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\$3.8b in the public works pipeline

The public works programme will be maintained at high level, with new projects worth \$3.8 billion expected next financial year, the secretary for Lands and Works, Mr Nicky Chan, said.

This initial estimate represents an increase of \$200 million, or 5.6 per cent, over the 1983/84 estimates.

Another \$1 billion is spent each year on land acquisition and the Housing Authority's expenditure on its public housing programme has also not been included in the public works total.

In addition, annual expenditure from the Capital Works Reserve Fund — excluding that of public housing — is currently running at between \$6 billion and \$6.5 billion.

Mr Chan said these figures might not convey a true sense of the achievement which the public works programme represents, but the changes in Hongkong's physical environment have helped reflect its success.

There has been continuous land development on an extensive scale, with site formation and highway projects in progress all the time, he said.

A steady stream of new projects to meet community demand will help convince visitors that the Government is fully committed to and energetically engaged in the development of the territory, he said.

"And, as the size of the public works programme indicates, this level of construction activity will continue in the years ahead," Mr



Mr Chan Chan said.

Discussing new town programmes, Mr Chan said there is no intention of stopping development programmes in these towns short of completion in favour of other schemes.

"The essence will be in blending the commencement of our new programmes for the 1990s with our current ones so that steady progress and an even investment pattern are maintained," he said.

"As far as post-new town programmes are concerned,

we are now in the process of drawing up briefs for planning and engineering feasibility studies of the harbour area to follow up the initial results of our long-term development studies.

"Once these and the current port development study are completed next year we shall begin to outline programmes for implementation," he said.

Mr Chan said planning statements would be drawn up for the other sub-regions — the northwest New Territories, northeast New Territories, north Lantau and Junk Bay and the Sai Kung hinterland.

Studies by consultants in both the northwest and northeast New Territories have identified rural areas affected by "haphazard low density agricultural, residential and even industrial development over the years resulting in poor environmental conditions."

Proposals have been made for the introduction of localised development schemes involving minimal investment which, if successful, will result in these areas being rehabilitated or upgraded.

Because of the many private interests involved in

these areas and problems in upgrading, a pilot scheme is being planned to discover possible difficulties and to find solutions.

A plan has been drafted for Sun Hing Tsuen in Tuen Mun and a working group had been set up to co-ordinate implementation of the pilot scheme, he said.

Mr Chan said once funds are obtained for the pilot scheme, the Government expects to take about two years to complete the necessary infrastructure and its part in the implementation of the scheme.

On urban renewal, Mr Chan said the problems and possible solutions have been studied for several years.

Interesting ideas have emerged, he said, and it is hoped firm proposals on land development corporations and alternative approaches will be forthcoming next year.

Replying to a query by Mr Cheung Yan-lung on water supply problems in Ma Wan, Mr Chan said a \$17 million project involving the laying of a submarine pipeline across Rambler Channel, including land mains and provision of a distribution system, is expected to be completed by 1987.