

Chang'an: the Pursuit of Everlasting Stability and Peace

Preface

Chang'an town is located at the southern tip of Dongguan, a dynamic city in central Guangdong Province, China. It covers an area of 83.4 square kilometers, with a total population of 390,000 living in 13 residential communities. Chang'an features a subtropical monsoon climate, with average temperature of 22.2 degrees Celsius and annual rainfalls of 1540 mm.

The name Chang'an, which is the same name as the capital city during Tang Dynasty (B.C. 618-907), means "A country of prosperity and peaceful people who live in harmony, where the good weather provides good harvest and healthy life". Chang'an cherishes its name, given its hard survival conditions and deprived life of its ancestors; locals of all ages possess a deep longing for the timely arrival of a harmonious society and a livable community.

As circumstances change with the passage of time, Chang'an people's ideal life has become a reality. Nowadays, Chang'an enjoys a fast-developing economy that ranks it 3rd amongst the 1000 Most Developed Towns in China and 2nd amongst the Towns with Greater Economic Strength at provincial level. Chang'an is certainly a vibrant city, excellent for both living and commerce.

Enhancement of the Natural and Built Landscape

Chang'an, which features a subtropical monsoon climate, presents a slanting topography, low in the south and high to the north. Chang'an is blessed by Lotus Mountain, an 18-kilometer mountain range to the north, and the 10-kilometer coastline created by the Pearl River estuary to the south.

Early dwellers of Chang'an made use of the slanting land and extensive shoreline by developing tidal salt fields. Under such adverse conditions, with no trees or grass in the salt fields, Chang'an people survived and thrived to more than 10 clans and villages.

Since the 16th Century, in order to improve living conditions, Chang'an people gradually substituted salt fields for grass fields, and planted "Guan Grass", a saline alkali tolerant plant. Called salted water grass by locals, it successfully changed the soil structure and became useful in basketry and handcrafts. In time, Chang'an was afforested and salt

producers become farmers.

By the middle of 19th Century, through long-term renovation of grass fields, the ancestors began planting rice. While they planted single-crop rice at first, they eventually started harvesting intermediate-crop rice. As Chang'an prospered, it became known as the Land of Fish and Rice in Dongguan. By this time, the scattered clans and villages had gradually merged to form a town.

In the late 20th Century, Chang'an entered a fast developing period. Rural industrialization and urbanization were trends that could not be halted. Chang'an took the opportunity and developed into a new category of town. Having experienced adverse conditions in the beginning, Chang'an people learned to treasure the role their natural environment plays. As a result, Chang'an adopted its developing principle: to Strengthen Environmental Planning and Build an Ecological and Liveable Home. To date, Chang'an continues its undeterred green development.

In 1986, when the Chang'an Government formulated its overall city planning, which includes plans for its green area system, it called on citizens to build or adopt public green areas, encouraged enterprises or individuals to protect specific ecological habitats, and set out to build a liveable and ecological town.

Over the past 30 years, Chang'an has been determined to build a mountain landscape belt, thus building 15 parks around its hills; today, Lotus Mountain Forest Park and Jigong Mountain Forest Park are protected natural areas. Chang'an was also determined to build a lake landscape belt, and built 8 parks around lakes, with Lotus Lake covering 78.5 hectares. The lake is an ecological area also known as Egret Paradise. Chang'an also insisted on building community landscape belt, thus there are 66 squares built in or around communities, such as the Sports Park, which in its first phase of construction covers 18.8 hectares.

Over the past 30 years, Chang'an has set forth plans for protecting forest resources. Since 1999, the Town Government has prohibited commercial deforestation. During this time, the government carried out diversification of species in its forestland, built a 34.3 kilometer-long fire-retardant biological belt, and afforested over 700 hectares of barren land, allowing Chang'an's forest coverage rate to reach 17.3%. Chang'an advocates protection of biological diversity, and formulated plans and regulations for the effective protection of wild animal resources and natural ecological resources. Chang'an was adamant on protecting the marine natural landscape, and has kept its salty water grass wetland, and built a Mangrove Conservation Area.

Over the past 30 years, Chang'an has built 263.1 kilometers of roads, with 100% green coverage. The road green coverage uses arbor trees and shrubs, integrated with flowers and grasses, increasing the diversification of plant species and becoming the separator and a green corridor between residential communities.

Over the past 30 years, Chang'an has implemented its People-oriented Enhancement of the Landscape Plan, thus giving each citizen access to a public green area covering more than 0.8 hectare within 500 meters from their home. The city also built a belt-like park along main roads, creating elaborate landscaped boulevards and streets. The government also mandates a green coverage rate above 35% for all new residential communities. Through its landscape enhancement of nature, parks and architectural sketches, Chang'an has built a natural and peaceful circumstance and accomplished the dream of building a liveable town from its original saline alkaline beach.

Arts, Culture and Heritage

Chang'an has over 1,000 years' history of civilization, with distinctive features of art, culture and heritage adequately protected.

Chang'an has 45 old trees over 100 years old, amongst which 2 are aged more than 300 years. The government's regulation on green heritage protection mandates that for each tree a record file must be kept, all old trees and famous species must have a full-time keeper, and that mass media, such as newspaper, TV programs and websites, are responsible for communicating professional knowledge regarding old tree protection. These mandates established a standardized legal green heritage protection mechanism.

Chang'an carried out a thorough survey on cultural relics that led to the announcement by the Presidium of National People's Congress confirming 57 historic sites and 2 intangible cultural heritages to be protected and maintained. Namely Shangsha Site, the Ancestors' Hometown of Dr. Sun Yat-sen (1866-1925), in memory of the greatest revolutionary leader of modern China.

Chang'an Basin Meal (Poon-Choi) is a typical culinary concoction with over 100-year history. The deepest joy of eating a basin meal comes from the gathering and sharing by villagers of different ages, thus symbolizing unity and reunion. Chang'an people preserve the Basin Meal as a culinary tradition and customarily treat guests to this local specialty during official events.

Chang'an's Awaken Lion Dance is a centuries-old folk dance that has led to the town being recognized as "Chinese Hometown of Dragon and Lion Dance". The town government established the Dragon and Lion Dance Association and built professional training bases to preserve this cultural tradition and legacy. Each year, the government holds related carnivals and parade performances, while competitions are held both at home and abroad.

Chang'an has also been recognized as the Hometown of Cantonese Opera. The town government has established the Folk Music Association and Amateur Cantonese Opera

Team to preserve its folklore. Since 1992, Chang'an has produced 36 pieces of Cantonese opera, and held 467 stage performances. The large modern Cantonese opera "The Source" has won the Chinese Folk Art Award, Literature Award and Excellent Mise-en-Scène Award etc.

Chang'an is also known as the first Hometown of Chinese Calligraphy in China. The town government has established the Calligraphy Association, allocating adequate funds to promote and protect this folkloric expression. Schools in Chang'an include Calligraphy in their curriculum and set vocational calligraphy training classrooms.

Both culture and art in Chang'an are diversified and inclusive. Chang'an people have their own ideas on what is appealing to investors; they take economic and trade activities as a form of cultural exchange and integration.

The government has made efforts to introduce western advanced technology, management philosophy and living customs by guiding people to respect, learn or integrate the best aspects of different cultures, thus enriching local culture. With the increase of foreign enterprises, the migrant workers have occupied up to 90% of the residential offer. The government has made efforts to include and showcase their different arts and culture. Different cultures coexist under one inclusive culture.

Therefore, in Chang'an one can enjoy Dragon and Lion Dances and European Circus Parade Performances, listen to Oriental Instrument Music and Western Orchestral Music, taste Chang'an's Basin Meal and numerous Chinese snacks, as well as traditional western dishes.

Many cultures under one idiosyncrasy led Chang'an to the fast development of its economy.

Environmental Best Practices

Long-term scientific planning is the pillar of environmental protection. It sets the proper pattern for the balance among economic development, environmental management and protection, breaking free from the vicious circle that is "pollution first and treatment after".

In 1995, Chang'an government was the first town in China to implement an Environment Protection Plan. Since then, the government has continued to expand this plan leading to the establishment of Ecological Construction Regulations, which have ensured Chang'an's development is delineated by scientific environmental protection.

Chang'an government has set an industrial development strategy, streamlined procedures for industrial setup, changed its industrial structure, and implemented the "Clean Production and Circular Economy". In the past 3 years, 12 enterprises have been certified

as clean production enterprises, and 10 large-scale enterprises with pollution exceeding permitted standards have been closed down. Worth mentioning is Chang'an Electronics Factory. They implemented a Clean Production Solution, thus achieving the following reductions: wastewater down by 340,000 tons per year, COD emission down by 27 tons of per year, and power consumption down by 3,750,000 KWh per year, which exemplifies the win-win approach for the enterprise.

Chang'an government developed a protected zoning plan around drinking water resources. The zoning strengthened the management of areas near the town's drinking water resources, rivers and lakes. Dredging and cleaning projects significantly improved water quality in key landscapes. In 2010, Chang'an built a Water Purification Plant with daily capacity in excess of 200,000 tons; this treated water is used for irrigation in public areas and road cleaning thus effectively preserving natural water resources.

Each year, Chang'an government carries out full-scale vehicle gas emission inspection and sampling. Sale or use of leaded petrol is forbidden. 524 taxis, which account for 90% of the city's fleet, have been fitted to run on natural gas instead of petrol, this measure has substantially contributed to reducing and controlling vehicle gas emissions. The government actively promotes the use of LNG, and has laid 86 kilometers of LNG pipelines, thus allowing gas use rate to reach 97%.

Chang'an government delineated noise control measures for manufacturing units, infrastructure construction sites, public events, etc. The government requests enterprises to use silencing devices and related technologies in their facilities, effectively reducing and in some cases eliminating noise pollution.

Chang'an government actively advocates reduction of domestic waste and its safe recycling treatment. The town applies classification solutions, incineration of domestic garbage, and recycling and reusing. The rate of harmless treatment of waste is 100%.

Chang'an government promotes the use of solar energy. The total area of solar heat collectors reaches more than 25,000 square meters. 145 enterprises have implemented the technological upgrading of industrial energy consumption, of these, 62 enterprises have already switched to natural gas. Chang'an government implemented an innovative management contract system with manufacturers to replace 130,000 street lamps for intelligent energy-saving bulbs thus saving over 60% in consumed energy. Traffic lights at main crossroads, which are remotely managed through a network, have been changed to solar-powered lights. The local government implemented energy-saving solutions in construction by renovating 158,000 square meters of the town government offices; additionally, 1,313,000 square meters of buildings currently under construction must rigorously abide by the town's Energy Conservation Standards. In 2011, the town's GDP energy consumption per 10,000 Yuan was effectively reduced by 5.01%

Community Participation and Empowerment

After a long period of transformation, the Chang'an government has successfully positioned the town as an important economic, financial, and commercial hub of abundant leisure features in China. Consequently, establishing multiple mechanisms for effective community involvement in city planning, construction and management has become a main priority.

Chang'an has established the Mayor's Mail Box and Hotline, which receive more than 2800 communications per year.

Chang'an government has established a system to publicly announce all of the city's planning and construction projects. In addition to fulfilling all requirements and receiving approval from the budget department and the expert evaluation and planning committee, all construction projects must incorporate requests and opinions from citizens. Furthermore, all city construction projects are granted via public bidding. The bidding process is supervised and audited by the Construction and City Management Bureau, the notary office and citizen representatives.

Chang'an government has launched administration micro-blogs and public forums where citizens can put forward their requests and opinions on city management. The government set up hotlines and advisory services in each community to promptly solve inquiries and complaints, and to collect opinions on community development.

Chang'an government proposed and established the Community Owners Committees, where citizens can co-operate, regulate, supervise and assist property management companies, thus effectively involving them in community affairs. This system has proven effective in eliminating narcotics, gambling, and accident hazards from the communities. This single proposal has contributed enormously to the achievement of our safe, peaceful and civilized communities.

Chang'an's social security system successfully protects the citizens' rights and interests. In early 2000, Chang'an implemented a comprehensive social security and insurance system, which includes benefits such as endowment and medical insurance, occupational insurance, unemployment insurance, housing funds, and education insurance, amongst others. So far, over 10,000 working units have joined the scheme.

Chang'an ensures the functionality of its social groups. Among them are the Workers Union, which promotes occupational activities for the betterment of the relations between employers and employees, and the Youth Federation, which promotes environment protection activities. Also worth mentioning are the Women's Federation, which holds activities in care of young and old to safeguard their rights and interests, the

Comprehensive Service Center, which integrates social services such as emergency and disaster prevention, rehabilitation and employment, charity rallies and social nursery services, to name a few. The government has built 6 hospitals and 28 community health centers and clinics, which together form a medical care network that guarantees access to a health facility within a 15-minute radius. The government has established Chang'an's Charity Federation, the Union for the Disabled, the Volunteer Service Center and the Rehabilitation Center for the Disabled, which together have effectively empowered disabled people who have living or employment problems.

Healthy Lifestyle

Chang'an people are proud of their abundant leisure space. The town's 89 leisure parks and squares cover a total area of 795.39 hectares; they include namely Chang'an Square, Chang'an Park, Lotus Mountain Country Park, and Chang'an Sports Park, among others. Each year, Lotus Mountain Country Park, with its 220 hectares of area, attracts more than 2 million tourists from home and abroad. They all come to enjoy the park's 6.1 kilometers of hiking trails. "Egret Paradise in Lotus Mountain Peak" is one of the 8 new sceneries of Dongguan.

Chang'an people enjoy year-round cultural activities held at appropriate facilities. They cover 900,000 square meters and include the Chang'an Library (with 24-hour self-service), the Cultural and TV Building, the TV studio, and the Elderly Club, to name only a few. Chang'an has more than 10 associations for cultural promotion ranging from folk music, Chinese painting and calligraphy, to dancing and photography. There are 13 community libraries, 39 cultural parks, 27 cultural squares and 9 movie theaters. Together, they form a cultural network that binds together the town, its communities and its enterprises.

Both primary and secondary education in Chang'an, are free and compulsory. Each year, the town government allocates more than 15 million US dollars to support schools. There are 22 public schools, 57 private middle schools and kindergartens, with university entrance rate up to 95%. Each summer holiday, Chang'an government organizes "Chang'an Outstanding Individual Training Program" to provide moral education and additional technical training to those who excel at work; furthermore, through government guidance and adequate promotion, employment rate of local university graduates has reached 95%. The benefits of these activities are evident. The Chang'an Public Cultural Lectures are held each year, and regularly invite renowned personalities in different fields; so far there have been more than 47 lectures.

Chang'an Government has successfully invited working units, communities, and enterprises to co-operate in hosting the Weekend Cultural Square Performances program for 12 consecutive years. The program has produced altogether more than 500 stage performances, reaching over 1 million spectators since its creation. Every 3 years, the

government organizes the Art Festival, the Sports Meeting and the National Cultural Activities. Each year, the Volunteer Cultural Caravan brings free skill training, performances, movies and exhibitions to numerous communities, schools and factories, activities that are all highly acclaimed by the attendees.

Chang'an government is proud to provide and sponsor convenient fitness and sport facilities for its citizens. There are 4 standard football playgrounds, 27 table tennis halls, 19 swimming pools, 6 badminton halls, 38 billiard halls, 13 gyms, numerous tennis courts, and track & field grounds. The town's Sports Meeting, held every 3 years, includes track and field, swimming, basketball, table tennis, and badminton among other sports, and Chang'an has the first Children Gymnastics Association at town level in China, and has been recognized as Chinese Training Base for Children's Gymnastics. With the support of Chang'an Government, Mr. Li Zhenqiang, the first ranked Olympic Equestrian athlete in mainland China, has won a lot prizes throughout the country.

Strategic Planning

Given Chang'an's position as an economic, financial, and commercial hub, the government is fine-tuning its approach to economic growth and resource development/use to ensure harmony between economy and environment.

General Planning: Chang'an will continue to push forward throughout the town its district development strategy based on function clusters, these ensure a structure that will balance ecological and industrial cluster spaces while keeping a reasonable control of its population.

Industrial Planning: Chang'an is investing 840 million US dollars to build a new district named Binhai. Binhai consists of a central district and a secondary central district. Here, Chang'an will build a high-rise industrial complex to cement its important role as a hub in the Shenzhen-Hong Kong Economic Corridor.

Transportation Planning: Chang'an's transportation planning is described as One Light Rail/Two Ring Roads/Three Districts. The town plays an integral role in the development of the Guangzhou-Dongguan-Shenzhen intercity light rail (currently under construction), which will offer convenient transportation and further propel the city's economy. Chang'an will build a "Double Ring Road - one Grid" vehicular network to relieve traffic and strengthen intercity connectivity.

Landscape Planning: Chang'an will focus on building Lotus Lake Wetland Park, which will cover 500 hectares, and Lotus Lake View Park, which upon completion, will have a total area of 430 hectares. The town is going to build cycling paths and 67 kilometers of landscape roads with beautiful trees or flower greenbelts to complete its Slow Transportation System project. The town is going to build a Sports Park, a Lotus Mountain

Calligraphy Theme Park, City Exhibition Park, and the Youth Palace, among other projects. The investment in this ambitious infrastructure project will total 150 million US dollars thus ensuring that Chang'an will enjoy a modern landscape style with peaceful and ecological environment, adequate for both living and enterprising.

Heritage Planning: Chang'an will optimize its protection mechanisms for natural landscape, cultural relics, and folk customs. Combining protection, management and renovation, Chang'an will implement the Purple Line Planning Regulation, namely building a historic and cultural exhibition system to showcase Chang'an's history and local culture.

Environmental Protection Planning: According to the Pearl River Delta Reform and Development Plan, Chang'an will strengthen the environmental protection education and develop a circular economy, promoting energy conservation and an environment-friendly society. The town government will invest 50 million US dollars to build a water plant with production capacity in excess of 20 tons per day, in order to upgrade the water network system, and invest 18 million US dollars to build an additional sewage treatment plant. The government is going to build two large-scale waste treatment stations with total investment of 8 million US dollars, and gradually close its basic landfills. To further promote the use of clean energy, the government will also invest 6 million US dollars to build an intermediate and high pressure LNG regulating station, 2 vehicle natural gas filling stations and to renovate the city's natural gas pipeline system.

Chang'an has embarked in an undeterred quest for everlasting peace and stability. Having been recognized as a National Sanitation Town, National Garden Town, and National Best Environment Town among others, we believe our aim is right and we will make great progress in building a liveable Chang'an.