

Chek Lap Kok may lose last natural coast for bridge project

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Olga Wong

Chek Lap Kok airport island will lose its last piece of natural coast if the latest plan for a road to the bridge linking Hong Kong with Macau and Zhuhai (珠海) goes ahead.

The Town Planning Board has been asked by the government to set aside the coastal protection area zoning for the 3 hectare strip of land on the island to enable the area to be reclaimed. This is among several rezoning requests for Chek Lap Kok that will be considered tomorrow.

According to a paper submitted to the board, about 1 hectare of the protection area would be replaced by a road connecting the bridge and a checkpoint. About 7,000 square metres would be used for a backup area for maintaining the linking road while 1.4 hectares would become



SCMP GRAPHIC SOURCE: PLANNING DEPARTMENT

landscaped buffers between the road and Dragonair Tower and CNAC Tower at the airport.

The coastal protection area was originally zoned to preserve a piece of the natural landscape of Chek Lap Kok island, which was flattened and massively extended to build the airport in the 1990s.

A source at the Planning Department said the original alignment of the linking road – a bridge connecting Tung Chung to the airport island – did not affect the coastline. But the alignment was changed after strong opposition from residents of Tung Chung, who said the bridge would be an eyesore.

Alan Leung Sze-lun, senior conservation officer of WWF, urged the government to explore alternative options to save the island's last piece of natural coast.

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Save Chek Lap Kok coastline

I refer to the report ("Chek Lap Kok may lose last natural coast for bridge project", June 4).

At a consultation forum on October 10, 2008, the Association for Geoconservation, Hong Kong was assured by the government that the highway layout had been conceived to have no impact on the natural shoreline on the eastern part of Chek Lap Kok.

This stretch of shoreline has been designated as a coastal protection area which signifies the original effort to compensate for the vast destruction of the natural environment due to construction of the airport. We were shocked to learn this is not going to be the case.

The government has swiftly changed its plans to a new design which will destroy the entire shoreline of the east coast.

This contradicts the very basic concept for the protection of natural landscape that formed the basis of our participation in the consultation.

The proposal is completely unacceptable.

We strongly urge members of the Town Planning Board to reject this plan to remove the coastal protection area. The government must examine other options.

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