

立法會
Legislative Council

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**Paper for the House Committee Meeting
on 10 July 2026**

**Legal Service Division Report on
Northern Metropolis Development Bill**

I. SUMMARY

- 1. The Bill**

The Bill seeks to:

 - (a) declare certain areas as the Northern Metropolis;
 - (b) provide for measures for facilitating the development of the Northern Metropolis;
 - (c) empower the Chief Executive in Council to make subsidiary legislation for related purposes; and
 - (d) provide for related matters.
- 2. Public Consultation**

According to the Administration, a public consultation was conducted from 24 March to 22 May 2026. As stated by the Administration, the legislative proposals were generally supported by members of the public, and adjustments have been made to the proposals in view of the public views gathered and reflected in the Bill and related subsidiary legislation.
- 3. Consultation with LegCo Panel**

The Panel on Development was briefed on 24 March and 23 June 2026 on the legislative proposals. Members generally supported the proposals but expressed various views.
- 4. Conclusion**

The Legal Service Division is scrutinizing the legal and drafting aspects of the Bill. Since the Bill seeks to introduce dedicated legislation for the development of the Northern Metropolis, Members may consider forming a Bills Committee to study the Bill in detail.

II. REPORT

The date of First Reading of the Bill is 8 July 2026. Members may refer to the Legislative Council (“LegCo”) Brief (File Ref.: DEVB(PL-CR)1-10/94) issued by the Development Bureau on 3 July 2026 for further details.

Object of the Bill

2. The Bill seeks to:
- (a) declare certain areas as the Northern Metropolis (“NM”);
 - (b) provide for measures for facilitating the development of NM;
 - (c) empower the Chief Executive in Council (“CE in C”) to make subsidiary legislation for related purposes; and
 - (d) provide for related matters.

Background

3. According to paragraph 1 of the LegCo Brief, there is consensus in society to speed up and drive quality in the development of NM, and the nation’s 15th Five-Year Plan explicitly requires accelerating the NM development. To this end, the Administration has undertaken to introduce dedicated legislation for the development of NM with a view to further streamlining planning and lands procedures, expediting construction works and facilitating industry operation. The Bill is therefore introduced into LegCo and its key provisions are summarized in the ensuing paragraphs.

Provisions of the Bill

Proposed declaration of the Northern Metropolis (Part 2 and Schedule 1)

4. Clause 3(1) of the Bill seeks to declare the areas described in Schedule 1 to the Bill (i.e. the area shown coloured pink on the plan numbered NM/001 and deposited in the Land Registry, and the Shenzhen Bay Port Hong Kong Port Area) as NM.¹ Under clause 4 of the Bill, CE in C could, by notice published in the Gazette, amend Schedule 1 to the Bill under specified circumstances (e.g. in consequence of any amendment to the area declared to be the North District or Yuen Long District under the District Councils Ordinance (Cap. 547)). Such notice would be subsidiary legislation subject to the negative vetting procedure of LegCo under section 34 of the Interpretation and General Clauses Ordinance (Cap. 1) (“negative vetting”).

Proposed measures for facilitating the development of the Northern Metropolis and the proposed empowerment of the Chief Executive in Council to make subsidiary legislation for related purposes (Part 3)

Town Planning (Division 1: clauses 5 to 7)

5. At present, for proposed land uses not under Column 1 uses (i.e. uses which are always permitted in that zone) or Column 2 uses (i.e. uses which may be undertaken with planning permission) of individual land use zones, or development parameters/requirements with no provision of relaxation, etc., an application under section 12A of the Town Planning Ordinance (Cap. 131) is required to be made to the Town Planning Board (“TPB”). According to paragraph 7 of the LegCo Brief, going through the entire section 12A of Cap. 131 and plan-making procedures would take at least nine months.

¹ Members may refer to Annex C to the LegCo Brief for the plan (four pages) in draft form.

6. Clause 6(1) of the Bill seeks to provide that TPB could, in accordance with a regulation to be made by CE in C under clause 7 of the Bill, grant permission for any use or development of any land or building that falls wholly within an area in NM that is included in a plan under Cap. 131 (“NM land or building”) regardless of whether the relevant plan under Cap. 131 for the land or building provides for the grant of such permission. According to paragraph 8(a) of the LegCo Brief, the planning procedures to be involved would cut the process from typically at least nine months to just two months. Regulations to be made under clause 7 of the Bill would be subsidiary legislation subject to negative vetting and could provide for specified matters, including modifications to any plan under Cap. 131 for extending the maximum duration of any temporary use or development of NM land or building.

Land Resumption (Division 2: clauses 8 to 11)

7. Section 16A(1) of the Lands Resumption Ordinance (Cap. 124) currently provides that, where an offer of payment made by the Administration in respect of resumption of land is not accepted, the Administration may make a provisional payment (pending the determination by the Lands Tribunal of the compensation) and such provisional payment bears interest from the date of resumption of the land to the date on which the compensation payment is made. At present, no time limit is provided by law in relation to the acceptance of the compensation payment.

8. Clause 9(2) of the Bill seeks to provide that compensation in respect of the resumption of specified land in NM (e.g. the land is a lot that is identified by a lot number and falls wholly within NM) (“NM land”) would cease to bear interest after the expiry of the specified time limit. Clause 11(1) of the Bill seeks to empower CE in C to make regulations (which would be subject to negative vetting) for facilitating the payment of compensation in respect of the resumption of the NM land and such regulation could, among others, provide for the power to specify a time limit for the purposes of clause 9(2) of the Bill.

9. Separately, according to paragraph 12 of the LegCo Brief, some compensation payments in respect of resumption of land that was held in the name of a clan, family or t’ong (t’so/t’ong) have been held up for many years because the relevant compensation offer has met with objection from members of the t’so/t’ong. Clause 10(2) and (4) of the Bill seeks to provide that the payment of compensation in respect of resumption of certain land in NM that was held in the name of a clan, family or t’ong immediately before the resumption could be made to the registered manager(s) of the clan, family or t’ong (if there is no vacancy in the office of registered manager concerned) even if there is an objection of any kind from any member of the clan, family or t’ong.

Works (Division 3: clauses 12 and 13)

10. Section 42(1) of the Buildings Ordinance (Cap. 123) currently authorizes that the Building Authority (“BA”) may, upon application, permit modifications of the provisions of Cap. 123 if in BA’s opinion special circumstances render it desirable. Clause 12(1) of the Bill seeks to provide that, for an application made under section 42(1) of Cap. 123 in respect of any specified works within NM, if there exist any specified circumstances, it would be regarded that there are special circumstances that render it desirable for BA to permit modifications of the provisions of Cap. 123. Under clause 13 of the Bill, CE in C could, by notice published in the Gazette (which would be subject to negative vetting), specify works and circumstances for the purposes of clause 12(1) of the Bill.

Noise Control (Division 4: clauses 14 to 17)

11. Currently under section 6 of the Noise Control Ordinance (Cap. 400), any person who, without a construction noise permit issued by the Noise Control Authority (“NCA”) under section 8(1) of Cap. 400, carries out certain construction works during specified hours commits an offence (unless exempted). Clause 15(1) of the Bill seeks to provide that NCA could issue construction noise permits in respect of any “specified Northern Metropolis construction work” (as defined in clause 14 of the Bill). Clause 16 of the Bill seeks to empower the Secretary for Environment and Ecology to issue Technical Memorandum (“TM”)² relating to noise emanating from specified Northern Metropolis construction work and provide for matters relating to such TM. Under clause 17 of the Bill, CE in C could make regulations (which would be subject to negative vetting) to, among others, specify any construction work within NM for the purposes of the definition of “specified Northern Metropolis construction work”.

Cross-boundary Flows (Division 5: clauses 18 to 21 and Schedule 2)

12. Clause 21 of the Bill seeks to empower CE in C to make regulations (which would be subject to negative vetting) for the purposes of clause 19 or 20, or otherwise for facilitating or regulating cross-boundary flows of tangibles (e.g. persons or goods), intangibles (e.g. data or information) or capital between places outside Hong Kong and specified areas within NM (“Cross-boundary Flow Regulation”).

13. Clause 19 of the Bill seeks to provide for the disapplication of certain provisions specified in Part 2 of Schedule 2³ to the Bill in relation to certain equipment or other articles specified in that Schedule that are used or to be used in connection with any cross-boundary infrastructure construction in accordance with the Cross-boundary Flow Regulation. According to paragraph 25 of the LegCo Brief, the purpose is to facilitate the cross-boundary use of plant and equipment, thereby enabling more efficient construction of cross-boundary infrastructure projects.

14. Clause 20 of the Bill seeks to provide that any area within NM specified in the Cross-boundary Flow Regulation would be regarded as a closed area for the purposes of the Public Order Ordinance (Cap. 245) and any other enactment that applies to a closed area, and provide for matters relating to the permission to enter or leave the closed area. According to paragraph 27 of the LegCo Brief, the purpose is to establish a dedicated boundary control point at the Western Cross-River Link Bridge to facilitate convenient access by employees and related personnel of the Innovation and Technology Park to and from the Shenzhen Park across the boundary.

Statutory Corporations (Division 6: clause 22)

15. Clause 22 of the Bill seeks to empower CE in C to make regulations (which would be subject to negative vetting) for establishing body corporates for managing specified areas within NM.

Related matters (Part 4: clauses 23 to 25)

16. Part 4 of the Bill seeks to provide for miscellaneous matters. For instance, clause 25 of the Bill seeks to provide that any subsidiary legislation that could be made under

² Members may refer to Annex D to the LegCo Brief for the draft TM. Such TM would be subject to LegCo’s scrutiny under section 11 of Cap. 400, which provides for a mechanism similar to negative vetting.

³ Future amendment(s) to the proposed Schedule 2 to the Bill would be made by way of an amendment bill.

clause 7, 11, 13, 17, 21 or 22 of the Bill⁴ (see paragraphs 6, 8, 10, 11, 12 and 15 above respectively) could contain incidental provisions etc.

Commencement

17. The Bill, if passed, would come into operation on the day on which it is published in the Gazette as an Ordinance, except for (a) Part 3 (excluding clauses 14 and 16 (see paragraph 11 above)) (see paragraphs 6 to 15 above), (b) Part 4 (see paragraph 16 above) and (c) Schedule 2 (see paragraph 13 above), which would come into operation on a day to be appointed by the Secretary for Development by notice published in the Gazette (which would be subsidiary legislation subject to negative vetting).

Public Consultation

18. According to paragraph 40 of the LegCo Brief, a public consultation on the legislative proposals was conducted from 24 March to 22 May 2026 during which briefing sessions with over 20 statutory and advisory bodies were arranged and 48 written submissions were received. According to the Administration, the proposals were generally supported by members of the public, while specific suggestions on individual proposal were received. As explained by the Administration, in view of the public views gathered, adjustments have been made to the legislative proposals and reflected in the Bill and related subsidiary legislation.

Consultation with LegCo Panel

19. As advised by the Clerk to the Panel on Development, the Administration briefed the Panel on the legislative proposals at its meetings on 24 March and 23 June 2026. Members supported the Administration's introduction of the Bill to accelerate the development of NM, with a view to further removing barriers in planning and lands procedures, expediting construction works, and facilitating industry operation. Members raised concerns about the proposals' geographical scope and boundary flexibility beyond NM, the risk of temporary land uses becoming permanent, and the need to synchronize planning updates with land lease and infrastructure processes. Members called for a clear roadmap on cross-border flows (including extending the "white list" beyond Hetao), quantifiable indicators for innovative construction technologies, and careful handling of construction noise permit applications and land resumption compensation.

Conclusion

20. The Legal Service Division is scrutinizing the legal and drafting aspects of the Bill. Since the Bill seeks to introduce dedicated legislation for the development of NM, Members may consider forming a Bills Committee to study the Bill in detail.

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⁴ Members may refer to Annex B1 to Annex B5 to the LegCo Brief for the draft of five pieces of subsidiary legislation which would be formally made after the passage of the Bill.