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SOCIETY

# LAM PAINTS ROSY PICTURE OF LIFE IN NORTHERN HUB

**Leader says those living in proposed metropolis will enjoy more family time, sleep better, and have bigger homes in beautiful natural setting**

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Chief Executive Carrie Lam Cheng Yuet-ngor has painted a rosy picture of life in her planned Northern Metropolis, predicting residents of the mega development near the border with the mainland will enjoy more family time, better sleep and bigger homes nestled in the surrounding natural beauty.

Lam yesterday said the metropolis would be “self-contained”, a first for Hong Kong’s new town developments, and would provide enough jobs to spare residents the need to commute long distances to existing urban centres, in turn facilitating a “better home-job balance”.

Lam presented her vision of life in the Northern Metropolis – first unveiled last month in the final policy address of her term – at a webinar held as part of the Global Conference of the Alliance for Healthy Cities.

“From time to time, on a working day, when I am driven from the urban area where I live into the new development areas to attend a meeting, to officiate at a function, I will always see the buses coming the other way, that is, from the new development areas into the urban areas, and the

majority of passengers on the buses are falling asleep,” Lam said.

“You just imagine, if we have more jobs in the areas where these people live, they will have an extra hour of quality sleep at home and not on the bus,” she continued.

“So one of the primary objectives of the Northern Metropolis is we will try to make sure, for the first time in Hong Kong’s new town development, that it will be self-contained.”



**They will have an extra hour of quality sleep at home and not on the bus**

CARRIE LAM, CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The long-term goal of the project is to alleviate the city’s chronic housing shortage and foster a new hi-tech hub to contribute to Beijing’s Greater Bay Area plan. The plan seeks to integrate Hong Kong, Macau and nine mainland cities into an economic powerhouse.

The Northern Metropolis will

supply more than 900,000 flats for some 2.5 million people, and will be home to 650,000 jobs, including 150,000 related to innovation and technology.

Lam also said the goal of housing 2.5 million residents was meant to achieve “higher per capita space standards for people’s accommodation”.

Lam also said that to make the new metropolis a “healthy city”, five new railway lines were planned to encourage residents to commute by mass transit instead of driving.

She added the government would adopt “a far more proactive conservation policy” to achieve better “urban-rural integration” and improve residents’ quality of life.

In addition to the existing Mai Po wetland on the western side of the planned metropolis, and the Geopark on its eastern side, Lam said the government would also create three new wetland areas spanning 2,000 hectares and establish a new country park in the development area.

But North district councillor Hau Chi-keung, also the chairman of Sheung Shui Rural Committee, said he was less optimistic about it all.

“The Northern Metropolis project sounds like a good plan and we support the idea, too. But it will take some 20 years to finish. Politicians are good at presenting visions and making promises. But what residents really care about is how they are going to deliver,” Hau said.