

規劃宜居新市鎮

Planning for Liveable New Towns

大埔

Tai Po



規劃署

Planning Department

2022

Geographical Context

Tai Po New Town (Figure 1) is located in the Northeast New Territories, about 11 kilometres (km) north of Sha Tin and 8 km south of Fanling. It covers an area of about 2 949 hectares (ha) and surrounded by the mountain ranges of Pat Sin Leng, Cloudy Hill, Tai Mo Shan and Grassy Hill etc. in the north, west and south, and by Tolo Harbour in the east. The valley areas and basins formed by this network of ridgelines provide opportunities for human settlements. The old market town and fishing centre of Tai Po were originally located on the coastal plains at the confluence of Tai Po River and Lam Tsuen River. The indented coastlines and mountain ranges provide not only visual relief and recreation opportunities, but also a unique townscape identity. Tai Po New Town is one of the second generation New Towns in Hong Kong. According to the Hong Kong 2021 Population Census, the population of Tai Po New Town was about 276 400.

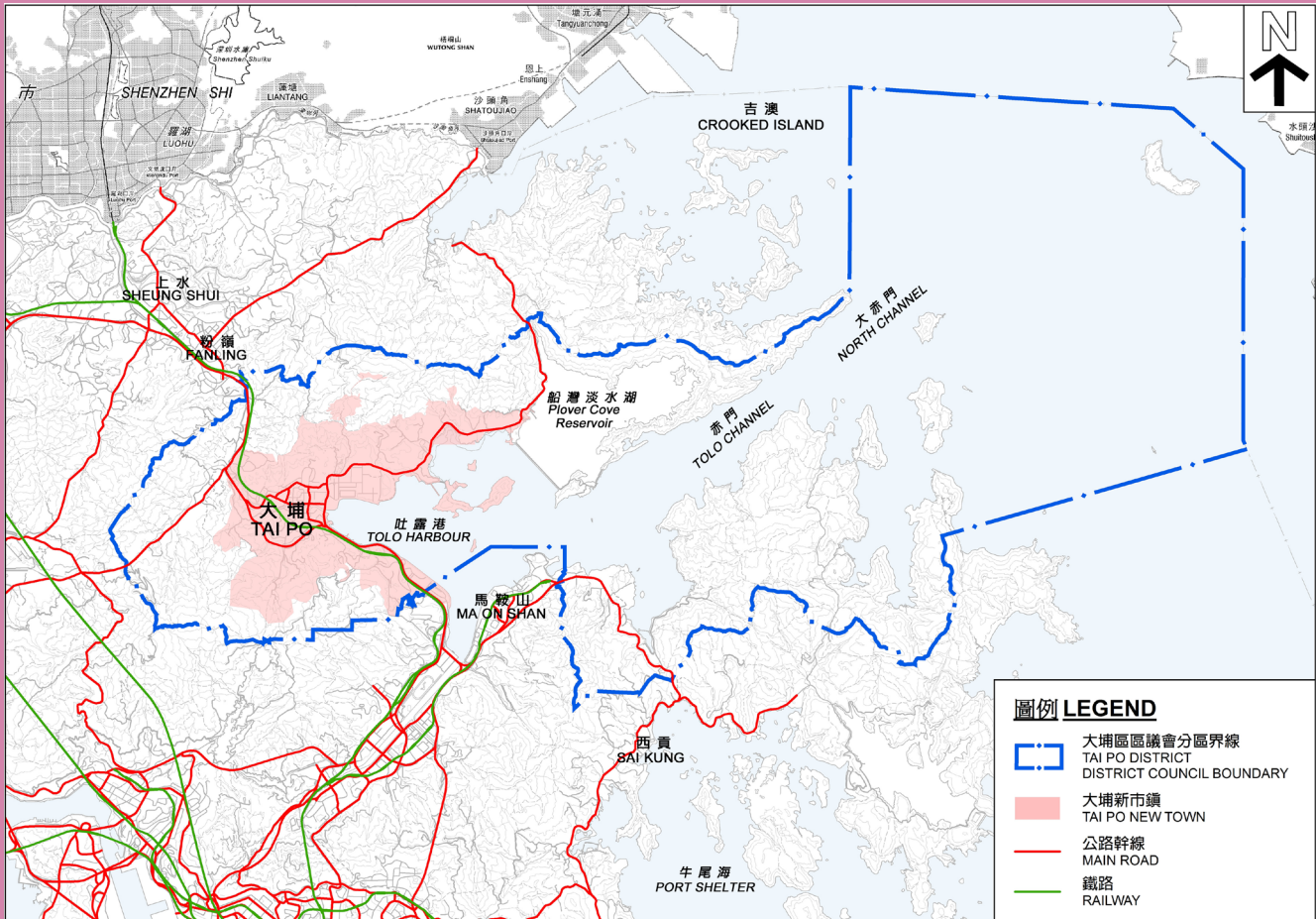


Figure 1: Location of Tai Po New Town

Figure 2: Tai Po in 1964 and present

Historical Background

Early records about Tai Po can be traced back to the Tong Dynasty. At that time, Tai Po was famous for pearl fishing. In the Sung Dynasty, due to invasion of the northern tribes, residents of south China moved south and resided in Tai Po. The Tai Po old market was gradually established for trading of agricultural and fishing products. Commercial activities continued to flourish and a new market was established in 1893 at the northeastern bank (Tai Wo) of Lam Tsuen River by a federation (Tsat Yeuk) of seven groups of villagers from some sixty-four villages. The organisation brought an alliance between the Hakka and Punti people living in the area.

Since then, Tai Po became one of the famous market towns for retailing and wholesaling of market products in the northern New Territories. The completion of the Kowloon Canton Railway (KCR) in 1910 with a station serving Tai Po Market made it an important market centre for the New Territories. The old District Office (North) at Wan Tau Kok Lane was constructed in 1907 and used by the District Office to administer the whole New Territories. It is currently a declared monument occupied by the Scout Association of Hong Kong.

It was not until the 1960s (Figure 2) that major expansion occurred. At that time, the land between Tai Po Market and the former District Office was developed in accordance with a plan prepared by the then Town Planning Office of the Public Works Department, the new development being known as the Tai Po Central Area.

In October 1972, the then Governor-in-Council approved a major housing programme with an aim of providing adequate housing for 1.8 million people by the mid-1980s. More than half of this housing development was to be provided in the New Towns of Sha Tin, Tsuen Wan and Tuen Mun. Limited development was envisaged for Tai Po and other traditional market towns and rural townships. At that time, public housing to be provided in Tai Po was expected to accommodate about 33 000 persons.



Figure 3: Existing developments in Tai Po New Town



Figure 4: Tai Po New Town in 2019

In 1974, the Government decided to establish the first industrial estate in Hong Kong at Tai Po. Reclamation for the Tai Po Industrial Estate began in 1976. At the same time, work began on the reclamation for the first public housing estate, Tai Yuen Estate adjacent to Ting Kok Road. A large temporary housing estate was constructed in 1977 at Yue Kok to accommodate people displaced by clearance for development in Tai Po District. Residents of the Yuen Chau Tsai squatter area near Island House were its first occupants.

The status of Tai Po was upgraded to a New Town in January 1979. The first draft Tai Po Outline Zoning Plan (OZP) No. LTP/47 was gazetted on 12 December 1980. By mid-1990, some 300 ha of land was reclaimed from the sea for the development of a largely self-contained community in which a full range of commercial, industrial and community facilities would be provided for about 300 000 people (Figures 3 and 4).

Planning Concept

Balanced development in terms of provision of community services, recreational facilities, and education facilities has been a major objective in the development of Tai Po New Town. It is also an objective to maintain the tranquility of the natural and village environment and for conservation of significant natural areas in the rural part of the New Town. Minor improvement works are implemented to provide essential infrastructural facilities to sustain the village type developments under the Local Public Works (LPW) Programmes.

In planning the development of Tai Po New Town, suitable sites have been reserved for various types of land uses including residential, commercial, industrial and open space, and for the provision of different types of community and infrastructural facilities to meet the needs of the population.

Development in Tai Po New Town

Population and Housing Mix

There is a variety of housing in Tai Po to suit a range of income levels and housing aspirations. According to the Hong Kong 2021 Population Census, the population of the Tai Po New Town includes about 154 500 persons residing in private permanent housing, about 40 900 persons in public rental housing (PRH), about 76 400 in subsidised sale flats¹, and the remainder of about 4 600 persons in others (including private temporary housing and non-residential housing).

Upon full development of Tai Po New Town as planned, the overall flat mix ratio of the New Town will be about 50:50 between public (including PRH and subsidised sale flats) and private permanent housing (including village housing). The total planned population in Tai Po New Town will be about 299 900.

Public Housing

The first PRH estate in Tai Po New Town, Tai Yuen Estate (Figure 5), was completed in 1981 and the latest one, Fu Tip Estate (Phase 1) (Figure 6), was partially completed in 2021. At present, there are altogether eight PRH estates, nine Home Ownership Schemes (HOS) and three Private Sector Participation Schemes (PSPS) in Tai Po New Town.



Figure 5: Tai Yuen Estate

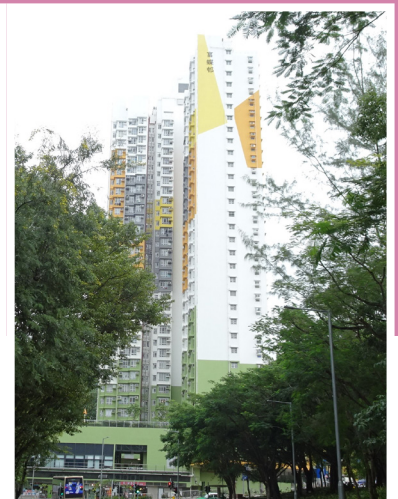


Figure 6: Fu Tip Estate

¹ Subsidised sale flats include Housing Authority's Home Ownership Scheme flats, Private Sector Participation Scheme flats, Buy-or-Rent Option Scheme flats, and Housing Society's Flat-for-Sale Scheme flats.



Figure 7: High-density residential developments

Private Housing

Private housing development is mainly provided in Tai Po Market, Tai Po Old Market, Tai Po Centre/ Tai Po Plaza and Tai Po Tau largely in the central part of the New Town (Figure 7). Medium to low-density residential developments (Figures 8 and 9) are located at the periphery of the New Town and near the countryside areas.



Figure 8: Medium-density residential developments



Figure 9: Low-density residential developments

Community Facilities

In Tai Po New Town, a number of community facilities are planned and developed in accordance with the requirements set out in the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines for provision of medical, education and community facilities to serve the local residents. Major community facilities include the Alice Ho Miu Ling Nethersole Hospital (Figure 10) and Tai Po Hospital, providing 1 631 hospital beds and two existing clinics are located in Tai Po New Town.



Figure 10: Alice Ho Miu Ling Nethersole Hospital

Both primary and secondary schools have been provided and planned to meet the changing population needs. The Education University of Hong Kong is in the northeastern part of the New Town and four special schools are in its northern part.

At present, there are four community halls, i.e. Tai Yuen Community Hall, Kwong Fuk Community Hall, Fu Shin Community Hall and Tung Cheong Street Community Hall; and four community centres, i.e. Wan Tau Tong Community Centre, Tai Po Community Centre, Fu Heng Neighbourhood Community Centre and Tai Wo Neighbourhood Community Centre, in Tai Po New Town.

Recreation and Open Space

The scenic setting of Tai Po creates a strong sense of visual identity, thus the strategy for recreation provision in the New Town aims at providing ample recreational facilities and open space at the new residential areas while enhancing their linkages to rural recreation areas and the surrounding countryside. One of the major existing open spaces is the promenade along Lam Tsuen River in the town centre, which provides a visual corridor to Tolo Harbour in the east and Tai Mo Shan in the west and connects to the 22 ha of Tai Po Waterfront Park (Figure 11), separating the town centre from the Industrial Estate. Among the existing recreational facilities, the major ones are Tai Po Sports Ground and Tai Po Swimming Pool near the town centre and the Lake Egre Nature Park for eco-tourism related recreational developments in Tai Po Kau. Indoor recreation centres are provided at various locations. Ball courts and local open spaces are common facilities shared by schools and residents of the public housing estates. Moreover, a network of country trails which mainly follows existing village footpaths and ridges overlooking Tai Po New Town from the west and the north, connects urban Tai Po to rural recreation areas and surrounding countryside.



Figure 11: Tai Po Waterfront Park

Town Centre

Tai Po Market and its adjacent reclamation in Tolo Harbour form the urban core of Tai Po New Town (Figure 12). It is well served by the Tai Po Market Railway Station and public transport facilities. Tai Po Market was once occupied mainly by tenement buildings, many of which have, however, been redeveloped in recent years. The reclamation to the south of Ting Kok Road is mainly for residential and new industrial developments including public housing estates and Tai Po InnoPark.



Figure 12: Tai Po Town Centre

Retailing and Services

Tai Po is one of the important regional shopping centres in the New Territories with retail provisions (Figures 13 to 17) serving the New Town and its rural hinterland. Retailing and market facilities are provided in Tai Po Market (such as Uptown Plaza (Figure 13) adjoining Tai Po Market Railway Station), which are supplemented by the shops at the Tai Po Centre/Tai Po Plaza area. Local shopping centres and convenient market facilities are provided in public housing estates.



Figure 13: Retail shops in Uptown Plaza



Figure 14: Retail shops in Tai Po Centre



Figure 15: Retail shops in Tai Po Centre

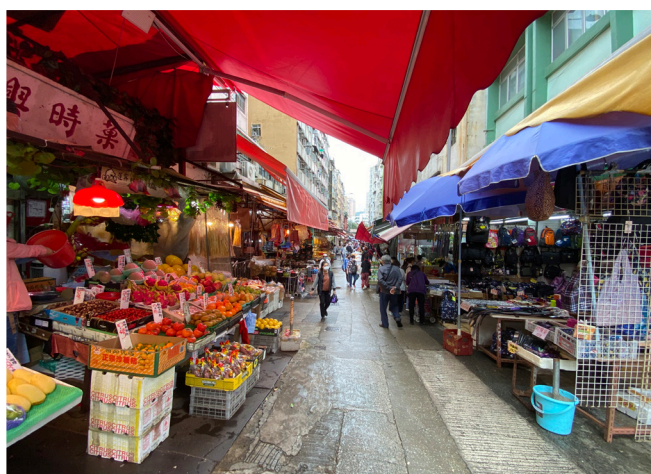


Figure 16: Tai Po Old Market



Figure 17: Tai Po Market

New Industries

At present, most of Tai Po's industry is accommodated in the Tai Po InnoPark (Figure 18) and the mixed industrial and office buildings such as Tai Ping Industrial Park (Figure 19) at Ting Kok Road, with the rest in a few conventional ground floor premises and squatter structures.

In 1974, the Government decided to establish Hong Kong's first planned industrial estate in Tai Po. Some 88 ha of reclaimed land in the northeastern part of the New Town was earmarked for special industries which, by applying a relatively high level of technology, helped to broaden Hong Kong's industrial base. Such industries cannot operate efficiently in conventional flatted factories. In 2021, Tai Po Industrial Estate was repositioned as “Tai Po InnoPark” with a view to promoting the development of high-end manufacturing industries and “re-industrialisation”.



Figure 19: Tai Ping Industrial Park



Figure 18: Tai Po INNOPARK

Science Park

Science Park (Figure 20), with an area of about 22 ha at Pak Shek Kok, is planned to provide accommodation to attract new technology-based firms and activities to Hong Kong so as to stimulate the growth of locally-owned, technologically advanced businesses. It provides the environment, form, structure and services to facilitate research and development (R&D) activities, product innovation and synergy. The land and premises within Science Park are suited to the R&D needs of local and international high-technology firms and activities. Science Park is well-located to contribute to the development of a high technology corridor linking Shenzhen and the main urban areas. Science Park is being developed in phases. Phase 1, 2 and 3 were completed in 2004, 2011 and 2014 respectively. Phase 1 of Science Park Extension Programme was completed in 2021. Another Science Park Expansion Programme would be implemented from 2025 onwards in batches to create more R&D space to meet the needs of technology enterprises. The buildings therein are low to medium-rise with extensive landscaping. A stepped height concept with decreasing building heights from Tolo Highway to Tolo Harbour has been adopted in order to create an interesting building height profile. Ancillary and supporting facilities such as restaurants, conference rooms, business centre and on-site staff quarters are also provided in the Science Park.



Figure 20: Science Park at Pak Shek Kok

InnoCell near Science Park was completed in 2020 to provide residential units with flexible design and ancillary facilities such as co-working space for leasing to principals of tenants and incubatees of Science Park as well as their employees and visiting researchers from the Mainland and overseas. It is an important supporting infrastructure for Science Park and will help foster the development of the innovation and technology ecosystem in Hong Kong. The Government will explore the development of a new InnoCell near Science Park.

Village Type Development

Land is reserved for village development (Figures 21 to 23) within the Tai Po New Town. The traditional villages have different development characteristics in terms of density, design and landscaping aspects as compared to other residential development areas in the New Town.



Figure 21: Cheung Shue Tan Village



Figure 22: Villages in Lam Tsuen



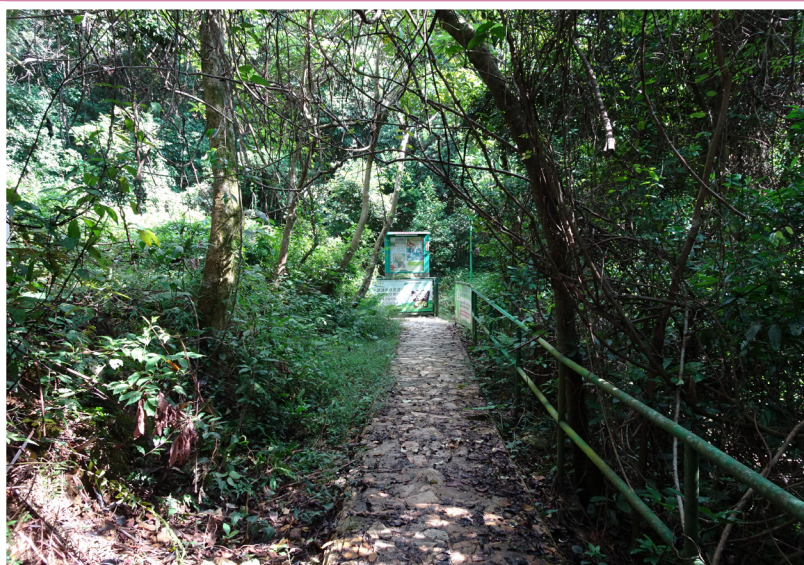
Figure 23: Villages in Ting Kok

Conservation of Natural Environment

Fung Yuen Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) (Figures 24 to 26) was designated in 1980 for its well-forested ravine where some rare plants are recorded and which is an important breeding site for some rare butterflies. Tai Po Egretty which provides an important habitat for egrets and herons near the town centre was designated as a SSSI in 1994. Both SSSIs together with five sites zoned "Conservation Area" at Tai Po Kau are important for preservation of the natural habitats.



Figure 24: Location of Fung Yuen Site of Special Scientific Interest



Figures 25 & 26: Fung Yuen Site of Special Scientific Interest

Sha Lo Tung

For the purpose of long-term conservation of Sha Lo Tung (SLT), the Chief Executive in Council in June 2017 agreed in-principle to the pursuit of a proposal for the contemporaneous surrender of private land with high ecological importance in SLT to the Government and granting of a piece of land at the Shuen Wan Restored Landfill in Tai Po to the private land owner (the non-in-situ land exchange). The land exchange procedures were completed in July 2022. This non-in-situ land exchange is a clear commitment and an important initiative by the Government to promote nature conservation in SLT, which offers a prime habitat for a multitude of butterflies, fireflies, freshwater fishes, mammals, amphibians, reptiles and birds. It enjoys a reputation for having marshes and streams among woodland and being a sanctuary for dragonflies.

The Government has established a Countryside Conservation Office (the Office) in 2018 to coordinate conservation projects that promote sustainable development of remote countryside, and has earmarked \$1 billion for such conservation effort and revitalisation works. As one of the priorities, the Office has been, in collaboration with non-governmental organisations on an interactive basis, implement an ecological conservation project in SLT.

Transport

Tai Po New Town is well-served by different types of transport modes and good transport networks linking with other parts of the territory.



Figure 27: Tai Wo Railway Station

The East Rail Line

Tai Po is served by two existing railway stations, Tai Po Market Railway Station and Tai Wo Railway Station (Figure 27) of the East Rail Line which provides an important transport link between Tai Po, Kowloon and the eastern part of the New Territories. Each of the railway stations is served by a public transport terminus for convenient change of transport modes to and from areas outside Tai Po. In May 2022, the East Rail Line extended service to Hong Kong Island, which becomes the fourth cross-harbour railway line connecting the Northeast New Territories, Central Kowloon, and Hong Kong Island. The new extension will enhance the overall railway network of Hong Kong.

Highways and Roads

Tolo Highway (Figure 28), which forms part of the New Territories Circular Road system, runs along the southern part of the New Town and provides high-speed links to the main urban areas and other parts of the New Territories. It connects with the roads leading to the major town centres in the New Territories including Sha Tin and Tai Po to provide an efficient road network. It is supplemented by a system of district and local distributor roads which penetrate all parts of Tai Po New Town. Tolo Highway between Island House Interchange and Tai Hang has been widened to a dual four-lane carriageway since 2014.



Figure 28: Tolo Highway

Internal Road Network

Within Tai Po, a comprehensive road network has been developed, with on-going upgrading of existing roads and construction of new roads. All cross-town and through traffic is diverted to Tai Wo Road and Nam Wan Road to relieve the traffic at Kwong Fuk Road. The implementation of a one-way circular traffic system along Wan Tau Street, Heung Sze Hui Street and Po Heung Street has greatly improved the traffic congestion problems in the Tai Po Market Area. Most of the distributor roads in Tai Po have been completed and they are linked to Tolo Highway via two major interchanges, the Island House Interchange and the North Tai Po Interchange.

Public Transport

Tai Po New Town is served by various bus routes linking Tai Po and other parts of Kowloon and the New Territories. Moreover, a number of public light buses and residents coaches are available for commuters to travel between large residential estates and railway stations.

Pedestrian Walkways and Cycle Tracks

A comprehensive network of segregated footpaths and cycle tracks (Figure 29) has been planned for Tai Po New Town. Major routes are through landscaped areas alongside distributor roads, the main river channels, the waterfront and important open spaces and recreation areas. The network will not only serve town-wide roads but also provide links into the surrounding countryside where picnic, barbecue and rest areas are located. The cycle track which runs alongside Tolo Highway from Sha Tin to Tai Mei Tuk is one of the most popular routes in the territory particularly during weekends and public holidays.



Figure 29: Footpath and cycle track alongside Tolo Harbour

Rural Tai Po

Tai Po District features a harmonious blend of urban vibrancy and rural tranquility. Beyond the New Town, development in the rural Tai Po mainly consists of village houses concentrated around the 61 recognised villages (Figure 30). About 223 ha of land is reserved for village type development and 532 ha of land is in conservation zones on the statutory plans for preservation of rural and natural character of rural Tai Po.



Figure 30: Villages in Tai Po

Future Development

The future planned developments include:

- Proposed sports centre at Ma Wo Road to the south of the Town Centre

It has been included in Leisure and Cultural Services Department's "Five-Year Plan for Sports and Recreation Facilities" under the 2017 Policy Address. It will mainly include a sports centre, social welfare facilities and a public vehicle park.

- Proposed Football-cum-rugby pitch in Area 33, Tai Po

It will provide a 11-a-side soccer pitches (artificial turf pitches) cum rugby pitch, covered seating and ancillary facilities as well as public vehicle park.

- Proposed Community Health Centre at the former Tai Po Jockey Club Swimming Pool at On Pong Road

The Government proposes to provide primary medical facilities including a community health centre with a district library at the site.

- The second Advanced Manufacturing Centre at the Tai Po INNOPARK

The Government will explore the construction of the second Advanced Manufacturing Centre at the Tai Po INNOPARK, so as to provide space and facilities for specialised industries to set up advanced manufacturing production lines.

- Planning East Rail Line Science Park/Pak Shek Kok Station

The Government is studying the construction of a new Science Park/Pak Shek Kok Station at the current site of the Education University of Hong Kong's Sports Centre at Pak Shek Kok. The Government will also make the best use of the development potential of the station site and its adjoining land to provide more housing and parking spaces, shops and public facilities for local residents. The Science Park/ Pak Shek Kok Station will be commissioned by 2033.

- Proposed Shatin Bypass

This north-south new trunk road connecting Tai Po and Kowloon West will give residents of the New Territories East a faster route to urban areas and relieve traffic pressure on Tolo Highway.

Looking Ahead

In the past decades, Tai Po has experienced rapid changes and has been developed from a rural market town to a modernised new town with good living environment and adequate community and infrastructural facilities. It is worthy to note that Tai Po is among one of the new towns where on the one hand, development has taken place and on the other hand, disturbance to the natural areas has been kept to the minimum. This will remain the major planning objective for Tai Po New Town in the future.

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