

Zhanjiang to become provincial subcenter

Package of policies give city the chance to boost its presence in Guangdong province

By YUAN SHENGGAO

Zhanjiang, a coastal city in South China's Guangdong province, is to steer local development into the fast lane with the provincial government launching a package of policies to make it a subcentral city of the province.

On March 29, the Guangdong provincial government issued a guideline to support Zhanjiang in accelerating its development as a provincial subcentral city. It will build itself into a key engine to drive the growth of the coastal economic belt of Guangdong.

The policies are regarded by the Zhanjiang authorities as a "big gift package". They address local concerns over growth in transport, industrial development, urban layout and trade with the Hainan Free Trade Port.

Zhanjiang's development goals by 2025 are defined in the guideline, pointing out that significant progress should be made in the subcentral city program, economic growth, urban development and transport network expansion.

Moreover, the guideline requires Zhanjiang to make special efforts to involve itself in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, cooperate with the Hainan Free Trade Port and collaborate with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

The guideline also proposes



Zhanjiang, a coastal city in the southwest of Guangdong, is now positioning itself as a subcentral city in the province and a key engine to drive the growth of the coastal economic belt of Guangdong. LANG SHUCHEN / FOR CHINA DAILY

long-term goals for Zhanjiang. By 2035, the provincial subcentral city will basically have taken shape; its economic competitiveness will be ranked among the top in Guangdong; its role as a national-level comprehensive transportation hub should be strengthened; and its involvement in the 21st Century

Maritime Silk Road will be significantly improved.

The guideline also signals that more provincial economic and social management authority will be delegated to Zhanjiang, including greater autonomy in managing all kinds of institutional and market resources.

The provincial government has pledged to gradually increase financial support for Zhanjiang, supporting its major industrial projects, major development platforms and infrastructure construction.

The guideline clearly defines the development objectives of

Zhanjiang in the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25) and further into 2035, said Zheng Renhao, secretary of the Zhanjiang committee of the Communist Party of China, at a conference held on April 2.

"It proposed 25 supporting policies in five aspects. The ambitious planning and unprecedented support

have brought hope to Zhanjiang's rise," Zheng said.

"We should have a deep understanding of the great significance brought by the guideline, firmly carry forward the task of building Zhanjiang into a subcentral city and accelerate the process of developing a key growth driver for the modern coastal economic belt of Guangdong," Zheng added.

Ning Ling, vice-president of Guangdong Ocean University based in Zhanjiang, said in order to build Zhanjiang into a provincial subcentral city, it should meet relevant standards in the four aspects of economy and trade, transportation, science and education and logistics and tourism.

He said the priority in developing a subcentral city should first fall on the economy and trade and promote the upgrading of local industries.

Second, transportation — which used to be a bottleneck in Zhanjiang's development — should be improved.

The third point is that Zhanjiang has a good foundation for science and education. It is supported by a number of colleges and universities, as well as research institutions. There are also provincial laboratories in the city. Together these institutions can be given full play to create technologies and foster professionals.

The fourth is logistics and tourism development, which can be realized on the basis of the local industry and transport development. Zhanjiang's future business connections with Hainan Free Trade Zone will benefit the development of local logistics and tourism, Ning said.

Port economy the focus of future development

By YUAN SHENGGAO

Zhanjiang, a coastal city in South China's Guangdong province, will make the local port economy into a core driver for its future high-quality development, according to a guideline issued by the Guangdong provincial government.

The guideline was released in hopes of strengthening Zhanjiang's position as a subcentral city in the province. The development of coastal economic belt and the upgrade of industrial clusters are among the key tasks.

To realize its target, the guideline proposed several major steps including accelerating the development of world-class industrial clusters, fostering large-scale industrial parks and building up modern industrial bases for the local port economy.

"We are planning to launch four world-class projects, 10 strategic industrial clusters and 12 types of high-quality industrial parks," said Wang Xiaosui, head of Zhanjiang's industry and information technology bureau. "We will also incubate three industrial clusters each with an annual industrial output surpas-

sing 100 billion yuan (\$15.23 billion) in the petrochemical, steel, as well as new energy and automobile industries."

To that end, the government of Zhanjiang has initiated a series of policies to facilitate industrial investment and support key projects in the city.

One of the local star projects, Zhongke (Guangdong) Refinery and Petrochemical Project — which uses a highly automated production system — began producing gasoline and diesel fuel last year.

With an investment of 44 billion yuan in its first phase, the plant's annual output value is expected to exceed 60 billion yuan when the first phase becomes fully operational. Its second phase is going to kick off later this year.

Baosteel Zhanjiang Iron and Steel, another high-profile project in Zhanjiang, will kickstart the operation of its No 3 furnace by the end of June.

Directed by the guideline, Zhanjiang officials said they will take measures to strengthen the planning and construction of large-scale industrial parks with high standards in the following years,



Baosteel Zhanjiang Iron and Steel is an important part for Zhanjiang to develop a port-based economy. PENG ZHENQIANG / FOR CHINA DAILY

covering land planning, infrastructure construction, supporting facilities and investment promotion.

Efforts from the local government of Zhanjiang have yielded outstanding results in the past year.

The city completed investment projects with a total value of 232 billion yuan during the 13th Five Year Plan period (2016-20).

In the first two months of this year, the added value of local companies above a designated size — those with annual revenue of 20 million yuan or more — reached about

12.3 billion yuan, a year-on-year increase of 31.2 percent.

Among them, four backbone enterprises respectively funded by Baosteel, Zhongke, China National Offshore Oil and papermaker Chenming — achieved a combined added value of 8.8 billion yuan, accounting for 71.2 percent of the city's total.

By 2025, the city's industrial added value above designated size is expected to double that of 2020. It's expected to exceed 130 billion yuan with an average annual increase of 12 percent, Wang said.

Business environment gaining from new rules

By YUAN SHENGGAO

A total of 12,700 new market entities, including 3,300 enterprises and 9,200 self-employed businesses, were added in Zhanjiang during the first quarter of 2021, notching a year-on-year growth of 37.5 percent, 66.2 percent and 29.5 percent respectively.

The growth can be attributed to the government's innovative measures to improve the local business environment, officials said.

On March 29, the Guangdong provincial government issued a guideline to support Zhanjiang's goal of becoming a subcentral city, encouraging Zhanjiang to deepen reforms of its business environment.

The guideline points out Zhanjiang should adopt the standards of the World Bank to assess the business environment and create a market-oriented business atmosphere.

The local government has pledged to further improve the investment environment, streamline the approval procedures for enterprise operation and improve the efficiency of services.

The authorities will also strive to optimize the environment for employment and entrepreneurship, improve the social credit system and make the government service more transparent and accessible.

In addition, the provincial government of Guangdong will delegate some of the business-related administration authority to the local government, according to the guideline.

Lin Junming, head of the Zhanjiang market supervision and administration bureau, said to sus-

tain business environment improvements, the bureau will focus on offering "whole-life-cycle services" for enterprises that address challenging issues and further deepen the reform of the commercial system.

To reduce the startup cost for enterprises and explore an intelligent approval service for enterprise registration, the government bodies offer one-stop services both offline and online where most procedures such as obtaining a business license, invoice and bank account can be finished all at once.

Newly established enterprises in the city can receive their first set of corporate seals, including one official seal and one special invoice seal, for free.

By expanding the coverage of an all-in-one service, the local government will guide banks to provide full-process services for enterprises, which represents another added convenience.

To expand the service channels for enterprises from different locations, the local government has established offices in other cities in Guangdong where applicants can handle business registration procedures with Zhanjiang in their own locations.

The government has also initiated tailor-made "one enterprise, one policy" services for Zhanjiang's high-profile industrial projects by setting up special working teams to fully serve their operations.

By the end of March, the total number of market entities in the city reached 330,700, including 74,300 enterprises and 252,100 self-employed businesses, with a year-on-year increase of 9.6 percent, 10.6 percent and 9.4 percent respectively.

Modern transport network built to drive growth

By YUAN SHENGGAO

An extensive and faster transport system linking cities is being planned by the government of Zhanjiang. The aim is to provide convenience for passengers and promote the local economy as a subcentral city in Guangdong province.

The Zhanjiang government will grasp the historic opportunity of becoming a subcentral city by developing local transport infrastructure — pushing the expansion of roads, railways, ports and airport with more effort, greater efficiency and at a faster speed — in a bid to meet the standards of a national transportation hub, said Zhuang Guangquan, head of the Zhanjiang transportation bureau.

The efforts in transportation improvement are in accordance with the city's 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25), the overall plan of Zhanjiang Port, and the medium and long-term plan to build a comprehensive transport system and develop the tourism industry, the official said.

A highlight of the plans is the



The main structure of the Zhanjiang Wuchuan Airport terminal is planned to be completed and put into operation by 2022. GUO BILONG / FOR CHINA DAILY

airport relocation project, with the ongoing construction of the Zhanjiang Wuchuan Airport. Some facilities, like railways and highways, to link the airport will be finished in the near future, according to Zhuang.

The main terminal of the Zhanjiang Wuchuan Airport is

planned to be opened by 2022.

The construction of the Guangzhou-Zhanjiang high-speed railway is underway. Several other interregional railways including Hepu-Zhanjiang railway, Zhanjiang-Haikou railway and the Guilin-Zhanjiang section of Zhangjiajie-Haikou railway will begin

construction in the foreseeable future.

To have a high-speed railway reach every county in Zhanjiang is one of the major tasks of the long-term plan.

During the 13th Five-Year Plan (2016-20), Zhanjiang has made marked achievements in developing its transport system, Zhuang said.

The city's total investment in transportation infrastructure exceeded 70.7 billion yuan (\$10.7 billion) during that period.

In the past five years, 143 kilometers of trunk railways were put into service, including 85.7 km of high-speed railway. The transport capacity of normal-speed railways was also improved significantly.

A number of wharves for special use were either under construction or opened.

The Xuwen Nanshan Port Terminal has been put into service, forming a new channel connecting Zhanjiang with Hainan province.

Zhanjiang West Railway Station has become a railway transport hub with the largest scale and most functions in western Guangdong, according to Zhuang.



A worker inspects a large roll at the plant of local papermaker Guanhao High-Tech. ZHANG FENGFENG / FOR CHINA DAILY