

1. The meeting was resumed at 9:00 a.m. on 4.11.2024.
2. The following Members and the Secretary were present in the morning session:

Permanent Secretary for Development
(Planning and Lands)

Ms Doris P.L. Ho

Chairperson

Mr Stephen L.H. Liu

Vice-chairperson

Mr Daniel K.S. Lau

Mr K.W. Leung

Professor Jonathan W.C. Wong

Mr Ricky W.Y. Yu

Professor Roger C.K. Chan

Mr Vincent K.Y. Ho

Mr Ben S.S. Lui

Mr Timothy K.W. Ma

Ms Kelly Y.S. Chan

Mr Daniel K.W. Chung

Mr Ryan M.K. Ip

Chief Traffic Engineer/Hong Kong
Transport Department

Ms Jodie K.Y. Chan

Chief Engineer (Works)
Home Affairs Department

Mr Paul Y.K. Au

Principle Environmental Protection Officer (Territory South)
Environmental Protection Department
Miss Queenie Y.C. Ng

Director of Lands
Mr Maurice K.W. Loo

Director of Planning
Mr Ivan M.K. Chung

Hong Kong District

Agenda Item 3 (continued)

[Open meeting (Presentation and Question Sessions only)]

Consideration of Representations in respect of the Draft Pok Fu Lam Outline Zoning Plan No. S/H10/22

(TPB Paper No. 10987)

[The item was conducted in Cantonese and English]

3. The Chairperson said that the meeting was to continue the hearing of representations in respect of the draft Pok Fu Lam Outline Zoning Plan (OZP) No. S/H10/22 (the draft OZP).

4. The Secretary reported that Members' declaration of interests had been made in the morning session of the hearing on 1.11.2024 and was recorded in the relevant minutes of meeting.

Presentation and Question Sessions

5. The following government representatives, representers and their representatives were invited to the meeting at this point:

Government Representatives

Planning Department (PlanD)

Ms Janet K.K. Cheung	- District Planning Officer/Hong Kong (DPO/HK)
Mr Ronald C.H. Chan	- Senior Town Planner/Hong Kong (STP/HK)

Representers and Representers' Representatives

R8 – Wong Yue Chim Richard

Professor Wong Yue Chim Richard - Representer

R26 – Au Yeung Tsz Ying

Ms Fan Mei Mary]
Mr Kong Kai Chung] Representers' Representatives
Mr Ricco Chan]
Mr Wilson Wong]

R828 – Berry Sau Har Natalie

Ms Berry Sau Har Natalie - Representer
Mr John David Berry - Representer's Representative

R1302 – 馮詠桂

Mr Ho Ying Kei - Representer's Representative

R1350 – 潘德莊

Ms Poon Tak Chong - Representer

R1440 – 李秀煥

Ms Li Sau Woon - Representer

R1701 – Ng Kar Fai Pamela

Ms Ng Kar Fai Pamela - Representer

R1707 – 梁宗賢

Mr Leung Chung Yin - Representer

R1780 – Wang Zhuo

Ms Wang Zhuo - Representer

R1977 – Ivan Au

Mr Ivan Au - Representer

R2022 – 王世揚

Mr Wong Sai Yeung Colin - Representor

R2282 – Katrina Pui Yue Weerakoon

Ms Katrina Pui Yue Weerakoon - Representor

R2324 – Yip Sze Chung

Mr Yip Sze Chung - Representor

R2326 – So Ho Yee Sirina

Ms So Ho Yee Sirina - Representor

R2375 – So Suet Lai

Ms So Suet Lai - Representor

R2376 – Wong Tak Lee

Mr Wong Tak Lee - Representor

R2387 – 李少芬

Ms Li Siu Fan Irene - Representor

R3252 – Chu Tak Wing

Mr Chu Tak Wing - Representor

6. The Chairperson extended a welcome and briefly explained the procedures of the hearing. She said that the presentation made by the government representatives in the morning session of 1.11.2024 had been uploaded to the Town Planning Board (TPB/the Board)'s website for public viewing. As suggested by some Members in the hearing session on 1.11.2024, PlanD's representatives would be invited to supplement information about the background and development parameters of the proposed development related to Amendment Item A (Item A). To ensure efficient operation of the hearing, each representor would be allotted 10 minutes for making presentation. There was a timer device to alert the representors and/or their representatives two minutes before the allotted time was to expire,

and when the allotted time limit was up. A question and answer (Q&A) session would be held for the respective morning session. Members could direct their questions to the government representatives, the representers and/or their representatives. After the Q&A session, the government representatives, the representers and/or their representatives would be invited to leave the meeting. After the hearing of all the oral submissions from the representers and/or their representatives, the Board would deliberate on the representations in closed meeting and would inform the representers of the Board's decision in due course.

7. With the aid of a PowerPoint presentation, Mr Ronald C.H. Chan, STP/HK, PlanD briefed Members on the design and development parameters of the Global Innovation Centre (the Centre) and the findings of the relevant technical assessments conducted by the project proponent.

8. The Chairperson remarked that PlanD's presentation was based on the original proposed scheme presented at the Metro Planning Committee (MPC) of the Board on 1.3.2024 and contained in MPC Paper No. 3/24 (the MPC Paper). On 3.10.2024, the University of Hong Kong (HKU) issued a press release stating that it would strategically amend the development plan of the proposed Centre, e.g. reducing the density of the proposed development and bulk of the building(s), increasing the setback area from neighbouring buildings, designating more green spaces, etc., to address stakeholders' opinions as much as practicable after carefully considering the public views collected. HKU also committed to enhancing engagement with the community so as to improve the development proposal.

9. The Chairperson then invited the representers and/or their representatives to elaborate on their representations.

R8 – Wong Yue Chim Richard

10. Professor Wong Yue Chim Richard made the following main points:

- (a) as the Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Interim) of HKU, he briefly introduced the importance of developing the Centre to HKU and Hong Kong as a whole. As stated in the 2021 Policy Address (PA), the Government accepted in principle HKU's proposal and provided land for research use by

reserving the “Green Belt” (“GB”) site in Pok Fu Lam for the advancement of innovation and technology (I&T) development in Hong Kong. It was a transformative project that would become Hong Kong’s first research facility dedicated to upstream deep technology. The Centre would bring together talents and researchers from various fields worldwide to share their knowledge. Its significance extended beyond HKU’s future development as it would also bring long-term benefits to Hong Kong by contributing to sustainable economic growth and high-technology development and by creating job opportunities. After a few years of study, the results showed that the Centre at the Item A Site was feasible;

- (b) the Mainland and Hong Kong lagged behind in having I&T platforms for upstream deep technology and such platforms provided opportunities for worldwide talents and researchers gathering together for cutting-edge technology development. Products from some leading enterprises in technology field in the Mainland were advanced but some had been adapted from other countries. Challenges remained in research and development (R&D) and in creating original products. The success of R&D and the development of original products depended on universities’ research. The establishment of the Centre could attract talents to Hong Kong for research, similar to how Elon Musk moved from South Africa to the United States to study at a university, and subsequently developed his business. There was a pressing need to establish such deep technology research platforms in Hong Kong to keep pace with other countries and with HKU serving as a key driver;
- (c) after receiving feedback from stakeholders in the past few months, HKU decided to strategically amend the proposed scheme, e.g. reducing the density of the Centre, designating more green space, etc., to minimise the adverse impacts on the surroundings and the community; and
- (d) developing an I&T platform in Hong Kong would provide a new engine for economic growth. While this transformation would take time, failing to start today would make Hong Kong’s development increasingly difficult. The

Centre aimed to foster innovation and breakthroughs in upstream deep technology, which would, in turn, support the development of midstream and downstream technologies. Located near HKU campuses, the Centre would enhance educational collaborations in various disciplines and attract talents/researchers to Hong Kong for interdisciplinary exchanges.

R828 – Berry Sau Har Natalie

11. Ms Berry Sau Har Natalie and Mr John David Berry made the following main points:

- (a) the “GB” site should be preserved and it was inappropriate to reserve the Item A Site for HKU to develop the Centre without local consultation since 2021. HKU might consider that the land was secured, leading to significant investment of time and resources under the assumption that they could proceed with the project. While I&T development was supported, there were better alternative sites available, such as San Tin Technopole (STT) in the Northern Metropolis (NM) which aimed at attracting global I&T development and talents;
- (b) the project raised concerns about HKU’s commitment to the environment, particularly the removal of over 2,000 trees in the “GB” site. While HKU had proposed compensatory plantings, these were mainly greenery landscape treatments on roofs and edges of buildings. Such artificial landscape treatments could not replace the natural “GB” and was incomparable. The Pok Fu Lam area was already suffering from air and noise pollution from various ongoing projects, including redevelopment of Wah Fu Estate and Cyberport Expansion. The Centre would worsen the situation;
- (c) the Centre was expected to accommodate around 7,000 employees including 1,500 research teams and 350 residents, and an increase in population would significantly increase traffic flow. The Traffic Impact Assessment (TIA) conducted by HKU in 2022 during the post-COVID period reflected lower traffic levels than today. The TIA indicated inadequate capacity at key

junctions (Pok Fu Lam Road (PFLR)/Sassoon Road (J1), PFLR/Victoria Road (J5) and Victoria Road/Sandy Bay Road (J8)) to accommodate traffic generated from various developments, including Queen Mary Hospital (QMH) Redevelopment in the coming years. The Centre would aggravate the traffic conditions of PFLR and Victoria Road. The design of the Centre would cause inconvenience to pedestrians who wanted to go to the bus stops on the opposite side of PFLR for southbound traffic from the Centre; and

- (d) HKU had various properties in the area, including staff quarters at Sha Wan Drive and student hostel at High West. HKU was exercising land-grabbing in Pok Fu Lam for expansion. Alternative locations, such as STT, would provide better land resources for the Centre and its ancillary facilities.

R1302 – 馮詠桂

12. Mr Ho Ying Kei (R2386) made the following main points:

- (a) he was a resident of upper Baguio Villa. He understood HKU's intention of developing the Centre but opposed its proposed location;
- (b) the Centre was proposed at a large sloping area between Baguio Villa and Woodbury Court. In particular, it was located near Blocks 19 to 21 of Baguio Villa. The distance between Blocks 19 to 21 of Baguio Villa and Woodbury Court was about 100m and the building heights (BHs) of Baguio Villa and Woodbury Court were 163mPD and 218mPD respectively (i.e. with a height difference of about 60m). The Centre, being located between Baguio Villa and Woodbury Court, would generate adverse visual and air ventilation impacts on the surroundings. HKU overlooked the rights and concerns of Baguio Villa residents in the planning and design of the Centre;
- (c) the woodland near Baguio Villa served as a 'district lung' (區肺) for the area. This woodland was one of the very few green spaces remaining in Pok Fu Lam, especially after using the green spaces for the development of

Residence Bel-Air and The Independent Schools Foundation Academy (the ISF Academy). The Centre would affect the integrity of the concerned piece of green space and the ecological balance of the area;

- (d) the Centre and its ancillary scholars' residence/staff quarters were expected to accommodate 7,000 to 10,000 population, including about 1,500 research teams. Currently, there were traffic congestions along PFLR and there was inadequate capacity for PFLR to support the increased population brought by the Centre;
- (e) two alternative locations were suggested for the Centre. One was Pok Fu Lam Village (PFLV). The Government could relocate the residents of PFLV to the redeveloped Wah Fu Estate and spared the land of PFLV for the Centre. The other was HKU's Stanley Ho Sports Centre Complex in Sandy Bay which could be reprovisioned through near-shore reclamation; and
- (f) the Board and HKU should seriously consider his comments and the grave concerns of the residents of Baguio Villa.

R1350 – 潘德莊

13. Ms Poon Tak Chong made the following main points:

- (a) she objected to the location of the Centre;
- (b) Pok Fu Lam was a green and medium-density residential area, and there was diverse wildlife inhabiting the woodland and water sources of the “GB” area. The construction of the Centre would lead to irreversible loss of habitat for wildlife due to tree removal, and the proposed artificial green elements like rooftop gardens could not compensate for this loss. HKU was urged to consider alternative sites for the Centre in order to protect the environment in Pok Fu Lam;

- (c) the Centre would adversely affect the environment, air quality and traffic of the area. It could also create technical problems, particularly concerning the sewerage discharge, as the sewerage facilities might not have adequate capacity to meet the demand arising from the increase in population at the Centre; and
- (d) HKU should assess the suitability of the Item A Site for the Centre as the site selection violated the Government's conservation principles, which was considered unacceptable.

R1701 – Ng Kar Fai Pamela

14. Ms Ng Kar Fai Pamela made the following main points:

- (a) she was retired and had lived in Pok Fu Lam for about 45 years. She supported the development of the Centre but opposed its location at the Item A Site;
- (b) she was not aware that the Government had granted the Item A Site to HKU for the development of the Centre in 2021, and there was no gazette on this. She queried whether some procedures, including public consultation, were omitted;
- (c) she had witnessed the development of Pok Fu Lam over the decades, during which everything had remained smooth and harmonious. Unlike the affected property owners who had invested time and effort in building their homes in the area, most decision-makers for this project were not living in Pok Fu Lam. Choosing Pok Fu Lam to build the Centre was considered as a decision made solely for HKU's convenience, given that HKU had already occupied much of the land in Pok Fu Lam;
- (d) she expressed grave concerns about the funding source for constructing the Centre. HKU claimed that the funding would mainly come from self-funding and fundraising. Nevertheless, she doubted whether some costs might be borne by public money from taxpayers. If so, there was no reason

for taxpayers in Pok Fu Lam to fund the construction of the Centre;

- (e) the project would involve the felling of over 2,000 trees which would only be replaced by artificial planting;
- (f) the site for the Centre needed to be chosen carefully to avoid unnecessary conflicts. As the Centre was anticipated to take several years to construct and would have long-term impacts on residents in the area, elaborated local consultation was warranted, which might, however, exhaust the stakeholders; and
- (g) the Centre should be located in STT which was designated for such uses. The upstream deep technology research facility proposed by HKU could create synergy with the midstream and downstream facilities in STT. The Board was urged to reconsider the location of the Centre.

R1707 – 梁宗賢

15. Mr Leung Chung Yin made the following main points:

- (a) he had lived in Pok Fu Lam for decades and opposed the location of the Centre;
- (b) there were already traffic congestions during morning peak hours in the area. With the existing and planned developments in Tin Wan and Pok Fu Lam, such as redevelopment of Wah Fu Estate, QMH Redevelopment and Cyberport Expansion, and without any MTR service, the current two lanes in each direction of PFLR was unlikely able to cater for the traffic generated by the increased population. The additional population working/living in the Centre could worsen the situation. Besides, he questioned the necessity for providing over 300 private car parking spaces and the ratio of car parking spaces allocated for staff quarters versus office use at the Centre;

- (c) he suggested several alternative sites for the Centre, including:
- (i) STT as it was designated for I&T development. Instead of locating in the residential area of Pok Fu Lam, the Centre should be located in STT to complement the midstream and downstream I&T development, with land available for expansion;
 - (ii) HKU's sports ground in Sandy Bay, as the Centre was a project initiated by HKU and should be located within HKU's property;
 - (iii) the slope behind the bus terminus at Pokfield Road, as this site shared similar conditions with the Item A Site but offered potential for future expansion; and
 - (iv) Pok Fu Lam Reservoir, as it was not in operation and could be filled to facilitate the construction of the Centre. Its proximity to HKU's staff quarters would help provide accommodations for the research teams and staff of the Centre; and
- (d) the Centre was regarded as a 'Cyberport 2.0 project', using the development of the Centre as a pretext for real estate projects.

R1780 – Wang Zhuo

16. With the aid of a sound track, Ms Wang Zhuo made the following main points:
- (a) she lived in Upper Baguio Villa with her family and was a PhD student at the School of Design at the Hong Kong Polytechnic University. Her research focused on sustainability and climate change, particularly on engaging people in sustainable practices;
 - (b) citing several scholar articles, she emphasised the importance of the human-nature connection in motivating sustainable actions and mitigating the climate crisis. Leaders should accord high priority to sustainability and

ecology, avoiding human-nature separation in urban context;

- (c) tree removal and compensation should not be assessed merely by the numbers involved. The woodland outside the window of her flat was not just a visual landscape with a diversity of trees e.g. Hong Kong Orchid Tree (*Bauhinia x blakeana*) (洋紫荊) but provided habitats for wildlife e.g. yellow-crested cockatoos (*Cacatua sulphurea*) (小葵花鳳頭鸚鵡). The natural conditions of “GB” site reflected the changing seasons and weather. By sharing recordings of nature sounds captured outside the window of her flat at 4 a.m., she highlighted the dangers faced by the local wildlife due to the irreversible loss of habitats. She was shocked to learn about using the “GB” site for the development of the Centre while HKU had all along emphasised the importance of ecology and ecosystem in the research conducted by its professionals;
- (d) the Centre was described as a “white elephant” project that could be built anywhere with less ecological impact. HKU’s decision was criticised for failing to demonstrate responsible leadership; and
- (e) she concluded that (i) rezoning the “GB” zone would increase human-nature segregation and cause adverse ecological impact, reduce urban sustainability, and diminish public awareness of climate change; (ii) the Centre would undermine the core values of the Pok Fu Lam community, including its healthy and biodiversity ecosystem; and (iii) HKU, being a reputable university promoting sustainability and community values, was setting a poor example by acting against these principles for short-term gains. She strongly opposed the rezoning of the “GB” area for the development of the Centre.

[Mr Ryan M.K. Ip joined this session of the meeting during R1780’s presentation.]

R1977 – Ivan Au

17. Mr Ivan Au made the following main points:

- (a) he had been a resident of Baguio Villa for over a decade and was frustrated by the continuous development in Pok Fu Lam. Whilst he understood the need for developing the Centre, he opposed the rezoning of the Item A Site;
- (b) when selecting a site, it was important to strike a balance among environmental, social and governance (ESG) considerations, especially to minimise any adverse impacts on the local community;
- (c) Cyberport was underutilised with vacant retail and commercial spaces. The unused spaces in Cyberport together with new space in Cyberport Expansion could be allocated to HKU for the development of the Centre;
- (d) the slope between Victoria Road and the ISF Academy could also be an option for the Centre. Although building the Centre at the said location might still cause adverse impacts on the environment, the effects on nearby residents would be relatively mild. This site could also better connect HKU and Cyberport;
- (e) HKU could also consider locating the Centre in the Hong Kong-Shenzhen Innovation and Technology Park (HSITP) in Lok Ma Chau Loop (the Loop) which was developed for I&T purposes; and
- (f) he echoed other representers' concerns about the potential adverse traffic impacts of the Centre. The Item A Site was not accessible by MTR and could only be reached by road-based public transport, which might further burden the already congested road network in the area, particularly during morning peak hours.

R2022 – 王世揚

18. Mr Wong Sai Yeung Colin made the following main points:

- (a) he had lived in Baguio Villa with his family for about 15 years. He supported the idea of developing the Centre but opposed rezoning the Item A Site for its construction;
- (b) TPB Paper No. 10987 (the Paper) stated that public consultations had been conducted regarding the development of the Centre at the Item A Site. Nevertheless, residents of Baguio Villa considered that they were not adequately consulted and were only aware of the project recently. He also queried the rationale for adopting streamlined approach of the statutory planning procedures for the project;
- (c) the Item A Site was a steep slope where construction would be more difficult and costly than on flat land. The construction of the Centre might likely be funded by public money. He considered that Cyberport and STT could be suitable alternative sites for the Centre, potentially at a lower cost than the Item A Site;
- (d) the local road network, particularly Victoria Road, was significantly congested during peak hours due to, inter alia, redevelopment of Wah Fu Estate and QMH Redevelopment. Victoria Road was a two-lane single carriageway for two-way traffic which posed challenges for construction vehicles accessing the Item A Site. He was concerned whether Victoria Road could cope with the additional traffic flow generated by the Centre. Furthermore, the vehicular access to the Centre via Victoria Road and PFLR was poorly planned. PFLR was also a busy road that could not be further widened to increase its capacity. The Centre would exacerbate the traffic conditions of the local road network;

- (e) as mentioned in the Paper, most of the felled trees were classified as common species. Nevertheless, trees should not be evaluated solely based on the species but also for their broader contributions. The developments in Pok Fu Lam had already transformed the areas near Wah Fu Estate and along Victoria Road and PFLR from significant greenery into a concrete jungle. This trend was alarming and should not be continued; and
- (f) he understood the need to develop the Centre, but the site selection did not make sense in terms of traffic, ESG considerations and costs. He urged the Board to exercise due diligence in the planning process as residents had limited opportunities to voice their concerns.

R2282 – Katrina Pui Yue Weerakoon

19. Ms Katrina Pui Yue Weerakoon made the following main points:

- (a) she had lived in Baguio Villa with her family for about 15 years. Whilst she understood the need for developing the Centre, she opposed using the Item A Site;
- (b) many developments did not prioritise environmental protection due to lower costs, and she disagreed with this approach. The greenery in the area had already shrunk due to various development projects, e.g. redevelopment of Wah Fu Estate;
- (c) she questioned whether the traffic assessment conducted had taken into account the planned developments in Pok Fu Lam, such as Cyberport Expansion, South Island Line (West) (SIL(W)) and redevelopment of Wah Fu Estate;
- (d) only the completion year for Phase 1 of the Centre was provided while the completion year of the whole project was unclear;

- (e) local residents were given short notice about the Centre project and were not fully consulted; and
- (f) she supported other representers' views on the site selection for the Centre. HKU might have other reserved land in Pok Fu Lam for the Centre and the Centre should be built on existing land located further away from residential developments and with lower construction costs.

R2324 – Yip Sze Chung

20. Mr Yip Sze Chung made the following main points:

- (a) he had lived in Baguio Villa for many years and opposed using the Item A Site for the Centre;
- (b) despite the explanation from Professor Wong Yue Chim Richard, R8, at this meeting that HKU would reduce the density of the Centre, he doubted whether the originally estimated population to be accommodated in the Centre (i.e. 7,000 employees including about 1,500 research teams) would remain unchanged under the revised scheme, and if affirmative, why HKU did not provide a lower-density scheme at the outset. He also questioned whether the Item A Site would not be selected if the Centre was not operated by HKU;
- (c) research related to biotechnology would be carried out at the Centre, with the use of high-risk laboratory equipment. He had grave concerns about the potential hazards and risks associated with the chemical and biomedical research laboratories, dangerous goods storage facilities, animal storage, and nitrogen tanks, as these might pose risks to the residents of Baguio Villa. He questioned whether hazard/risk assessment had been conducted;
- (d) he echoed Mr Wong Sai Yeung Colin (R2022)'s concern about the adverse traffic impacts generated by the Centre. Victoria Road was too narrow and could not be widened, and traffic on PFLR and Aberdeen Tunnel was already

congested during morning peak hours. Redevelopment of Wah Fu Estate and development of the Centre would increase traffic flow and further strain the local road network;

- (e) the green belts in Pok Fu Lam had already been significantly reduced recently. He questioned why the “GB” site was selected for the Centre given the irreversible loss;
- (f) other I&T locations in Hong Kong, such as Hong Kong Science Park, Cyberport, InnoParks in Tai Po, Yuen Long and Tseung Kwan O, and STT, were better alternatives for the Centre as these sites were farther away from residential areas and potential hazards, if any, could be accommodated. Moreover, synergy with other I&T industries could be achieved. Since HKU was willing to reduce the Centre’s density, HKU could make use of its existing land resources in Sandy Bay (i.e. HKU Stanley Ho Sports Centre Complex) for the Centre’s development; and
- (g) unlike HKU, which had sufficient time to prepare the proposal and conduct assessments, he had insufficient time to prepare his comments. He considered that the stakeholders should be consulted at the very beginning of the project, so that they could have more time to provide their comments. He urged the Board to consider the rezoning cautiously.

R2326 – So Ho Yee Sirina

21. Ms So Ho Yee Sirina made the following main points:

- (a) she had lived in Upper Baguio Villa for about 7 years, attracted by the greenery and tranquil environment. She supported the idea of developing an I&T Centre in Hong Kong but opposed the Item A Site;
- (b) the green belts in Pok Fu Lam had been significantly reduced due to developments, with many trees removed. The damage was irreversible and contradicted the Government’s goals for reducing carbon emissions;

- (c) whilst the Paper stated that technical assessments conducted by the project proponent had demonstrated no insurmountable technical problems or impacts arising from the Centre, he considered that there were impacts yet to be addressed/mitigated. For instance, tree compensation through artificial planting could not compensate for the loss of natural trees in terms of their functions in eliminating carbon emissions, improving air quality and serving as wildlife habitats;
- (d) substantial nuisance related to environment, traffic, air, noise and glare would affect the quality of life of the local residents during the construction period of the Centre and throughout its daily operation;
- (e) constructing the Centre with an 11-storey podium on such a steep slope was not geotechnically feasible and would be very costly. Alternative sites should be considered to avoid these challenges;
- (f) besides, establishing an I&T Centre should benefit Hong Kong as a whole and synergise with the participation of other universities. As such, it was not necessary for the Centre to be located near HKU. The reason for locating the Centre near HKU was not justified; and
- (g) the quality of the living environment was important to the residents. She opined that HKU should consider the possible adverse impacts/nuisance caused by the Centre to the local residents when selecting the site, and there should be sufficient consultation and liaison with stakeholders.

R2375 – So Suet Lai

22. Ms So Suet Lai made the following main points:

- (a) she had lived in Pok Fu Lam for more than 20 years. She represented her local community in strongly opposing the Centre being located in Pok Fu Lam. The precious “GB” site should be preserved;

- (b) locating the Centre in Pok Fu Lam violated the National and Hong Kong Development Strategies, which aimed to concentrate I&T uses in NM to promote close cooperation between Hong Kong and the Great Bay Area (GBA). For example, the GBA International Clinical Trial Institute operated by HKU Li Ka Shing Faculty of Medicine located in the Loop was a good location to enhance regional cooperation and synergy;
- (c) the natural landscape and biodiversity in Pok Fu Lam were important to residents. The Centre would adversely affect the ecology of the area as trees would be removed, irreversibly damaging the habitat of the wildlife including yellow-crested cockatoos (*Cacatua sulphurea*) (小葵花鳳頭鸚鵡). Tree felling would also lead to urban heat island effect and hence worsening the living conditions for residents. HKU's proposed tree compensation measures could not replace the permanent loss of habitats;
- (d) the Centre was in conflict with the character of Pok Fu Lam as the BH of the proposed buildings would be up to 158mPD, which far exceeded the BHs of the nearby developments, and the proposed BH was intrusive to the skyline;
- (e) Victoria Road was a two-lane single carriageway that could be easily congested due to extreme weather and traffic accidents. Sassoon Road was also too narrow for construction vehicles. These factors would lead to overcrowding of the road network during the construction period of the Centre;
- (f) noise and air pollutions would occur during construction of the Centre and were expected to last for more than a decade. The pollution could harm the health of nearby residents, especially those who were vulnerable, such as children and the elderly. A Biosafety Level 3 (BSL-3) laboratory would be situated in the Centre. If pathogens were accidentally released, the health of nearby residents would be threatened;

- (g) the dissemination of information regarding the proposal of the Centre lacked transparency and community engagement. In May 2024, with short notice given, HKU held meetings to consult residents of Pok Fu Lam regarding the project. At the meetings, no concrete responses were given by HKU to address residents' concerns about environmental disturbance and public safety, particularly potential hazards and risks associated with the proposed chemical and biomedical research and the associated facilities. Residents were doubtful about HKU's management and decision-making abilities due to the vague responses and lack of concrete solutions to the issues raised by residents during the meetings; and
- (h) she urged the Board to reconsider the proposal as the development scale of the Centre was not compatible with the surroundings, the construction of the Centre would generate traffic and environmental problems to the area for more than a decade, and the proposal would adversely affect the environment and ecology of the area.

R2376 – Wong Tak Lee

23. Ms Wong Tak Lee made the following main points:

- (a) he presented the unity of Pok Fu Lam residents in opposing the development of the Centre in Pok Fu Lam;
- (b) the Centre, being located far from NM, contradicted the objectives of the National and Hong Kong Development Strategies which envisioned NM as the core of I&T growth and the promotion of cross-boundary cooperation between Hong Kong and GBA. The chosen location (i.e. the Item A Site) for the Centre also limited opportunities for partnerships and talents exchange with the Mainland;
- (c) the existing infrastructure in Pok Fu Lam could not support such large-scale development, and enhancing the infrastructural capacity to support the development of the Centre would be costly. While the SIL(W) might

improve accessibility of the Centre, it would not be fully operational until 2034 at the earliest. On the contrary, NM was planned with the required infrastructure to support the I&T development. Due to the lack of infrastructural support, there might be under-utilisation of the Centre, thereby wasting public money and compromising the long-term sustainability of the Centre;

- (d) the scale of the Centre, in terms of its proposed gross floor area (GFA), plot ratio and BH, was incompatible with Pok Fu Lam, which was a scenic and tranquil residential area with green spaces. The Centre would disrupt residents' privacy due to visual intrusion from the Centre and would cause devaluation of properties, forcing long-term residents to leave Pok Fu Lam. The Centre would transform a peaceful community into a crowded and overbuilt district;
- (e) she had grave concerns about the potential BSL-3 laboratory at the Centre. Such facilities should not be located in residential areas due to potential leakage risks. Neither did HKU provide clear responses nor propose long-term risk management strategies to address these safety concerns, which could have serious consequences for public health;
- (f) public consultation should be conducted at an early stage transparently and the views of local residents should be duly respected; and
- (g) the selection of the Item A Site prioritised HKU's convenience over the well-being of the Pok Fu Lam community. The rezoning of the Item A Site to "Undetermined" ("U") was misleading as it was merely a tactic to delay the project and silence the local residents.

R3252 – Chu Tak Wing

24. Mr Chu Tak Wing made the following main points:

- (a) he was a resident in Pok Fu Lam and objected to locating the Centre at the Item A Site;
- (b) regarding visual impact, the Centre was out of context given its massive scale. However, HKU's Visual Impact Assessment (VIA) concluded that the proposed development would not lead to any significant adverse visual impact. The Board should note that since the Centre was mostly not visible from most of the viewing points identified in the VIA due to obstruction by foreground objects or long distances, those identified viewing points might not be representative of the visual impacts of the Centre. In particular, the viewing point on Victoria Road, a scenic route amid a natural environment offering great sunset views, was popular among hikers and tourists. If one walked along Victoria Road with the Centre towering over the adjacent hill slope, one's field of view would be dominated by the Centre for about 1 km. The Centre was considered visually intrusive and would adversely affect the visual amenity. Therefore, the Item A Site was not suitable for the Centre;
- (c) on ecology, the trees and wildlife in the woodland at the Item A Site would be destroyed if the proposed development proceeded. The concerned woodland was home to diverse flora and fauna, with trees such as Flame Tree (*Delonix regia*) (鳳凰木), Camel's Foot Tree (*Bauhinia variegata L.*) (宮粉羊蹄甲), Hong Kong Orchid Tree (*Bauhinia x blakeana*) (洋紫荊) and Tree Cotton (*Bombax ceiba L.*) (木棉). These trees served as habitats for many animals, including yellow-crested cockatoos (*Cacatua sulphurea*) (小葵花鳳頭鸚鵡), wild boars, snakes and black kites (*Milvus migrans*) (黑鳶), etc. The inaccessibility of the Item A Site had helped protect the woodland from human disturbance, allowing its trees and wildlife to thrive undisturbed and hence preserving its ecological integrity. Such precious natural resources should be treasured and conserved for public enjoyment, rather than being destroyed to make way for a massive development. He concurred with many representers that the proposed tree compensation measures could not fully compensate for the loss of woodland;

- (d) regarding public consultation, local residents were not given sufficient time and information to familiarise themselves with the proposed development. Firstly, the local community was not informed about the Centre project until as late as March/April 2024. Secondly, the briefings for the local community were held at short notice and did not provide sufficient details about the project. The information disclosed was also piecemeal and lacked comprehensiveness. For instance, the number of employees at the Centre was said to be about 15,000 during the abovementioned briefings, but this figure was later reduced to about 7,000 (including 1,500 research teams) in the Paper, and this number might be further downsized as indicated by HKU during the subject hearing session. Since the information about the Centre project available in the public domain was inconsistent and fragmented during the consultation process, it was suggested that an official channel be established to centralise the dissemination of information to the public; and
- (e) HKU had been expanding its campus over the years by dispersing satellite campuses across the residential neighbourhoods in Pok Fu Lam. There was an impression that HKU students at these satellite campuses (e.g. those on Sassoon Road) seemed to have the habit of jaywalking, which would increase the likelihood of traffic accidents. HKU was therefore urged to properly manage pedestrian connections among its scattered campuses in Pok Fu Lam so as to minimise disturbance to the local community.

R2387 – 李少芬

25. Ms Li Siu Fan Irene made the following main points:

- (a) she had lived in Baguio Villa for more than 20 years;
- (b) Victoria Road was originally a narrow road and was later progressively widened to its current two-lane single carriageway for two-way traffic. If

the proposed development proceeded, the road would not be able to cope with the increased traffic, particularly construction-related traffic;

- (c) her home was very close to the Centre at the Item A Site. If there were any leaks or biohazards from the laboratories of the Centre, the nearby residents would be exposed to immediate risk, which was a grave concern. Given that HKU had been expanding its campus throughout the residential neighbourhoods in Pok Fu Lam, HKU should seek to co-exist with the local community in harmony, rather than developing at the expense of the well-being of the local residents; and
- (d) on one hand, the Centre project was still subject to many unresolved issues (e.g. traffic congestion, environmental pollution, destruction of the natural environment, geotechnical difficulties, etc.) and on the other, the local residents were not informed about the Centre project until very recently, nor were its details fully disclosed to the public. It was not sure why HKU was rushing ahead with such an immature project despite the unresolved issues. The Board should conduct an objective and comprehensive assessment on the suitability of the location and feasibility of the Centre project and disapprove it.

[The meeting was adjourned for a 10-minute break.]

26. As the presentations of the representers and/or their representatives in this session had been completed, the meeting proceeded to the Q&A session. The Chairperson explained that Members would raise questions and the Chairperson would invite the representers, their representatives and/or the government representatives to answer. The Q&A session should not be taken as an occasion for the attendees to direct question to the Board or for cross-examination between parties. The Chairperson then invited questions from Members.

Strategic Positioning and Site Selection

27. Some Members raised the following questions:

- (a) the positioning of the Centre in the context of the I&T ecosystem;
- (b) the relationship between the Centre and HKU and the rationale for locating the Centre in close proximity to HKU, taking Silicon Valley and Stanford University as an example that the two were about a 30-minute drive apart rather than in close proximity;
- (c) if the Item A Site was finally not made available for the Centre, whether HKU would continue to pursue the project and how the synergy could be affected;
- (d) whether HKU would establish campus in the NM University Town; and
- (e) whether alternative locations had been considered for the Centre, such as the slope between Victoria Road and the ISF Academy, near-shore reclamation adjoining the HKU Stanley Ho Sports Centre (and whether the reclamation would be governed by the Protection of the Harbour Ordinance (Chapter 531) (PHO)), or STT, where land was relatively abundant for further expansion of HKU and the Centre could complement midstream and downstream I&T development.

28. In response, Professor Wong Yue Chim Richard, R8, made the following main points:

- (a) in general, the I&T ecosystem comprised three sectors, viz. the upstream (i.e. R&D), the midstream (i.e. prototype testing and application) and the downstream (i.e. manufacturing) sectors. While the upstream sector had closer ties with R&D scientists conducting research, the midstream and downstream sectors had stronger connections with I&T enterprises transforming R&D outcomes into application and mass production. The

proposed Centre would be a deep technology research facility providing venues for high-level basic research by research teams worldwide, positioning it in the upstream sector. In contrast, facilities in Cyberport, HSITP in the Loop and NM with close networks with enterprises were more related to the midstream and/or downstream sectors. The proposal of the Centre was first put forward by HKU in 2018/19 and later supported by the Government;

- (b) the Centre would be a gathering place for top-notch scholars/scientists worldwide to share ideas and exchange views, particularly valuable when international exchange/cooperation among like-minds from the Mainland and overseas were not easy to take place amid the current challenging international environment. The Centre would be operated as an entity financially independent of HKU, and a fee would be imposed on the research teams for using the Centre. Since HKU would provide manpower and management resources in running the Centre and had expertise in various research disciplines which the Centre would be dedicated to, it was therefore logical to locate the Centre next to HKU to maximise the synergy with HKU's existing resources and ensure smooth operation of the Centre. Comparatively, Silicon Valley originated within Stanford University's campus before expanding to Palo Alto and subsequently the San Francisco Bay. The relationship between HKU and the Centre mirrored that of Stanford University and Silicon Valley in earlier times;
- (c) HKU was committed to realising the Centre project to facilitate Hong Kong's technological development. HKU would revise the development plan to take into account local views and address the local concerns as far as possible. Under the circumstances, the Item A Site was considered the most preferable as it had been demonstrated to be feasible through various technical assessments but, if it eventually fell through, HKU would continue to pursue the project at other location(s). However, the extent of synergy at other sites would depend on their proximity to HKU, with physical access to HKU's facilities likely to be less efficient at more distant locations;

- (d) the NM University Town and the Centre were intended to serve different purposes where the former was mainly for academic/teaching activities while the latter was dedicated to research. As far as he understood, HKU had no plan to relocate to the NM University Town; and
- (e) with regard to the suggestion of locating the Centre in STT, it was understood that STT was positioned to serve as a hub for I&T enterprises mainly in the midstream and downstream sectors with focus on cross-boundary collaboration/partnership with the Mainland. In contrast, the Centre was primarily intended for upstream scientific research in core areas (including financial technology (Fintech)) in which HKU had expertise (e.g. finance, law, engineering, etc.). The co-location of the Centre and HKU was the key to maximising the synergy.

29. The Chairperson supplemented that during the representation hearing held in June/July 2024 in respect of the proposed STT development under the STT OZP, the Innovation, Technology and Industry Bureau (ITIB) explained that STT was intended to support the upstream (R&D), midstream (prototype and application development) and downstream (manufacturing) processes of the I&T industries, with the main focus on the latter two to commercialise R&D outcomes and develop application of the R&D findings in the manufacturing and production process. Regarding the NM University Town, the 2024 PA announced that the Government had earmarked over 80 ha of land in NM for the development of the NM University Town, of which about 5 ha would be reserved in Hung Shui Kiu/Ha Tsuen for development of self-financing post-secondary institutions, about 40 ha of land would be reserved in Ngau Tam Mei (one rail station away from STT) for renowned local, Mainland and overseas universities to set out satellite campus to provide branded programmes, and another about 40 ha of land would be reserved in New Territories North New Town. The preliminary land use scheme for Ngau Tam Mei was being finalised. The Outline Development Conceptual Framework of the NM University Town would be promulgated by the Education Bureau in 2026.

30. On the two suggested alternative locations of the slope between Victoria Road and the ISF Academy and near-shore reclamation adjoining the HKU Stanley Ho Sports Centre Complex, Ms Janet K.K. Cheung, DPO/HK, PlanD made the following main points:

- (a) the Item A Site was considered by HKU as the most suitable location for the Centre, having regard to the site's accessibility to HKU's existing and planned facilities, including the Medical Campus of HKU (HKUMed), among other factors;
- (b) for the slope between Victoria Road and the ISF Academy, compared with the Item A Site, it was a woodland with steep terrain also zoned as "GB" and relatively further away from HKU's facilities. The feasibility of accommodating the Centre on the steep terrain was not yet ascertained; and
- (c) for the suggested near-shore reclamation adjoining HKU Stanley Ho Sports Centre Complex, albeit not governed by PHO, its feasibility was still subject to various technical assessments (e.g. potential impacts on the waterways, engineering feasibility, etc.).

31. In that connection, Mr Kong Kai Chung, R26's representative, supplemented that HKU had already considered a number of alternative sites in the Pok Fu Lam district (including the area between Victoria Road and the ISF Academy) before submitting the proposal for consideration by the Government. For instance, the slope between Victoria Road and the ISF Academy was steeper, rendering greater construction difficulties and costs. It was richer in biodiversity, with rivers converging, and might result in more adverse traffic impact due to the absence of a through-road at the cul-de-sac of the IFS Academy. On balance, the Item A Site was considered the most suitable.

32. In response to a Member's enquiry about the additional construction costs incurred due to the sloping terrain of the Item A Site as compared with a flat land parcel, Mr Kong Kai Chung, R26's representative, said that information about the construction cost was not yet available. A preliminary study suggested that adopting a terraced building design to integrate the proposed development into the undulating slope profile of the Item A Site would incur lower construction costs than removing the entire slope to create a piece of flat land. Consideration would be given to including the construction cost figure in the revised development scheme, as requested by the Member.

Traffic and Transport

33. Some Members raised the following questions:

- (a) noting year 2032 was the design year of the TIA, whether the surrounding proposed developments (e.g. redevelopment of Wah Fu Estate) with completion years beyond 2032 had been factored into the TIA;
- (b) the potential traffic impact on Victoria Road and PFLR during peak hours as a result of the proposed development;
- (c) the number of employees at the Centre and whether they had been taken into account in the TIA; and
- (d) whether there would be any mechanism to co-ordinate the commencement of construction works for surrounding developments to minimise traffic impact.

34. In response, Ms Janet K.K. Cheung, DPO/HK, PlanD, with the aid of some PowerPoint slides, made the following main points:

- (a) HKU's TIA had already taken into account the known major planned and committed developments in the surroundings with varying completion years (e.g. redevelopment of Wah Fu Estate, QMH Redevelopment (Phase 1), Cyberport Expansion, proposed public housing developments in Pok Fu Lam South and Ka Wai Man Road, etc.) in the assessment of the nearby road junctions and road links, including PFLR, Victoria Road, Sassoon Road, etc.; and
- (b) the TIA had the following major findings regarding the traffic impact:
 - (i) under the scenario with the proposed development, the assessed junctions (except for J1, J8, J16 and J17) and roads links would operate satisfactorily during the morning and afternoon peak hours

in the design year of 2032 (as shown on Drawing H-1y of the Paper), and HKU had proposed junction improvements at J1 and J8. Although J16 and J17 were farther from the proposed development and traffic generated/attracted by the proposed development at those two junctions was considered negligible, HKU had proposed improvement measures to improve the two junctions;

- (ii) in the TIA, it was assumed that the traffic related to the car parking spaces of the Centre would be handled by PFLR and Victoria Road at a split of 85% and 15% respectively. To alleviate southbound queuing on PFLR for vehicles turning right into the Centre, the TIA proposed diverting southbound traffic off PFLR to an anti-clockwise loop near HKU High West Student Hostels before entering the Centre (i.e. Drawing H-1x of the Paper). With two proposed vehicular ingress/egress points to the Centre, Victoria Road was found capable of handling the increased traffic without the need for road widening;
- (iii) as the development programme of the Centre would span over a relatively long period, HKU had committed to undertaking an updated TIA at the detailed design stage, a construction traffic impact assessment, and a traffic review prior to project commissioning; and
- (iv) the TIA concluded that the Centre would not generate adverse traffic impact on the local road network, with implementation of the improvement measures identified in the TIA.

35. On the number of employees assumed in the TIA, Mr Kong Kai Chung, R26's representative, explained that the TIA had taken into account the total number of 7,000 employees (including about 1,500 research teams and 900 conference attendees) which were estimated based on the various functions of the floorspace of the Centre (e.g. conference rooms) and the diverse job nature of the employees (e.g. laboratory research, office work, supporting staff, etc.), assuming that some would work normal office hours from 9 a.m. to 5

p.m. and others would have different working hours. To minimise traffic impact, conference events were proposed to be scheduled during non-peak hours. In response to a Member's enquiry about improvement measures for public transport, Mr Kong remarked that the junction near the proposed vehicular ingress/egress of the Centre on PFLR would be improved by lengthening the bus laybys and widening the pedestrian walkways on both sides of PFLR (as shown on Plan 5c of the MPC Paper) to accommodate the anticipated increase in bus and pedestrian traffic.

36. On co-ordinating traffic during the construction periods of various projects in the Pok Fu Lam area, Ms Janet K.K. Cheung, DPO/HK, PlanD said that since every construction project should be supported by a construction impact assessment subject to scrutiny by relevant government departments, the construction traffic impact arising from different projects would be assessed through individual project's construction impact assessment which should take into account construction traffic of other projects operating within similar timeframes. Ms Jodie K.Y. Chan, Chief Traffic Engineer/Hong Kong, Transport Department (TD) supplemented that for any proposed construction works on public roads, the contractor of the works should submit a temporary traffic arrangement (TTA) proposal to TD and the Hong Kong Police Force for approval. In general, if large-scale road works were involved, the TTAs should be suitably spaced out to minimise the cumulative impacts.

Environment and Ecology

37. A Member raised the following questions:

- (a) how the ecological value of the woodland in the Item A Site was assessed;
and
- (b) measures to address the environmental impacts during the construction period of the Centre.

38. Regarding the ecological value of the woodland in the Item A Site, Ms Janet K.K. Cheung, DPO/HK, PlanD, with the aid of some PowerPoint slides, said that according to HKU's Ecological Impact Assessment (EcoIA), the woodland habitat in the Item A Site was found endowed with a few flora and fauna species of conservation interests (including three

flora species, one avifauna species, one herpetofauna/aquatic fauna species and one mammal species). The EcoIA concluded that the ecological value of the woodland habitat was rated as 'low' to 'moderate' based on a host of assessment criteria such as naturalness, size, diversity, rarity, age, ecological linkage with nearby woodland, etc., on which the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) had no adverse comment.

39. The Vice-chairperson observed that the proposed tree compensation ratio of 1:0.48 under the Centre project (i.e. felling of some 2,000 trees to be compensated by about 850 new trees) was relatively low as compared to the 1:1 tree compensation ratio generally proposed in the development proposals previously considered by the Board. He suggested that tree felling should be minimised and tree compensation should be provided on-site as far as practicable, and that the option of compensatory planting within the Pok Fu Lam district should also be explored and prioritised. In response, Professor Wong Yue Chim Richard, R8, confirmed that the above suggestions would be explored in the upcoming review of the development plan of the Centre.

40. As regards the environmental impacts of the Centre during construction, Mr Kong Kai Chung, R26's representative, explained that HKU would explore various engineering methods (e.g. pad footings for foundation works, MiC method, etc.) to minimise site work and construction nuisance effectively.

Health and Safety Concerns

41. In response to the concern on potential laboratory hazards, particularly the laboratories with nitrogen tanks and for biotechnology research as raised by some representers (R2324 and R2376) and a Member, Professor Wong Yue Chim Richard, R8, and Mr Kong Kai Chung, R26's representative, explained that the research activities to be carried out in the Centre would be mainly computer operations (e.g. Fintech research) in dry laboratory facilities. The nitrogen tank which was of concern to some representers was not inflammable, usually used for cooling purpose. All those facilities in the Centre would comply with relevant government legislation, regulations, and international environmental and safety standards. In the HKU and HKUMed campuses, there were some existing similar laboratories, located near the residential neighbourhoods, operating under stringent safety regulations for many years, without major incidents of lab leaks/risks according to HKU's

records. HKU was extremely responsible and had a good track record in responsible building design and risk management.

Public Consultation

42. A Member asked how HKU would strengthen their public consultation on the revised development scheme of the Centre. In response, Mr Kong Kai Chung, R26's representative, said that HKU cherished good relationships with the local community. For the Centre project, HKU had launched a website to disseminate information and gather feedback from the local community. HKU would also strengthen liaison with the Southern District Council and explore options to establish direct contact with local residents.

[Mr Timothy K.W. Ma left and Professor Roger C.K. Chan joined this session of the meeting during the Q&A session.]

43. The Chairperson remarked that the Board understood the concerns of the representers and expressed that if the Board agreed to rezone the Item A Site from "Other Specified Uses" annotated "Global Innovation Centre" ("OU(Global Innovation Centre)") to an interim "U" zoning, HKU would review the development plan of the Centre and conduct relevant technical assessments, further consult the local community and re-submit the revised development scheme for consideration by relevant government bureaux/departments (including ITIB, TD, AFCD, PlanD and Environmental Protection Department, etc.). If the revised proposal was considered acceptable to the Government, PlanD would identify an appropriate zoning for HKU to take forward the revised proposal. Subject to the Board's agreement to the proposed change from "U" to the appropriate zoning, the rezoning would then have to go through another round of statutory planning procedures in accordance with the Town Planning Ordinance (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 Board directly. The Chairperson also appealed to the attending representers and HKU to disseminate the above information to the local community through their communication network.

44. As Members had no further question to raise, the Chairperson said that the Q&A session for the morning session of the hearing on the day was completed. She thanked the

representers, their representatives and the government representatives for attending the meeting. The Board would deliberate on the representations in closed meeting after all the hearing sessions were completed and would inform the representers of the Board's decision in due course. The representers, their representatives and the government representatives left the meeting at this point.

45. The Chairperson said that the meeting would be adjourned for lunch break.

[The meeting was adjourned for lunch break at 1:30 p.m.]

46. The meeting was resumed at 2:10 p.m.

47. The following Members and the Secretary were present in the afternoon session:

Permanent Secretary for Development
(Planning and Lands)
Ms Doris P.L. Ho

Chairperson

Mr Stephen L.H. Liu

Vice-chairperson

Mr Daniel K.S. Lau

Mr K.W. Leung

Mr Ricky W.Y. Yu

Professor Roger C.K. Chan

Mr Vincent K.Y. Ho

Mr Ben S.S. Lui

Ms Kelly Y.S. Chan

Mr Daniel K.W. Chung

Mr Ryan M.K. Ip

Mr Rocky L.K. Poon

Mr Derrick S.M. Yip

Chief Traffic Engineer/Hong Kong
Transport Department
Ms Jodie K.Y. Chan

Chief Engineer (Works)
Home Affairs Department
Mr Paul Y.K. Au

Principal Environmental Protection Officer (Territory South)
Environmental Protection Department
Miss Queenie Y.C. Ng

Director of Lands
Mr Maurice K.W. Loo

Director of Planning
Mr Ivan M.K. Chung

48. The following government representatives, representers and their representatives were invited to the meeting at this point:

Government Representatives

PlanD

Ms Janet K.K. Cheung - DPO/HK
Mr Ronald C.H. Chan - STP/HK

Representers and their Representatives

R26 – Au Yeung Tsz Ying

Ms Au Yeung Tsz Ying - Representer
Mr So Tsz Ching Barton]
Ms Fan Mei Mary]
Mr Kong Kai Chung] Representer's Representatives
Mr Ricco Chan]
Mr Wilson Wong]

R563 – Chan Ho Yau

R3303 – 陳理誠

Mr Chan Lee Shing William - Representer and Representer's Representative

R2427 – Lee Chun Wo Lawrence

Mr Lee Chun Wo Lawrence - Representer

R2446 – Budge John Robertson

Mr Budge John Robertson - Representer

R2818 – Cheung Sau Fun Susie

Ms Cheung Sau Fun Susie - Representer

R2823 – Chui Fat Lim

Mr Chui Fat Lim - Representer

R3187 – Lee Chee Ling Sharon

Ms Lee Chee Ling Sharon - Representer

R3198 – Astrid Andersson

Ms Astrid Linnea Alexandra Andersson - Representor

R3219 – Wong Chi Fai Nelson

Mr Wong Chi Fai Nelson - Representor

R3250 – Roger Anthony Nissim

Mr Roger Anthony Nissim - Representor

49. The Chairperson extended a welcome and invited the representors and/or their representatives to elaborate on their representations:

R2427 – Lee Chun Wo Lawrence

50. Mr Lee Chun Wo Lawrence made the following main points:

- (a) he had been living in the Pok Fu Lam area for over 30 years, first at Baguio Villa and then at Woodbury Court;
- (b) the Item A Site, characterised by its steep slope, was serving as a significant green space between Victoria Road and PFLR. The proposed Centre at the site would greatly disrupt the visual landscape of that part of Pok Fu Lam, particularly when viewing from the lower levels near the sea. In contrast, redevelopment of Wah Fu Estate involved careful consideration of BHs to ensure that the visual landscape of the area remained largely intact;
- (c) the Item A Site was one of the few sizable green spaces near the Pok Fu Lam community, making its preservation crucial for enjoyment and recreational use of the community. With the removal of over 2,000 trees, the compensatory planting involving only 600 trees could not replicate the original natural environment;
- (d) developing the Item A Site, which was on a steep slope, would not be cost-effective and would waste public funds. Nearby alternative sites, such as those for Cyberport Expansion and redevelopment of Wah Fu Estate,

could better accommodate the Centre. Utilising existing flat land would be more efficient than attempting to develop a challenging steep slope;

- (e) the construction-related disturbances in the short to medium term, along with long-term transportation and infrastructure issues related to the Centre's operation, would significantly affect local residents;
- (f) given the large number of adverse representations received, the Board should retain the Item A Site as a "GB" zone and reassess the impacts of the revised development proposal from HKU on the surrounding areas, nearby residents and the community as a whole, to reach broader public consensus before proceeding with the proposal; and
- (g) once the greenery of the Item A Site in the Pok Fu Lam area was lost, it could not be restored, and the "GB" site should be valued and protected.

R2446 – Budge John Robertson

51. Mr Budge John Robertson made the following main points:

- (a) he had been a resident of Sassoon Road in Pok Fu Lam for 32 years and deeply valued the green belt, which included 2,000 significant trees and countless smaller ones that supported local biodiversity. While he opposed the location of the Centre at the Item A Site which involved the rezoning of "GB", he and his colleagues were not against the idea of the Centre for facilitating deep technology research in Hong Kong;
- (b) the steep slope of the Item A Site would necessitate years of construction, leading to significant inconvenience for local residents. That would not only affect their health due to dust and noise pollution but also exacerbate traffic congestion on the already busy PFLR and Victoria Road;
- (c) over the past decade, HKU had constructed three high-rise buildings on Sassoon Road and was set to begin work on another. While he had never

objected to HKU's developments before, he believed that removing all the trees and destroying the green belt at the Item A Site for the convenience of a few academics would be a serious act of vandalism. The planting proposal failed to replace the existing biodiversity, and the newly planted trees would struggle to grow in concrete containers;

- (d) he questioned why the Centre was not proposed to be located in NM, which emphasised global innovation. The NM Development Strategy, released in late 2021, aimed to promote I&T, aligning with national development strategies outlined in the 14th Five-Year Plan and the Outline Development Plan for the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao GBA. Alternative locations, such as redeveloping HKU's low-rise Patrick Manson Building on Sassoon Road and Middleton Towers on PFLR, or using the government site of the soon-to-be-closed Caritas Wu Cheng-chung Secondary School next to HKU's William MW Mong Block, should be considered;
- (e) the construction costs of the Centre at Item A Site were expected to be expensive and its financial viability was questionable. Public funds should be better spent on research rather than the high construction costs. The alternative locations suggested for development of the Centre would be more cost-effective and less disruptive to the local community; and
- (f) the extensive developments in the Pok Fu Lam area over the past three decades, including Cyberport, QMH expansion, new HKU buildings and redevelopment of Wah Fu Estate, had already led to significant traffic increases. He urged that the Item A Site be maintained as a "GB" zone, as further development would only worsen the traffic issues.

[Mr K.W. Leung joined this session of the meeting during R2446's presentation.]

R2818 – Cheung Sau Fun Susie

52. Ms Cheung Sau Fun Susie made the following main points:

- (a) she was the chairperson of the Incorporated Owners of Aegean Terrace and had lived in the area for 18 years. She expressed her gratitude to R2446 for eloquently representing the residents' concerns;
- (b) she questioned the Government's abrupt decision to allocate the Item A Site to HKU for the development of an international I&T centre, and the local residents were not aware of the decision until May 2024;
- (c) the Pok Fu Lam residents should be consulted about the development proposal of the Centre, and the views of the entire community, including seniors, youth and other local stakeholders such as schools and cemeteries, should be taken into consideration. Preserving the area's greenery and tranquillity was crucial, as they were highly valued by the residents. With growing emphasis on ESG principles nowadays, HKU had a responsibility not only to inspire young people but also to engage all stakeholders in gathering a collective viewpoint; and
- (d) given the experiences from past projects, such as Cyberport and Western Harbour Tunnel, if the development of the Centre was approved eventually, measures should be implemented to mitigate the negative impacts, such as dust and traffic, to safeguard the well-being of the community.

[Mr Ryan M.K. Ip left this session of the meeting at this point.]

R2823 – Chui Fat Lim

53. With the aid of a visualiser, Mr Chui Fat Lim made the following main points:

- (a) he had been living at 60 Sassoon Road since 1973, and his apartment was directly facing the Item A Site. He expressed strong objection to the development of the Centre at the Item A Site;
- (b) since most of the concerns had already been expressed by previous representers, he would focus on the visual impact of the Centre. The

project proponent failed to adequately address visual impact concerns which were vital to the local community, especially compared to a picture of the entire greenery of the Item A Site he presented; and

- (c) to mitigate the negative visual impact and maintain the environmental quality of the area, the scale of the Centre should be reduced so that the existing trees and woodland areas could be better preserved. In particular, the height and bulk of the buildings near Victoria Road should be reduced to ensure compatibility with the surrounding environment.

R3187 – Lee Chee Ling Sharon

54. With the aid of a PowerPoint presentation, Ms Lee Chee Ling Sharon made the following main points:

- (a) she had lived in the Pok Fu Lam area for 10 years and owned a property there. Her children used the pathways near the Item A Site to get to school. She was also a member of the HKU Global Innovation Centre Public Representation Group which represented about 21 residential properties in the area;
- (b) there were serious concerns about the significant landslide risks associated with developing the Item A Site, as there were past landslide incidents in Kong Sin Wan, Victoria Road/Mount Davis Road and Baguio Villa in 2023, 2021 and 1992 respectively. The development at the Item A Site would pose potential dangers to nearby schools. There was also an alarming increase in landslides in Hong Kong, with 600 incidents reported in 2023 compared to the average of about 300 cases per year over the previous 35 years, as stated by the Geotechnical Engineering Office of the Civil Engineering and Development Department (CEDD) in May 2024. Undertaking a slope stability assessment did not mean there would not be landslide risks, particularly since 90% of the Item A Site was over 80mPD. The removal of 2,000 trees, including 22 mature ones, would compromise slope stability as the root systems of new trees planted in concrete boxes

could not replicate those lost. Given the undetermined timeline for future development phases, there were concerns about the landslide risk arising from the suspension of site formation and slope stability work after the implementation of Phase 1;

- (c) the TIA was conducted during atypical periods, such as during COVID-19 and school holidays (specifically in May, July and December), when traffic conditions in Pok Fu Lam were not representative. The surveyed peak traffic hours (5:45 p.m. to 6:45 p.m.) did not accurately reflect the actual conditions when 4,500 students used Victoria Road and Sassoon Road to leave school during dismissal times (3:00 p.m. to 3:45 p.m.). This led to discrepancies in the TIA regarding the assessments of junctions J2, J3, J5, J6, J7, and J8. More accurate surveys should be conducted, taking into account school hours and schedules. Moreover, a construction stage TIA was lacking, and therefore the possibility of road closures and disruptions on PFLR, Victoria Road and Sassoon Road were not assessed. Incidents of flying rocks from the construction site would pose risks to pedestrians, vehicles and local residents and closing a traffic lane during construction works could not help reduce such risks;
- (d) the credibility and accountability of HKU were questionable, as observed from HKU's handling of site safety issues in its past and ongoing projects, including its Pokfield Campus which received over 40 written warnings for unauthorised slope alterations and procedural shortcuts. There was no accountability for HKU in adhering to plans presented to the community or the Board. The consultation regarding the proposed development of the Item A Site for the Centre was only a notification to the nearby residents rather than a genuine engagement with the local community;
- (e) it was also questionable why HKU was renting out its properties in Pok Fu Lam area at market rate to graduate students and visiting professors, instead of utilising them for academic purposes. Compared to the scale of the Centre (220,000m²) to those of other global research institutes, the largest of which was only 93,000m², it was doubtful why HKU would need such a

large project for I&T development; and

- (f) if HKU continued to expand, more “GB” land would be encroached. Planning approval should be required for each phase of development of the Centre if the site was to be rezoned to “U”. Otherwise, Item A Site should be retained as “GB”. This would prevent HKU from exploiting the Item A Site without adequate community engagement.

R3198 – Astrid Andersson

55. With the aid of a PowerPoint presentation, Ms Astrid Linnea Alexandra Andersson made the following main points:

- (a) she was affiliated with HKU and had been studying the yellow-crested cockatoos (*Cacatua sulphurea*) (小葵花鳳頭鸚鵡) for almost 10 years. She was also a member of the Wild Parrot Specialist Group for the International Union for Conservation of Nature;
- (b) Hong Kong was home to nearly 10% of the global population (about 2,000) of a critically endangered species of yellow-crested cockatoos, which was a native species in Indonesia. In their native range, yellow-crested cockatoos were threatened by habitat loss and trapping for the pet trade, leading to a decline in their numbers. The situation made Hong Kong a crucial area for the conservation of the bird species. Yellow-crested cockatoos were mainly found on Hong Kong Island, particularly in the western part of Hong Kong Island, including the Item A Site, and they had been recorded by the Hong Kong Bird Watching Society since 1964. A photo of a family of yellow-crested cockatoos perched in a tree within the “GB” area near Baguio Villa was shown;
- (c) according to her research findings, yellow-crested cockatoos required large trees with a diameter of over 80cm at breast height for nesting, which was scarce in Hong Kong. Many nesting sites had been lost due to tree

removal in urban parks and other public areas, reducing breeding opportunities. Currently, only 10% of the cockatoo population in Hong Kong was reproducing, likely due to a lack of suitable nesting sites;

- (d) the removal of 26 large trees at the Item A Site would threaten a critical habitat for approximately 20 yellow-crested cockatoos that had been depending on those trees for roosting, feeding and nesting. Given that the Item A Site had long been zoned “GB”, the nest holes in those large trees were expected to be preserved. If the development of the Centre proceeded, surveys were recommended to be conducted to identify the existing nesting sites and to consider the installation of artificial nest boxes to safeguard the habitats of yellow-crested cockatoos. Implementing artificial nest boxes would require a professional approach and was estimated to cost about HK\$1 million to HK\$2 million; and
- (e) Hong Kong had the potential to lead in yellow-crested cockatoos conservation and demonstrate successful human-wildlife coexistence in an urban environment.

[Mr Rocky L.K. Poon joined this session of the meeting during R3198’s presentation.]

R3219 – Wong Chi Fai Nelson

56. Mr Wong Chi Fai Nelson made the following main points:

- (a) he claimed to also represent R3310 (Lau Chi Yiu), who was a resident of Baguio Villa. Their views were the same as most of the other opposing views, in that they were very supportive of HKU in developing the Centre but just not at the Item A Site;
- (b) they recognised the importance of pursuing I&T achievements as a world-renowned research university. That said, HKU should also address the community’s concerns and contribute to the society, aligning with the ESG principles that applied to all organisations. It was unfortunate that

HKU did not engage with the local community early in putting forward the proposed development of the Centre, resulting in a large number of adverse representations that created a great deal of discord within the Pok Fu Lam community;

- (c) HKU should undertake the planning of the Centre with seriousness, responsibility and transparency. It was worried that the hearing session was just part of a delaying tactic by HKU. The rezoning proposal to “U” was objected to and the Item A Site should be maintained with its original “GB” zoning;
- (d) with the development of STT and the ‘South-North dual engine (Finance-I&T)’ strategy, STT was a much more suitable option for the Centre in terms of planning, design, construction and cost benefits;
- (e) HKU should consider a location that would allow for future expansion and flexibility for I&T development. The Government had reserved land in the NM to establish the NM University Town for the post-secondary institutions to tie in with the I&T development of STT. By setting up the Centre within strategic area of NM University Town, HKU could create synergies with various development zones in NM for I&T advancement; and
- (f) Cyberport was also considered a viable option for the Centre. Its scale, including extensions, should meet the laboratory space requirements for the Centre. Despite uncertainties regarding start-up operations, vacancies, and profitability, etc., at Cyberport, the Government and HKU should collaborate to optimise the use of the floor space at Cyberport for I&T development.

R3250 – Roger Anthony Nissim

57. With the aid of a PowerPoint presentation, Mr Roger Anthony Nissim made the following main points:

- (a) he had been a chartered surveyor and planning consultant in Hong Kong for over 50 years. He also taught at the Department of Real Estate and Construction of HKU;

- (b) the Pok Fu Lam OZP No. S/H10/1 was first gazetted in February 1986, designating the Item A Site as a “GB” zone due to its steep slopes and natural beauty, which meant that the site was unsuitable for development. The designation of “GB” zone aimed to conserve the natural environment and prevent urban encroachment. For nearly 40 years and over 20 versions of the Pok Fu Lam OZP, there had been a strong presumption against development within the “GB” zone, rooted in preserving the natural landscape of the Item A Site since 1986. The Explanatory Statement (ES) of the OZP emphasised that the challenging topography and geotechnical conditions rendered the site unsuitable for development. The proposed development for the Centre contradicted the long-standing planning intention and the established presumption against development. The Town Planning Board Guidelines for ‘Application for Development within Green Belt zone under Section 16 of the Town Planning Ordinance’ (TPB PG-No. 10) promulgated in 1991 clearly stated that there was a general presumption against development (excluding redevelopment) and planning applications would only be considered under exceptional circumstances and should be justified by very strong planning grounds. There was a legitimate expectation that the Board would adhere to its publicly stated planning intention and guidelines. The development of the Centre at the Item A Site did not fulfill the strong planning grounds required for development, as outlined in the OZP since 1986 and in TPB PG-No.10 in 1991;

- (c) alternative sites for the Centre were available, such as STT and HSITP. Those locations were deemed more suitable for the Centre compared to the Item A Site, which was incompatible with the surrounding residential areas. Recent government policies, including those from 2023 regarding the green belt development as well as the gazettal of the STT OZP in 2024, indicated that the 2021 policy of granting the Item A Site to HKU for a global I&T centre was outdated; and

- (d) given the very steep and well-vegetated slope with an 80m difference between PFLR and Victoria Road, the cost of developing the “GB” site was anticipated to be extremely high. The financial viability of development the Centre at the Item A Site was dubious.

R563 – Chan Ho Yau

R3303 – 陳理誠

58. Mr Chan Lee Shing William made the following main points:

- (a) he was the chairperson of the Incorporated Owners of Baguio Villa;
- (b) a letter regarding the development proposal of the Centre was received from HKU in March 2024, but it lacked details about the proposal. Two subsequent meetings in May 2024 between the residents of Baguio Villa and HKU revealed a lack of clarity, as representatives of HKU were unable to address fundamental questions from the residents. With the help of a district council (DC) member, records of meeting of the Development Planning Committee (DPC) of the Southern District Council held in January 2024 that showed support for the Centre were obtained. However, the information about the development proposal of the Centre that was presented to DC was considered insufficient for an informed decision, particularly when the DC members were newly appointed at that time without full knowledge of the local concerns. While the Chairman of the DPC anticipated that HKU would strengthen communication with local stakeholders about the project, meetings with local residents were not scheduled until May 2024;
- (c) the size of Item A Site was comparable to that of 37 football pitches. Such a large-scale development would require a longer implementation timeframe of over a 20-year period. STT should be a more suitable location for the Centre due to its strategic location in proximity to Shenzhen, which could

create a synergy that supported the transformation and commercialisation of R&D outcomes from universities, encompassing upstream, midstream, and downstream processes. The need for an exhibition venue within a scientific research facility at the Centre was questionable; and

- (d) the proposed development at the Item A Site would encounter significant challenges due to the steep terrain and the already overstrained road network in the area. A redevelopment proposal for Ebenezer School and Home for the Visually Impaired, which included over 100 parking spaces, was rejected during his tenure at the DC due to the Pok Fu Lam Moratorium (PFLM). The addition of more than 300 parking spaces for the Centre would likely worsen existing traffic congestion in the local neighbourhoods. The proposed one-way access next to Woodbury Court on PFLR could lead to congestion in areas such as the Chinese Culinary Institute, Pok Fu Lam Village and Chi Fu Fa Yuen. Furthermore, the TIA did not address potential traffic issues resulting from the comprehensive redevelopment of QMH, which would further exacerbate the traffic situation.

[The meeting was adjourned for a 5-minute break.]

59. As the presentations of the representers and/or their representatives in this session had been completed, the meeting proceeded to the Q&A session. The Chairperson explained that Members would raise questions and the Chairperson would invite the representers, their representatives and/or the government representatives to answer. The Q&A session should not be taken as an occasion for the attendees to direct question to the Board or for cross-examination between parties. The Chairperson then invited questions from Members.

HKU's Proposal

60. With reference to a photomontage of the Centre presented by a representer, the Vice-chairperson enquired about the possibility of a staggered building design for the Centre. Moreover, noting that the site for HKUMed Expansion to the east of 3 Sassoon Road had reserved a 32m-wide non-building area (NBA) from the boundary of Ebenezer School, whereas the current design of the Centre only featured a 10m NBA towards both Ebenezer

School and Home for the Visually Impaired and Baguio Villa, the Vice-chairperson enquired whether there was an opportunity to increase the width of NBA for the Centre. Mr Kong Kai Chun, R26's representative, responded that HKU was in the early stages of revising the development proposal for the Centre and was open to consider various suggestions for reducing the development scale, enhancing the building design and layout, and minimising the visual impact. Ms Fan Mei Mary, R26's representative, supplemented that while the 32m-wide NBA in the HKUMed Expansion site was provided to preserve a stream channel, there was flexibility in the design of the Centre to take into account various considerations.

61. A Member asked whether there was a completion timeframe for Phases 2 and 3 of the Centre, as the Paper only mentioned a tentative completion date for Phase 1 by 2028. In response, Ms Fan Mei Mary, R26's representative, said that given the substantial development scale, the Centre would be implemented by phases. After completing the statutory planning procedures, the land grant process would follow. Meanwhile, it was estimated that some time would be required for the preparation and finalisation of the revised proposal for the Centre, with construction works to commence around 2027/2028. As such, Phases 2 and 3 would likely start after 2030. While HKU was not rushing to finalise the development plan for the Centre, the implementation of the Centre for I&T development should not be delayed. Mr Kong Kai Chung, R26's representative, added that the proposed "U" zoning would allow time for HKU to duly engage with the local community and HKU would not aggressively push for the development of the Centre in the interim. Nevertheless, the completion of the Centre should be pursued within a reasonable timeframe.

Rezoning of "GB"

62. In response to a Member's question on how strong the justification would be required for rezoning a "GB" site given that there was a general presumption against development within this zone as pointed out by R3250, Ms Janet K.K. Cheung, DPO/HK, PlanD said that there was a general presumption against development in "GB" zones, and TPB PG-No. 10 also set out the planning criteria for consideration of section 16 (s.16) applications for development within "GB" zones. Nevertheless, TPB PG-No. 10 was applicable only to s.16 applications rather than proposed amendments to the OZP. It was indeed stated in TPB PG-No. 10 that the Board would only be prepared to approve applications for development in the context of requests to rezone the "GB" site to an

appropriate use. The Chairperson added that the general presumption against development was applicable to all “GB” zones across all OZPs, with the objective of discouraging development in “GB” zones which had the planning function of serving as buffer between built-up areas and non-built up areas. That said, there was no lack of examples in the past where “GB” zones were rezoned for appropriate uses, such as housing, and strong planning grounds were required to justify such land use changes, particularly the public interests that the rezoning proposals intended to achieve. Any development within a “GB” zone that would have environmental impacts would need to be supported by relevant technical assessments with adequate and effective mitigation measures, and whether the environmental trade-offs were justified in meeting the needs of society.

63. Another Member expressed that the selection of the “GB” site for development of the Centre was primarily based on its proximity to HKU’s campuses and strong justification for rezoning the Item A Site was yet to be provided. At the invitation of the Chairperson, Mr Roger Anthony Nissim, R3250, expressed his appreciation that some Members had highlighted the point on presumption against development in “GB” zones which he had raised. He added that the 2023 PA announced that the Government had identified sufficient land for development and had no plans to further utilise “GB” sites.

64. Noting that the “GB” zones on the OZP possessed unique characteristics, being situated between the country park to the east and the seashore to the west, and unlike the developments on the northern and western sides of Hong Kong Island, a Member enquired about the development history of the Item A Site. In response, Ms Janet K.K. Cheung, DPO/HK, PlanD, with the aid of some PowerPoint slides featuring aerial photographs, said that in the 1960s, the Item A Site was primarily farmland with some scattered structures and there was a significant amount of farmland in the Pok Fu Lam and Kong Sin Wan areas. An area of land once covered by trees and plants to the immediate south of the Item A Site was developed into the Baguio Villa in the 1970s. As agricultural activities ceased, the Item A site and the surrounding slope became gradually overgrown with trees. The Item A Site covered an area of about 4 hectares (ha), accounting for 3.4% of the “GB” zone on the OZP before it was rezoned to “OU (Global Innovation Centre)”. The total area of the “GB” zone on the current OZP was 117 ha, equivalent to approximately 28% of the Planning Scheme Area of the OZP.

Alternative Sites

65. In response to Members' questions about Cyberport and the potential collaboration between Cyberport and HKU to support the Centre, Ms Janet K.K. Cheung, DPO/HK, PlanD said that Cyberport was specialised in information and communication technology, with a total floor space of about 160,000m². Cyberport expansion was currently underway for completion by 2025, which would provide an additional GFA of 66,000m². Cyberport housed over 600 on-site start-ups and technology-related enterprises, with an occupancy rate of around 90%. The Chairperson remarked that further development for Cyberport beyond its current expansion was limited. That said, about 15 ha of land in Lau Fau Shan would be designated for I&T development by Cyberport, though this would take time to materialise.

66. In response to a Member's enquiry on the feasibility of reclaiming the nearby seashore areas in Pok Fu Lam or near Cyberport for the Centre, Mr Kong Kai Chung, R26's representative, explained that reclamation involved complex issues and procedures, which would require in-depth technical studies. In view of substantial resources required for such studies, HKU was currently not considering this option.

Traffic Issues

67. Noting R3303's comment that the redevelopment proposal of Ebenezer School and Home for the Visually Impaired was previously rejected due to PFLM, a Member asked about the background of that case and whether there were opportunities for increasing the traffic capacity of the Pok Fu Lam area. In response, Ms Janet K.K. Cheung, DPO/HK, PlanD explained that PFLM was an administrative measure aimed at limiting excessive development in the Pok Fu Lam area for traffic management reasons. Any lease modification for redevelopment of sites with higher intensity in the area should be approved by the Executive Council, subject to fulfilling two conditions that (i) redevelopment would not result in insurmountable traffic impacts with proposed traffic improvement measures; and (ii) the proposal served the public interest.

68. The same Member invited R3303 to elaborate on how traffic from the Centre might exacerbate existing congestion problem and affect the nearby areas. In response, Mr

Chan Lee Shing William, R3303, said that currently, south-bound traffic along PFLR towards Aberdeen direction would need to take U-turn at the flyover near the Chinese Culinary Institute (CCI) of the Vocational Training Council (VTC) to reach the entrance of Ebenezer School and Home for the Visually Impaired. The junction outside VTC was managed by two sets of traffic lights and was frequently busy. The proposed priority junction (with left-in-left-out arrangement) at PFLR would further increase U-turn traffic at the already overstrained junction near the CCI. Mr Chan also remarked that the TIA for redevelopment of Wah Fu Estate suggested that there would be no significant adverse traffic impact on PFLR, as most public housing residents would rely on public transport.

Yellow-crested Cockatoos

69. Some Members raised the following questions:

- (a) regarding the yellow-crested cockatoos, a non-native species with approximately 200 individuals residing in Hong Kong out of the global population of 2,000, whether the EcoIA had assessed the impacts of the Centre's development on the species. With the presence of the yellow-crested cockatoos, whether the ecological value of the Item A Site could still be classified as low to moderate; and
- (b) considering that removing 26 large trees from the Item A Site could threaten a habitat of around 20 yellow-crested cockatoos relying on those trees, and that R3198 had proposed the installation of artificial nest boxes as a potential safeguard, whether HKU could consider such conservation measures for the yellow-crested cockatoos in the revised development proposal for the Centre.

70. In response, Ms Fan Mei Mary and Mr Kong Kai Chung, R26's representatives, made the following main points:

- (a) an EcoIA was conducted and submitted to relevant departments for consideration. The ecological survey confirmed that there was a diverse range of flora and fauna at the Item A Site, and efforts would be made to

conserve as much of the original habitats as possible. HKU was committed to reviewing the development proposal of the Centre based on the feedback from the stakeholders. The revised proposal, along with updated technical assessments, would go through another round of statutory planning procedures. Specialists would be consulted to ensure that the updated EcoIA would be conducted in a holistic manner. The advice and insights from the representers regarding the importance of certain plants and species were acknowledged, and HKU had engaged experts to provide guidance on their protection. While the development of the Centre would have impact on existing habitats, extensive efforts would be made to protect the natural areas within the site, including the habitats along river channels; and

- (b) the EcoIA predominantly recorded various bird species, and specialists had advised on selecting suitable tree species and planting methods to protect those birds. While fruit-bearing trees tended to attract more birds, their maintenance would be more complex. Nonetheless, HKU was committed to taking responsibility for conserving the natural environment. Appreciation was expressed to the representers for their valuable advice during the hearing. Since the revision of the development proposal for the Centre was still in the early stage, ongoing consultations with experts and research in ecological conservation at the site would continue.

Slope Safety

71. A Member enquired about the history of landslides at/near the Item A Site over the past 40 years as raised by some representers. In response, Ms Fan Mei Mary, R26's representative, said that there were no records of landslides at the Item A Site. As nearby slope areas had experienced landslides, slope stabilisation works had been carried out by CEDD. Further assessments of slope stability in the area would be conducted by HKU to ensure public safety. As some representatives from Ebenezer School and Home for the Visually Impaired also raised concerns about landslide risks during the previous hearing session, HKU would take into account their concerns in the planning and design of the Centre, including selecting appropriate tree species for slope planting, to mitigate such risks.

72. Noting R3187's accusations about HKU's creditability and monitoring issues related to the construction of its Pokfield Campus (with over 40 unresolved site notices), a Member asked whether HKU would engage experts to closely supervise the construction of the Centre, which was on a steep slope. In response, Ms Fan Mei Mary, R26's representative, said that HKU had been swiftly and actively negotiating and working with contractors at the Pokfield Campus to address ongoing issues. That over 40 site notices were issued to remind contractors of their responsibilities, particularly concerning slope stability. HKU had a dedicated team of resident staff, construction consultants and engineers to continuously monitor the construction process. HKU also engaged with local residents and DC to explain the situation and build trust. It would continue its management efforts and cooperate fully with concerned government departments during regular inspections to ensure safety.

Development Control in "U" Zone

73. A Member asked whether the rezoning of the Item A Site from "GB" to "U", as proposed by PlanD, would allow HKU to develop the site without any restrictions as claimed by one of the representers. In response, Ms Janet K.K. Cheung, DPO/HK, PlanD clarified that the Notes of the OZP would also proposed to be amended as set out in Annex IX of the Paper, i.e. all uses or developments except minor/government uses/works within the "U" zone would require planning permission from the Board.

74. The Chairperson also took the opportunity to clarify to the representers and the representers' representatives that if the Board decided to propose an amendment to the draft Pok Fu Lam OZP by rezoning the Item A Site from "OU(Global Innovation Centre)" to "U" in the interim period to serve as a stopgap arrangement pending completion of the review and further community engagement by HKU, the "U" zoning would allow time for HKU to review and adjust its development plan in response to the views expressed by the stakeholders and engage the community before submitting the revised development scheme to Government for consideration. If the revised development scheme was considered acceptable to the Government, PlanD would identify an appropriate zoning for HKU to take forward the revised scheme. Subject to the Board's agreement to the proposed change from "U" to the appropriate zoning, the rezoning would then have to go through another round of statutory planning procedures in accordance with the Ordinance, during which members of the public

would have the opportunity again to submit written representations and attend hearings to express their views to the Board directly.

75. As Members had no further question to raise, the Chairperson said that the Q&A session for the afternoon session of the hearing on the day was completed. She thanked the representers, their representatives and the government representatives for attending the meeting. The Board would deliberate on the representations in closed meeting after all the hearing sessions were completed and would inform the representers of the Board's decision in due course. The representers, the representers' representatives and the government representatives left the meeting at this point.

76. This session of the meeting was adjourned at 4:35 p.m.

Addendum

Amendments to Confirmed Minutes of the 1327th Town Planning Board Meeting held on 4.11.2024

(Agenda Item 3)

Para. 23 **Ms Mr** Wong Tak Lee made the following main points:

Para. 23 (d)The Centre would disrupt residents' privacy due to visual intrusion from the Centre, and would cause **visual and noise pollution leading to psychological impact on residents and** devaluation of properties.....

Para. 23 (e) ~~she~~**he** had grave concerns about the potential BSL-3 laboratory at the Centre. Such facilities should not be located in residential areas due to potential leakage risks.....