

1. The meeting was resumed at 9:00 a.m. on 5.11.2024.

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

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

Assistant Director (Environmental Assessment)  
Environmental Protection Department  
Mr Gary C.W. Tam

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)

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[The item was conducted in Cantonese, English and Putonghua.]

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/or 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**

R9 – Cheng Hong Sui

Professor Vivian Yam ]

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

R143 – Chan Yu Sum Sam

Mr Chan Yu Sum Sam	-	Representer
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R1238 – Chan Ka Wing Kevin

Mr Chan Ka Wing Kevin	-	Representer
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R3176 – Hui Chi Sang Anthony

Mr Hui Chi Sang Anthony	-	Representer
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R3263 – Kok Kai Lam Peter

Mr Kok Kai Lam Peter	-	Representer
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R3297 – Chan Kai Yu Rudy

Mr Chan Kai Yu Rudy	-	Representer
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R3314 – Yeo Keng Swee

Mr Yeo Keng Swee	-	Representer
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R3315 – Leung Kam Ming

Mr Leung Kam Ming	-	Representer
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R3319 – Tong Wai Lee

Ms Tong Wai Lee	-	Representer
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R3320 – Kwok Tai Yuen

Mr Kwok Tai Yuen	-	Representer
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R3322 – Taylor Lucy Joan

Mr Tan Tsung Yuan Nicholas - Representers' Representative

R3337 – Yan Oi Wah Peggy

Ms Yan Oi Wah Peggy - Representers

R3323 – Vivianne Lau

R3352 – Chua Jamie Zai-En

Ms Vivianne Lau - Representers and Representers' Representative

R3364 – Chua Yuan Shiun Theodore

Mr Chua Yuan Shiun Theodore - Representers

R3408 – Yeung Siu Hung

Mr Yeung Siu Hung - Representers

6. The Chairperson extended a welcome and briefly explained the procedures of the hearing. She said that the presentations made by the government representatives in the morning sessions of 1.11.2024 and 4.11.2024 had been uploaded to the Town Planning Board (TPB/the Board)'s website for public viewing. To ensure efficient operation of the hearing, each representer would be allotted 10 minutes for making presentation. There was a timer device to alert the representers 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. The Chairperson invited the representers and/or their representatives to elaborate on their representations.

R143 – Chan Yu Sum Sam

8. Mr Chan Yu Sum Sam made the following main points:

- (a) he shared the views of previous representers on the importance of the proposed Global Innovation Centre (the Centre) in fostering innovation and technology (I&T) which was in line with the National Development Strategy. He stated that the University of Hong Kong (HKU) had a long-standing commitment to providing benefits to the community through development projects and such a commitment was also evidenced in the preliminary planning and design of the Centre;
- (b) the Centre would provide cutting-edge scientific facilities with well-planned amenities and space for academics, scientists and researchers. It would bring together top-notch scientific talents from around the world and propel an innovation-led economy. It would promote STEM education and inspire the local youths to dedicate themselves to the pursuit of scientific discoveries and breakthroughs;
- (c) the Centre, attaching high importance to a sustainable and connected space, had incorporated design elements that would benefit the community. For example, a terraced building design would be adopted to blend in with the surrounding landscape. An abundance of greenery with a green podium and outdoor recreational space would be provided;
- (d) the design of the Centre would also seek to improve the connectivity and accessibility of the neighbourhood. HKU had been working closely with the MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL) for the planning of the proposed South Island Line (West) (SIL(W)) near the project site and with relevant government departments to explore opportunities to incorporate improvement measures/works for road junctions to minimise adverse traffic impacts. Also, the pedestrian accessibility of the neighbourhood would be improved by overcoming the level difference between Pok Fu Lam Road (PFLR) and Victoria Road through provision of vertical lifts and escalators within the

Centre. An internal walkway would be provided to connect the Centre to the new academic facilities of HKU near Sassoon Road. Hence, the walkability and connectivity of the neighbourhood were envisaged to be enhanced with the development of the Centre;

- (e) the Centre would be located in close proximity to the campus of HKU and several academic, innovation and research hubs, including Cyberport and Queen Mary Hospital (QMH), to create a synergy effect which was conducive to nurturing a mature academic, intellectual and research ecosystem for the researchers and scientists to collaborate and exchange views; and
- (f) HKU had received feedback from stakeholders on the Centre and had committed to strategically amend the development plan of the Centre such as reducing the density and bulk, increasing the setback area from neighbouring buildings and designating more green spaces, etc. HKU cherished the comments of the stakeholders and would continue to engage the stakeholders through various channels with updated information.

[Mr Rocky L.K. Poon joined this session of the meeting during R143's presentation.]

#### R9 – Cheng Hong Sui

9. Professor Vivian Yam made the following main points:

- (a) she was the Interim Vice President of HKU in charge of the proposed development of the Centre, and was born in Hong Kong and educated at HKU. Over the past 30 years, she had been engaging in scientific research on chemistry and energy specialising in photochromic materials, luminescence and supramolecular chemistry;
- (b) currently, five local universities ranked the world's top 100 universities and many top scientists were attracted to work in Hong Kong and the Greater Bay Area (GBA). The 2024 Policy Address (PA) announced the establishment of a Committee on Education, Technology and Talents led by the Chief Secretary

for Administration to promote Hong Kong as an international hub for high-calibre talents. Also, HKU was proactive in the promotion of upstream basic research and the results of the research were encouraging, e.g. the toughest steel invented by HKU. Furthermore, HKU had the edge in the research on Nanotechnology and microchips and was thus able to entice talents from around the world, including Nobel Prize winners and artificial intelligence experts. In order to harness these opportunities to advance scientific research in Hong Kong, more dedicated space and infrastructure were necessary;

- (c) the Centre was strategically located in an area with mature scientific research ecosystem, including the HKU campus, academic and research facilities of Medical Campus of HKU (HKUMed) at Sassoon Road, QMH and Cyberport for synergising effect to fuel new productive forces;
- (d) the Centre would provide an opportunity for Hong Kong to incubate more local talents to become ‘new blood’ in scientific research. Through cross-disciplinary attempts encompassing physics, quantum science, chemistry and engineering, the Centre sought scientific breakthroughs to effectively address the grand challenges facing humanity;
- (e) the Centre would serve as a platform for talents to work together on scientific research and a hub for exchange of knowledge through seminars, etc. Moreover, similar to other world-class research centres such as Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory and several synchrotron facilities in Dongguan, Shanghai and Beijing, visiting scholars would be given a limited time to make use of the equipment and appliances in the Centre. Hence, short-term residence for scholars/scientists was necessary; and
- (f) the project team had already taken heed of the stakeholders’ views with regard to the traffic, visual, ecological, landscape impacts, as well as the nuisance during construction stage. The project team would revise the proposal to address the stakeholders’ concerns and would continue to strengthen communication with the community and stakeholders. To give more time for the project team to work on the revised proposal, she appealed to the Board to



rezone the Item A Site to “Undetermined” (“U”) as an interim land use zoning.

[Ms Kelly Y.S. Chan joined this session of the meeting during R9’s presentation.]

R3263 – Kok Kai Lam Peter

10. Mr Kok Kai Lam Peter made the following main points:

- (a) he was born in Hong Kong and was a resident of Pok Fu Lam. He understood that Hong Kong needed scientific advancement and was not unsupportive to the development of the Centre, but he was sceptical of the reasons for choosing the Item A Site and concerned about the development scale of the Centre;
- (b) the Centre would encroach on the green space and residential areas in the community. Close proximity to HKU campus was not a strong justification as many world known research centres could be detached from the university campus. Also, the sloping terrain of the Item A Site would undermine the development potential of the Centre. He opined that locating the Centre in a more spacious area in the New Territories North, which could also help enlarge its catchment areas to serve GBA, would be more preferable;
- (c) Despite various upgrading works, there were still severe traffic jams in Aberdeen Tunnel, PFLR and Victoria Road, and he expected that the traffic problems could not be resolved even with the proposed road junctions improvement works. Hence, the Pok Fu Lam Moratorium (PFLM) was still in force to prohibit excessive developments in the area, though PFLM was partially uplifted several times before to facilitate the development of Cyberport, the Cyberport Expansion and redevelopment of Wah Fu Estate. It was unconvincing that a development with a gross floor area (GFA) of about 220,000m<sup>2</sup> would have no adverse traffic impact; and
- (d) it was inappropriate to rezone the Item A Site to “U” at the moment, while HKU agreed to strategically amend the proposal as announced in October 2024 in light of thousands of objections. This gave the impression of a hidden

agenda behind the rezoning to circumvent any subsequent public scrutiny. HKU needed to revisit the proposal and step up communication with the community before submitting the revised proposal for the consideration of the Board.

11. With regard to the “U” zone as proposed in TPB Paper No. 10987 (the Paper), the Chairperson clarified that the Item A Site had been rezoned from “Green Belt” (“GB”) to “Other Specified Uses” annotated “Global Innovation Centre” (“OU(Global Innovation Centre)”) in March 2024. The “U” zone was not proposed by HKU, but by PlanD as a stopgap arrangement to give HKU time to conduct further review of the proposal and engage with the community with a view to addressing the stakeholders’ opinions as stated in HKU’s press statement released in October 2024. Upon completion of the review and after engagement with the community on the revised proposal by HKU, HKU would need to submit the revised proposal with technical assessments for consideration by relevant government bureaux/ departments. 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.

R3297 – Chan Kai Yu Rudy

12. With the aid of a PowerPoint presentation, Mr Chan Kai Yu Rudy made the following main points:

- (a) he had been working in the field of the technology for 25 years and was a resident of Pok Fu Lam. He supported Government’s initiative to accelerate technology development in Hong Kong. As I&T was developing at a rapid pace, it was imperative for the Government to implement the relevant policies in a timely manner in order to maintain Hong Kong’s competitiveness;
- (b) it was a flawed assumption that the Centre, focusing on upstream research, had

to be located close to HKU campus in Pok Fu Lam and could be distanced from midstream or downstream research activities that were presumably taken place in the San Tin Technopole (STT). With reference to the top overseas universities having accelerator and incubator programmes, e.g. Stanford University, Harvard University, Yale University, etc., different forms of research activities were interconnected to form a bigger ecosystem which could facilitate constant interactions among researchers and thereby ignite creativity and technology breakthroughs;

- (c) it was also the policy of the Innovation, Technology and Industry Bureau (ITIB) to strategically position STT as a hub for the development of various I&T clusters to enable different forms/stages of research activities, including upstream, midstream and downstream activities along the I&T value chain. Also, STT would provide larger land parcels for establishing pilot transformation bases and mass production facilities for commercialisation and industry-based I&T activities of the research outcomes. It would be more beneficial to locate the Centre in STT to harness the comprehensive I&T ecosystem envisioned there;
- (d) it would be gruelling to properly address the concerns of the stakeholders, which would take considerable time for the technical issues to be resolved, e.g. the steep topography. Hence, the development of the Centre in Pok Fu Lam would undoubtedly lead to excessive delays. Instead of opting for a slow path, STT offered sites more readily available for the Centre; and
- (e) he urged the Board not to approve any zoning to accommodate the Centre in Pok Fu Lam and requested HKU to reconsider locating the Centre in STT for the sake of Hong Kong's I&T development in future.

[Mr Vincent K.Y. Ho joined this session of the meeting at this point.]

R3314 – Yeo Keng Swee

13. With the aid of a PowerPoint presentation, Mr Yeo Keng Swee made the following main points:

- (a) he had been a resident of Pok Fu Lam for 10 years;
- (b) the consultation with the stakeholders was inadequate and hasty. After the announcement of the 2021 PA that a piece of land zoned “GB” was reserved for HKU to construct facilities for deep technology research, a former district council member of the Southern District Council (SDC) had written to the Government requesting information on the details of the Centre’s development and to HKU enquiring about the public consultation arrangement in late 2021 and early 2022 respectively. ITIB and HKU replied in January 2022 and May 2022 respectively that HKU would reach out to the Pok Fu Lam community to gauge views from the stakeholders. Notwithstanding that, HKU had not initiated consultation. When HKU consulted the SDC on the Centre in January 2024, the SDC requested HKU to strengthen communication with the local community on the proposal. In March 2024, the draft OZP incorporating the rezoning for the Centre was gazetted and the local stakeholders could only learn the details of the proposal at that juncture. While HKU held two briefing sessions in May 2024, their representatives were unable to provide substantive answers to the questions raised by the local stakeholders. Given the tight schedule of the representation of the OZP, the local stakeholders could only prepare their submissions within a short period of time;
- (c) the technical assessments prepared by HKU’s consultants were shaky. Given the compatibility issue with the surrounding land uses, the loss of woodland and steep natural terrain, the proposal was considered very difficult, if not infeasible;
- (d) it was uncertain if the Item A Site with an area of 4.7 hectares (ha) was adequate for HKU to promote upstream research, given that the project was still in the

initial stage. HKU had been undergoing continuous expansion in Pok Fu Lam area, e.g. Pokfield Campus Development and new academic building at 3 Sassoon Road and HKUMed Expansion. The Planning Report prepared by HKU stated that HKU had experienced a continuous growth in the number of students by 51%, professors and staff by 34% in the past 10 years. According to a ballpark estimation based on annual projected growth of 4.2%, the size of HKU would double in 2031 compared with 2014. Therefore, he envisaged that more land would be required, and might exert pressure on the precious green belt land in Pok Fu Lam. HKU should consider locating the Centre in the Northern Metropolis (NM) for more growing space. This would also be in line with the recent government policies that emphasised the I&T development in NM;

- (e) only about 40% of the GFA was for research purposes, while the remaining GFA was for academic, exhibition, office and a scholar's residence/staff quarters. He opined that the scholars' residence/staff quarters were unnecessary as existing residences of HKU were scattered in Pok Fu Lam area, including Middleton Towers and Alberose, which were right on the opposite side of by PFLR;
- (f) there was concern about the nuisance relating to prolonged construction period as HKU only expected Phase 1 of the Centre to be completed in 2028 and the development programme of the remaining phases remained unknown;
- (g) according to ITIB, the Centre was a self-financing project initiated by HKU. However, without funding details, there would be risks of delay in completion; and
- (h) HKU should address the concerns of the stakeholders and consider locating the Centre in NM to avoid development on a piece of valuable green belt site. The project should be subject to close scrutiny on its feasibility, funding arrangement and quality of technical assessments. He urged the Board not to approve any zoning to accommodate the Centre in Pok Fu Lam.

R3315 – Leung Kam Ming

14. Mr Leung Kam Ming made the following main points:

- (a) he was a graduate of HKU and had been a resident of Pok Fu Lam for many years;
- (b) there was a lack of proper consultation with the local residents, although HKU pledged to strengthen communication with the stakeholders as mentioned in their press release in October 2024;
- (c) he shared the views elaborated by other representers that it was a wrong choice of location for the Centre in Pok Fu Lam. In particular the need for being close to HKU campus was unconvincing as in the information era of nowadays, 5G or 6G technology could easily transcend the locational constraints. In addition, HKU Shenzhen Hospital demonstrated that frequent commuting of the staff between Hong Kong and Shenzhen was possible. Instead, HKU should seize the opportunity to locate the Centre in STT, pioneering the development of I&T hub there. There was no point in developing the Centre in Pok Fu Lam;
- (d) the traffic congestion in Pok Fu Lam area would be exacerbated during the construction stage of the Centre. The traffic congestion had been inflicting immense hardships on Pok Fu Lam residents for a long time. Currently, there were already some traffic congestions in the mornings on the two main roads serving Pok Fu Lam area, namely PFLR and Victoria Road, as well as Aberdeen Tunnel. Worse still, the heavy construction traffic brought by redevelopment of Wah Fu Estate would increase the traffic burden. It was doubtful if the two main roads could accommodate additional traffic induced by the construction of the Centre;
- (e) the concerns on slope safety could not be overlooked. The project site was a steep slope covered with mature vegetation and was currently in a relatively stable condition. Removal of vegetation during the construction would be

detrimental to slope stability, especially during inclement weather. There were also occasional reports on landslide incidents in Pok Fu Lam area; and

- (f) he urged the Board to take the representations made by the residents of Pok Fu Lam area seriously, as their concerns were genuine, reasonable and rational. Their wish to preserve the environment of their beloved homes should be understood and respected by the Board and HKU. He urged the Board to reject the zoning amendment for the Centre in Pok Fu Lam.

[Ms Kelly Y.S. Chan and Mr Paul Y.K. Au left this session of the meeting temporarily during R3315's presentation.]

R3319 – Tong Wai Lee

15. With the aid of a PowerPoint presentation, Ms Tong Wai Lee made the following main points:

- (a) she wished the Board to hear the representations in an open-minded and impartial manner;
- (b) PFLM was established in 1972 to prohibit excessive development until there was an overall improvement in the transport network in the area and it was still in force today. The massive scale of the Centre (with GFA of about 220,000m<sup>2</sup>) would violate PFLM. Although PFLM had been partially uplifted to facilitate redevelopment of Wah Fu Estate and development of Cyberport, traffic impact assessments (TIAs) had been conducted to demonstrate that the projects would not generate adverse traffic impacts with the implementation of appropriate traffic improvement measures;
- (c) HKU should not assume that the Commissioner for Transport (C for T) had no objection to the proposal. As stated in the Paper, C for T had no in-principle objection to the zoning amendment subject to, inter alia, the submission of (i) an updated TIA; (ii) construction TIA; and (iii) traffic review before commissioning of the project to their satisfaction. However, none of the

submissions was available;

- (d) the TIA only covered the development programme up to 2029 (target completion of Phase 1 of the Centre would be in 2028), but had not taken into account the remaining phases. The construction traffic of the Centre and that of redevelopment of Wah Fu Estate had not been taken into account. The linear configuration of the Item A Site, together with the steep terrains and the need to remove about 2,000 trees, would induce heavy construction traffic that should have been duly considered by HKU. It would be too late to conduct the traffic review prior to project commissioning. The shortcomings of the TIA necessitated an updated TIA which HKU had not submitted;
- (e) the mitigation measures as suggested in the TIA were inadequate and infeasible to improve the performance of transport network in Pok Fu Lam area. The TIA assessed the capacity of the major road junctions and revealed that only four junctions, i.e. J1, J8, J16 and J17, needed to be improved. The proposed improvement works and the possible shortcomings were as follows:
  - (i) J1 (junction of PFLR/Sassoon Road/access to QMH) would be under heavy traffic, and the proposed improvement works were to increase the cycle time for traffic signals from 100 seconds to 120 seconds, i.e. the maximum cycle time recommended by the Transport Department (TD). Cycle times in excess of 120 seconds could possibly cause traffic congestion;
  - (ii) the proposed improvement measure for J8 (junction of Victoria Road/Sandy Bay Road) was to provide a staggered pedestrian crossing. The measure could only alleviate the inadequacy but not address the problem at its root;
  - (iii) no improvement works were suggested for J16 (signalised junction outside the Belchers') and J17 (junction of Victoria Road/Cadogan Street/ Belcher's Street) by HKU as, the two junctions were far away



from the Item A Site. J16 was the major gateway for the inbound and outbound traffic of Pok Fu Lam area. Owing to physical constraints, the TIA stated that the improvement works at J16 could only be possible if there were large-scale redevelopment of the adjacent lots to facilitate the provision of additional traffic lanes or construction of grade-separated pedestrian crossing facilities with the setback of private land lot boundary. In other words, the proposed improvement works were infeasible in the foreseeable future; and

- (iv) J17 was very important, as the construction trucks would have to pass through J17 to reach the Item A Site. The proposed improvements could only rely on an undertaking by HKU that all servicing vehicles could only access to the Item A Site during off-peak hours. It was doubtful if the undertaking would be sufficient to address the traffic issues at J17, not to mention that the contractors for Pokfield Campus Development received 44 written warnings for the non-compliance with traffic regulations in July 2024;
- (f) as PFLR was a primary distributor road and Pok Fu Lam area was not served with mass transit currently, the residents had great traffic and safety concerns on the heavy traffic generated by the Centre. The creditability of the TIA was in doubt; and
- (g) whilst PlanD proposed to rezone the Item A Site to “U” to allow time for HKU to review the proposal, she urged HKU to consider the location of the Centre from a wider perspective and not to be bound by the 2021 PA of having the development option in Pok Fu Lam only. The 2023 and 2024 PAs had designated NM, in particular STT, to be the future development nuclei in fostering Hong Kong as an international I&T hub. As a reputable tertiary education institution in Hong Kong, HKU should have a more holistic consideration and consider locating research facilities, including the Centre, in NM to anchor the I&T development there.

R3320 – Kwok Tai Yuen

16. With the aid of a PowerPoint presentation, Mr Nelson Tai Yuen Kwok made the following main points:

- (a) he was the project director of a construction company with over 25 years of experience in construction, mainly in foundation and site formation works. He was currently an authorised signatory under the Buildings Ordinance (BO) for a specialist contractor under the “Site Formation” and “Foundation” categories as well as a member in the Appeal Tribunal Panel under BO. As a professional geotechnical engineer, he would like to provide some information about the project construction for Members’ reference;
- (b) the typical construction sequence for a project on a slope included (i) site investigation; (ii) detailed design, submission and approval; (iii) construction of foundation for temporary steel platform; (iv) construction of temporary steel platform; (v) construction of pile wall; (vi) transportation of excavation and other lateral support works; (vii) construction of foundation; and (viii) construction of superstructure. He would focus on (i) to (vi) which were specific to building on slopes requiring long construction time;
- (c) although HKU claimed to have considered the surrounding landscape and would adopt a terraced building design to integrate with the slope profile of the Item A Site, massive excavation would be required as shown in the Geotechnical Planning Review Report (GPRR). The width of the project site was approximately 534m. Based on the preliminary design of the GPRR, 84 large-diameter-bored piles would be used for the retaining wall at a length of 45m to 50m. A total of about 2.6 years would be required for the construction of the bored piles;
- (d) according to the ground investigation information in the GPRR, the average thickness of the soil layer was about 2.68m. As the depth of total excavation was about 38m, the depth of rock excavation would be about 35.32m beneath the soil layer. The total excavation volume was estimated to be about

574,584m<sup>3</sup>. Assuming 85% of the excavation was rocks, it would take 8.4 years for excavation. Together with the construction of bored piles, the total construction period would extend to about 11 years;

- (e) from the traffic angle and for cross-checking, assuming the dump truck with a capacity of 7m<sup>3</sup> worked 8 hours per day and one truck left the construction site every 10 minutes, about 5.3 years would be required for removing the excavated debris. However, the production rate of the excavated debris would decrease significantly as excavation went deeper because of improved rock quality;
- (f) he summed up that the estimated duration and timeline for site formation including (i) site investigation; (ii) detailed design, submission and approval; (iii) construction of foundation for temporary steel platform; (iv) construction of temporary steel platform; (v) construction of pile wall; (vi) carting out excavation and other lateral support works; and (vii) construction of foundation would take at least about 12.6 years from June 2025 to January 2038, excluding the construction of the building structures;
- (g) compared with a much smaller project of HKU Pokfield Campus Development, where site formation works started in 2021 and would take 5 years to complete, his estimate of about 12.6 years for the subject project of such a large scale was considered in proportion. The overall project duration would completely negate the purpose of the Centre at the outset, which was not in line with the government policy to fast-track technological research to enhance the competitiveness of Hong Kong;
- (h) rock excavation would create excessive noise and continuous vibration. Three noise sensitive receivers, namely Ebenezer School, Woodbury Court and Baguio Villa, were identified in proximity to the Item A Site. The noise and vibration generated from the rock breakers used for excavation would have significant adverse impact on these noise sensitive receivers, in particular, the visually impaired students of Ebenezer School for a prolonged period;

- (i) based on the current market price, the additional construction cost for site formation involving steep slope was estimated to be about HK\$863 million. Long-term monitoring on the slope stability might be necessary. Such additional costs could be better spent in other areas, especially during the current economic downturn, regardless of the funding sources of the project; and
- (j) STT would provide an enabling environment for the development of upstream, midstream and downstream activities along the I&T value chain and be a preferred location for the Centre. There would be room for expansion without incurring any additional costs for site formation.

[Mr Paul Y.K. Au rejoined this session of the meeting during R3320's presentation.]

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

#### R3322 – Taylor Lucy Joan

17. With the aid of a PowerPoint presentation, Mr Tan Tsung Yuan Nicholas made the following main points:

- (a) part of the Fanling Golf Course (FGC) was rezoned to “U”. As the planning circumstances for the Centre were different from those of FGC, the “U” zoning of FGC should not set a precedent for the Centre. In addition, there was no mention of the status of the “U” zone in the Explanatory Statement (ES) of the OZP, and hence further consultation on the “U” zone would be required;
- (b) the rezoning of the Item A Site to “U” was recommended by PlanD in response to the press statement of HKU in October 2024. However, there was no representation requesting such rezoning. Since PlanD was not one of the representers, the rezoning proposal by PlanD could not be considered by the Board pursuant to section 6B(8)(a) of the Ordinance;
- (c) whilst 248 representers were in support of the “OU(Global Innovation Centre)”

zone for the development of the Centre, 3,411 representers objected to the rezoning. None of them proposed rezoning the Item A Site to “U”. As such, the Board should not consider that the rezoning of the Item A Site to “U” could meet the representations in accordance with section 6B(8)(b) of the Ordinance;

- (d) the only possible decision for the Board was to reject the proposed rezoning of the Item A Site to “U” and leave HKU with an option to resubmit a revised proposal as per their press statement in October 2024 for reconsideration of the Board; and
- (e) locating the Centre in STT would represent a better option. Not only would the option align with the National policies, it would also echo HKU’s stated ambition to be a leader in upstream research. Coupled with the upstream, midstream and downstream I&T developments in STT as envisaged by ITIB, an ideal ecosystem there would help HKU’s proposal to come to fruition.

R3337 – Yan Oi Wah Peggy

18. With the aid of a PowerPoint presentation, Ms Yan Oi Wah Peggy made the following main points:

- (a) she was a resident of Pok Fu Lam;
- (b) despite a large number of opposing representations, it appeared from the government responses that the views of the many were not proportionally weighted. She felt helpless and was apprehensive about the failure of the system in providing an effective channel to reflect her views;
- (c) she considered having the Centre on a piece of green belt a mismatch and requested the Item A Site be remained as “GB” zone. The Centre should be located in STT where HKU could play a more proactive role to building a global technology hub there. Furthermore, STT could provide space for expansion of the Centre;

- (d) noise was more than a nuisance, and could pose a risk to health. According to a study conducted by Harvard Medical School, noise pollution could not only drive various physical illnesses but could also cause stress, mental health issues, childhood learning delays, etc. Prolonged construction noise, even at lower decibel levels, could also cause adverse impacts to the neighbourhood. The assessment conducted by HKU was silent on the disturbance upon community mental health caused by noise pollution. In essence, the construction of the Centre would deprive the underprivileged, impaired students/children and elderly of the tranquility that was crucial to their well-being. The tranquility of Pok Fu Lam was already at risk due to several large-scale developments in the area, e.g. redevelopment of Wah Fu Estate, QMH Redevelopment and Cyberport Expansion, etc., up to 2041. The construction of Centre would put tremendous mental and physical pressure on the residents;
- (e) the threat of landslides had become imminent and the number of landslides had increased at an alarming rate recently in Hong Kong. While the memory of an unwarned landslide above Baguio Villas on a rainy day that caused death was still vivid, the landslides continued to occur nearby, including the one above The Independent Schools Foundation Academy (the ISF Academy) in September 2023 and a mini landslide at the Item A Site a few years ago. With the presence of the vegetation on the Item A Site in holding the soils, a hazardous landslide was prevented. The assessment conducted by HKU pertinent to slope stability was superficial and missed out the impact of climate change on reducing slope stability over time. The Board was advised to evaluate the slope safety issue at the highest standard as it would affect human lives;
- (f) the Centre was too close to residential areas, especially for Baguio Villa. With images of computer rendering, she showed that the Item A Site would become an eyesore for the residents of Baguio Villa during the construction phase;
- (g) the locality of Pok Fu Lam was characterised by its greenery and tranquility, attracting weekend visitors from other districts and travelers for taking the

scenic trail and being the habitat of some endangered species, including yellow-crested cockatoos (*Cacatua sulphurea*) (小葵花鳳頭鸚鵡). The loss of the greenery would jeopardise the survival of these endangered species and harm the livability of the community;

- (h) the additional population brought by the Centre would become a traffic burden in Pok Fu Lam. With a current population of about 20,000 people living around the Item A Site, the traffic demand was already so huge that the current mass transit system could hardly accommodate it. The waiting time at HKU Station was more than 10 minutes at peak hours. The accuracy of the TIA report was questionable as it underestimated the traffic congestion in Pok Fu Lam area; and
- (i) she urged the Board to keep the zoning of the Item A Site as “GB”.

R1238 – Chan Ka Wing Kevin

19. With the aid of a visualiser, Mr Chan Ka Wing Kevin made the following main points:

- (a) he was a resident of Pok Fu Lam and a graduate of HKU;
- (b) he quoted the views of Ambassador Geng Shuang, Deputy Permanent Representative of the People’s Republic of China to the United Nations, who spoke on the issue on the disposal of the Fukushima nuclear-contaminated water to the ocean, and some of his views on the issue could be mirrored in the development of the Centre in that both events (i) would bring about an irreversible ecological damage; (ii) would affect the homes of the neighbouring residents and species; (iii) hinged on relevant assessment reports to be a ‘licence’ for their undertaking, ignoring the well-being of other stakeholders in the concerned areas; and (iv) did not entail earnest communication with the affected stakeholders;
- (c) referring to an image of Mrs Carrie Lam, he highlighted that the Government

in her tenure as the former Chief Executive of Hong Kong and former Director of Social Welfare had put forward the elderly care policy of “ageing in place as the core, institutional care as back-up”. “Ageing in place” required the elderly to live in an environment featuring (i) a familiarity with mutual support from the neighbours; (ii) quiet, good ventilation and ample light with plenty of greenery; and (iii) convenient transport for them to commute. The Centre would put an end for these “ageing in place” features in Pok Fu Lam and replace them with a construction site that was full of dust and noise from blasting and breaking of rocks and traffic obstructions for the upcoming decade, and the elderly would suffer in such an environment. He quoted a proverb that meant “do not do to others what you do not want others to do to you” (己所不欲，勿施於人);

- (d) referring to an image of a panda, China’s national treasure, he appealed for more thoughts on whether developments that conferred benefits on society and humanity would necessarily be at the expense of someone else, and enquired if there was a win-win way out; and
- (e) he supported the I&T development of HKU, but opposed the Item A Site for the development of the Centre, for the reason that it would cause irreversible damage to the environment, degrade the livable living environment enjoyed by Pok Fu Lam residents, and contravene the “ageing in place” policy espoused by the Government. In case the expansion had to be in proximity to the campus, HKU should consider to relocate to places with better development potential in the long term.

R3176 – Hui Chi Sang Anthony

20. Mr Hui Chi Sang Anthony made the following main points:

- (a) he did not oppose the concept of the Centre per se, but opined that HKU’s proposal was fundamentally flawed. Many major universities around the world were pursuing strategic research such as cyber future, financial



technologies, quantum technologies, sustainable growth, etc., for which HKU encapsulated them into a term called “deep technology” or “upstream research”. As such, the terms were merely fuzzy language and did not present anything new or groundbreaking;

- (b) HKU did not provide details on what types of facility/equipment would be provided in the Centre, such as a Hadron Collider, a world-class biotech laboratory in Wuhan or the largest hypersonic wind tunnel in Beijing. Apparently, the approach of HKU was to secure land for the proposal first, and then work on the details later. The absence of such details could not substantiate HKU’s request for the amount of land, and Members could not assess whether this piece of land would meet the needs of the Centre. Also, there was no way to hold HKU accountable without well-defined key performance indicators targeted at achieving its objectives;
- (c) if HKU wished to become a world-class leading institution with a grand ambition, there would be no need for HKU to scale down its proposal to address the concerns raised by the community. The reason behind announcing the scale-down was merely to secure the land, and there was no clear idea for what HKU sought to achieve;
- (d) HKU should not be bound to Pok Fu Lam. There were many examples of successful universities with remote facilities in different locations, separate from the main campus. HKU should consider relocating the Centre to STT as suggested by many representers, since there were no constraints for further expansion. The Item A Site was a green belt with steep slopes, adjoining quiet residential communities and reliant on PFLR which was the major trunk road to the city centre and thus notorious for traffic jams during peak hours;
- (e) if synergy with main campus was imperative for the development of the Centre, then HKU should consider locating the Centre to Cyberport. Since its inception 20 years ago, the locational disadvantage had stifled the capability of Cyberport to contribute transformative technology and it had not been a favourite location for the top I&T companies. The upcoming Cyberport

Expansion provided an opportunity to both HKU and Cyberport. The construction work for Cyberport Expansion was expected to be completed by the end of 2025, thus providing a shorter timeframe for HKU to work on the design, site formation and construction. The participation of HKU would help turn the tide for the current business of Cyberport which was not robust for the past 20 years. The research developments anchored by HKU would rejuvenate Cyberport and be conducive to its positioning for the innovation mission; and

- (f) if the Centre was located in Cyberport, the calamitous rezoning of a piece of green belt with massive tree felling and slope levelling would be obviated. In addition, there was a prevailing trend to pursue sustainable development and environmental protection, with many businesses setting carbon emission goals as part of their key objectives. Therefore, HKU should instead put forward a proposal that did not require the razing of green belt.

[Mr Derrick S.M. Yip left this session of the meeting temporarily during R3176's presentation.]

R3323 – Vivianne Lau

R3352 – Chua Jamie Zai-En

21. Ms Vivianne Lau made the following main points:

- (a) PFLR was the primary distributor serving not only the residents of Pok Fu Lam but also users/staff of QMH. QMH was an important institution that should not be adversely impacted by traffic jams;
- (b) HKU chose the Item A Site for the Centre merely for the convenience of the professors and HKU staff, but had not taken into account the people living in the neighbourhood, the patients in the hospital, the students, animals, plants and insects in the area. Cyberport was not a successful innovation hub because of its location, and HKU should not repeat the same mistake; and

- (c) PFLM recognised the unique topographical constraints of the area, and came into force in 1972 to protect the neighbourhood from over-development and ensure that all future developments would blend in with the environment and be compatible with existing landforms, vegetation cover and character. However, HKU's proposal contravened the rationale of PFLM.

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

22. 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*

23. A Member raised the following questions:

- (a) how the Centre could benefit the community; and
- (b) why only 40% of the total GFA of the Centre as an upstream research facility was dedicated for research purpose.

24. In response, Ms Fan Mei Mary and Mr Kong Kai Chung, R9's representatives, with the aid of some PowerPoint slides, made the following main points:

- (a) on top of pursuing a top-notch research facility, the Centre would bring planning gains to the community. The design of the Centre sought to balance the operational requirements for accommodating research facilities that required expansive floor plates while achieving responsive building design and visual openness. Building separation and layout had been meticulously oriented to maximise air and visual permeability, while the height and bulk of the buildings would be compatible with the surrounding environment, creating

a stepping height profile in the area. On the traffic aspect, on-site drop-offs and setback for providing space for bus lay-by extension were proposed. Upgrading of the concerned road junctions would be conducted if necessary. To enhance the landscaping and greening of the proposed development, HKU had committed to providing a minimum of 30% overall greenery coverage and communal open space of not less than 12,000m<sup>2</sup>, thereby contributing to a quality landscape setting for use by the general public that benefited both the environment and the community. In addition to the intention to retain existing trees as much as practicable, new tree planting in clusters to recreate the habitat, and vertical greening or edge planting to soften the building form would be planned. Newly planted tree species would be carefully selected to sustain and attract biodiversity. Similar to the main campus of HKU, landscape plaza and courtyard were proposed at the podium level for events and leisure activities for public use. Members of the public could also pass through the Centre via lifts and escalators between PFLR and Victoria Road; and

- (b) in the indicative scheme of the Centre, some non-domestic GFA was reserved for research, academic, conference/exhibition, office and supporting facilities. Research facilities (about 40% of non-domestic GFA) included both wet and dry laboratories. Academic and office referred to space for teaching and learning as well as collating research results for publication and discussion. In short, both academic and office were areas dedicated for use by the research team. Together with the research facilities, they accounted for about 70% to 80% of the total GFA.

### *Site Selection*

25. Noting the difficulty in building on the vegetated slope, a Member referred to Plan H-2 of the Paper and asked if HKU could consider developing on land within the adjacent “Residential (Group C) 6” (“R(C)6”) and “Residential (Group C) 7” zones as Ebenezer School had planned to relocate to Tung Chung and there was no implementation programme for residential development in the vacant “R(C)6” zone. Noting that HKU would revise the design and layout to address the stakeholders’ concerns, the Vice-chairperson asked if HKU would consider relocating the Centre to another site at STT as suggested by some representers

in the event that the revised scheme did not meet the technical requirements and address community concerns. In response, Mr Chan Yu Sum Sam, R143, said that HKU would not rule out any possible options. As far as he understood, the formed land at STT in the first phase would be ready in the next 4 to 5 years, but it would take a longer time to develop a mature environment, including the establishment of other I&T related institutions/research institutions. HKU would consider the representers' suggestions, taking into account the available time and support. A Member followed up by suggesting HKU to consider the land in the 80-ha Lok Ma Chau Loop where land would be available by the end of 2024. Another Member opined that Hong Kong had five top universities in the world and the environment for research institutions was mature, enabling HKU to collaborate with other universities in contributing to the upstream I&T development.

### *Traffic and Transport*

26. In response to a Member's question on HKU's responses to the comments of R3319 relating to the TIA including, inter alia, how junction improvements at specific locations would be conducted and why traffic review would be submitted at a later stage, Ms Fan Mei Mary, R9's representative, made the following main points:

- (a) the TIA was conducted based on assumed development parameters, including the assumption that the proposed development would accommodate 7,000 employees including about 1,500 research teams. Besides, the TIA had taken into account major planned and committed developments in the vicinity such as the redevelopment of Wah Fu Estate and the Cyberport Expansion. Regarding the proposed SIL(W) which was under planning by MTRCL, HKU had met with MTRCL to discuss the interface issues to ensure smooth coordination of both projects. The TIA did not factor in the SIL(W) for assessment under the conservative approach and hence had assumed no modal shift resulting from any new non-road public transport systems;
- (b) the locations of the vehicular ingress/egress points and the capacity of the concerned road links and junctions in the vicinity were assessed. The TIA concluded that all assessed roads links and junctions, except for four junctions (J1, J8, J16 and J17), would operate satisfactorily during peak hours under the

scenario with the proposed development. Junction improvements for J1 (i.e. increasing the cycle time of traffic signals) and J8 (i.e. provision of staggered pedestrian crossing) were proposed in the TIA to ensure adequate junction capacity. Although junctions J16 and J17 were located further from the proposed development and the traffic generated/attracted by the proposed development at those two junctions was considered negligible, HKU had proposed junction improvement works. HKU had been liaising with TD on the need for the proposed improvement measures such as setback of the development site and road and pavement widening, and would coordinate with TD on the future improvement works if necessary;

- (c) the development programme of the Centre outlined in the TIA extended only to 2029 with a design year of 2032. In view of the considerable long timeframe for the implementation of the Centre, HKU had committed to undertaking an updated TIA at the detailed design stage, a construction TIA, and a traffic review prior to project commissioning. The requirement for HKU to submit these additional assessments had been incorporated into the ES of the OZP; and
- (d) PFLR was a primary distributor road with two lanes in each direction, connecting the Western District and the Aberdeen areas. HKU had implemented a number of projects in the area and was familiar with the traffic pressure of the local road network including PFLR, and HKU would continue to make every attempt to mitigate the any adverse traffic impact on the local road network. For example, to avoid congestion from buses queuing at the bus stop on PFLR, setback would be proposed to provide space for extension of bus lay-by. All loading/unloading activities for the Centre would be conducted on-site to avoid tailbacks/blockages at the vehicular ingress/egress. Widening of the footpath and pedestrian crossing at PFLR near the vehicular ingress/egress of the Centre was proposed. By adopting an open campus policy and facilitating pedestrian connectivity between PFLR and Victoria Road, HKU would provide vertical pedestrian connection routes via lifts and escalators within the Centre, which would be open for public use. An internal walkway would also be provided to connect the proposed Centre with the

## HKUMed and its expansion at Sassoon Road.

27. In response to a Member's question on whether HKU, as the project proponent, would bear the cost of the proposed traffic improvement measures, Ms Janet K.K. Cheung, DPO/HK, said that HKU would be responsible for designing and implementing, at its own cost, any traffic improvement measures or works identified in the TIA and any follow-up assessments/reviews as necessary to address traffic impacts related to the Centre. Ms Fan Mei Mary, R9's representative, supplemented that the project proponent would also bear the costs of improving supporting infrastructures, in addition to traffic measures, if warranted. HKU would coordinate with the Government on the follow-up work.

### *Project Construction*

28. Noting the comments of R3320 on the Centre's construction time, cost and impact, some Members raised the following questions:

- (a) how HKU would respond to R3320's comments, including the challenges of construction on slopes, the extent of excavation, the number of bored piles required, and the prolonged construction time and associated impact on the neighbourhood;
- (b) under the perception that construction on slopes would lead to higher cost and longer construction time, what percentage of the total cost the slope stabilisation works would account for. Whether rock blasting would be involved for site formation, and bored piling or slope cutting would be involved for slope works. To facilitate estimation of the completion time of the construction works, how long it would take from slope stabilisation to building substructure and from rock excavation to building superstructure; and
- (c) noting that Ebenezer School and Home for the Visually Impaired had expressed their concerns on the construction impact/nuisance of the proposed Centre, whether assessments on such impact, particularly noise nuisance during construction, were conducted.

29. In response, Mr Chan Yu Sum Sam (R143), Mr Kong Kai Chung and Ms Fan Mei Mary, R9's representatives, with the aid of some PowerPoint slides, made the following main points:

- (a) most of HKU's campuses/developments were on sloping sites. With experience accumulated, HKU had confidence in construction involving slopes. As the Centre was at the preliminary planning and design stage, the estimated construction costs and time were not available at the current stage. Nevertheless, based on past experience, the construction period should not be more than 10 years, assuming contractors had sufficient labour, resources and expertise in construction on slopes. The proposed Centre would adopt terraced building design to integrate with the slope profile of the Item A Site. The high-end laboratories, which were vibration sensitive, required foundation on solid bedrock. In accordance with the preliminary ground investigation information in the GPRR, the top soil was 2m to 3m deep and the rock layer was shallow at the Item A Site, and piles would not have to go deep to reach the solid bedrock. As shown on the diagrammatic plans in the preliminary design, the floor slab of the buildings would be placed away from Victoria Road so as to minimise the extent of rock excavation and hence time and cost. Similar to the phased development of Science Park or Cyberport, the Centre would be developed in three phases. HKU had devised a long-term plan including assessments covering all the phases. The scale of Phase 1 would be comparable to the Pokfield Campus Development. Commencement of the remaining phases would be subject to funding source and development needs upon completion of Phase 1;
- (b) by adopting a terraced design, it was anticipated that the extent of rock excavation would not be extensive, subject to further study. Previous experience and the ground investigation information showed that the rock layer at the Item A Site was intact and of high quality. Adoption of footing could be considered for the foundation works and there would be no need for using soil nail or bored piles for foundation, thereby reducing construction time and noise impact. Based on the preliminary information, the site formation works would account for about 5% of the total construction cost and the foundation



works would account for about 5% to 8%, subject to more information to be available at the detailed design stage. Around one-third of the construction period was estimated for foundation and substructure works. The superstructure would then be built after 2 to 3 years. While the GPRR indicated that the slopes within the Item A Site were in good condition, those in the adjacent “R(C)6” zone were weak. Natural terrain mitigation measures would be proposed and carried out in parallel as necessary; and

- (c) Ebenezer School had been identified as a sensitive receiver since the beginning of the project. HKU had been liaising with the school on its concerns on noise, sunlight penetration, ventilation and hoarding, etc. As Ebenezer School was located at a higher level, the original design of the podium of the Centre would extend to the boundary of the school site. . Taking into account the concerns of the stakeholders, the podium as shown in the preliminary design had incorporated building voids and undulating terraced design descending from east to west to minimise building bulk and blend in with the topography. Two 15m separations between buildings and a 10m buffer from Ebenezer School were designated to reduce visual impact and enhance wind environment. Phase 1 of the proposed development would be the farthest away from Ebenezer School. The impact of the construction activities would be alleviated by minimising the extent of rock excavation and the use of bored piles. Noting that the proposed building setback might not be considered adequate by Ebenezer School, HKU would liaise with Ebenezer School to explore effective measures such as noise barriers or improvement to the insulation of the school campus to mitigate noise at different stages and other design features to minimise the impacts.

30. A Member suggested that the information provided by HKU at the meeting should be communicated to the stakeholders in the upcoming consultation on the revised design so as to facilitate a smooth process in taking forward the project. Despite HKU’s clarification at the meeting, the same Member pointed out that the GPRR indicated a need for 60 large-diameter bored piles for slope stabilisation. There were two platforms near Baguio Villa with a height difference up to 18m to 20m, where soil and rocks would need to be excavated. It was common for the foundation and substructure works to take up one-third of the total construction

time of a project on flat land and more time would be required for a project on slope. HKU should not play down the impacts of the proposed development on the community. Another Member reminded HKU to provide quantitative information of the specific measures taken to support the claim of alleviating the impact during construction after considering the concerns of the stakeholders.

31. To follow up on Members' questions and suggestions mentioned above, Mr Nelson Tai Yuen Kwok, R3320, with the aid of some PowerPoint slides, supplemented that his assumptions were made based on the preliminary design as shown in the GPRR. He disagreed with HKU's claim that the excavation extent could be minimised because of intact and high-quality rock layer. According to his estimation from the GPRR, 84 large-diameter bored piles would be used. Excavation in rocks required significantly more time than in soil, with piling works progressing at a rate of only 1m per day. A substantial quantity of rocks would need to be removed, as indicated in the section plans for the proposed foundation and site formation in the GPRR. Simply using dump trucks for rock removal would take more than 5 years. The estimated total duration for site formation could range between 12.6 years and 16.3 years. These ballpark figures were calculated with reasonable assumptions. Rock breakers would generate noise exceeding 100dB and high-frequency vibration. Noise mitigation measures, including 10m setback and noise barriers, were considered ineffective, and substantial nuisance to Ebenezer School and Bagoio Villa would be expected. While he did not contest the GPRR's conclusion that the proposed site formation works were geotechnically feasible, he considered that the time, cost and impact made the Item A Site unsuitable for the proposed development. Referring to the ongoing Pokfield Campus project, delays were likely for construction on slopes, particularly those involving tuff rock.

32. In response to a Member's enquiry on HKU's perspective on the assumptions and assessments made by R3320, Mr Chan Yu Sum Sam, R143, and Ms Fan Mei Mary, R9's representative, with the aid of a PowerPoint slide, explained that some bored piles would indeed be required for slope cutting according to the preliminary design in the GPRR. About one-third of all the bored piles along the whole site would be used for Phase 1. HKU acknowledged the time and impact associated with large-scale excavation. While adopting a terraced building design, they would improve the design and layout and adjust the bulk of the development when more detailed ground investigation information was available. As Ebenezer School expressed concerns on the impact of low-frequency vibration, the use of bored

piles would be avoided as far as possible. In view of the time, cost and impact, the extent of rock excavation would be minimised. To address the anticipated delays often associated with construction on slopes, HKU would allow additional buffer time when planning the construction works at the detailed design stage. HKU had no specific comments on the assumptions made by Mr Nelson Tai Yuen Kwok, R3320.

33. In response to a Member's question about the potential effect on the Phase 1 operations from the construction of the remaining phases of the Centre, Ms Fan Mei Mary, R9's representative, said that the three phases would be separated by natural topographical features such as streams. Dedicated construction access between phases would be established. HKU would also review the proposed phasing when strategically amending the development scheme.

34. Mr Nelson Tai Yuen Kwok, R3320, commented that partial handover between phases could only occur after site formation was completed, as the laboratories were sensitive to vibration. The elevation of Victoria Road, being lower than the Centre, posed a risk, as any rockfall from the slope could damage vehicles and significantly affect traffic.

35. Mr Yeung Siu Hung, R3408, said that he had lived in Baguio Villa since 1997. He recalled a landslide in 1992 in Upper Baguio Villa that resulted in two fatalities. Following a heavy rainstorm in 1999, the property owners of Baguio Villa had to raise funds to construct a retaining wall to stabilise the nearby slope. During heavy downpours, mud and debris often ran down the slope between Baguio Villa and Sassoon Road, causing road closures for clean-up. The steep slope between PFLR and Victoria Road was not stable. It was too optimistic for HKU to estimate that only 5% of the construction cost was for slope stabilisation.

### *Zoning*

36. Noting that R3322 raised the question on whether it was possible for the Board to approve the "U" zone proposed by PlanD instead of the representers, a Member sought clarification on the Board's options for decision-making under the Ordinance. Ms Janet K.K. Cheung, DPO/HK, with the aid of a PowerPoint slide, replied that under section 6B(8) (s.6B(8)) of the Ordinance, "after considering any representation under this section, the Board must decide whether or not to propose amendment to the plan in the manner proposed by the representation; or to propose amendment to the plan in any other manner that, in the opinion of

the Board, will meet the representation”. Recently, HKU issued a press release to announce its decision to take some time to strategically review and amend the development plan to address stakeholders’ opinions as much as practicable. HKU also endeavoured to step up engagement with the community through various channels to improve the proposal and provide timely project updates. In light of the above, PlanD proposed to rezone the site to “U” in this interim period to serve as a stopgap arrangement pending completion of the review and further community engagement by HKU. The Board could consider the representations and decide whether to accept the suggestions made by the representers or by PlanD under s.6B(8) of the Ordinance.

37. Mr Ivan M.K. Chung, Director of Planning, supplemented that the Board, after considering the representations, could decide whether to amend the zoning of the Item A Site on the OZP in accordance with the Ordinance. If the decision was to amend the OZP, the Board could follow the proposals of the representers. Alternatively, the Board could amend the OZP in a way as it thought fit that would meet the representations. As stated in the Paper, some representations supported HKU’s project while a majority opposed it. Among the adverse representations, there were various comments and suggestions, e.g. imposing different building height (BH) restrictions and designating setback and non-building area, etc. HKU had announced that it was willing to revise the scheme, e.g. reducing density and bulk, increasing setback from neighbouring buildings, designating more green spaces, etc. and the Government agreed for HKU, as the project proponent, to suitably revise the development scale and layout to respond to stakeholders’ views. Pending HKU’s review and further consultation, it was premature for the Board at this juncture to decide to adopt other zonings or impose any specific planning restrictions in the absence of a revised scheme. It was not the first time for the Board to adopt “U” zone as an interim zoning. In parallel, HKU should engage the local stakeholders prior to the preparation and submission of a revised proposal to the Government for examination. Should the revised proposal be found acceptable, another round of statutory planning procedures would be required to rezone the site to an appropriate zoning with specified development parameters to guide and facilitate the development of the Centre. The public would then be invited to submit representations on the revised zoning on the OZP in accordance with the Ordinance.

38. Mr Kok Kai Lam Peter, R3263, queried if the zoning of the Item A Site had already been changed from “GB” to “OU(Global Innovation Centre)”. If so, such change of use had

not gone through any public consultation. With decades of experience in a developer firm, Mr Kok reckoned that the slope-related construction cost and time should be carefully considered. In addition, the construction traffic could only rely on Victoria Road, a two-lane single carriageway, which would definitely extend the required time for construction.

39. In response to R3263, the Chairperson said that the Item A Site had already been zoned “OU(Global Innovation Centre)” on the draft OZP, which came into effect in March 2024 when the draft OZP was exhibited for public inspection under section 5 (s.5) of the Ordinance. During the 2-month statutory exhibition period up to May 2024, representations on the “OU(Global Innovation Centre)” zone were received. The representations received and the public hearings had helped the Board understand the representers’ views on the proposed development and their proposals including rezoning the Item A Site back to “GB” at the hearing. After giving consideration to the representations and taking into account the points raised in the hearing sessions, the Board would decide whether to propose or not to propose any amendment to the draft OZP, including rezoning the Item A Site from “OU(Global Innovation Centre)” to an interim “U” zoning, to meet/partially meet the representations. The rationale for proposing to rezone the Item A Site to “U” by PlanD was to allow time for HKU to consider the site selection as well as reviewing its plan and revising the development bulk and scale to mitigate the impacts on the community. The “U” zone would serve as a stopgap arrangement pending completion of the consideration and review by HKU. If HKU wished to pursue the proposed development at the Item A Site, HKU should conduct further community engagement as pledged in its press release and submit the revised proposal supported with technical assessments to the Government for examination. If the Government accepted HKU’s revised proposal, there would be another round of statutory planning procedures for rezoning and the public would have the opportunity to submit written representations and attend hearings to express their views to the Board directly.

[Mr Derrick S.M. Yip, Ms Kelly Y.S. Chan and Mr Ryan M.K. Ip rejoined, and Mr Maurice K.W. Loo left this session of the meeting during the Q&A session.]

40. 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.

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

[The meeting was adjourned for lunch break at 1:00 p.m.]

42. The meeting was resumed at 2:00 p.m.

43. 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

Professor Jonathan W.C. Wong

Professor Roger C.K. Chan

Mr Vincent K.Y. Ho

Mr Ben S.S. Lui

Mr Timothy K.W. Ma

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

Assistant Director (Environmental Assessment)  
Environmental Protection Department  
Mr Gary C.W. Tam

Deputy Director/General  
Lands Department  
Ms Jane K.C. Choi

Director of Planning  
Mr Ivan M.K. Chung



Presentation and Question Sessions

44. 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 - DPO/HK

Mr Ronald C.H. Chan - STP/HK

**Representers and Representers' Representatives**

R9 – Cheng Hong Sui

Mr Cheung Hong Sui - Representer

Ms Fan Mei Mary ]

Mr Kong Kai Chung ] Representer's Representatives

Mr Ricco Chan ]

R143 – Chan Yu Sum Sam

Mr Chan Yu Sum Sam - Representer

R265 – Kadoorie Farm and Botanic Garden

Mr Nip Hin Ming - Representer's Representative

R374 – Bhasin Deeya

Ms Bhasin Deeya - Representer

R3332 – Lionel John Krieger

Mr Lionel John Krieger - Representer

R3364 – Chua Yuan Shiun Theodore

Mr Chua Yuan Shiun Theodore - Representer

R3408 – Yeung Siu Hung

Mr Yeung Siu Hung - Representor

R3448 – Fung Mei Ling

Ms Fung Mei Ling - Representor

R3530 – Donald Edward Knapp

Mr Donald Edward Knapp - Representor

R3535 – Gregory Laurence De’Eb

Mr Gregory Laurence De’Eb - Representor

R3545 – Wong Teck Sun

Mr Wong Teck Sun - Representor

R3637 – The Conservancy Association

Mr Ng Hei Man - Representor’s Representative

R3657 – Mary Mulvihill

Ms Mary Mulvihill - Representor

R3663 – Island South Property Management Limited

Ms Ng Wing Han - Representor’s Representative

R3668 – Vera Ho

Ms Vera Ho - Representor

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

R3332 – Lionel John Krieger

46. Mr Lionel John Krieger made the following main points:

- (a) he opposed Item A on the draft OZP;
- (b) HKU's proposal was prepared hastily without sufficient information to support the need of the project and its feasibility, as well as to address the objections raised by stakeholders. The 'no in-principle objection' provided by relevant government departments to the proposal at this early stage should not be taken as an endorsement of the proposed development;
- (c) HKU's proposal was a right project but in the wrong place. He disagreed with HKU's justification for locating the Centre at a site between PFLR and Victoria Road (i.e. the Item A Site) to create synergy with HKU's existing facilities. By citing an overseas example where research findings were mainly shared online, he believed that proximity to HKU's Main Campus was not necessary to foster collaboration; and
- (d) STT, which was positioned as an I&T hub, would be established in the near future. The Centre, which occupied approximately 4 ha, could be easily accommodated within STT. Therefore, it was considered unnecessary to locate the Centre at the Item A Site.

R3408 – Yeung Siu Hung

47. With the aid of a PowerPoint presentation, Mr Yeung Siu Hung made the following main points:

- (a) he was a resident of Baguio Villa and opposed Item A;
- (b) HKU had not conducted a timely and adequate local consultation for the development of the Centre at the Item A Site;
- (c) the proposed nitrogen tank of the Centre was disproportionately large (occupying an area of about 9,000 square feet (ft<sup>2</sup>)) and was located close to Blocks 19 to 21 of Upper Baguio Villa (about 35m). Without knowing the

actual amount and type of gas to be stored in the tank, and considering a fatal gas explosion incident at a CLP power station in 1992, the proposed nitrogen tank was considered risky and a potential threat to the safety of local residents. It was proposed to relocate the nitrogen tank at least 100m away from residential areas to ensure public safety;

- (d) the proposed scholars' residence/staff quarters block with a proposed BH of 158 Metres above Principal Datum (mPD), which was located close to Blocks 19 to 21 of Upper Baguio Villa and Woodbury Court (about 30m apart), would create adverse visual and air ventilation impacts on the surrounding residential developments. The proposed scholars' residence/staff quarters block should be located at least 100m away from residential areas to ensure the quality of life of local residents;
- (e) Pok Fu Lam was not served by MTR, and residents mainly relied on buses and minibuses for their daily commuting. However, the public transport services were not efficient. For example, different franchised bus companies operated similar bus routes without proper coordination, resulting in poor bus schedules that significantly affected residents' daily travel. The current traffic condition would be worsened with the increased traffic flow from the Centre. To alleviate those issues, appropriate traffic improvement measures, including the timely implementation of the SIL(W) and improved coordination among public transportation service providers, should be considered; and
- (f) the suitability of locating the Centre at the Item A Site was in doubt. Alternative sites should be explored.

R3448 – Fung Mei Ling

48. With the aid of a PowerPoint presentation, Ms Fung Mei Ling made the following main points:

- (a) she had been living in Pok Fu Lam for over 20 years. She supported the

development of the Centre but opposed its location in Pok Fu Lam primarily due to traffic concerns;

- (b) the capacity of PFLR, Victoria Road and Sassoon Road was limited. Apart from the Centre, there were a number of ongoing projects in the district, including HKU's redevelopment projects, redevelopment of Wah Fu Estate, Cyberport Expansion and QMH Redevelopment. Construction works for those projects would require temporary closure of sections of PFLR and Victoria Road and adversely affect the traffic conditions. The population and workforce in Pok Fu Lam were increasing, with over 50,000 people living and working in the area. There were also more than seven primary and secondary schools near the Centre. With poor public transport services and the lack of a concrete implementation programme for SIL(W), the increase in traffic flow from the Centre would further aggravate the traffic congestion problem in the area, particularly on PFLR and Victoria Road;
- (c) when the underground water mains burst, resulting in the closure of a section of Wong Chuk Hang Road in Aberdeen last year, PFLR and Victoria Road served as alternative routes to divert congested traffic in the Southern District. That incident highlighted the importance of PFLR and Victoria Road in the area. Given the limited capacity of PFLR and Victoria Road, no more large-scale projects, such as the Centre, should be implemented in the area to avoid further worsening of the existing traffic condition; and
- (d) the potential noise nuisance from the prolonged construction period of the Centre (i.e. about 10 to 15 years) would seriously disrupt the learning environment for students in nearby schools such as Ebenezer School and the ISF Academy.

R3530 – Donald Edward Knapp

49. With the aid of a PowerPoint presentation, Mr Donald Edward Knapp made the following main points:

- (a) he had lived in Hong Kong since 2007 and used to walk past the Item A Site daily. He opposed Item A;
- (b) he shared the concerns raised by other representers, particularly regarding the potential adverse traffic impact of the Centre and its proximity to Blocks 19 to 21 of Upper Baguio Villa and Woodbury Court;
- (c) he only learnt about the details of the Centre project in early May this year, but the proposal had already been agreed by the Metro Planning Committee (MPC) of the Board in March this year. At that time, the public did not have the opportunity to provide comments on the proposal;
- (d) during the briefing to the local residents by HKU in May this year, he noticed that despite the considerable opposition to the proposed development at the Item A Site from the community, people consistently expressed their support for the research centre proposed by HKU;
- (e) the challenge of constructing the Centre on a steep slope at the Item A Site would increase the project cost and involve a longer implementation timeframe, which would hinder the Government's effort to enhance Hong Kong's innovation capacity as stated in the Outline of 14<sup>th</sup> Five-Year Plan for National Economic and Social Development of the People's Republic of China and the Long-Range Objectives Through the Year 2035;
- (f) developing the Centre in Pok Fu Lam was not sensible as there were no critical mass or clusters of upstream research and development facilities in the vicinity. In addition, there was little room for future expansion of the Centre at the Item A Site. Alternative sites in STT and the Hong Kong-Shenzhen Innovation and Technology Park in NM, both of which were government-initiated with plenty of land for I&T development, should be considered by HKU. Locating similar uses next to each other could create a synergy effect. Besides, there would be more comprehensive infrastructures and facilities in NM, including residential developments to accommodate research talents, making it more appealing to researchers from

the Mainland and overseas;

- (g) PlanD's response provided in paragraph 6.2.7 of the Paper that "GB" still occupied a major portion, amounting to 28.43% (or 117.43 ha) of the total area covered by the OZP, was misleading. Most of the "GB" zones were actually inaccessible and scattered among other uses. Rezoning the Item A Site, which had been designated as "GB" zone for over 40 years, for the development of the Centre would adversely affect the living environment of local residents;
- (h) he disagreed with PlanD's response in paragraph 6.2.8 of the Paper that the proposed development was not incompatible with the surrounding environment, which was dominated by medium-rise residential developments and government, institution and community facilities with vegetated slopes. He pointed out that the more "GB" areas were rezoned for development, the more areas would become "not incompatible", eventually resulting in a further reduction in "GB" areas;
- (i) the technical assessments submitted by HKU indicated that the existing sewerage system in Pok Fu Lam would need to be upgraded to accommodate the increase in sewage discharge from the Centre. That implied that extensive new sewer laying works on Victoria Road and sewer upgrading works on Cyberport Road would be required. The land excavation needed for those sewer laying and upgrading works would adversely affect the traffic conditions in the area;
- (j) he disagreed with PlanD's recommendation to rezone the Item A Site to "U" as stated in paragraph 9.3 of the Paper. Rezoning a site for another use should only be considered appropriate when the existing zoning was no longer compatible with its current use, which was not true in the current case. In addition, HKU should have ample time to prepare a proper and practical proposal to address local concerns before the land was rezoned, but they failed to do so. As such, the community was hesitant to believe that HKU would genuinely consider local opinions after the rezoning proposal was

agreed by the Board; and

- (k) given that HKU was currently undertaking several large-scale and complex projects in the area, including the Pokfield Campus Development and High West projects, it was questionable whether they had sufficient capacity to take on another complicated project like the Centre at the same time.

R3535 – Gregory Laurence De’Eb

50. With the aid of a PowerPoint presentation, Mr Gregory Laurence De’Eb made the following main points:

- (a) he was the Chairman of Woodbury Court Incorporated Owners (IO), one of the spokespersons of the HKU Global Innovation Centre Public Representation Group and the Convenor of the Pokfulam IO Forum that encompassed about 22 residential developments in Pok Fu Lam. He opposed Item A;
- (b) no proper public consultation had been conducted by HKU, despite one of its representatives stating at the MPC meeting held in March this year that more regular meet-ups with local residents would be conducted, and a letter to the ITIB in August this year indicating that HKU would enhance its engagement with stakeholders and the community through various channels. In fact, most stakeholders were only informed of the proposed development eight days before the deadline for making representation, resulting in a significant number of opposing representations being submitted in the last few days before expiry of the 2-month plan exhibition period;
- (c) HKU was not trustworthy, as revealed by his previous experience in negotiating with HKU regarding a residential development opposite to Woodbury Court across PFLR, i.e. the High West project for student and senior staff accommodation. HKU did not provide a full picture of the whole development scheme and the local stakeholders were only consulted on part of the development proposal. While HKU explained that public



consultation was considered not necessary as the remaining part of the development for the staff quarters conformed to the “Residential (Group C)” (“R(C)”) zoning of the OZP, it revealed that HKU did not respect local views. As for the Centre, local stakeholders had also not been consulted with the enlarged site area of 4.72 ha, which had increased by 17.5% compared to the 4 ha site mentioned in the 2021 PA. Besides, while a total GFA of about 222,720m<sup>2</sup> was proposed for the Centre, only 39% was designated for research purposes, and the remaining 61% was allocated for unnecessary uses such as staff quarters, restaurants, cafes, shops, offices and conference facilities;

- (d) he considered it absurd to destroy the existing natural “GB” areas to provide 12,000m<sup>2</sup> of communal open space within the proposed development. The proposal, which would induce unnecessary cost, was a waste of valuable resources and made a mockery of HKU’s claims of sustainability. It was strongly opposed by the local community;
- (e) HKU currently owned 18 high-rise residential developments in Pok Fu Lam and some of which were available for private rental. Notwithstanding that, the High West project which comprised a few 19 to 20 storeys towers for student and senior staff accommodation would soon be completed in Q2 2025. Given the over-capacity of HKU’s residential units in Pok Fu Lam, there was no need for HKU to develop another large-scale project with residential components in the neighbourhood;
- (f) 90% of the Phase 1 area of the Centre (about 1.7 ha) would be used for residential, restaurant, cafe and carpark. Excluding the Phase 1 area (1.7 ha) and the communal open space outside the Phase 1 area (0.77 ha out of the total communal open space of 1.2 ha to be provided for the whole development), only about 2.23 ha of land was required for research purposes, which was less than half of the original development area of 4.72 ha. Instead of sacrificing the “GB” areas, HKU should consider utilising the piece of land zoned “R(C)6” to the immediate east of the Item Site A (about 2.5 ha) for the development of the Centre. By locating the Centre at the “R(C)6” zone,

synergy could be created with HKU's existing and planned residential developments in the "R(C)" zone right across PFLR, while preserving the existing "GB" areas at the Item A Site. This could be a win-win solution for both HKU and the local community; and

- (g) in view of the difficulties faced by the students of Ebenezer School, no construction works should take place until the school and its students could be relocated elsewhere.

[Mr Paul Y.K. Au left this session of the meeting temporarily during R3535's presentation.]

R3545 – Wong Teck Sun

51. Mr Wong Teck Sun made the following main points:

- (a) he was the chairman of the Royalton II Owners' Corporation and currently living in Pok Fu Lam. He was also a retired teacher of HKU. He opposed Item A;
- (b) an adjacent site along PFLR originally zoned "GB" had been rezoned to facilitate the expansion of HKUMed, resulting in a loss of "GB" areas in the community. The Centre, which involved the rezoning of an even larger "GB" area, would substantially affect the living environment of the local residents;
- (c) he concurred with the concerns raised by other representers regarding the adverse traffic impact of the development of the Centre in Pok Fu Lam;
- (d) PlanD recommended rezoning the Item A Site to "U" as an interim land use zoning to allow HKU to review its development proposal. He disagreed with this recommendation as it appeared that the Item A Site would still be selected for the same purpose, though with a revised proposal. Instead, given the significant local objections primarily focused on site selection, HKU should seriously consider alternative sites for the Centre;

- (e) it was considered unnecessary to locate the Centre near HKU's existing facilities as communication with researchers, including those from overseas, had become easy and convenient nowadays with the advancement in technology;
- (f) the Centre with a proposed BH of 158mPD was considered unacceptable as it would be higher than the adjacent Ebenezer School with a BH of 151mPD, resulting in adverse visual impact on the neighbourhood. Besides, it would convert a large "GB" area into concrete structures; and
- (g) he requested the Board to exercise its function independently, taking into account the strong objections raised by local residents and to urge HKU to reconsider alternative sites for the Centre.

R3637 – The Conservancy Association

52. With the aid of a PowerPoint presentation, Mr Ng Hei Man made the following main points:

- (a) he had three main concerns regarding the rezoning of the "GB" for the development of the Centre at the Item A Site. A balance between development and conservation should be struck. If HKU could not adequately address the conservation-related issues, alternative sites for developing the Centre should be considered;

*Tree Conservation*

- (b) according to his visit to the Item A Site, it was a densely-vegetated area with many large and mature trees, such as Chinese Banyan (*Ficus microcarpa*) (細葉榕), and some channelised watercourses. Although some human disturbances were noted at the Item A Site, its ecological value was high. Only a small number of invasive tree species, such as White Popinac (*Leucaena leucocephala*) (銀合歡), were observed. In contrast, a

significant number of young and healthy trees and various native plants and shrub species were found. Referring to the aerial photos from the 1960s to the 1990s, he believed that the Item A Site could continue to regenerate into a more mature secondary woodland if no further human disturbances occurred;

- (c) it was disappointing that only a limited number of compensatory trees would be provided. The proposed compensation of 854 trees was significantly fewer than the 2,025 trees to be felled. The compensatory planting ratio was only 1:0.48, which was far below the minimum ratio of 1:1 as recommended in relevant guidelines;
- (d) off-site compensatory planting had not been thoroughly explored in the indicative scheme. Referring to other rezoning exercises, for example, the rezoning of “GB” sites for proposed residential developments in Pok Fu Lam, Ma On Shan and Kwai Chung in 2018, 2021 and 2022 respectively, various ecological mitigation measures were proposed. Those measures included the identification of off-site woodland compensation areas, afforestation and plantation enrichment programmes. Setting aside the effectiveness of those mitigation measures, ecological impacts were at least carefully assessed during the study process and mitigation measures were proposed. HKU should adequately assess the ecological impact of the proposed development at the Item A Site and explore alternative tree compensatory strategies;

*Hong Kong Tree Gecko (Hemiphyllodactylus hongkongensis) (半葉趾虎)*

- (e) Hong Kong Tree Gecko was only exclusively found in Hong Kong and was confirmed as endemic to Hong Kong by an official declaration in an international academic journal in 2018. There were records of Hong Kong Tree Geckos on Hong Kong Island including Pok Fu Lam and Aberdeen. Previous records indicated that Hong Kong Tree Geckos had been spotted near the Item A Site;
- (f) a proposal to rezone a “GB” site in Pok Fu Lam to facilitate public housing development was considered by the Board in mid-2018. In that case, since

Hong Kong Tree Geckos were spotted in the “GB” site, the project proponent revised the original proposal by reducing the size of the housing site and dividing it into two separate sites to minimise the impact on the habitat of Hong Kong Tree Geckos;

- (g) there was no record of Hong Kong Tree Geckos in the Ecological Impact Assessment submitted by HKU. HKU should critically revisit the ecological survey. If Hong Kong Tree Geckos were found at the Item A Site, appropriate ecological mitigation measures should be recommended;

#### *Heritage Conservation*

- (h) he expressed concern about the protection of the boundary stones and the structures associated with the Old Dairy Farm located within or near the Item A Site. Historical records revealed that the Item A Site overlapped with Pokfulam Dairy Farm Lot D.F.L.2, which was previously used for dairy farming activities by the Old Dairy Farm. A local group attempted to locate the boundary stones of the Old Dairy Farm, and their findings indicated that some were located within or near the Item A Site. Besides, according to a survey map prepared by the Japanese during the 1940s and some past land survey sheets, structures related to the Old Dairy Farm, such as cowshed and dairy farm quarters, were located within or very close to the Item A Site. Similar structures and relics were observed during his visit to the Item A Site; and
- (i) while he did not oppose the Government’s policy to promote I&T development, a better tree compensation plan should be formulated to preserve the trees and woodland; a comprehensive ecological assessment should be conducted and a contingency plan should be formulated to protect the endemic Hong Kong Tree Geckos; and further assessment should be conducted to ensure proper preservation of non-graded heritage and boundary stones of the Old Dairy Farm. In summary, more thorough evaluation of conservation-related issues was necessary before making any further decision.

[Mr Paul Y.K. Au rejoined this session of the meeting during R3637's presentation.]

R265 – Kadoorie Farm and Botanic Garden

53. With the aid of some video clips, Mr Nip Hin Ming made the following main points:

- (a) it was noted that the Item A Site was recommended to be rezoned to “U” at a very late stage;
- (b) he had prepared several video clips to provide Members with an accurate understanding of the current situation at the Item A Site and the brownfield sites in the New Territories;
- (c) the first and second video clips showed the current condition of the Item A Site and its surrounding area. The Item A Site was a densely vegetated steep slope with many large and mature trees. Ebenezer School and Home for the Visually Impaired, as well as some residential developments such as Baguio Villa were located in proximity to the Item A Site. The existing green belt provided a pleasant environment for the neighbourhood to enjoy;
- (d) the third and fourth video clips showed the brownfield sites in Pat Heung. Those sites occupied large areas of flat land in rural areas, which were mainly used for open storage, vehicle repair workshops, recycling yards, etc. The brownfield sites were easily accessible from major roads;
- (e) the fifth video clip highlighted the beautiful fish ponds in San Tin. Those fish ponds would be destroyed and filled to facilitate I&T development in STT. He doubted whether it was a good planning to distribute I&T developments across different districts;
- (f) while supporting the Government's policy to promote I&T development, it was questionable why I&T development needed to be located at the Item A Site, which was a well-wooded area on a steep slope. The Government should prioritise developments at brownfield sites before considering the

option of developing “GB” sites; and

- (g) Kadoorie Farm and Botanic Garden had not been consulted regarding the rezoning for the Centre. He hoped that HKU would engage green groups when revising the development proposal for the Centre.

[Professor Jonathan W.C. Wong left this session of the meeting during R265’s presentation.]

R3663 – Island South Property Management Limited

54. Ms Ng Wing Han made the following main points:

- (a) she presented on behalf of Island South Property Management Limited and the IO of Residence Bel-Air;
- (b) local residents were mainly concerned about the adverse traffic impact of the Centre on the surrounding area, particularly with redevelopment of Wah Fu Estate and Cyberport Expansion also underway. There were doubts about whether the traffic impact brought by redevelopment of Wah Fu Estate on Victoria Road, which was the main access to Residence Bel-Air, had been taken into account in the TIA submitted by HKU. They worried that the Centre would further overstrain the traffic capacity of Victoria Road; and
- (c) two suggestions were put forward for HKU’s further consideration. Firstly, the scale of the Centre should be reduced. Under the indicative scheme, only 39% of the GFA of the Centre was designated for research facilities, while a significant portion was allocated for non-research uses, which was not in line with the intention of developing an I&T centre. Secondly, as mentioned by other representers, HKU should seriously consider locating the Centre in alternative locations.

R3668 – Vera Ho

55. Ms Vera Ho made the following main points:

- (a) she had collected views from local residents regarding the development of the Centre at the Item A Site. Local residents raised concerns mainly about issues such as transport infrastructure, road capacity, preservation of the “GB” zone, conservation, etc. Residents of Blocks 19 to 21 of Upper Baguio Villa also expressed serious concerns about the close proximity to their residences;
- (b) the controversy was mainly due to the lack of effective communication between HKU and the local community. Local residents were informed late about the rezoning proposal and were not adequately informed about the details of the development proposal, resulting in strong opposition from local residents;
- (c) the I&T development was supported and should not be hindered due to the lack of an effective communication mechanism. The residents’ concerns about the Centre’s close proximity to their homes and HKU’s intention to establish the Centre near its Main Campus to create synergy effect were duly acknowledged. Nonetheless, further justification was required to explain why the synergy effect could only be created by placing research and laboratory facilities close to HKU’s Main Campus;
- (d) Pok Fu Lam was not served by MTR. With redevelopment of Wah Fu Estate (including future developments in Kai Lung Wan) and frequent bursts of underground water mains in Pok Fu Lam, local residents were concerned that the traffic conditions would be further worsened, significantly affecting their daily commutes; and
- (e) while the proposed I&T development was in the right direction, the key issue was how to address the concerns raised by local residents. It was hoped that the outstanding issues could be resolved through an effective communication mechanism.



R3657 – Mary Mulvihill

56. With the aid of a visualiser, Ms Mary Mulvihill made the following main points:

*Item A*

- (a) the community was very confused about the zoning of the Item A Site. While it was originally rezoned from “GB” and “R(C)6” to “OU(Global Innovation Centre)”, it was lately recommended to be rezoned to an interim zoning of “U”. The last-minute change to a completely different zoning without consultation would undermine the town planning process;
- (b) rezoning the Item A Site for developing the Centre under s.5 of the Ordinance without the need to submit section 12A (s.12A) application had bypassed the town planning procedures. While there were mechanisms for deferment and submission of further information to support the development scheme under s.12A of the Ordinance, there were no such provisions under s.5 zoning amendment process. By incorporating the proposed development directly as an amendment to the OZP under s.5 of the Ordinance, the required procedures under s.12A application were obviated and there was no mechanism for addressing the technical issues raised and concerns received on the proposal. Hearing of representations at the meeting was a dead end for the community as the Government would have impact on the Board’s decision, and the plans it supported were never rejected by the Board;
- (c) HKU had not provided any information on the funding source and cost of the development of the Centre, and the land premium issue had never been mentioned. Making reference to the land sales of residential/commercial sites in Sha Tin, Kai Tak and Kennedy Town and a petrol filling station site in Pok Fu Lam, and assuming land premium of HK\$5,000 and HK\$7,000 per ft<sup>2</sup>, the land premium of the Centre at the Item A Site with a GFA of 222,720m<sup>2</sup> (i.e. about 2,397,000ft<sup>2</sup>) would amount to about HK\$12 billion and HK\$17 billion respectively. If HKU could get the valuable Item A Site free of charge, in particular when it had been mired in controversy including

financial irregularities, it would be a matter of concern to the taxpayers;

- (d) while the 2021 PA announced that the Government had accepted in principle the proposal from HKU, the policy could change due to changing circumstances. As stated in the 2023 PA, ‘developing the rest of the “GB” areas, which include many slopes, has been considered highly challenging. As the Government has already identified enough land for housing, industry and other developments for the coming 30 years, the Government has no plan for the time being to further use the “GB” areas for large-scale development.’ As such, rezoning the Item A Site, which was zoned “GB”, for the development of the Centre was inappropriate and was in contravention of the 2023 PA;
- (e) it was alarming that more than 2,000 trees would be felled, and only about 800 compensatory trees would be planted, many of which would be planted on podiums at various levels. That approach completely ignored one of the objectives of Hong Kong’s Climate Action Plan 2050 for promoting urban forestry;
- (f) no information was provided in the Drainage Impact Assessment (DIA) submitted by HKU about the impact of the slope works on local ecosystem and drainage system. The significant level difference would result in extensive slope excavation and site formation works, which would be costly and render the Item A Site vulnerable to landslides, particularly during torrential rainfall;
- (g) while HKU proposed to provide not less than 12,000m<sup>2</sup> of communal open space for passive recreational uses at various levels of the Centre, the proposed communal open spaces were neither accessible nor pedestrian-friendly;
- (h) it was unreasonable for the Government to partially lift the PFLM for developing the Centre, and the interest of HKU was clearly taking precedence over that of the community;

- (i) she queried why the Centre could not be located in other places, such as STT and Cyberport;
- (j) the Item A Site should be reverted to “GB” as it was obvious that HKU did not need so much space. HKU should develop the Centre together with the supporting infrastructure in NM; and

*Item C*

- (k) PlanD’s responses, which stated that Item C was to reflect the as-built condition and land grant boundary of Wah Fu Estate and the existing trees at the site would not be affected by the rezoning, was misleading. It should be noted that Wah Fu Estate would be redeveloped and the trees at the Item C Site might be affected. The existing “Open Space” zoning should be retained as it formed part of the green buffer between the estate and the shoreline. No information was provided regarding the number and condition of trees located at the Item C Site and within the area of redevelopment of Wah Fu Estate. There was also no guarantee that the trees located at the Item C Site would be retained.

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

57. 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.

*Alternative Location for the Centre*

58. Noting that some representers had suggested using the adjacent vacant “R(C)6” site for the development of the Centre, a Member asked whether HKU had explored this option.

In response, Mr Chan Yu Sum Sam, R143, and Ms Fan Mei Mary, R9's representative, said that when identifying a site for the development of the Centre, the major considerations including site area, site profile (such as constructability on slope) and accessibility to HKU's Main Campus had been taken into account. While the vacant "R(C)6" site was similar to the Item A Site in terms of constructability and accessibility, it had a smaller area and did not meet the requirement of at least 4 ha to create a critical mass for a self-sustaining Centre development that could accommodate various research, academic, office and conference facilities. Hence, it was considered that the Item A Site would be more appropriate for the development of the Centre. Nonetheless, HKU would revisit the possibility of using the vacant "R(C)6" site for the development of the Centre in the upcoming process.

59. In response to a Member's enquiry about the major planning considerations/constraints in case deploying the adjacent vacant "R(C)6" site for the development of the Centre, Ms Janet K.K. Cheung, DPO/HK, PlanD said that the area of the adjacent vacant "R(C)6" site was about 2.5 ha. According to the Notes of the OZP for the "R(C)" zone, I&T as well as research and development uses were neither Columns 1 nor 2 uses, and zoning amendment was required for the development of the Centre. Project proponents would need to provide justifications and conduct relevant technical assessments to support the zoning amendment, which would be circulated to relevant government bureaux/departments for comment prior to submission to the Board.

60. The Chairperson remarked that if HKU was inclined to explore alternative locations for the development of the Centre, such as the vacant "R(C)6" site, the Government would be prepared to consider the option with HKU.

#### *Expansion Plan*

61. Noting that the Item A Site might not have much spaces for the expansion of the Centre, a Member enquired about HKU's future expansion plan and whether HKU would consider alternative locations with greater flexibility for expansion, such as STT. In response, Ms Fan Mei Mary and Mr Kong Kai Chung, R9's representatives, made the following main points:

- (a) HKU strategically planned for its future expansion several years ago, aiming

to implement various developments to meet the needs for its growth. The development of the Centre, which was positioned for the medium term (i.e. for the next 10 years), would meet HKU's planned development needs. In parallel, HKU had been continuously reviewing its floorspace requirements in view of the changing circumstances. After the COVID-19 pandemic, while teaching and working modes had changed and some floorspaces in HKU campus for teaching and administration functions could be reviewed to optimise land use, dedicated research spaces would still need to be provided on campus; and

- (b) the Centre, which was planned to develop at the Item A Site in three phases, would accommodate 1,500 world-class research teams with a total of 7,000 employees.

62. In response to another Member's enquiry, Mr Kong Kai Chung, R9's representative, said that the estimated number of employees that could be accommodated in the Centre was derived based on the GFA of the planned facilities and would be adjusted according to the actual operational requirements. As such, the 1,500 research teams and 7,000 employees referred to the estimated maximum capacity of the Centre.

#### *Alternative Option for Scholars' Residence/Staff Quarters*

63. Noting R3535's views that HKU had a number of staff quarters in Pok Fu Lam and some units were currently vacant and available in the private rental market, a Member enquired whether HKU had considered using those vacant premises as scholars' residence/staff quarters of the Centre such that the total GFA of the Centre could be reduced.

64. In response, Mr Kong Kai Chung, R9's representative, made the following main points:

- (a) HKU had a number of staff quarters in Pok Fu Lam, yet the vacancy rate for those accommodation was low. Having discussed with the Government, some vacant units, which were generally large and not preferred by HKU staff, were allowed to be put in the private rental market. HKU was considering

reducing the size of those vacant units to better meet the needs of the staff;  
and

- (b) the proposed scholars' residence/staff quarters of the Centre aimed to provide short-term accommodation, say, 2 to 3 months, for the visiting scholars/researchers as it was considered difficult for them to rent short-term accommodation in the private market.

### *Risk and Safety Concerns*

65. Noting R3408's concerns that placing nitrogen tank close to Upper Baguio Villa would put residents' health and safety at risk, a Member enquired whether HKU had any measures to address such concerns. In response, Mr Chan Yu Sum Sam, R143, explained that nitrogen was not toxic. With relevant risk mitigation measures, a nitrogen tank was different from nitrogen cylinders and the risk of gas explosion was very low. Besides, all relevant government legislation and safety standards would be strictly followed. Nonetheless, in view of the residents' concerns, HKU committed to revisiting the location of the nitrogen tank and to further assessing the potential risk of the nitrogen tank when revising the development proposal for the Centre.

### *Tree Preservation and Ecological Conservation*

66. Noting that a representer mentioned at the previous session of the hearing that a critically endangered species, yellow-crested cockatoo, would lose its habitat if substantial mature trees at the Item A Site were felled, a Member asked the representatives of R265 (Kadoorie Farm and Botanic Garden) and R3637 (The Conservancy Association) for their views on the ecological impact of the Centre on yellow-crested cockatoo.

67. In response, Mr Nip Hin Ming, R265's representative, made the following main points:

- (a) while yellow-crested cockatoo was not a native species in Hong Kong and was an exotic one, it was listed as a critically endangered species in the global context. According to bird experts, there was a small and stable population

of yellow-crested cockatoos in Hong Kong. Although they had a habit of digging holes in tree trunks for their roosting sites that might affect the health of the trees, they were worthy of preservation given their status as a critically endangered species. While he had not observed any yellow-crested cockatoos at the Item A Site, they were often spotted in Hong Kong Park on Hong Kong Island and occasionally found in Sham Shui Po in Kowloon;

- (b) in respect of ecological conservation, due regard should be given to the overall ecological habitat of the locality rather than focusing solely on a particular species. Different kinds of birds (such as bird of prey (猛禽)), insects, bats and wildlife animals were found at the Item A Site, and they sometimes migrated to the nearby country parks and green belts. Their reliance on and relationship with the Item A Site and its surrounding areas should not be neglected; and
- (c) he was more concerned about the potential impact of the Centre on Hong Kong Tree Gecko, as mentioned by R3637. That species, which was only exclusively found in Hong Kong, had a very small population. Although he had no record of finding the species at the Item A Site, Hong Kong Tree Gecko could be found in other parts of Pok Fu Lam.

68. In addition, Mr Ng Hei Man, R3637's representative, made the following main points:

- (a) he had no information on whether yellow-crested cockatoos were found at the Item A Site. Yellow-crested cockatoos always dug holes in tree trunks for their roosting sites, which might affect the health of the trees. On the other hand, tree management authorities might prefer removing dead limbs for safety reasons, which could in turn affect the roosting sites of yellow-crested cockatoos; and
- (b) if yellow-crested cockatoos were found at the Item A Site, consideration should be given to striking a balance between tree preservation and conservation of yellow-crested cockatoos. The habitat and behaviour of

yellow-crested cockatoos should be studied and the impacts of tree felling on their population should be assessed. Appropriate mitigation measures should be recommended, such as designation of a tree preservation zone and formulation of guidelines on tree management including pruning. Those measures would help minimise disturbance to yellow-crested cockatoos while ensuring effective tree management.

69. Noting some representers' concerns about the felling of about 2,000 trees while only planting about 850 new trees as compensation, a Member asked whether there was any scope to preserve and/or compensate for more trees during the revision of the development proposal of the Centre to minimise its ecological impact on the environment. In response, Ms Fan Mei Mary, R9's representative, said that owing to site constraints and conflicts with the development layout, it was anticipated that about 2,000 trees would inevitably be felled. Although only about 850 new trees would be planted, HKU put much emphasis on the quality of the compensatory trees. For example, more heavy standard trees with larger diameter at breast height rather than light standard trees would be planted, and the possibility of planting new trees in appropriate locations instead of simply putting them on the roof had been duly considered. Compensatory trees would also be planted in clusters to form natural habitats for birds/butterflies' foraging. Off-site tree planting had been explored but no suitable sites could be identified yet. Nevertheless, when revising the development proposal for the Centre, HKU would critically review the tree preservation and compensation proposals, and liaise with the concerned government departments to explore off-site tree planting options.

#### *Drainage and Sewerage Aspects*

70. Two Members raised the following questions:

- (a) whether HKU had conducted technical assessments for the potential drainage/sewerage impacts of the Centre on the surrounding area; and
- (b) whether the laying of drainage/sewerage pipes along roads would result in the closure of Victoria Road.

71. In response, Ms Janet K.K. Cheung, DPO/HK, PlanD, with the aid of some



PowerPoint slides, made the following main points:

- (a) a Preliminary Environmental Review (PER) (including a Water Quality Impact Assessment) had been conducted by HKU to assess the environmental impacts of the Centre. The PER concluded that the Centre was not expected to create significant adverse impacts on the surrounding environment. The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) had no adverse comment on the PER. HKU had also conducted a DIA and a Sewerage Impact Assessment (SIA) for the Centre. The DIA concluded that the existing drainage infrastructure facilities were adequate to handle the anticipated water flow generated by the Centre, and no upgrading works were required. The SIA revealed that upgrading of the existing sewerage system was necessary to discharge the sewage generated by the Centre. Besides, wastewater discharge from the Centre would need to comply with relevant legislation and regulations; and
- (b) if road closure was required for the construction/upgrading of utility facilities, HKU would need to liaise with the concerned government departments such as the Lands Department and the Highways Department as appropriate.

72. To supplement, Mr Gary C.W. Tam, Assistant Director (Environmental Assessment) (AD(EA)), EPD said that according to the SIA conducted by HKU, the capacity of the existing wastewater treatment capacity in the area was adequate to handle the sewage generated by the Centre. Subject to further information and design, construction of the new sewers might not require road closure for the sewerage works.

73. In response to a Member's question on the requirements for the discharge of chemical waste from laboratories, Mr Gary C.W. Tam, AD(EA), EPD said that chemical waste generated from laboratories could not be discharged into the sewerage system. There was relevant chemical waste regulation governing the collection, storage and disposal of chemical waste generated by laboratories. HKU needed to register the relevant laboratories under the regulation and appoint a licensed chemical waste collector to transport and dispose of the chemical waste to/at the Chemical Waste Treatment Centre in Tsing Yi.

*Public Consultation*

74. Noting R265's concern that HKU had not consulted green groups regarding the rezoning of "GB", a Member enquired whether HKU would extend its consultation to include non-neighbourhood stakeholders such as green groups when revising their development proposal. In response, Mr Chan Yu Sum Sam, R143, said that HKU would endeavour to enhance engagement with the community, including not only neighbourhood stakeholders but also green groups, through a comprehensive public engagement exercise so as to improve the development proposal for the Centre.

*Others*

75. A Member enquired about the time required by HKU to review the development proposal. In response, Ms Fan Mei Mary, R9's representative, said that it would take about one year to review and submit the revised development proposal for the Centre to the Board for consideration. During the revision progress, HKU would improve communication with the stakeholders and address their opinions as well as government bureaux/departments' comments on the revised development proposal.

[Mr Timothy K.W. Ma left this session of the meeting during the Q&A session.]

76. 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. The Chairperson remarked that the views expressed by representers including suggestions on alternative locations were good food for thought for HKU in considering how best to take forward the Centre project. Should the "U" zoning be accepted by the Board, HKU was expected to strengthen communication with the community and duly address their concerns in the revised development proposal for the Centre.

77. Mr Chan Yu Sum Sam, R143, thanked Members and the representers for their valuable views, and expressed that HKU would endeavour to step up engagement with the community and enhance the development proposal for the Centre to address stakeholders' opinions as much as practicable.

78. The Chairperson thanked the representers, their representatives and the government representatives for attending the meeting. As all the hearing sessions were completed, the Board would deliberate on the representations in closed meeting later 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.

79. This session of the meeting was adjourned at 5:05 p.m.

### **Addendum**

#### Amendments to Confirmed Minutes of the 1327<sup>th</sup> Town Planning Board Meeting held on 5.11.2024

#### **(Agenda Item 3)**

*Para. 50 (e)* HKU currently owned 18 high-rise residential developments in Pok Fu Lam ~~and some of, within~~ which **some apartments** were available for private rental.....

*Para. 50 (f)* ..... Excluding the Phase 1 area (1.7 ha) and the communal open space outside the Phase 1 area (0.77 ha out of the total communal open space of 1.2 ha to be provided for the whole development), only about 2.23 ha of land was required for ~~research purposes~~ **the remaining proposed uses including research and supporting facilities**, which was less than half of the original development area of 4.72 ha.....