



Our ref.: Council/BLA/JL/NK/20250414

14 April 2025

Mr. YAU Cheuk Hang, Vic, JP
Director, Northern Metropolis Co-ordination Office
Development Bureau
Units 506-507,
5/F, Shui On Centre,
6-8 Harbour Road,
Wan Chai, Hong Kong

By post & email
d.nmco@devb.gov.hk

Dear Mr. YAU,

The Hong Kong Institute of Architects' Advisory Response to the Ngau Tam Mei Planning Proposal

Further to our letter dated 3 April 2025 regarding "The Hong Kong Institute of Architects' Response to Ma Tso Lung and New Territories North New Town Planning Study," some of our members wish to offer additional advisory comments and recommendations to the Northern Metropolis Co-ordination Office, Development Bureau. Building on our recent engagement with the Ma Tso Lung development, we have evaluated the Ngau Tam Mei proposal within the wider framework of the Northern Metropolis vision. The briefing session on the New Territories North New Town and Ma Tso Lung development in late February 2025 provided valuable insights, deepening our understanding of the Northern Metropolis' goals. We are enthusiastic about sharing our perspectives on the Ngau Tam Mei development, as announced on 14 December 2024.

As Architects committed to Hong Kong's sustainable future, we recognize significant potential in the Ngau Tam Mei project to serve as both an innovation hub and a culturally responsive community. We applaud the HKSAR proposal's robust planning foundation and offer suggestions to further integrate local heritage, enhance academic-industry collaboration, and strengthen infrastructure for transportation and healthcare. Drawing on global examples and Hong Kong's distinctive position in the Greater Bay Area, our recommendations aim to foster a connected, thriving, and culturally rich development.

1. Recognition of Planning Principles

We commend the Ngau Tam Mei proposal for its consistent application of sound planning principles, including the blue-green infrastructure spine, the 15-minute neighborhood concept, transport-oriented development, and sustainable urban design strategies. These components establish a strong foundation for a vibrant, well-connected community, reflecting thoughtful and deliberate planning.



2. Cultural Heritage Integration

The proposal could be further enriched by incorporating Ngau Tam Mei's distinctive cultural heritage. Shaped by Hakka and Punti communities since the Ming Dynasty and later influenced by a post-war mix of indigenous and refugee populations, the area carries a deep cultural narrative. We recommend embedding these historical elements into the urban design to create a development that feels genuinely connected to its roots and resonates with its residents.

3. University Town Location Analysis

The proposed university town offers opportunities to bolster its role within the Northern Metropolis' innovation and technology ecosystem. However, its current landlocked location—surrounded by natural features, planned highways, and military facilities might hinder synergies with industry. Drawing from global examples, such as Stanford Industrial Park's evolution into Silicon Valley or the strategic placement of Tokyo's universities near business districts, we see the value of proximity in fostering academic-industry partnerships. We suggest exploring options to strengthen these connections in Ngau Tam Mei.

4. Alternative Academic Distribution Model

A decentralized academic model across the Northern Metropolis could be a promising approach. For example, medical and biochemistry programs might align with healthcare facilities in Ngau Tam Mei, while information technology faculties could collaborate with tech firms in the San Tin Technopole. This strategy would cultivate specialized innovation ecosystems, amplifying the university's impact throughout the region.

5. Healthcare Facility Considerations

The planned 3,000-bed acute hospital demonstrates a bold commitment to healthcare and required medical experts' prioritized input. To maximize its benefit for the Northern Metropolis population, we advise government consider to prioritize strong public transportation links. Unlike historical hospital designs that favored isolation, contemporary standards emphasize accessibility through mass transit. Early planning for these connections could secure the hospital's long-term effectiveness.

6. Strategic Positioning Within the GBA

Considering Hong Kong's role in the Greater Bay Area, our members recommend HKSAR to consider a decentralized model for the Northern Metropolis centered on education and research-driven growth. A network of "Research Hubs" each integrating university campuses, innovation and technology parks, and nearby residential and commercial zones could be distributed across the region. These hubs might focus on fields such as artificial intelligence, bio-medical sciences, micro-chip technology, 6G, ICT, and robotics, taking inspiration from regions like the San Francisco Bay Area and Tokyo Bay Area. This approach could enhance Hong Kong's competitive standing in the Greater Bay Area.



7. Conclusion

We appreciate the opportunity to share these insights and hope they contribute to realizing Ngau Tam Mei's potential as both a local community and a key component of Hong Kong's innovation landscape. The Hong Kong Institute of Architects remains dedicated to supporting this initiative and is eager to provide further professional expertise. We look forward to continued collaboration to shape a sustainable and successful Northern Metropolis.

Yours Sincerely,

Ar. LAU Man Kwan Julia, *CHKIA, JP*
President
The Hong Kong Institute of Architects