

Hong Kong, 5 August 2023

Public Engagement on San Tin Technopole

12/F, Tower 2, Grand Central Plaza,

138 Shatin Rural Committee Road,

Sha Tin, Hong Kong

Fax: 3922 9797

Email: info@nm-santintech.hk

Re: Public Engagement on San Tin Technopole

Dear Sir/Madam,

Designing Hong Kong is writing to raise our concerns on the latest proposal for a “San Tin Technopole”.

Technopole plans need to change to avoid permanent damage to wetlands and ecological corridor

San Tin Technopole overlaps a wetland area and is in close proximity to Mai Po, a wetland of international importance recognised as a Ramsar Site. It is a habitat for a diverse range of local and migratory wildlife.

The proposals include the filling of approximately 90 hectares of fishponds. This will permanently alter the landscape and destroy an important habitat for migratory birds. Doing so will fragment the local wetland system and ecosystem impacting the flight and resting corridor for birds.

The proposed Technopole development will result in a permanent loss of wetlands and affect the adjacent Ramsar Site. To protect the world-renowned ecological corridor and stop over for migratory birds we call on government to amend the Technopole plans.

The plans ignore well established planning principles for the Deep Bay Area

According to the *Town Planning Board Guidelines for Application for Development within Deep Bay Area under Section 16 of the Town Planning Ordinance (TPB PG-NO.12C)*, the Deep Bay Area is recognised as a wetland of international importance and is a habitat to support a high diversity of biota, including a large variety of waterbird species.

The guideline includes principles for “no-net-loss in wetland” in terms of “area” and “function”. The fundamental land use planning concepts set out for the area is to avoid the loss of fishponds and habitat fragmentation, and to mitigate negative impacts from undesirable land uses and human disturbance. In addition to the conservation zoning, a Wetland Conservation Area (WCA) and Wetland Buffer Area (WBA) have been designated.

The proposed San Tin Technopole ignore these well-established designations and planning principles and undermine the many long-term conservation efforts and investments made by Government and civil society since the 2nd World War.

The Technopole plans disregard earlier commitments made to set up a Wetland Conservation Park

In the *Northern Metropolis Development Strategy Report* published in October 2021, an area of about 520 hectares with mostly fishponds was designated to be the Sam Po Shue Wetland Conservation Park. The *Strategic Feasibility Study on the Development of Wetland Conservation Parks System under the Northern Metropolis Development Strategy* is underway. The Technopole plans will shrink the Sam Po Shue Wetland Conservation Park to around 300 hectares, and fill land development.

The intention of the Conservation Park was for the wetlands to be integral to the Northern Metropolis and deserving priority conservation. Three wetland conservation parks were identified to maintain and enhance the connection with the Ramsar Site's wetland ecosystem and biodiversity, and for the protection of the flight paths of birds. However, the documents submitted to the Legislative Council indicate that the goal posts have been moved. The Sam Po Shue Wetland Conservation Park is now identified as to make up for the loss in ecological functions due to filling of some fishponds for and ecological impact caused by the development of San Tin Technopole.

This demonstrates a cavalier attitude towards conservation – a fungible compensation for human disturbance of nature, and the destruction of ecological sensitive areas. Deep Bay Area has for long been regarded as a wetland of international importance. The failure to maintain and improve the conservation of this area of high ecological value is criminal.

Hong Kong role and contribution to the national development is different from Shenzhen.

Hong Kong is finally speeding up integration with the Mainland. Our neighbour is Shenzhen – the 'Silicon Valley of the East' which has long attracted the best entrepreneurial talent from our country. Hong Kong has its own strengths, including our natural resources. Why destroy this? Why double the San Tin development from 340 hectares to 627 hectares? Hong Kong has poured much land and resources into technology: Cyberport, Hong Kong Science Park, and INNOPark (Yuen Long, Tai Po, Tseung Kwan O and Tuen Mun). A mad and wasteful competition with Shenzhen. Instead, we urge Hong Kong to complement Shenzhen with a pursuit of excellence playing to our own strengths.

Conclusion – End the madness!

The proposals for a San Tin Technopole will destroy our Deep Bay wetland area. We urge the government to pursue our own strengths instead of a misguided pursuit to copy Shenzhen.

Yours sincerely,
Designing Hong Kong Limited