

# Town Planning Board decides to amend zoning of Global Innovation Centre site in Pok Fu Lam to "Undetermined"

The Town Planning Board (TPB) completed today (November 29) the deliberation on the representations in respect of the draft Pok Fu Lam Outline Zoning Plan (OZP) No. S/H10/22. After thorough discussion, the TPB decided to accept the Planning Department (PlanD)'s recommendation to partially meet some of the representations by amending the zoning of the 4.72-hectare site designated for the proposed Global Innovation Centre (the Centre) by the University of Hong Kong (HKU) in Pok Fu Lam (the Site) from "Other Specified Uses" annotated "Global Innovation Centre" ("OU(Global Innovation Centre)") to "Undetermined" ("U") in the interim, in order to allow the HKU to review and adjust its proposal in response to the views expressed by the representers and to consult relevant stakeholders including the local community before submitting its revised proposal for the Government's consideration.

During deliberation, the TPB thoroughly considered the 3 677 representations and the oral submissions made by about 80 representers and/or their representatives during the three-day hearing in early November, as well as the views and responses of the PlanD and relevant government bureaux/departments (B/Ds) before arriving at its decision.

TPB members acknowledged that most representers supported the development of the Centre by the HKU to consolidate Hong Kong's leading position in deep technology research, while their objections/concerns were mainly related to site selection and hence land use compatibility, development intensity, impacts on traffic, visual, landscape, ecological, environmental, geotechnical, public health and safety aspects, as well as the lack of proper consultation. TPB members also noted that the HKU had committed in its press statement in early October and at the hearing to consulting relevant stakeholders in strategically reviewing and amending its development plan to address their opinions as much as practicable. The HKU would also explore the possibility of identifying alternative sites for the development of the Centre.

To address representers' concerns, TPB members made the following comments and suggestions for the HKU's consideration in reviewing its proposal and taking forward the project:

- consider alternative locations in Pok Fu Lam and other places such as the Northern Metropolis. If the HKU concludes after review that the Centre should be in Pok Fu Lam, the HKU should consider whether the present site or another area, including but not limited to the adjoining undeveloped "Residential (Group C) 6" site, is more suitable

for achieving the HKU's objective while minimising impacts on neighbouring communities;

- critically review the necessity and floorspace requirements for various components of the Centre, including accommodation and conferencing facilities, and consider optimising the utilisation of the HKU's existing premises/facilities to meet such needs;
- enhance the design, including reducing density and bulk, lowering building height and increasing setback from neighbouring buildings;
- address traffic concerns and minimise environmental impacts and nuisance on the neighbouring community and residential developments during both construction and operation phases;
- minimise tree felling and disturbance to natural habitats, enhance tree compensation and provide more green space;
- incorporate additional planning and design merits and facilities that might benefit the local community; and
- strengthen efforts to engage and consult with stakeholders including the local community.

In particular, in case the HKU decides after review that the Centre should remain in Pok Fu Lam, TPB members considered that the HKU should fully address the impacts of the Centre on students with hearing impairments in Ebenezer. Traffic is another area requiring more efforts from the HKU – not only should the traffic impact of the Centre be properly assessed and improvement measures formulated, but the HKU should also consider advancing the impact study of construction traffic so that the results can be discussed with the local community and refined as appropriate. Last but not least, TPB members emphasised the need for constructive engagement with stakeholders and looked forward to the HKU stepping up communication with them, as it has pledged on various occasions.

In view of the above, the TPB considered it inappropriate to revert the zoning of the Site to "Green Belt", maintain the "OU(Global Innovation Centre)" zoning, or propose other specific zoning before the HKU's submission of a revised proposal. Thus, it was prudent to rezone the Site to "U" in the interim, serving as a stopgap arrangement pending the HKU's completion of the review. Members also noted that there would be adequate planning controls under the "U" zoning, as anyone taking forward development in the "U" zone would require the TPB's approval.

The TPB will exhibit, under section 6C of the Town Planning Ordinance, the proposed amendment of rezoning the Site to "U" on December 13 for public inspection for three weeks, during which any person might make a further representation to the TPB on the proposed amendment. The TPB will consider the further representations, if any, in accordance with the Ordinance before submitting the draft OZP to the Chief Executive in Council for approval within the statutory time limit.

Upon the HKU's completion of the review and engagement with the community on the revised proposal, it will need to submit a revised proposal supported by technical assessments for consideration by relevant B/Ds. Should the revised proposal be accepted by the Government, the PlanD will propose

appropriate zoning amendment(s). Subject to the TPB's agreement, the rezoning would then undergo another round of statutory planning procedures in accordance with the Ordinance, during which members of the public would have the opportunity to submit written representations and attend hearings to express their views to the TPB directly.