



BPF Submission on the North East New Territories New Development Areas

General Remarks

The Business and Professionals Federation of Hong Kong (BPF) understand there is much controversy around the proposed development of North East New Territories (NENT), despite this, we firmly support this important new town development and call for Government to overcome the obstacles and get ahead with it.

The government should communicate with the public more effectively. For example, it should address the main public concern of preservation and show people how the proposed development areas really look like now, not only conceptual pictures of how they will look like in the future, so that people understand why improvements need to be made.

Although much of the debate centres around housing, it is important to bear in mind that this is not purely a housing programme. It resolves the problem of scattered and inefficient land use in the proposed development areas, helps do away with those waste dumping sites and container yards. This is an enhancement to the whole area.

On the housing side, we understand that the government has listened to the public and revised the ratio between public and private housing to 60:40; however, we would like to point out the importance of a balanced community and we need more home ownership scheme flats, not only public rental housing.

As there will be an aggregate total population of about 460,000 in the development and surrounding area, there should be a town hall, similar to other new towns, and an adjoining central plaza for leisure and for entertainment.

Last but not least, we need to look at the development from the economic and employment angle.

Specific Recommendations

1. Compensation
 - i) This is an important and sensitive issue and should be handled with delicacy.
 - ii) There are both indigenous and non-indigenous villagers. While the latter may not own any land, some of them have been living in the affected villages for a long time and have their own ways of life. Their views should also be listened to and their needs be considered. In this connection, we support the government proposal to make land available for agricultural development.



- iii) We stress the importance to strike a balance. Though rising compensation costs for developments and infrastructure projects are a concern, we should deal with the problems in a humane way and be willing to pay compensations that are affordable and reasonable.
- iv) There are also people who prefer continuing with their life style in a new place and efforts should be made to accommodate their demands.

2. Economic Development & Employment

- i) It is said in the Information Digest that 37,700 new jobs will be created. We would like to know how this figure is arrived at.
- ii) Previous experience has clearly told us the importance of bringing about sufficient economic activities to provide employment for people living in the new development areas. We doubt whether designating 3.6% land use for commerce and R&D will be sufficient.
- iii) There will be an R&D zone in Kwu Tung North. With increased public housing, however, we also need jobs that fit in with the education profile of local residents so that not a large number of them have to travel to other districts for work. This will also help avoid too much pressure on the public transport system.
- iv) We should provide incentives and entice businesses to move there and set up back offices, phone centres etc, which provide jobs for low skilled workers.
- v) Retail, particularly mom and pop shops, eateries, not chain stores in shopping malls, is a main area that provides jobs for low skilled workers. The government can encourage this through zoning plans by, for example, putting for sale more small lots of land or through architectural design and discouraging podium development so that there can be small shops and interactive street level activities. The government may even consider designating land or designs of buildings to provide opportunities for outdoor dining.

3. Transport

- i) The government should try to project what economic activities will happen and what will not, thereby projecting the economic and employment pattern and trying to facilitate it.
- ii) For example, a focus of the transport planning is to provide for the need of local residents commuting to city centre. We should not, however, overlook the cross



border transport demand as greater integration is expected in the coming ten years. As industries in cities like Shenzhen and Donguan revitalise, there may be more people travelling to work or for school crossing the border.

- iii) Although there may be people coming from north of the border to work, this is a sensitive issue that may draw more public opposition, this is not something the government should or can avoid.
- iv) There is a large area of land north of Kwu Tung North New Development Area (NDA) and south of Shenzhen River. If no planning is done, it will just become sites for waste dumping and containers etc. Transport links should be built from the red boundary to link this area to cities across the Shenzhen River.

4. Implementation

- i) A major issue is how land can be acquired to implement the land use plan outlined in the Information Digest as much of the land is in private ownership.
- ii) A proposal for consideration is to return to the land exchange system which was so successful in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s and which enabled the development of the new towns to take place with little protest or delay. The total area of the NENT development is known, so is the total area required for public purposes, thus, the remaining area is available for private development. This ratio could be implemented in an exchange system, which would avoid many complications in land acquisition.

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