hang Tsuen. They suggested adding guard rails in the pedestrian walkways of Tong Hang Tsuen intersection to reduce the potential danger to pedestrians caused by trucks turning. As the proposed Fanling Bypass was very close to the Tong Hang Tsuen, some suggested to move the alignment of Fanling Bypass to the west as close as possible to the Ma Wat River in order to avoid affecting the private land in front of the Tong Hang Tsuen, the Government should consult the landowners before the implementation of the proposed Fanling Bypass. It was also hoped that the Government would instate noise barriers along the section of Fanling Bypass near Tong Hang Tsuen, to minimize the noise impact of the proposed roads on the residents.

In addition to the proposed Fanling Bypass, some villagers of Tin Ping Shan Tsuen were of view that the proposed road next to the village would affect the environment and the health of the villagers. They requested the Government to commence the construction of the roads in the south of FLN NDA after the second phase of implementation to delay the impacts to the nearby villagers. At the same time, residents of the nearby private housing estates asked the Government to provide measures to alleviate noise and air pollutions, such as noise barriers and traffic control, in the proposed new roads around them. Concerning the recommendations on the road network of FLN NDA, other NDAs and the surrounding areas, some suggested the construction of overpass or underpass around the Fu Tei Au Road crossing through the East Rail Line, so as to link up the eastern part of KTN NDA and western part of FLN NDA and alleviate the traffic burden on Shek Wu Road.

Response

The Study Team has evaluated the traffic of NDAs and adjacent areas, the TIA shows that upon the completion of a series of road improvement works and construction of new roads, there will not be significant adverse impacts caused by the NDA developments on the North District and it will be within the acceptable range. Parts of the outbound traffic will be improved due to the construction of Fanling Bypass. The police driving training school will be connected to the western section of Fanling Bypass and the proposed interchange on Man Kam To Road. The TIA analysis shows that the new road will be sufficient to handle the traffic flow generated by the police driving training school and extension of SWH STW.

We are pleased to continue to explain to the public about the design and alignment of Fanling Bypass through various channels of communication. Compared to the alignment design of Fanling Bypass in the northern shore of Ma Wat River near Lung Yeuk Tau completed a decade ago, the Study had moved the alignment of Fanling Bypass southward, making it closer to the river and away from the existing Lung Yeuk Tau. After the Stage Two Public Engagement, the Study has further reviewed and enhanced the details of alignment. In accordance to the two key principles of road safety and transport functioning, the enhanced alignment has been revised further away from the existing villages. For example, the distance between Fanling Bypass and Shung Him Tong has increased to about 100 meters and that with Tong Hang Tsuen has increased to about 70 meters. Based on the results of EIA and taking into account the public aspirations of visual and noise impacts, Fanling Bypass will adopt landscape improvement measures and retrofit with noise barriers to minimize the impact on the residents as far as possible. To meet the traffic safety requirements on the reducing alignment and balancing its influence on the residents on both sides, the current alignment has strived to be away from the existing villages. The Study Team is aware of the great concern of the villagers on the Fanling Bypass. We will investigate the feasibility of optimizing the alignment in the preliminary design stage and will endeavour to lower the road heights near the villages and beautify the landscape planting design.

With regard to the suggestion of underpass option for Fanling Bypass, after the Stage Two Public Engagement, the Study has amended the design in which the section near Belair Monte will have sunken design in order to reduce the noise and visual impacts. If the tunnel is further lengthened, a ventilation building and ventilation facilities will be needed to meet the fire safety standard and the energy consumption, waste generation and costing of Fanling Bypass will be multiplied. The Study does not recommend the underpass option be adopted for the north section north of Ng Tung River. The reasons is that if the section is built in the form of underpass, the road needs to go deeper than the Ng Tung River yet entrances are required at grade in connection with the roads of FLN NDA and so the road will exceed desirable gradient. There will also be a number of spatial and technical difficulties need to be addressed if the southern section is built as underpass. These mainly include: the use of cut-and-cover for underpass near the Lincoln Centre will overlap with Ma Wat River and hence not feasible. If Ma Wat River is to be changed temporarily, it will involve the relocation and clearance of buildings, resulting in quite significant impact. As for the section near East Rail, if an underpass is built, the road will have to be located more deeply and there is not enough distance to climb and be connected to the Fanling Highway at-grade. The underpass structure of service roads of Fanling Bypass may also affect the stability of pillar structure of Liantang/Heung Yuen Wai BCP roads.

Although the eastern section of the proposed Fanling Bypass cannot adopt the underpass form in its entirety, that alignment has been designed as far away as possible from the neighboring villages. The alignment has considered the relevant comments and shifted slightly southward to reduce the impact on existing residents. The Fanling Bypass will provide access connections and modify the link roads of Wa Shan Tsuen to reduce land resumption. The Bypass will feature green noise barriers, in order to reduce the noise and visual impacts.

The improvement works at the Jockey Club Road intersections will be undertaken, given the opportunity as a result construction of Fanling Bypass to ease the traffic at Jockey Club Road. The improvement works of intersections will make reference to the views of the residents to optimize the design in the detailed design stage to facilitate accessibility of residents. We also agree with the suggestion of adding guard rails in the pedestrian walkways of Tong Hang Tsuen intersection and will consider this in the detailed design.

Early implementation of the roads in the southern part of FLN NDA will play the role of easing the traffic congestion problem on Jockey Club Road and Po Shek Wu Road, in response to the traffic demand in the phase 1 development as well as the public concerns over the traffic congestion on Jockey Club Road and Po Shek Wu Road. The road also accommodates the pipelines connecting various basic infrastructures such as sewage treatment works, water treatment works and electric substations. Therefore, the Study recommends including that road as a part of the phase 1 development. Delays in the construction of the road will affect the existing traffic on Jockey Club Road and Po Shek Wu Road. Regarding the impacts to the nearby residents during the construction of roads, we will ensure that the construction works will comply with relevant legislation on environmental protection and implement the relevant mitigation measures.

2.4.6 Environmental Conservation

With regard to the need of relocating the Man Kam To Road Egretty as a result of the FLN NDA development, some green groups pointed out that as there had been no precedent case of successful relocation of an egretty, the Government was urged to handle this properly and minimize the impacts on the egrets. In addition, they pointed out that the Government should try its best not to interfere with the streams that had not had artificial treatment, for example Siu Hang San Tsuen stream which was with good water quality and lots of fish. It is suggested to designate the whole streams (including its tributaries) and its coastal areas as zonings with conservation intention, such as "Conservation Area" or "Green Belt".

On the other hand, as mentioned earlier in this Report (paragraph 2.4.3) about the proposed police facilities in Fu Tei Au, the green groups noted that the proposed police facilities in Fu Tei Au was close to the ecologically sensitive areas in its west and therefore urged the Government to conduct detailed assessment of the potential environmental impacts of these facilities. Similarly, there were many members of local community expressed concern about the environmental impact of the proposed facilities. They especially worried about that the activities in the police training facility would produce noise and exhaust gas. They were of the view that the proposed police facilities in Fu Tei Au is not in line with the planning of proposed "Conservation Area" nearby. They suggested to retain the area for police facilities for agricultural purpose to surround the "Conservation Area" and conserve the ecological

value of the area. In addition, some local residents noted that there were creatures such as night fireflies and bats in Wa Shan Tsuen during night-time and worried that the NDA would cause damage to the existing ecology.

Apart from this, some local residents were of the view that the fertile soil in Ma Shi Po and area to the south of Ng Tung River was suitable for farming and should be retained for agricultural purposes. Some even opined that Ma Shi Po should be zoned as "Conservation Area". Also, some green groups agreed that the active agricultural land in the FLN NDA and surrounding areas should be kept as much as possible. They suggested that the Government should by means of flexible land use planning and government subsidies to encourage the development of eco-agriculture. Urban agriculture could also be promoted in the neighboring populated town centre such as the FLN NDA. There were individual suggestions to change the proposed riverside parks into agricultural land/vegetable fields, so that the affected farmers could continue farming, also allowing the nearby residents to enjoy fresh vegetables and improving the greening percentage in the area.

Response

As the proposed Fanling Bypass is very essential to the traffic of FLN NDA and the alignment of bypass is constrained by the terrain and the consideration to minimize impacts to the community, the construction work will inevitably have a direct impact on the Man Kam To Road Egret. We propose to carry out the construction work during the non-breeding season of the egrets and provide suitable breeding habitat for egrets in the nearby wetland before the commencement of construction works and designate that particular wetland as "Conservation Area" zone. Regarding the streams in Siu Hang San Tsuen, some streams will be included in the NDA area and the section of Fanling Bypass passing through the streams will be in the form of viaduct. Relevance part of the streams will be zoned "Open Space" and not be affected. The proposed police facilities will be re-planned and some areas reserved as "AGR" zone adjoining the "Conservation Area" to serve as a buffer. The NDA will inevitably affect some rural land. Ma Shi Po being adjacent to existing Fanling/Sheung Shui New Town is suitable for medium- and high-density development in the FLN NDA. The affected farmers can look for suitable agricultural land for agriculture rehabilitation under the prevailing policy. As mentioned in previous sections, the Government will endeavour to offer assistance to the affected farmers.

2.5 Ping Che/Ta Kwu Ling New Development Area

2.5.1 Rehousing for Affected Villagers and Implementation Mechanism

There were public comments and TKL residents participated in the Special Meeting of the Legco Development panel expressed that any compensation and resettlement arrangement was not accepted and demanded “no demolition, no removal” and suspension of the NDA plans. In addition, there were suggestions that land should be put aside for local rehousing for the affected residents, as in the local rehousing sites in the KTN NDA. Some also suggested sites for building small-scale resettlement areas outside the NDA such as the Closed Area and Ping Che New Village etc. Some suggested reserving land to resettle the affected villagers in “Residential Zone 4” zone. Some TKL residents reflected that they were only aware that they would be affected by the NDA development at the Stage Three Public Engagement and criticized the Government for not consulting them.

Response

In view of the absence of mass transit and other supporting infrastructures, PC/TKL NDA was originally planned for special industrial and lower density residential developments. According to the 2013 Policy Address, the development potential in New Territories North (NT North) is to be explored. In this context, we will replan PC/TKL in consultation with the public again, in order to comprehensively review relevant considerations, including the development potential afforded by new railway infrastructure.

2.5.2 Land Use and Urban Design

Some members of the Housing Authority understood that if more population was accommodated in the PC/TKL NDAs, it would support railway development and suggested to consider to further increase the housing supply in response to the different voices in society and hoped that the Government would consider provision of PRH and HOS flats in PC/TKL. Regarding the development density of PC/TKL, some members of the public suggested the plot ratio of 1.5-3 to replace that of 0.75-2.1. If the Northern Link was extended to the PC/TKL NDAs, the plot ratios should be comparable to FLN and KTN. Some members of the public were of the view that there was too many low-density residential development proposed and the land should be used for the public housing.

In terms of urban design, some local community requested retaining the surrounding woodland so as to provide natural green environment for the NDA; There was a need to increase the green coverage ratio of PC/TKL NDAs to about 20%, similar to other NDAs. There were views suggested shifting the proposed Central Park from the back of Yuen Ha Tsuen to the central green corridor. There were worries that there would be a lack of community and recreational facilities in the area. Some commteres would like to add some recreational facilities near the Ping Yeung Village, such as the construction of a public swimming pool and a multi-purpose community hall inside the Central Park or neighbouring areas. Regarding the proposed Central Park, there were views that the location of the park was too far away from the residential area and should provide more small parks in the

residential areas. Ta Kwu Ling District Rural Committee recommended taking advantage of the underground area of “V” zone in Ha Shan Kai Wat Village for use of drainage or road facilities, such as cycle tracks or pedestrian walkways. Some local residents hoped that the Government would allocate land for traditional open bazaar for small operators and build a multi-purpose markets in the “Commercial” zone. Some professional bodies feared that the proposed sewage treatment works in PC/TKL was too close to the existing residential care homes for the elderly and should be equipped with appropriate mitigation measures. In addition, there were suggestions that the geographical location of PC/TKL NDAs was suitable for the provision of public housing for local rehousing, which was also convenient for the people who worked in the “Special Industries Area”. Having more public housing in that area could help decentralize the grassroots and avoid over-concentration in a certain area while addressing the public concern about “Hong Kong-Shenzhen Unification” in that NDA. Some organizations suggested in the PC/TKL, due to the limitations of supporting transport facilities and basic infrastructure, lower-density, village-typed public or subsidized housing could be developed in the area. Housings, specifically provided for the sandwich class, elderly and people with special needs could be considered.

Members of the TPB enquired about the planning principles for placing the “Special Industries Area” and residential area respectively in the north and south of the NDAs, placing the “Special Industries Area” and sewage treatment works along the rivers, as well as the proposed Central Park being located between the “Special Industries Area” and residential area in the PC/TKL NDAs. Some members of the public worried that the “Special Industries Area” would increase pressure on housing demand. There were concerns about the potential interface issues of industrial and residential land uses in PC/TKL. A professional institute particularly hoped that the Government would review the site area and distribution of parks in that NDA, making sure that there would be sufficient buffer zone between the residential land as well as Wun Chuen Sin Koon and industrial zone. On the other hand, some concerned groups noted that the proposed site area of “Special Industries Area” in PC/TKL was disproportionate to the proposed residential area, worrying that excessive concentration of industrial activities PC/TKL would affect the living quality of local residents. Some professional institutes as well expressed doubts about the site selection of “Special Industries Area” in the PC/TKL NDAs. These comments have made on the grounds that industrial development had been declining both in Hong Kong and Shenzhen, and that the proposed location of the large-scale industrial area was rather isolated location with low accessibility and long traveling distance for the working population. They urged the Government to further clarify the justifications for the relevant proposals to the public. Some members of the public were also of the view that the development potential of the “Special Industries Area” was low and should be used for residential or “GIC” purposes. At the same time, there was a suggestion to enhance the industrial land use in NT North (e.g. Sheung Shui Industrial Area, Fanling On Lok Tsuen Industrial Area), as this option could enhance land efficiency, in support of the industrial demand of the Loop and boundary area and hence reducing if not shelving the industrial development in PC/TKL should be considered.

Some villagers of Ping Yeung Village in TKL requested the Government to exclude the land where they had built small houses from the NDA development area. There were indigenous villagers from Ping Che village sought for preservation of the burial grounds of their ancestors which was situated in the proposed re-provisioning site of Ta Kwu Ling Operation Centre and requested exclusion from the NDA development area. Some green groups pointed out that, outside the PC/TKL NDAs, there were still more than 120 hectares of open

storage uses which were not included in the development area, the Government should first consider the re-planning of the nearby brownfield sites such as open storage. Furthermore, some villagers from Sheung Shan Kai Wat pointed out that some areas, which would currently be classified as wetlands and hence excluded from the NDA area, were actually not wetland and should be retained inside the NDA development. Some villagers from Ha Shan Kai Wat on the other hand were worried that the facilities inside the village might not be connected with the NDA in the future and would be exposed to noise or environmental pollution as it was not within the site boundary of NDA. Moreover, they mentioned that Sheung Shan Kai Wat and Ha Shan Kai Wat would be surrounded upon the completion of NDA proposals. To tie in with the overall planning, they suggested that the valley in the southern part should be extended as “V” zone, which could improve the existing environment as well as facilitating air ventilation. In addition, some members of the public expressed strong opposition to the construction of two reservoirs in the southern slope of PC/TKL NDAs as it would cut off the existing hiking trails and hoped that the Government would look for other locations. They suggested to create the hiking trails as a family walk or trails, with addition of rain shelters, interpretive signs, observation deck and shade trees etc. Ta Kwu Ling District Rural Committee would also like the Government to improve the transport and community facilities for the surrounding villages. There were of the view that linking up the development of Ping Che with Lung Yeuk Tau would achieve greater synergistic effect and provide more land for appropriate community facilities.

Response

As in Section 2.5.1, the Government will replan PC/TKL NDA and consult the public again.

2.5.3 Environmental Conservation

Some members of Ta Kwu Ling District Rural Committee indicated that urban development had caused impacts to the PC/TKL and its surrounding environment and ecology. A long-term conservation plan should be considered to minimise the impact of development on the environment. In addition, some green groups pointed out that the proposed link roads in Liantang/Heung Yuen Wai and the northeastern part of PC/TKL NDAs were of high ecological value and thus should not be affected by urban development. They opposed to the relevant road proposals and urged the Government to consider other alternative alignment options. Among them, some were particularly concerned about the Ping Che Egret and worried about the NDA development would affect the habitat and flight paths of the birds, and recommended the Government to avoid the development of PC/TKL wetlands and agricultural land. Some commented that the natural streams in Ha Shan Kai Wat should be zoned as “Conservation Area” to protect them from pollution by neighboring development. Some opposed to the proposed “Rural Residential Zone” which would destroy the streams in the area and demanded no channelization. Besides, other green groups were of the view that the situation of local agricultural land should be improved, such as the current industrial and open storage land uses in the south of Lei Uk Tsuen and to the east of Ha Shan Kai Wat should be relocated elsewhere, in order to maintain the rural character and avoid agricultural land being exposed to the threats of pollution. They pointed out that the NDA would completely eliminate large tracts of agricultural land in the NDA which accounted for about 32% of the PC/TKL NDAs. There are still large amount of active agricultural land in Tai Po Tin and to the east of Ha Shan Kai Wat of which the paddy fields habitat was comparable to

the Long Valley. There were over a dozen of registered certified organic farms in the area but they were all planned to be zoned for residential use. To the north of Sing Ping Village were dry agricultural land, fallow agricultural land and barren land which had potential for rehabilitation and it was unjustified to plan these for non-agricultural uses. However, some local villagers expressed that the wetland to the north of Sheung Shan Kai Wat/Ha Shan Kai Wat should be planned as a park because agriculture would also cause environmental depletion. Some green groups suggested connecting the proposed wetland to be resettled in PC/TKL with other green belts. In addition, they also had concerns over the establishment of wetland compensation area in Shui Hau River. They worried that the proposed “Special Industries Area” along the river would have potential impacts on the ecological environment and doubted that the future “Special Industries” might not be non-polluting.

Response

As in Section 2.5.1, the Government will replan PC/TKL NDA and consult the public again.

2.5.4 Road Works and Transport Facilities

Regarding the road network and transport facilities of PC/TKL NDAs, some members of the public, included the local residents who were of the view that the external transportation of PC/TKL was not comprehensive, especially the connecting roads to the urban areas. The external transportation would be paralyzed in case of traffic accident and thus the Government was urged to first improve the existing road network and public transport facilities (such as bus and green minibus services) to meet future demands. Among them, some were particularly concerned about, that the new working population resulted the from “Special Industries Area” in the PC/TKL NDA, as well as the additional traffic flow generated by the link roads of Heung Yuen Wai BCP would make the existing Sha Tau Kok Road even more congested, as Sha Tau Kok Road was already congested. Moreover, the existing roads to the urban areas (Fanling Highway and Tolo Highway) were insufficient to meet peak-time traffic. Some members of the public suggested to construct additional road connecting PC/TKL area with San Tin Highway, to facilitate the residents to use the Route 3 to go to the urban areas. The Government was advised to complete the transport infrastructure the soonest possible to reduce the inconvenience caused to the residents. In addition, some members of the public opined that the proposed roads in PC/TKL NDAs were only connected to Liantang/Heung Yuen Wai BCP Link Road and there was no direct road connecting to the urban areas, leading to the suspicion of “China-Hong Kong Integration” and allowing the entrance of mainland vehicles. There were views that the proposed roads in the PC/TKL should not lead to fragmentation of the community in the NDAs but should promote a community with high walkability.

In terms of railway linkage, some members of the Planning Sub-Committee of Housing Authority Committees could not understand the rationale for the proposed maximum plot ratio be constrained by various basic infrastructures such as transportation systems and they believed that transportation planning should be undertaken before planning for the NDA. Furthermore, some members of the public enquired about the timetable for the railway development connected to PC/TKL. Since the Government had planned for the construction of a railway station in the KTN NDA, members of the Legco Development Panel and public supported the extension of the Northern Link in connection with the PC/TKL NDA, or the

construction of a railway line crossing the FLN NDA with the Liantang/Heung Yuen Wai BCP as the destination. There were suggestions to revise the routing, starting from Heung Yuen Wai BCP to Kam Sheung Road Station, via PC, FLN, Sheung Shui, Kwu Tung and San Tin. Other local residents suggested the connection from Heung Yuen Wai BCP to Tseung Kwan O through Ma On Shan. In addition, there were some site suggestions for the Northern Link and considered that some area south to the proposed PTIs and northwestern part of Ping Che New Village could be reserved as a railway station of the Northern Link.

Response

As in Section 2.5.1, the Government will replan PC/TKL NDA and consult the public again.

3 Way Forward

Through the Stage Three Public Engagement, we have understood the public views on the implementation of the NDA Proposals and the RODPs. The major views collected were concerned on whether to implement the NDA Proposals, impact on agriculture, impacts of the NDAs development on the existing residents and the land resumption/compensation/rehousing arrangements. After considering the public comments and conducting relevant technical assessments on the planning and engineering feasibility, in order to optimize the use of valuable land resources, we will implement the KTN and FLN NDAs first as the extension of Fanling/Sheung Shui New Town and re-plan the PC/TKL NDA in the context of the study to explore the development potential in NT North, in order to comprehensively review the relevant considerations.

The EIA Ordinance procedures have commenced and the amendment of relevant statutory Outline Zoning Plans will proceed with in latter half of 2013. Moreover, other preparation work associated with the development project will follow.

July 2013