

Chapter 15

Planning, Land and Development

The government invests in developing land and new infrastructure to meet the wide-ranging needs of the community, amid fast-changing global competition and regional development, and is committed to enhancing the living environment of Hong Kong through effective land use planning, urban renewal, greening and heritage conservation.

The Development Bureau consists of two policy branches: the Planning and Lands Branch and the Works Branch.

The Planning and Lands Branch draws up policies on spatial planning, land development and supply, urban renewal, building quality and safety, and land administration. Its policy objectives are to facilitate Hong Kong's development through effective planning and use of land, a steady and sufficient supply of land, a facilitative building plan approval system, efficient land administration, promotion and regulation of building safety and timely maintenance, expediting urban renewal, harbourfront enhancement and revitalising existing built-up areas.

The Works Branch formulates public works policies and coordinates and monitors public works projects. It also oversees policies on development of a second central business district in Kowloon East; greening and tree management; water supply; slope safety; lift and escalator safety; flood prevention; promotion of professional services; construction industry; and conservation of historical buildings.

The bureau oversees the Land Registry and the departments of Architectural Services, Buildings, Civil Engineering and Development, Drainage Services, Electrical and Mechanical Services, Lands, Planning, and Water Supplies.

Spatial Planning and Land Development

Supply Forecast of Developable Land

To plan for land creation work and to keep the society informed of the land supply situation, the government has been updating and releasing the annual 10-year supply forecast of developable land, that is spade-ready sites, since 2022. According to the latest forecast, if all procedures involved in land creation could be smoothly taken forward, the estimated supply of spade-ready sites would reach around 3,000 hectares in the next decade, from which around 60 per cent (around 1,700 hectares) would come from the Northern Metropolis. The government is determined to sustain efforts in land creation and will take forward various land creation projects in a progressive and prudent manner, taking into account policy objectives, market conditions and fiscal considerations among different factors. The goal is to provide a stable and sustained land supply for Hong Kong to meet its overall demand, and to build up a land reserve in the long run to meet its future economic and social development needs.

Land Supply Initiatives

The government is taking forward large-scale land supply projects including developments in the Northern Metropolis, Tung Chung New Town Extension, Tseung Kwan O Area 137 and near-shore reclamation at Lung Kwu Tan. These projects involve releasing large plots of brownfield sites and deserted agricultural land as well as reclamation in environmentally less sensitive waters.

Northern Metropolis

The Northern Metropolis covers a vast expanse of land in the northern part of Hong Kong. The metropolis is divided into four major zones – 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 – each with a distinctive strategic positioning and development theme, according to the Northern Metropolis Action Agenda, published in 2023. Major projects include:

Hung Shui Kiu/Ha Tsuen New Development Area

The Hung Shui Kiu/Ha Tsuen New Development Area (NDA) is estimated to provide about 66,700 new flats for an additional population of 184,000, along with 150,000 new jobs. The first phase development works for the NDA commenced in 2020 with population intake for the first dedicated rehousing estate starting in November 2024. The second phase development works commenced in mid-2024 with targeted population intake starting from 2030, in conjunction with the anticipated commissioning of the Tuen Ma Line Hung Shui Kiu Station. The remaining phase of the NDA is partly under review in an ongoing study for Lau Fau Shan, Tsim Bei Tsui and Pak Nai areas to see whether the neighbouring areas can be planned with greater synergy.

Lau Fau Shan, Tsim Bei Tsui and Pak Nai

The ongoing study for Lau Fau Shan, Tsim Bei Tsui and Pak Nai areas covers an extension of the Hung Shui Kiu/Ha Tsuen NDA, as well as part of the remaining phase of the NDA. In March, a two-month public engagement exercise on the development proposal of Lau Fau Shan, Tsim Bei Tsui and Pak Nai was launched, with the key development themes of digital technology hub and eco-tourism. The study area was proposed to provide about 48,000 to 53,000 new flats for accommodating a total population of about 141,000 to 146,000, along with about 50,000 new jobs.

Yuen Long South NDA

The Yuen Long South NDA is estimated to provide about 32,900 new flats for an additional population of 98,700 and produce about 13,700 new jobs. Site formation and infrastructure works for the first phase development commenced in 2022, with target first population intake to start by 2028-29. Construction of the second phase development is planned to start in the third quarter of 2025, with the first population intake expected in 2029. Reviews for intensification and a possible extension to include the adjacent areas for the third phase are under way and expected to be completed in 2025.

Hong Kong-Shenzhen Innovation and Technology Park in the Loop

The Hong Kong-Shenzhen Innovation and Technology Park (HSITP) in the Loop will occupy 87 hectares of land. As laid down in the Development Outline for the Park, the first phase of the park will provide a gross floor area of about 1,000,000 square metres. The first batch of land parcels was provided at end-2021 for superstructure development and the first batch of three buildings completed progressively from end-2024.

San Tin Technopole

San Tin Technopole, excluding the HSITP in the Loop, will provide about 50,000 to 54,000 new flats and accommodate a new population of about 147,000 to 159,000, along with about 165,000 new jobs. The Revised Recommended Outline Development Plan was released in February and the Environmental Impact Assessment report was approved by the Director of

Environmental Protection in May. The town planning procedures were completed in September. The phase 1 stage 1 development commenced from end-2024, with a view to completing the formation of the first batch of innovation and technology (I&T) sites in 2026-27 and enabling the first population intake in 2031.

Ngau Tam Mei

The government announced the development proposal of Ngau Tam Mei and launched a two-month public engagement exercise in November. The development proposal involves about 130 hectares of land, among which about 46 hectares are proposed for the development of the Northern Metropolis University Town (including the campus of the third medical school) and approximately nine hectares are proposed for an integrated medical teaching and research hospital. The remaining area will be largely for a comprehensive residential community providing about 12,000 to 13,000 new residential units with a population of about 32,000 to 36,000. The entire development project is estimated to create 22,000 to 26,000 new jobs.

Kwu Tung North/Fanling North NDA

The Kwu Tung North/Fanling North NDA will provide about 86,200 new flats, nearly 70 per cent of which will be public housing, to accommodate an additional population of about 226,700. It will also generate about 53,100 new jobs. Development works started in 2019 for phased completion by 2031. The intake for the first batch of private housing started in end-2022 and the first intake for public housing is expected in 2026. Separately, a study to review the land uses of the Ma Tso Lung area, including some sites in the northern part of Kwu Tung North NDA, was commissioned in 2022. The development proposal formulated was released in December for a two-month public engagement exercise planned to commence in mid January 2025. The Ma Tso Lung area is proposed to provide about 9,800 to 10,700 new private residential flats with open spaces and ancillary facilities providing support to meet the housing and daily needs of the I&T talents in the Loop.

New Territories North New Town

New Territories North New Town covers an area of over 1,400 hectares. Given its locational advantage with three boundary control points – namely Lo Wu, Man Kam To and Heung Yuen Wai – the area can be developed into a boundary control point business district and a base for emerging industries. The related planning and engineering study was commissioned in 2021. In December 2024, the preliminary land use proposal was released for public consultation. Apart from providing land to drive the development of different industries, about 40 hectares of land has also been reserved for post-secondary education use, forming an important part of the Northern Metropolis University Town. Land has also been reserved for the development of a cultural node and a sports hub. As an initial estimate, the entire New Development Area will provide about 163,000 to 176,000 flats, accommodate about 449,000 to 484,000 population and create about 165,000 jobs.

Kau Yi Chau Artificial Islands

The Kau Yi Chau artificial islands project involves the provision of 1,000 hectares of new land through reclamation. The strategic geographical location of the project would make it an

important transportation node connecting Hong Kong Island, Lantau Island, the airport and the Northern Metropolis.

The Kau Yi Chau artificial islands project is at its preliminary planning and study stage. The government has reviewed the competing priorities of various projects and considered that the pace to take forward the project could be slowed down when efforts are being directed towards the development of the Northern Metropolis. Although there is no concrete timetable for the commencement of works for the project, the government is making efforts to carrying out the necessary preparatory work so that the reclamation works of the project can commence at an appropriate time in the future.

Tung Chung New Town Extension

The Tung Chung New Town Extension will provide about 64,800 flats and a commercial node for office, retail and hotel use. Reclamation works were substantially completed in Tung Chung East and the first phase of site formation and infrastructure works started in 2021. About half of the first phase of works have been completed, with first population intake starting from 2025 onwards.

Tseung Kwan O Area 137

Tseung Kwan O Area 137 will be developed into a new community primarily for housing purposes, providing around 103 hectares of land for accommodating about 50,000 housing units and associated ancillary facilities to meet the daily needs of future residents. After considering the views collected from the local community, several enhancements were made to the proposal. These include measures to improve the connections between the community and the blue-green resources nearby. Statutory procedures commenced at end-2024 after consulting the Sai Kung District Council on the enhanced land creation proposal. Advance preparatory works are expected to commence by the end of 2025. It will be served by the Tseung Kwan O Line southern extension and Tseung Kwan O-Yau Tong tunnel recommended under the *Hong Kong Major Transport Infrastructure Development Blueprint*.

Near-shore Reclamation at Lung Kwu Tan and Re-planning of Tuen Mun West Area

The government is conducting a planning and engineering study on near-shore reclamation at Lung Kwu Tan and re-planning of the Tuen Mun West area. With extensive sea frontage and the locational advantage given their proximity to the Northern Metropolis, Hong Kong International Airport and the Pearl River Delta region, Lung Kwu Tan and Tuen Mun West are strategically positioned to be an important source of land supply for the development of industries with growth potential. In 2024, the government conducted preliminary technical assessments on various aspects, such as reclamation extent, environmental and traffic impact, as well as initial market sounding to gauge the views of relevant stakeholders with a view to formulating initial development proposals. A two-month public engagement exercise on the development proposals will be launched in 2025.

Cavern Development

The government is taking forward a number of projects to relocate government facilities to caverns so as to release land for housing and other beneficial uses. The construction works for

the relocation of Sha Tin Sewage Treatment Works and Diamond Hill Fresh Water and Salt Water Service reservoirs; and Joint Cavern Development at Anderson Road Quarry Site for the Public Works Central Laboratory and Government Records Service's archives centre are under way.

The government is also undertaking the studies of underground quarrying and cavern development at Tsing Yi North and Sham Shui Kok in Lantau. Apart from the goal of forming development cavern spaces, underground quarrying is a local source of rock materials which can earn revenue. The pilot site is at Lam Tei and its revenue contract will commence in 2025.

Underground Space Development

The pilot study on underground space developments in Tsim Sha Tsui West, Causeway Bay, Happy Valley and Admiralty/Wan Chai has been completed.

Kowloon East

Kowloon East, comprising the Kai Tak Development and the Kwun Tong, Kowloon Bay and San Po Kong business areas, has a total area of about 514 hectares. Under the Energizing Kowloon East initiative, the area has been transformed into the second core business district to sustain Hong Kong's economic development.

By facilitating conversion or redevelopment of existing industrial buildings, as well as taking forward new development projects, commercial floor space in Kowloon East has increased from 1.7 million sq m in 2012 to 3.7 million sq m in 2024, and will further increase to over 4 million sq m, progressively getting closer to the scale of the Central core business district.

Island South

The Development Bureau promulgated the Invigorating Island South Conceptual Master Plan 3.0 for Wong Chuk Hang, Aberdeen and Ap Lei Chau in July. A study on pedestrian environment and traffic improvements to bring vibrancy to these areas was completed in the same month. Since 2021, 29 measures to improve connectivity, walkability, public spaces and the typhoon shelter waterfronts have been completed.

On major projects, technical assessments for the expansion of Aberdeen Typhoon Shelter were basically completed, with detailed design commencing in November. Riding on the expansion project, a marina is proposed and an expression of interest exercise will be launched in early 2025 to ascertain market interest. Site investigation works for the redevelopment and enhancement of recreation and sports facilities in Wong Chuk Hang commenced in February. Under the Round-the-Island Trail project, new trails near Sandy Bay and Tai Tam Tuk Reservoir Dam were completed.

Harbourfront Enhancement

The government continued to connect sections of promenade and provide public space along both sides of Victoria Harbour in 2024. Through collaboration with the Harbourfront Commission, 50 harbourfront sites had been opened from October 2020 to end-2024, extending the promenade along Victoria Harbour to about 29km. The first phase of the East Coast Boardwalk underneath the Island Eastern Corridor had been substantially completed by year end, connecting to Fortress Hill and North Point.

To bring convenience and better experience to visitors, smart specialty vending facilities providing popular light snacks and beverages are being piloted at the promenades of Wan Chai, Kwun Tong, and Cha Kwo Ling to explore introducing commercial facilities at selected suitable harbourfront locations.

The government introduced the Protection of the Harbour (Amendment) Bill 2024 into the Legislative Council in December. Upon its passage, it will put in place a formalised mechanism to control and minimise large-scale reclamation in the Victoria Harbour, while enabling harbourfront enhancement requiring small-scale reclamation to be processed through streamlined arrangements.

Sites in the Vicinity of the Hung Hom Station

Upon invitation by the government, the MTR Corporation Limited has completed a study to re-plan the site in the vicinity of Hung Hom Station, as well as the waterfront and former pier sites, with a view to releasing the commercial and residential development potential of the area, developing new harbourfront landmarks, and improving the pedestrian connectivity to the Hung Hom hinterland, its harbourfront area and Tsim Sha Tsui East. A two-month public engagement exercise on the proposed developments will be launched in April 2025.

Kai Tak

The government is providing essential infrastructure to serve the phased implementation of the Kai Tak Development, which covers the former airport precinct and the adjoining areas and has a footprint of about 320 hectares.

Cycle Track Network in New Territories

The government is implementing the cycle track network in the New Territories in phases to connect New Territories East with New Territories West for leisure and recreation purposes of the public. The total length of the cycle track already opened, which includes the Tuen Mun to Ma On Shan section, the Tsuen Wan waterfront section, and Sam Mun Tsai waterfront section in Tai Po, is about 63km. The implementation schedule of the remaining about 17km between Tsuen Wan and Tuen Mun is under planning.

Revitalisation of Industrial Buildings

The 2024 Policy Address announced the extension of measures under the Revitalisation Scheme for Industrial Buildings to end-2027. As at end-2024, the Town Planning Board had approved 71 applications for the redevelopment of industrial buildings. It allowed the plot ratios of most of these applications to increase by up to 20 per cent to optimise the use of land resources, having confirmed the technical feasibility of the proposed increases in development density.

Streamlining Development-related Administrative Procedures

The government continued to roll out measures to streamline development-related administrative procedures. To further institutionalise these efforts, the Development Bureau issued a circular to bureaus and departments in July to instil a 'facilitator mindset' in processing development-related applications.

Assistance to Brownfield Operators Displaced by Government Projects

Of around 1,600 hectares of brownfield sites in the New Territories, about 60 per cent will gradually be developed into high-density housing and other uses. While redevelopment of these sites can help make better use of precious land resources and enhance land use efficiency, the government will continue to facilitate displaced brownfield operators to relocate their businesses under the policy directive of ‘providing monetary compensation in parallel with facilitation service’.

Land Disposal

Land Sale Programme

Government land is usually disposed of through public sale for private residential, commercial and other developments. The annual Land Sale List includes sites with potential for sale in that financial year. The government announces sites every quarter to be tendered to provide transparency and certainty for the market.

In 2024, two residential sites and two electric vehicle charging station sites, were sold for about \$1.74 billion. The two residential sites were expected to provide about 864 private residential flats. In light of the market situation in 2024, the government did not put up any commercial sites for public sale.

Land Exchange

Private landowners may apply to the Lands Department for a lease modification or land exchange so as to, for instance, redevelop the site based on the town plan. The department acts as a private landlord in considering such applications. Approvals are subject to terms and conditions that may include the payment of premiums and administrative fees.

In 2024, the department concluded 69 such transactions, involving about 292.2 hectares and about \$8.5 billion in land premiums. These transactions are expected to provide about 6,477 residential flats and up to 244,554 sq m of gross floor area for commercial or other economic uses.

Urban Renewal

Urban renewal improves living conditions in old urban areas, primarily through redevelopment and rehabilitation of dilapidated buildings. The Development Bureau formulates policy on urban renewal and oversees the work of the Urban Renewal Authority (URA). The URA also provides financial assistance and technical support to building owners for building rehabilitation and repair.

In 2024, the bureau continued to explore policy measures to use newly developed land to drive large-scale urban redevelopment projects and support the URA to conduct two district planning studies on Tsuen Wan and Sham Shui Po. Moreover, legislative amendments to enhance the compulsory sale regime became effective in early December, which help promote urban renewal by expediting the consolidation of private property interests. Minority owners

affected by compulsory sale can receive one-stop support from the Support Service Centre for Minority Owners under Compulsory Sale, which was established in August.

Building Development

Private Sector

In 2024, superstructural works started at 61 sites, covering a gross floor area of 1.05 million sq m. A total of 554 buildings, with a gross floor area of 2.57 million sq m, were completed at a cost of \$120.8 billion.

Public Sector

The Architectural Services Department provides architectural and associated professional and project management services for the design, construction and upkeep of government buildings and public facilities. It explores the latest construction technologies with academics, local and mainland research and construction institutes and private sector and applies innovative building solutions, as well as inclusive and green building design to provide a more sustainable, resilient and human-centric built environment.

In 2024, the department completed 34 projects and commenced 32 projects, including Light Public Housing projects which will provide 30,000 units in the five years from 2023-24 to 2027-28. The department was recognised for its excellence in design of public architecture and won 71 regional and international awards in 2024.

Built and Archaeological Heritage

The government's heritage conservation policy is to protect, conserve and revitalise as appropriate historical and heritage buildings and sites through relevant and sustainable approaches for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations. Due regard is given to development needs, respect for private property rights, budgetary considerations and cross-sector collaboration to facilitate active engagement among stakeholders and the public.

The Development Bureau has implemented the Revitalising Historic Buildings Through Partnership Scheme, with seven batches involving a total of 24 historic buildings. Thirteen projects from Batches I to V are currently in operation. In addition to these thirteen projects, Former Lau Fau Shan Police Station – Hong Kong Guide Dogs Academy will start operation in the second quarter of 2025; while Roberts Block, Old Victoria Barracks is expected to complete in phases from the third quarter of 2025 to the second half of 2026. The pre-construction works of five other projects under Batch VI are also under way. Furthermore, Batch VII of the scheme includes Watervale House, Former Gordon Hard Camp; No 23 Coombe Road; and the Old Lunatic Asylum (Chinese Block). An assessment of revitalisation proposals for Watervale House, Former Gordon Hard Camp is under way, while proposals for the revitalisation of No 23 Coombe Road are being invited.

The Built Heritage Conservation Fund operates two funding schemes to support public engagement and research. In 2024, four proposals were selected for the Batch II of the Funding Scheme for Public Engagement Projects. The review of the Funding Scheme for Thematic

Research was completed, and enhancements will be implemented in the upcoming round of applications.

The Development Bureau monitors works on or development of declared monuments, proposed monuments, graded historic buildings or buildings proposed to be graded and discusses preservation options with the owners concerned. The bureau approved grants for maintenance works at 10 historic buildings under the Financial Assistance for Maintenance Scheme on Built Heritage in 2024.

During the year, the bureau undertook restoration and repair works at monuments including the Tang Chung Ling Ancestral Hall in Fanling, Kowloon Union Church in Jordan and Tung Wah Museum in Yau Ma Tei. Archaeological investigations were conducted in Tuen Mun, Tai Po and Islands districts.

The Antiquities Advisory Board advises the government on antiquities and monuments. As at end-2024, grading assessment of the heritage value of 1,669 buildings had been completed to provide an objective basis for guiding conservation efforts. During the year, Lo Pan Temple in Kennedy Town and the Residence of Tang Pak Kau in Kam Tin were declared monuments.

The Antiquities and Monuments Office organised heritage-themed exhibitions covering built heritage, archaeology, the Maritime Silk Road and dinosaur fossils. In addition, educational programmes and activities were launched to complement major exhibitions, dinosaur fossils and a recent restoration project. Furthermore, cross-sector heritage runs, school programmes for teachers and students and community engagement programmes were also held.

With the joint efforts of Guangdong and Macao, the first heritage trail in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA) was launched in October. The trail is themed on education aiming to trace the common historical roots and humanistic connections in the GBA through historic buildings. A total of 48 historic buildings at 37 sites were included in the Hong Kong Section of the trail.

In October, the Development Bureau announced the first discovery of dinosaur fossils in Hong Kong. The fossils were found on Port Island of the Hong Kong Unesco Global Geopark. Based on the Framework Agreement on Deepening Exchange and Collaboration regarding Stratigraphy, Palaeontology and Prehistoric Sites signed between the Development Bureau and the Institute of Vertebrate Paleontology and Paleoanthropology of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, joint excavation of the dinosaur fossils was carried out from October to November. The Dinosaur Parlour at the Hong Kong Heritage Discovery Centre was opened in December to showcase the preparation of dinosaur fossils to the public. In parallel, a series of talks and workshops as well as guided tours on dinosaurs and fossils have been held to enhance the public's interest and knowledge in the fields.

Framework for Land Use Planning, Building Control and Land Administration

Town Planning Board

The Town Planning Board is a statutory body that oversees the preparation and review of statutory plans and considers planning applications. In 2024, it amended 13 statutory Outline

Zoning Plans and prepared one new plan. It also updated documents related to statutory planning, including Master Schedule of Notes to Statutory Plans and Definitions of Terms Used in Statutory Plans, to streamline the planning application process.

Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines

The Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines provide criteria for determining the scale, location and site requirements of various land uses and facilities applicable to planning studies, town plans and development control. These are reviewed from time to time by relevant bureaux and departments to take account of changes in government policies, demographic characteristics, and social and economic trends. In early 2024, the guidelines were updated regarding the installation of electric vehicle charging facilities at all parking spaces in new developments, reflecting the latest requirements of the Environmental Protection Department.

Planning Control and Enforcement

The Planning Authority tackles unauthorised developments in the development permission areas and regulated areas. It may serve statutory notices on landowners, occupiers or responsible persons requiring them to stop or discontinue an unauthorised development within a specified period. A further notice may be served to require reinstatement of the land. Non-compliance is an offence.

In 2024, the authority handled 489 new cases of unauthorised development, and issued 3,072 warning letters or reminders involving 641 cases, 2,397 enforcement notices involving 429 cases, 636 reinstatement notices involving 145 cases and 2,580 compliance notices involving 418 cases. A total of 218 defendants in 66 cases were convicted. The enforcement and prosecution actions resulted in the discontinuation of 358 unauthorised developments on 88 hectares of land, while another 71 occupying 17 hectares of land later obtained planning permission.

Land Control and Lease Enforcement

The Lands Department carries out squatter control work. There are about 374,600 surveyed squatter structures throughout the territory, and they are tolerated until they cease to exist or are to be cleared for development, environmental improvement or safety reasons.

In 2024, the department demolished 277 illegal unauthorised squatter structures that were in breach of the squatter control policy, in addition to unauthorised structures cleared in the context of land control and lease enforcement. It also handled about 16,800 cases of reported unlawful occupation of government land and about 1,770 cases involving breaches of lease conditions.

The department keeps a register of man-made slopes which records their maintenance responsibility. It inspects and maintains about 17,500 registered man-made slopes under its purview regularly, and carried out maintenance works on about 7,200 of them in 2024.

During the year, the department provided advice for about 1,130 development control submissions relating to trees and landscape on leased land and about 1,600 cases of tree issues

on unallocated government land. It also conducted ad hoc vegetation maintenance work for about 23,000 cases.

Lease Extension

The Extension of Government Leases Ordinance came into operation in July. The ordinance establishes a new standing statutory mechanism for handling in batches and in a streamlined manner lease extension matters for general purposes leases (general residential, commercial, industrial leases) which do not contain a right of renewal. Applicable leases are extended for 50 years without payment of an additional premium but subject to payment of 3 per cent rateable value as government rent. In 2024, the government extended leases expiring from 5 July 2024 to the end of 2031, involving land leases of 379 lots in total.

Small House Policy Administration

The Lands Department administers the small house policy for indigenous villagers in the New Territories and the rebuilding of old village houses. In 2024, the department approved 821 applications to build small houses and 310 applications to rebuild old village houses. The department also processes rent exemption requisitions for indigenous villagers' rural properties.

Land Conveyancing

The department provides legal advice and conveyancing services for government land transactions. It drafts all government land disposal and lease modification documents, checks titles in land acquisitions, administers the Lands Department Consent Scheme, approves Deeds of Mutual Covenant, processes apportionments of premiums and government rents, and recovers arrears of government rents by taking re-entry or vesting action. In 2024, it approved 26 applications for the sale of about 11,800 residential flats under construction and approved 32 Deeds of Mutual Covenant in respect of residential development.

Land Resumption

Private land may be resumed for public purposes under relevant ordinances which provide compensation for the property's value and business losses. If the amount of compensation cannot be agreed, either party may seek determination by the Lands Tribunal. The department is involved in resuming land for public works, urban renewal and railway development projects. In 2024, about 3,136,200 sq m of private land was resumed and about \$9.63 billion of compensation was paid for resumptions supporting public works projects, including public housing development; \$110.7 million compensation was paid to owners of 24 resumed properties affected by 15 urban renewal projects; and \$67 million of compensation was paid in resumptions supporting railway projects.

Optimising Use of Vacant Government Sites under Short-term Tenancy

The Development Bureau runs a funding scheme for non government organisations (NGOs) to carry out one-off, basic and essential restoration works on vacant government sites and school premises fit for community, institutional or other non-profit-making use. In July, the funding commitment of the scheme was increased from \$1 billion to \$1.5 billion, with enhancement measures to facilitate NGOs to make gainful use of vacant government sites for worthy projects

for the community. As at end-2024, funding had been approved to take forward community projects at 30 vacant sites or premises.

Land Registration

The Land Registry registers land-related documents and keeps land records in an electronic format for the public to search. Major types of documents include sale and purchase agreements, assignments, and mortgages and legal charges. More than 3 million land registers and 27 million land-related documents can be retrieved electronically. During the year, 360,172 land-related documents were lodged for registration. The registry also provides an email notification service, Property Alert, to help property owners monitor any documents delivered for registration against their properties.

Hong Kong operates a deeds registration system. To enhance title certainty and simplify conveyancing procedures, this system will be gradually replaced with a title registration system. The Land Registry has forged consensus with key stakeholders on first implementing title registration on newly granted land, meaning land granted by the government after a specific date, and the Development Bureau will introduce the amendment bill to the Legislative Council in the first quarter of 2025.

Survey, Mapping and Geospatial Information Service

The Lands Department provides geospatial information to advocate the wider use of spatial data and locational information. It formulates and implements survey, mapping and geospatial data policies and standards; maintains a data bank of geospatial and cadastral data, and positioning infrastructure of Hong Kong; supports the implementation of Common Spatial Data Infrastructure (CSDI); develops 3D digital maps covering the territory; and maintains the Government Building Information Modelling (BIM) Data Repository. It carries out geodetic, mapping and land boundary surveys as well as providing cartographic and reprographic services to support land and building developments.

The department produces digital and paper maps, maintains a Land Information System, and provides free digital maps and web map applications to the public. In 2024, it further released the 3D digital maps covering Kowloon West, Lantau and the Islands, and New Territories Northwest for viewing and free download at the CSDI Portal and the online platform Open3Dhk. The department also launched the Underground Utilities Information System for use by relevant departments and utility undertakings.

Development of Common Spatial Data Infrastructure

The CSDI Portal, launched in 2022, provides more than 900 spatial datasets for use by the government, trade and public. The bureau continues to promote the use of CSDI, operate the Geospatial Lab, organise various activities, such as competitions, workshops and talks, to drive creation, analysis and applications of spatial data, and maintain close connections with stakeholders in the I&T sector to build up a spatial data ecosystem in promoting more innovative use of spatial data and technology.

Use of Building Information Modelling

The government continues to promote the adoption of BIM. The tools for automated compliance checking on floor area information in building plans jointly developed by the Buildings Department and Lands Department were launched in 2024. More tools for automated compliance checking are being developed and will be launched in 2025. The Buildings Department commissioned a consultancy study in 2024 to formulate a technical framework for the full adoption of BIM by the private sector for preparation and submission of plans for approval under the Buildings Ordinance. Based on the study's findings and the views of stakeholders, the government will publish an enhanced roadmap on the adoption of BIM for preparation and submission of building plans.

Promoting Elderly-friendly Building Design

To encourage ageing in place, the Development Bureau, in collaboration with the Buildings Department, released proposals on elderly-friendly building design for a two-month targeted consultation in November. After the public consultation, the government will implement the proposals in phases by putting in place the encouraged features through administrative means such as practice notes and a voluntary accreditation scheme from mid-2025 onwards, and implementing the mandatory features through legislative amendments in the first half of 2026.

Building Safety and Maintenance

The Development Bureau works with the Architectural Services Department, Buildings Department and partner organisations to enhance building safety and efficiency.

Building inspections and maintenance of government buildings and public facilities (except public housing) are mainly the responsibilities of the Architectural Services Department. In 2024, the total expenditure on maintenance works and refurbishment and improvement works was \$907.3 million and \$3,583.9 million respectively, involving an aggregate building floor area of 34 million sq m. The Architectural Services Department continues to apply innovative technology to enhance safety and efficiency in building maintenance works.

The Buildings Department enforces the Mandatory Building Inspection and Mandatory Window Inspection schemes to tackle building decay at its root by requiring owners of target buildings to inspect and repair their buildings and windows. In 2024, the department issued statutory notices to 605 buildings for building inspections and 605 buildings for window inspections under these schemes.

In 2023, the bureau announced measures to step up enforcement and strengthen support for owners or owners' corporations of buildings to comply with notices. The bureau also set up a standing communication mechanism to strengthen the collaboration among the Buildings Department, Home Affairs Department and URA to follow up on compliance with these notices.

The government, in partnership with the URA, supports building owners in need to carry out repairs and maintenance. In 2024, subsidies and loans approaching \$800 million were granted to eligible property owners through assistance schemes, including Operation Building Bright 2.0, the Building Maintenance Grant Scheme for Needy Owners, the Building Drainage System

Repair Subsidy Scheme and the Lift Modernisation Subsidy Scheme. As at the year end, around 4,000 applications had been approved to join the 'Smart Tender' Building Rehabilitation Facilitating Services scheme at a concessionary rate, since the scheme was launched in 2016 to provide technical support to building owners in procuring services for repair works.

To tackle unauthorised building works, the Buildings Department accords priority to enforcement actions against such works that are new or under construction, and those which constitute an obvious hazard or imminent danger to life and property. The department also removes unauthorised building works that have been erected on building exteriors, including rooftops, podiums and yards; are basements; are associated with subdivided units; are found in New Territories exempted houses; or are unauthorised signboards. In 2024, the department served 8,074 statutory removal orders and removed 28,504 unauthorised building works.

In 2024, the Buildings Department instigated 3,770 prosecution cases and secured 2,371 convictions in court for failure to comply with the removal orders, resulting in fines totalling \$25.29 million. The department launched various publicity campaigns to promote a culture of building safety.

Review on Buildings Ordinance

In the 2023 Policy Address, the government proposed to review the Buildings Ordinance and introduce amendments to ensure building safety and enhance building works safety. The Development Bureau, in collaboration with the Buildings Department, completed the ordinance review in 2024 and launched a two-month public consultation in December. The bureau will finalise the proposed amendments to the ordinance and commence drafting the amendment bill with the target of introducing it into the Legislative Council in the first half of 2026.

Lifts and Escalators

The Electrical and Mechanical Services Department carries out regular inspections and updates codes of practice relating to the design, construction and maintenance of lifts and escalators. In 2024, the department continued its \$4.5 billion Lift Modernisation Subsidy Scheme with the URA to enhance the safety of aged lifts. Since the commencement of the scheme, 1,467 modernised lifts have been put into use, and 3,761 aged lifts are under planning, tendering or construction stages.

Infrastructure

Infrastructure Investment

The government builds new infrastructure and improves existing facilities to meet economic development needs and enhance the living environment.

Pier Improvement Programme

Among the 10 public piers covered by the first phase of the Pier Improvement Programme, the new Pak Kok Pier on Lamma Island and the new Kau Sai Village Pier in Sai Kung were commissioned in November 2022 and September 2024 respectively; construction works for six piers are under way and are expected for completion from 2025 to 2026 progressively; and the

detailed design of the improvement works for the remaining two piers are largely completed. Of the 13 public piers covered by the second phase, construction works for five piers are ongoing and are expected for completion from 2025 to 2026 progressively; two piers are in detailed design stage; and the remaining six piers are under planning.

Drainage Services

The Drainage Services Department manages about 2,800km of storm water drains and watercourses, about 21 km of drainage tunnels, five stormwater storage tanks with total capacity of about 250,000 cubic metres and 27 village flood pumping schemes. It carries out drainage improvement works to cater for local developments and address probable effects of climate change.

In August, the department commenced the construction of drainage improvement public works projects in Wong Tai Sin, Kowloon City, Shek Kip Mei, Sha Tin, Tai Po, Kwun Tong and Eastern districts, to enhance the flood protection level of the stormwater drainage systems.

The department inspects, clears and repairs drainage systems regularly. In 2024, it inspected about 2,300km and cleared about 790km of drains and watercourses.

Slope Safety

The Civil Engineering and Development Department improves slope safety by adopting high standards and advanced technology, ensuring all new man-made slopes meet safety standards, improving the safety of existing man-made slopes and mitigating natural terrain landslide risks. The department also operates a landslip warning system to alert the public to landslide danger during periods of heavy rainfall.

Under the Landslip Prevention and Mitigation Programme, the department upgraded 150 government man-made slopes and mitigated the landslide risk of 37 natural hillside catchments in 2024. It also conducted safety screening studies for 101 private man-made slopes.

Water Supplies

Water from Guangdong

Since 1965, Hong Kong has been importing raw water from the Dongjiang River. The Dongjiang water supply agreement maintains flexibility in the daily supply rate, ensuring a reliable source of supply and avoiding wastage of precious water resources. In 2024, the city imported about 820 million cubic metres of Dongjiang water, accounting for 70 to 80 per cent of the fresh water consumption in Hong Kong.

Water Storage and Consumption

Full water supply was maintained throughout the year, during which 2,310mm of rainfall was recorded. Impounding reservoirs held about 410 million cubic metres of water at the end of 2024.

There were about 3.2 million water customer accounts as at the year end. About 1,060 million cubic metres of fresh water was consumed in 2024, with an average daily supply of about

2.89 million cubic metres. About 310 million cubic metres of salt water was supplied in 2024 for toilet flushing.

Total Water Management

The government's Total Water Management Strategy focuses on containing the growth of fresh water demand and building resilience in fresh water supply with diversified water resources to cater for the extreme effects of climate change. The first stage of the Tseung Kwan O Desalination Plant started supplying water at the end of 2023, with a water production capacity of 135,000 cubic metres per day.

Digital Water Office

Established in June, the Digital Water Office is responsible for driving the digitalisation of water supply services by using technology to enhance operational performance and efficiency. Its initiatives include enhancing the adoption of smart devices, digital twin technology, artificial intelligence, and wider use of online real-time sensors and robots, with an aim to optimise operational performance, achieve predictive asset maintenance and strengthen emergency response capabilities, hence ensuring provision of reliable and efficient water supplies and quality customer services.

Waterworks

The main works for the in-situ reprovisioning of Sha Tin Water Treatment Works (South Works) and Siu Ho Wan Water Treatment Works extension are being carried out for commissioning in 2027 and 2028 respectively.

Drinking Water Safety

The Water Supplies Department tests water samples collected from sources, through the supply and distribution systems, to consumers' taps to ensure the quality of drinking water. The department also encourages building owners to implement the water safety plan for buildings to further safeguard drinking water safety. By end-2024, there were about 40 per cent of households in Hong Kong residing in buildings with the plan implemented.

The department's Water Safety Plan Subsidy Scheme encourages the implementation of water safety measures to further safeguard drinking water safety. By end-2024, the department had received applications from more than 1,800 eligible buildings.

To further reduce the risk of lead leaching into drinking water, the department revamped the general acceptance system for metallic plumbing materials in September and imposed an upper limit of 3.5 per cent on the lead content of such materials for use in specified plumbing works.

Project Strategy and Governance

The bureau has been devising and implementing initiatives to strengthen the gateway process for cost management, enhance project delivery capability, lead strategic developments to improve cost-effectiveness, and enhance collaboration with international counterparts and local industry stakeholders.

'Construction 2.0'

The government's 'Construction 2.0' initiative encourages the construction industry to reform and upgrade by advocating innovation, professionalisation and revitalisation. It also promotes the application of I&T, including high productivity construction, digitalisation of the construction industry, BIM and the Smart Site Safety System. It coordinates works departments' efforts for promoting applied research and development in public works projects to raise productivity, strengthen works supervision and quality assurance, and improve site safety.

Modular Integrated Construction

Apart from mandating designated government buildings in capital works projects to adopt modular integrated construction (MiC), the government is progressively rolling out measures to strengthen the supply chain of the MiC modules, covering issues such as approval processes, manufacturing, taxation, transportation, storage and accreditation of modules, to align with the Mainland and drive the high-quality development of MiC.

Construction Digitalisation

The bureau utilises the developed Integrated Capital Works Platform to consolidate the data of all public works projects to achieve further application of artificial intelligence technology for big data analysis for reviewing the performance of projects in terms of cost and progress. This could facilitate the timely implementation of corresponding measures to enhance management efficiency and project performance, and continue to lead and promote digitalisation of the construction industry.

Building Technology Research Institute

The bureau established the Building Technology Research Institute in August. Apart from conducting research and development on innovative materials, construction methods and technologies, the institute also devises standards, conducts testing and provides accreditation to spearhead innovation in the industry. The MiC Manufacturer Certification Scheme was launched and open to applications in November, so as to leverage the complementarity of the construction industries in Guangdong and Hong Kong.

The institute will also review and enhance Hong Kong's building standards, which have been in place for many years, by making reference to building standards on the Mainland (Guobiao) and overseas, with a view to promoting the local application of high quality and cost effective construction materials from the Mainland and overseas. The institute is also working with its counterparts in Guangdong province to take forward the formulation of the GBA Construction Standards.

Construction Industry

Construction Industry Council

The Construction Industry Council supports the development of the construction industry, in particular by training construction workers. The council was allocated \$1 billion in 2022 to increase the number of training places and the amount of allowance of its training programmes, to attract new blood to the industry and to upskill and retain in-service workers.

The council has increased its training quota from 6,000 places in the 2021-22 academic year to at least 12,000 places in each academic year from 2022-23 to 2027-28.

With the support of the Development Bureau, the council launched the Special Class of 'Multi-skilled' Training Course in January to encourage registered semi-skilled workers and skilled workers to receive training in another trade and obtain relevant intermediate qualifications, thereby equipping local construction workers to participate in more trades, enhancing their employment opportunities, and address the manpower demand for shortage trades.

Among about 665,000 registered construction workers, 255,000 were semi-skilled or skilled workers. The government works with the council to monitor the industry's manpower supply and demand, and support training for local workers. To attach priority to the employment of local workers, the government launched the Labour Importation Scheme for the Construction Sector in 2023 as a supplementary measure to alleviate the manpower shortage of the sector. The number of quotas is capped at 12,000. As of end-2024, there were 9,109 approved and valid quotas under the scheme.

The government also works with the council to operate the Construction Innovation and Technology Fund. As at December, about \$1,500 million had been approved since the fund's launch in 2018, subsidising about 1,300 enterprises to adopt technologies and supporting about 18,000 technology training places.

The Smart Site Safety System is a proven measure to uplift site safety performance as demonstrated by its use in public works. To promote wider adoption of the system in the construction industry, the bureau and the council jointly launched a scheme which will issue labels to construction sites upon confirmation by site assessments that the Smart Site Safety System has been adequately and effectively implemented. As at December, around 500 labels had been granted to various public and private construction sites involving different works types and scales.

In December, the bureau, in collaboration with the council and over 20 industry organisations, launched the STEAM Up project to produce a set of construction-themed science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics (STEAM) teaching and learning materials for classroom use in all primary and secondary schools across Hong Kong. The project's aim is to integrate knowledge in the fields of architecture, surveying, town planning, landscape architecture and engineering in line with the curriculum guidelines for primary and secondary school levels. The campaign has also set up a STEAM learning resource centre which consists of a library and which will organise thematic exhibitions and workshops, as well as a wide range of activities, to inspire students' interest in and understanding of various professions of the construction industry.

The council continues to administer and promote the Registered Specialist Trade Contractors Scheme with a view to building up the capability of contractors. Contractors from 20 specialist trades have been registered as specialist trade contractors. The scheme imposes registration

requirements on safety, management, job experience, execution, finance and integrity management to uplift the professionalism of the industry.

Promotion of Professional Services

'Professional Title' is a unique evaluation system for professional qualifications adopted by the Mainland. It is an important benchmark for evaluating the skills and qualification levels of professionals and provides a basis for construction enterprises to recruit and promote talents. Due to differences in systems between Hong Kong and the Mainland, it was not easy for Hong Kong professionals to apply for the Mainland 'Professional Title' qualification in the past. With the joint efforts of the Guangdong and Hong Kong governments, a new evaluation mechanism applicable to Hong Kong professionals was established in 2023, and implemented as a pilot scheme in five engineering disciplines, namely civil; geotechnical; highway; electrical and measurement; as well as control and instrumentation. The assessment of the first batch of applications for 'Professional Title' qualifications was completed in 2024. In total, 207 Hong Kong engineers from the public sector, consultants, and contractors passed the assessment and obtained 'Professional Title' that include the ranks of 'Professorate Senior Engineer', 'Senior Engineer', 'Engineer' and 'Assistant Engineer'. The government will continue to maintain close collaboration with relevant Mainland authorities and coordinate the local construction sector with a view to regularising the new evaluation mechanism of 'Professional Title' and extending it to other construction related professions.

The Development Bureau and the Department of Housing and Urban-Rural Development of Guangdong Province signed the Letter of Intent on Strengthening Guangdong-Hong Kong Cooperation in Construction and Related Engineering Sectors on behalf of Guangdong Province and Hong Kong in March. The letter will strengthen the cooperation in the construction and engineering sectors between Guangdong and Hong Kong on various fronts, including promoting the synergistic development of the MiC industry in the GBA to build a Guangdong-Hong Kong industry chain.

It enhances research and development, quality accreditation and international marketing for MiC and will also support the joint formulation of GBA standards for technologies and products, as well as personnel training in the construction and engineering sectors in Guangdong and Hong Kong.

International Infrastructure and Projects Leaders Summit

The Development Bureau hosted the inaugural International Infrastructure and Projects Leaders Summit in November to showcase Hong Kong as an international infrastructure centre. It brought together more than 500 esteemed major infrastructure project leaders and visionary experts in infrastructure from over 20 countries and economies around the globe, including government, academia, construction and finance. Notable guests included senior government officials from the Mainland and overseas, and representatives of renowned international organisations such as the World Economic Forum and International Institute for Management Development.

Greening, Landscape and Tree Management

The Development Bureau is responsible for formulating policies and coordinating landscape and tree management strategies and initiatives. It promotes a holistic approach to landscape and tree management, advocating adequate space allocation for new planting, proper selection of plant species, good landscape design and planting practices, and proper tree maintenance, with public safety as a paramount consideration.

The Study Sponsorship Scheme and Trainee Programme under the Urban Forestry Support Fund encourage youngsters to join the arboriculture industry. Enhanced measures for both the scheme and programme have been implemented. By end-2024, around 1,200 sponsorship applications had been received and around 260 trainees had participated in the programme.

Since the launch of the Registration Scheme for Tree Management Personnel in 2020, around 950 applicants have registered as tree management personnel. The government has been employing registered personnel in new construction and maintenance contracts to enhance the quality of tree management.

The bureau hosted an International Urban Forestry Conference 2024 in April under the theme 'Green Metropolis – The Crucial Role of Urban Forests for a Sustainable Future'. The conference offered a platform for international experts and greening and landscape industry practitioners to exchange views, and examine various related matters.

During the year, the bureau continued to implement an array of enhancement measures on roadside tree planting and maintenance, including the expansion of the scope of tree risk assessment. A study of suitability and sustainability of roadside trees was under way.

Websites

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Civil Engineering and Development Department: www.cedd.gov.hk

Construction 2.0 – Time to Change: www.psgo.gov.hk/assets/pdf/Construction-2-0-en.pdf

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