

Development Proposal of Ngau Tam Mei

PURPOSE

This paper briefs Members on the development proposal of Ngau Tam Mei (NTM) in the Northern Metropolis (NM).

PLANNING VISION AND POSITIONING

2. The NM Action Agenda (NMAA) promulgated in October 2023 outlines the development positioning of four major zones in the NM¹. Among them, the Innovation and Technology (I&T) Zone covers San Tin Technopole (STT) (including the Hong Kong-Shenzhen I&T Park (HSITP) in the Loop and the San Tin area) as well as NTM (**Enclosure 1**). STT will be a hub for clustered I&T development, creating synergy with the Shenzhen I&T Zone².

3. Upon completion of the proposed Northern Link (NOL) Main Line³ in 2034 (**Enclosure 1**), NTM will only be one station away from STT. The NOL Main Line will also connect with the existing East Rail Line and Tuen Ma Line, forming a railway loop linking up the New Territories and urban areas. Transport links among NTM, other places in the New Territories and urban areas will become very convenient. As regards road transport, apart from the existing San Tin Highway and the NM Highway under planning, we plan to build a road in the northeastern part of NTM to connect with STT (**Enclosure 3**), with a view to further integrating the two development areas within the I&T Zone. Through the proposed cross-boundary NOL Spur Line and the new Huanggang Port under

¹ The four major zones, from west to east, are the High-end Professional Services and Logistics Hub, Innovation and Technology Zone, Boundary Commerce and Industry Zone, and Blue and Green Recreation, Tourism and Conservation Circle.

² The Innovation, Technology and Industry Bureau is conducting a consultancy study on the I&T industry development plan for the land in STT (excluding HSITP), with a view to recommending specific I&T uses in the I&T value chain for development on different land parcels in STT. The result of the consultancy study will be announced in 2025.

³ The proposed NOL Main Line is an approximately 10.7-km railway connecting Kam Sheung Road Station on the Tuen Ma Line and Kwu Tung Station (under construction) on the NOL Main Line/East Rail Line, with three intermediate stations at San Tin, NTM and Au Tau.

construction, it will be more convenient to travel from NTM to HSITP and Shenzhen in the future (**Enclosure 1**).

4. In view of this, the NMAA proposes that land be reserved in NTM for use of post-secondary education institutions, with a focus on scientific research, to complement the I&T development in STT, promoting “research, academic and industry” collaboration. As announced by the Chief Executive in his 2024 Policy Address (the Policy Address) in October 2024, the Government has earmarked over 80 hectares (ha) of land in the NM for the “Northern Metropolis University Town (NMUT)”⁴, and will encourage local post-secondary institutions to introduce more branded programmes, research collaboration and exchange projects with renowned Mainland and overseas institutions in a flexible and innovative manner. The Education Bureau (EDB) plans to release the NMUT Development Conceptual Framework in the first half of 2026. It was also announced in the Policy Address that land will be reserved in NTM for developing the third medical school and an integrated medical teaching and research hospital (integrated hospital).

5. We have completed the preliminary planning of the NTM development (**Enclosure 3**), involving approximately 127 ha of development land. More than one-third (about 46 ha) of the land is proposed for developing the **UniTown** (including the land required by the third medical school), which will offer space for activities related to research and development (R&D) and groom high-calibre talents to support I&T development in STT, as well as training more doctors to dovetail with Hong Kong’s development as an international health and medical innovation hub. Moreover, we have planned an approximately 9-ha site in NTM for an integrated hospital. Apart from providing comprehensive healthcare services for the existing and new population in the NM, the integrated hospital will be developed into a three-in-one teaching, training and research facility, providing training for medical and healthcare professionals, and conducting clinical trials and scientific research to facilitate the advancement of patient care.

⁴ Including the post-secondary education sites in NTM, New Territories North New Town and Hung Shui Kiu/Ha Tsuen New Development Area.

BROAD LAND USE CONCEPT PLAN

6. The Civil Engineering and Development Department and the Planning Department jointly commissioned the NTM Land Use Review Study (the Study) in November 2021 to capitalise on the development opportunities to be brought about by the NTM Station on the proposed NOL Main Line⁵. A Broad Land Use Concept Plan for the study area has been formulated (**Enclosure 3**), reflecting the three development themes stated below and other key planning features.

UniTown

7. About 46 ha of land will be reserved in the eastern part of the NTM study area for development of UniTown (**Enclosure 4**). We will encourage local post-secondary institutions to introduce more innovative, cutting-edge and high level branded programmes at undergraduate, postgraduate and professional levels, research collaboration and exchange projects with renowned Mainland and overseas institutions in a flexible and innovative manner, including cross-institution, interdisciplinary, cross-sector, and cross-boundary collaboration. We will also encourage institutions to fully capitalise on Hong Kong's advantage of enjoying strong support of the Motherland and being closely connected to the world under the "One Country, Two Systems" so as to establish footholds at the NMUT to take up the role of "super connector" and leverage the complementarity. In particular, the institutions can keep closer connection in areas such as scientific research collaborations, student exchanges and nurturing of talents, etc. These will enable Hong Kong's academics and research to scale new height in international development, and facilitate the I&T development of surrounding areas such as STT by providing talent support at "research, academic and industry" front, promoting the integrated development of education, technology and talents, and promoting Hong Kong as an international hub for high-calibre talents.

8. To enhance cost-effectiveness and synergy among different institutions, we will further explore the provision of special facilities (such as data centres) and other ancillary facilities (such as conference facilities, sports and recreation facilities, and student hostels, etc.) for shared use by different institutions. Through the provision of ample student hostel places, sports and outdoor leisure spaces as well as green mobility, the UniTown will become a self-sustained university neighbourhood with vibrant and diverse campus vibes, serving as a testbed for I&T and attracting talents from the Mainland and overseas.

⁵ According to the railway scheme gazetted on 6 October 2023, the NTM Station and the NTM Depot on the proposed NOL Main Line will be situated in the western part of the NTM study area.

Integrated Hospital and Third Medical School

9. With the gradual development of the NM, demand for healthcare services in the Yuen Long and North Districts will increase in future. About 9 ha of land in NTM has been reserved for a new integrated hospital providing about 3,000 beds (**Enclosure 5**). The integrated hospital will provide comprehensive healthcare services for the existing and new population in the NM. It will also be equipped with specialist manpower and related technology and apparatus to serve patients with individual highly complex diseases in the territory. The integrated hospital will provide teaching, training and research facilities (such as providing clinical trials) to complement the development of the life and health technology industry in STT and Hong Kong at large, promoting “research, academic and industry” collaboration. In particular, advanced life and health technology establishments (such as pre-clinical laboratories, animal laboratories, biological laboratories and cell culture R&D, etc.) will be attracted to the I&T Zone, helping the NM to become a “new international I&T city”. Considering that we are proposing to establish the third medical school at NTM, the integrated hospital can also become a teaching hospital.

10. The approximately 46-ha site for the UniTown will cover the land reserved for the third medical school campus. As announced in the Policy Address, in addition to increasing training places of the existing two medical schools, the Government supports the plan to establish a third medical school by local university, so as to increase the number of doctors to support the local healthcare system in providing quality medical services and supporting the city’s development as an international health and medical innovation hub. The Government has swiftly established the Task Group on New Medical School (the Task Group), which comprises seasoned local, Mainland and overseas academics for medical teaching and university management as well as experts of the related sectors, responsible for devising the direction and parameters for establishing the new medical school. The Task Group held its first meeting on 22 October 2024, and expects to invite universities interested in setting up the new medical school within this year to submit proposals in the first quarter of 2025, which should set out, among other things, a forward-looking long-term development plan for its campus and teaching facilities. The Task Group will endeavour to complete the assessment of the proposals submitted by universities within 2025, and make recommendations to the Government on the establishment of the new medical school by a competent university.

Integrated Residential Community

11. To capitalise on the development opportunities brought about by the NTM Station on the proposed NOL Main Line and to serve those who work and study at NTM in the future, an integrated residential community is planned around the proposed station in the western part of the study area, with a view to developing a “15-minute neighbourhood” with the following key planning features (**Enclosure 6**):

- (a) **Self-sustained UniTown Community** – In addition to living space, it is proposed to provide shopping, leisure and entertainment facilities, as well as essential Government, institution or community (GIC) facilities within the neighbourhood to meet the needs of local residents and serve the students, staff, researchers and healthcare professionals from the nearby UniTown and integrated hospital. Considering the development positioning of NTM, the housing demand in the area will predominantly be private housing.
- (b) **Blue-green Public Space Network** – We propose to develop an open space network extending from the NTM Station through the entire NTM study area. Street-level shops and leisure facilities are proposed adjacent to the open space in the central area to enhance people interaction, meet the social needs of the youth, and create open and diversified living space. The open space network will extend east-west along the revitalised drainage channel, incorporating various design measures (refer to paragraph 12(c)) to improve the resilience of the drainage system as part of the blue-green infrastructure in NTM. The network is also planned to serve as a key east-west pedestrian and cycle corridor, connecting the UniTown, integrated hospital, residential neighbourhood and railway station (**Enclosure 7**).
- (c) **Transport Connections** – In addition to the major external transport connections mentioned in paragraph 3 above, we plan to construct public transport interchanges near the NTM Station and within the UniTown to provide public transport/feeder connection services for future residents; staff, visitors and patients of the integrated hospital; and students and staff of the UniTown.

Major Urban Design Concepts

12. In planning and designing the NTM area, the following key urban design concepts are applied:

- (a) **Cultivating the UniTown for Integrated Development in NTM** – A number of place-making measures will be adopted to form a unique character for the UniTown, such as developing an open and inclusive campus and neighbourhood, creating landmarks, unique built forms and developing quality public spaces. With the introduction of vibrant public spaces, walkable neighborhood and dynamic streetscape, the NTM would be a place for creativity and social interactions.

- (b) **Developing a Convenient Community to Promote Healthy Living** – A “15-minute neighbourhood” concept will be adopted, whereby the use of green mobility between residential areas and key community resources will be encouraged. It would foster a neighbourhood that is pedestrian and bicycle-friendly, with low-carbon commuting, whilst promoting social cohesion.
- (c) **Multi-functional Riverside Park** – Current drainage channel in NTM will be reviated, and the riverfront will be designated as a Riverside Park, integrated with blue-green infrastructure to reduce flood risks and enhance environmental sustainability; leisure and recreational uses will be integrated to create pleasant and engaging public spaces. The Riverside Park will also form a key transit corridor connecting the entire UniTown. It will also integrate with the UniTown campus, that enhances connectivity within the urban fabric and creates a dynamic synergy between academic life and public spaces.
- (d) **Creating a Resilient and Sustainable Urban Future** – Smart, Green and Resilient features will be integrated in NTM, such as green transportation modes; incorporating smart city design elements; arranging recreational areas and breezeways according to prevailing wind directions; creating green communities; and introducing blue-green infrastructures.

Land Use Budget and Major Development Parameters

13. The proposed land use budget for NTM is summarised as follows:

Proposed Land Use	Area (ha)	Percentage
UniTown (including the third medical school)	46 ^{Note}	36%
Integrated Hospital	9	7%
Residential (including railway topside development)	18 ^{Note}	14%
Open Space	13	10%
Other GIC Facilities	12	10%
Roads and Other Uses (excluding the site for railway topside development)	29	23%
Total Development Area	127	100%
Green Belt (including permitted burial grounds)	3	--
Project Area	130	--

^{Note} A domestic plot ratio of 6 is assumed for residential sites, while a plot ratio of 3 is assumed for the UniTown.

14. The major planning parameters for NTM are as follows:

New Population	About 32,000 – 36,000
New Residential Units (mainly private housing)	About 12,000 – 13,000
New Job Opportunities	About 22,000 – 26,000

Remarks: The above development parameters will be subject to review in the next stage of the Study.

15. According to the records of the Lands Department, about 60% (i.e. about 80 ha) out of nearly 130 ha of total development area is private land, while about 40% (i.e. about 50 ha) is Government land. The development will mainly affect Yau Tam Mei Tsuen (a non-indigenous village) and some brownfield operations.

NEXT STEP

16. A two-month public engagement exercise commenced on 14 November 2024. We will conduct a series of publicity activities, including roving exhibitions and briefing sessions with relevant stakeholders (including advisory bodies, post-secondary institutions, professional institutes, rural committee, district council, local residents and business operators such as brownfield operators and operators of fish, agricultural and livestock farms, etc.). Members of the public are welcomed to express their views by post or email, etc. on or before 13 January 2025.

17. Taking into account the public views received, we will formulate a Recommended Outline Development Plan for NTM. We will also conduct environmental impact assessment (EIA) under the EIA Ordinance and formulate the implementation programme. We then need to carry out detailed design for the works, and we anticipate that government-led site formation and infrastructure works can commence in 2027 at the earliest. As mentioned in paragraph 10 above, the Task Group will endeavour to make recommendations to the Government on the university for establishing the new medical school within next year. EDB may also consider deciding on the allocation of UniTown land before or during site formation works, so that future institutions operating the new medical school and establishing presence in the UniTown can carry out planning and study the financial arrangement early so as to allow commencement of construction works of the campuses as soon as possible after the sites concerned have been formed. Site formation works for the first batch of residential, integrated hospital and UniTown land are expected to be completed progressively from 2029 onwards. First population intake is expected to take place from 2034 onwards to dovetail with the commissioning of the NOL Main Line.

18. Regarding the development approach for this new development area, apart from the traditional government-funded and government-led site formation and infrastructure arrangements, we will consider other approaches, such as in-situ land exchange and “Rail-plus-property” etc., so as to leverage market forces to enhance speed and quantity of development, whilst ensuring the sustainability of our public finance.

19. The Government has proposed the land uses and spatial planning for NTM. After the intended land uses have been finalised and upon completion of the detailed design for the works, we will take into account the prevailing economic circumstances and the Government’s fiscal situation in planning the works programme and phasing, and account for the estimated costs and financing arrangements before we proceed with the construction works.

ADVICE SOUGHT

20. Members are invited to offer their views on the development proposal of NTM.

ENCLOSURES

Enclosure 1	Northern Metropolis
Enclosure 2	Rendered Illustration of future Ngau Tam Mei area
Enclosure 3	Ngau Tam Mei Broad Land Use Concept Plan
Enclosures 4 to 7	Rendered Illustrations

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