

VGU SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE

SOCIAL HOUSING + MASS PUBLIC TRANSPORT (TOD)

**IN THE HO CHI MINH CITY MEGA-
URBAN REGION**

Doãn Minh Khôi · Cao Thành Nghiệp

Ho Chi Minh City · October 2026



PRESENTATION OUTLINE

01

Research problem, objectives and methodology

02

Theoretical foundations and lessons from the Paris metropolitan region

03

Ho Chi Minh City context: needs and priority spaces

04

Strategic framework, implementation instruments and pilot projects

Research problem

Social housing development linked to urban accessibility

Many current projects remain driven primarily by land availability and investment conditions. The relationship between homes, jobs, services and public transport is not yet a core location-selection criterion.

- Social housing distribution does not align with employment centres
- Daily housing–transport costs rise for low-income households
- Public transport infrastructure is not yet leveraged in a coordinated way

- 1 **Land availability and investment**
- 2 **Locations remote from urban opportunity**
- 3 **Daily housing burden**

Research question: Where should social housing be located to lower living costs and widen opportunity along public-transport corridors and nodes?

Objectives, scope and method

Objective

Propose a framework for site selection, spatial organisation and implementation instruments for social housing integrated with mass public transport in Ho Chi Minh City.

Study focus

Social housing in relation to employment, services and public transport

Scope

The Ho Chi Minh City mega-urban region and high-potential corridors and nodes

References

Location–quality theory, accessibility, equitable TOD and Paris

Methodology

Case-study research, literature synthesis, empirical analysis and development of a strategic framework

Affordability includes housing and transport costs

A low sale price or rent is insufficient to ensure affordability when homes are far from jobs and services

AFFORDABILITY

= Housing costs + transport costs + access time

- Assess total living costs rather than dwelling price alone
- Prioritise access to employment, schools, health care and essential services
- Reduce reliance on private vehicles



Public transport eases the travel burden when it is genuinely connected to homes and urban opportunities.

Three theoretical foundations for social housing integrated with public transport

01

Position–quality

Residential choice reflects trade-offs among location, access to jobs, transport cost and the quality of living space.

02

Accessibility

Distance is only one factor. Travel time, cost, safety and journey continuity must also be considered.

03

Equitable TOD

Land reserves and suitable housing must be secured early in areas benefiting from public-transport investment.

Overall implication: social housing is part of the urban spatial structure, not an isolated housing project.

Lessons from Paris on spatial equity



The Île-de-France region treats housing as an instrument for moderating disparities in access to employment, services and high-quality transport.

**68 new
stations**

Grand Paris Express provides a development framework for new urban centres

800 m

Station-area analysis radius, equivalent to around 10–15 minutes on foot

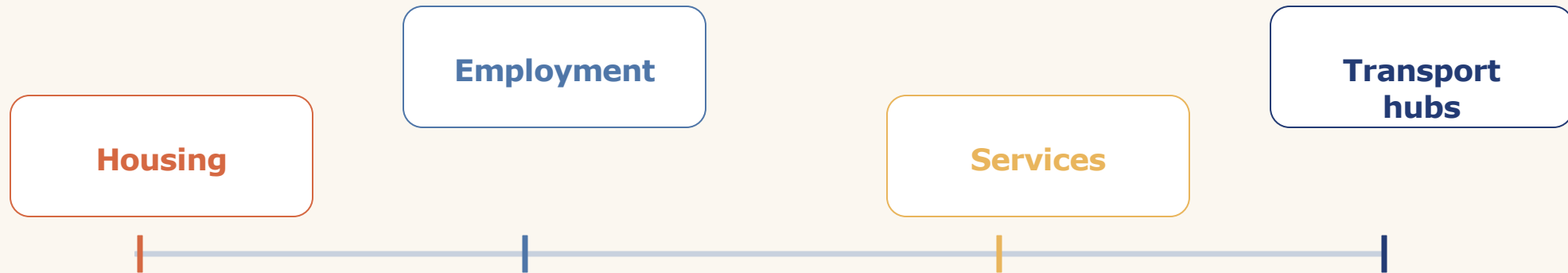
**Social
housing**

Secured early to prevent displacement of low-income groups from areas benefiting from transport investment

Source: compiled from references [9]–[12] in the research paper

Ho Chi Minh City: polycentric structure and movement flows

Homes, jobs and services are dispersed across urban, industrial, logistics and commercial centres



The need for social housing should be understood within this network of relationships—not solely within administrative boundaries or individual projects.

Groups in need of social housing and the travel burden

Workers and labour force

Industrial parks, export processing zones, logistics and services

Shared requirement

Housing affordable to residents and compatible with daily travel patterns.

Inner-city low-income groups

Dispersed employment; high rental and travel costs

Shared requirement

Housing affordable to residents and compatible with daily travel patterns.

Upgrading and resettlement households

Need to sustain livelihoods, social networks and access to services

Shared requirement

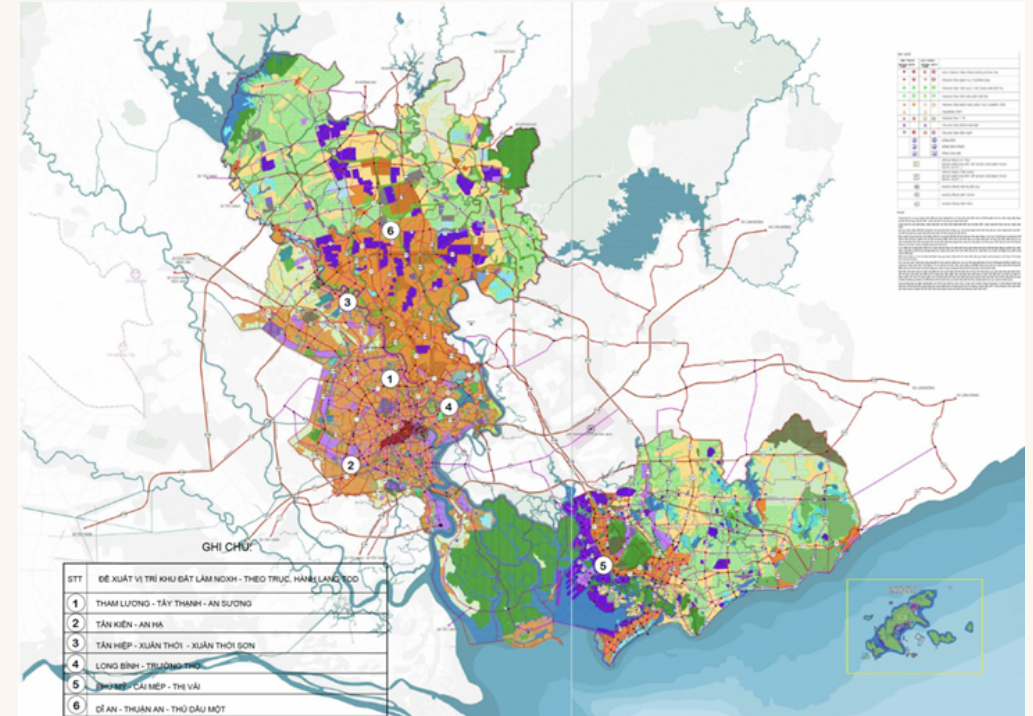
Housing affordable to residents and compatible with daily travel patterns.

Public transport as a framework for social housing

Consider the entire network—not just one metro line or one station project

- Urban rail, national rail and bus rapid transit corridors
- Interchange stations, depots and inter-regional hubs
- Industrial–service areas and urban regeneration areas

Selection criteria must consider access time, employment scale, services, infrastructure capacity and affordability together.



Map of selected potential social-housing areas in the Ho Chi Minh City mega-urban region.

Three priority location types for social housing

1 Public-transport nodes

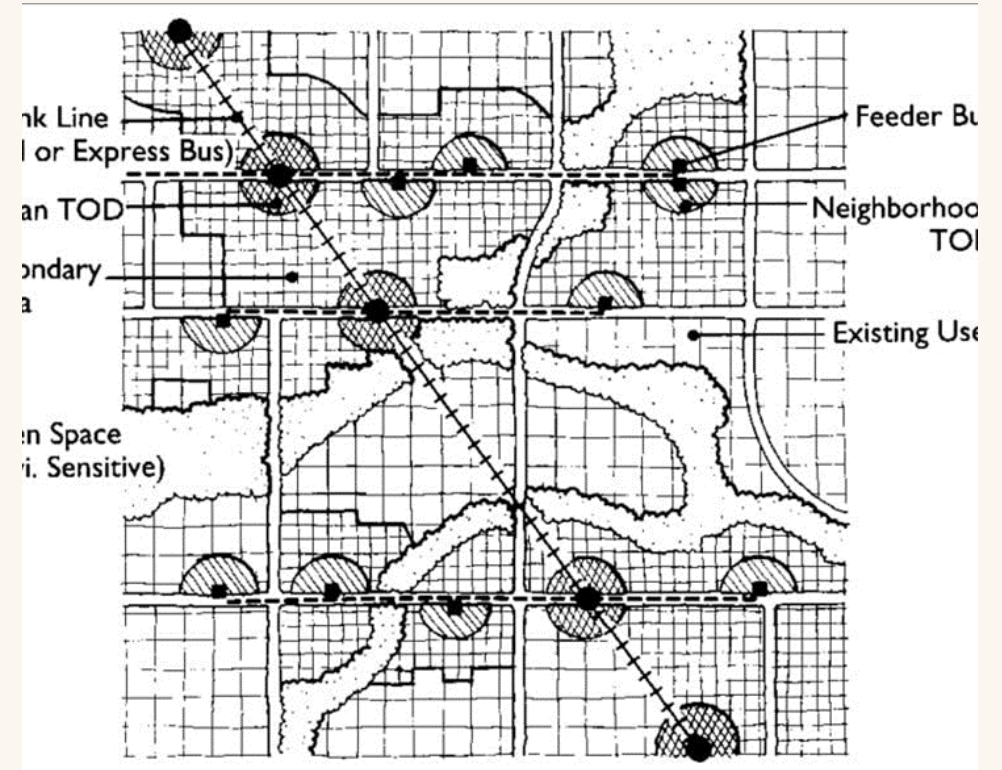
Direct access to stations, essential services and public space

2 Employment-connecting corridors

Link residential areas with industrial zones, logistics, services and new centres

3 Public land and redevelopment

Post-relocation land, converted-use sites and mixed-use projects



**Geometric distance is not the sole criterion.
The real access journey is what matters.**

Three key challenges:

01

Location mismatch

Social housing remote from employment centres, essential services and public transport networks.

02

Station-area inequity

Infrastructure investment raises land values and may push low-income groups away from areas that benefit.

03

Lack of planning integration

Housing, land use, transport and social infrastructure are not yet organised within a shared framework.

The core challenge is to shift from project-by-project development to coordination through a network-based spatial structure.

Principle 1: real access

Walking, transfers and access to services must form a continuous journey



- Access time
- Transfer capacity
- Path continuity
- Services within the catchment
- User safety

Networked social housing

Prioritise corridor-based studies linked to employment, industry, logistics and new urban centres

1 Tham Luong – Tay Thanh – Pham Van Bach

Identify land reserves, labour demand, infrastructure capacity and transport connectivity.

2 Tan Kien – An Ha

Identify land reserves, labour demand, infrastructure capacity and transport connectivity.

3 Tan Hiep – Xuan Thoi Thuong – Xuan Thoi Son

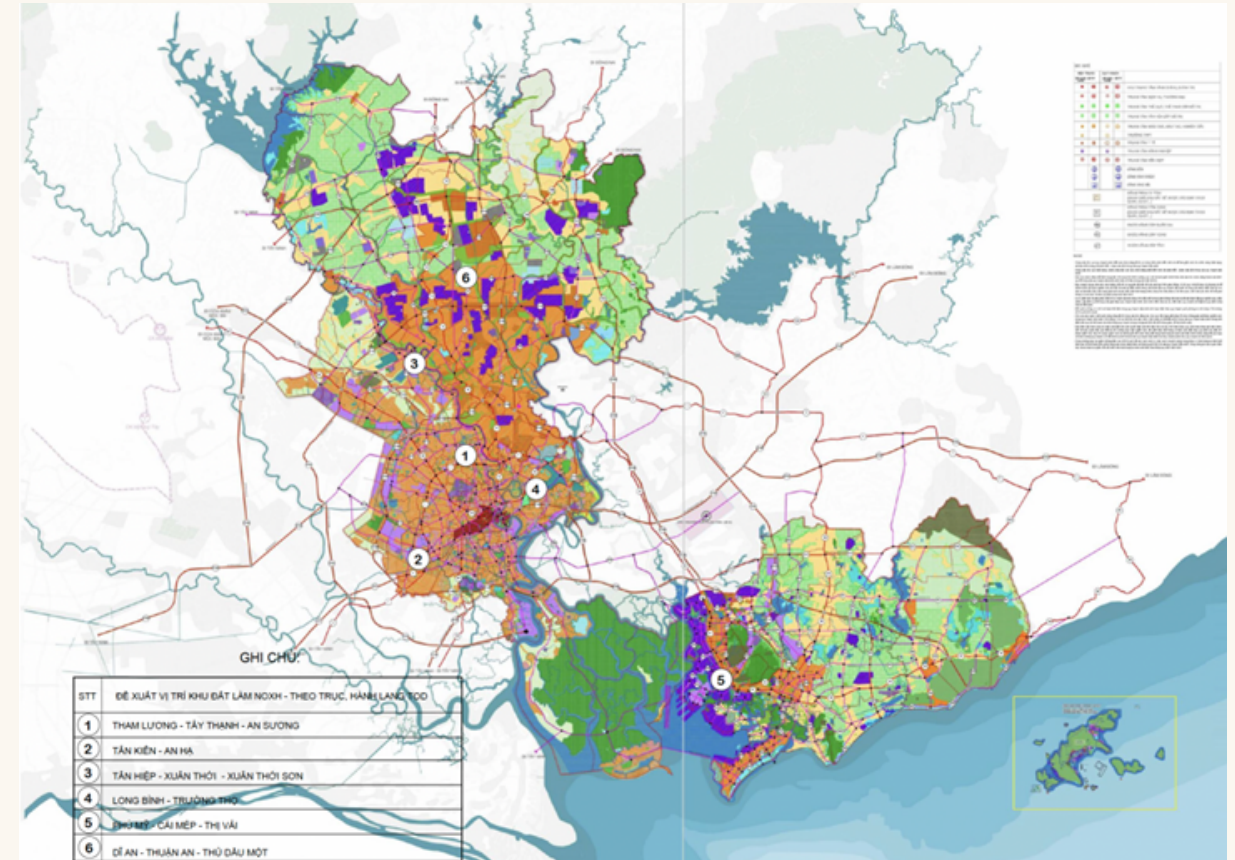
Identify land reserves, labour demand, infrastructure capacity and transport connectivity.

4 Long Binh – Truong Tho

Identify land reserves, labour demand, infrastructure capacity and transport connectivity.

5 Phu My – Cai Mep – Thi Vai

Identify land reserves, labour demand, infrastructure capacity and transport connectivity.



When land prices rise from infrastructure investment, social-housing land reserves must be secured at the planning stage.

Principle 3: housing for household needs

Rental housing

Workers, migrant labourers and households with limited ability to pay



Rent-to-own housing

Households with stable income but not yet able to purchase a home



Homeownership

Households seeking long-term residential stability



Model-selection criteria:

Actual payment capacity · income stability · household size · intended length of residence · relationship to workplace

Organising social housing across three scales

Regional scale

Distribution along corridors linking industrial areas, logistics, services and new urban centres.

Shorten home–work relationships

Node scale

Station and depot areas organise mixed land uses, social infrastructure and transfer points.

Prioritise walking and feeder connections

Project scale

Dwellings, community spaces, essential services and active ground floors that support livelihoods.

Improve everyday living quality

Density, building height, green space, parking and technical infrastructure must correspond to public-transport capacity and social-infrastructure provision.

Social housing at project scale: daily life and livelihoods



A project is more than a block of apartments

- Ground floors with essential services, childcare and appropriate workspaces
- Community spaces, play areas and bicycle parking
- Safe walking connections to stops, stations and feeder routes
- Social infrastructure aligned with resident population

Experience from Tan Hoa–Lo Gom shows that residential stability depends simultaneously on housing choices, livelihoods, on-site services and community ties.

Land, investment and support instruments

01

Land reserve inventory

Public and redevelopment land

02

Integration with TOD

Stations, depots and key corridors

03

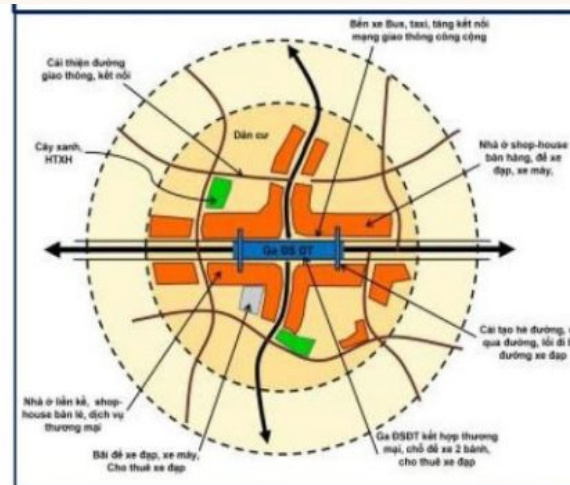
Investment mechanisms

Land, housing or finance funds

04

Resident support

Credit, rent support and rental funds



A share of land-value uplift generated by public transport investment should be converted into access to suitable housing and social infrastructure.

Community participation and post-project review

Six indicators for monitoring welfare, transport connectivity and spatial equity

01

Affordability

02

**Total housing–transport
cost**

03

Journey time to workplaces

04

Access to essential services

05

**Occupancy and resident
retention**

06

Public-transport mode share

The community must participate from site selection and disclosure of information through to post-project effectiveness evaluation.

Conclusions and pilot priorities

Social housing in urban spatial structure

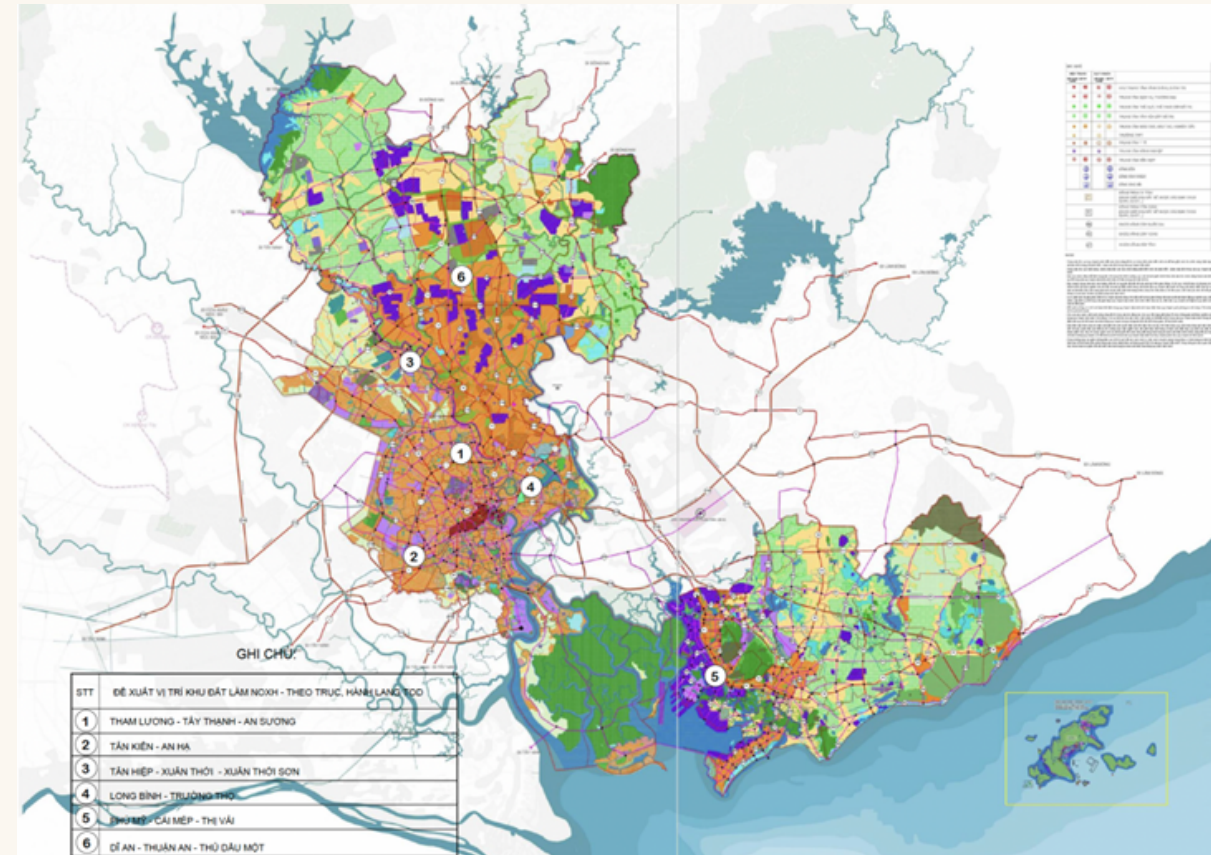
Housing distribution must connect to employment, services and mass public transport.

Affordability must be assessed through total living costs

Housing price, transport cost and access time must be assessed together.

Pilot corridors and nodes

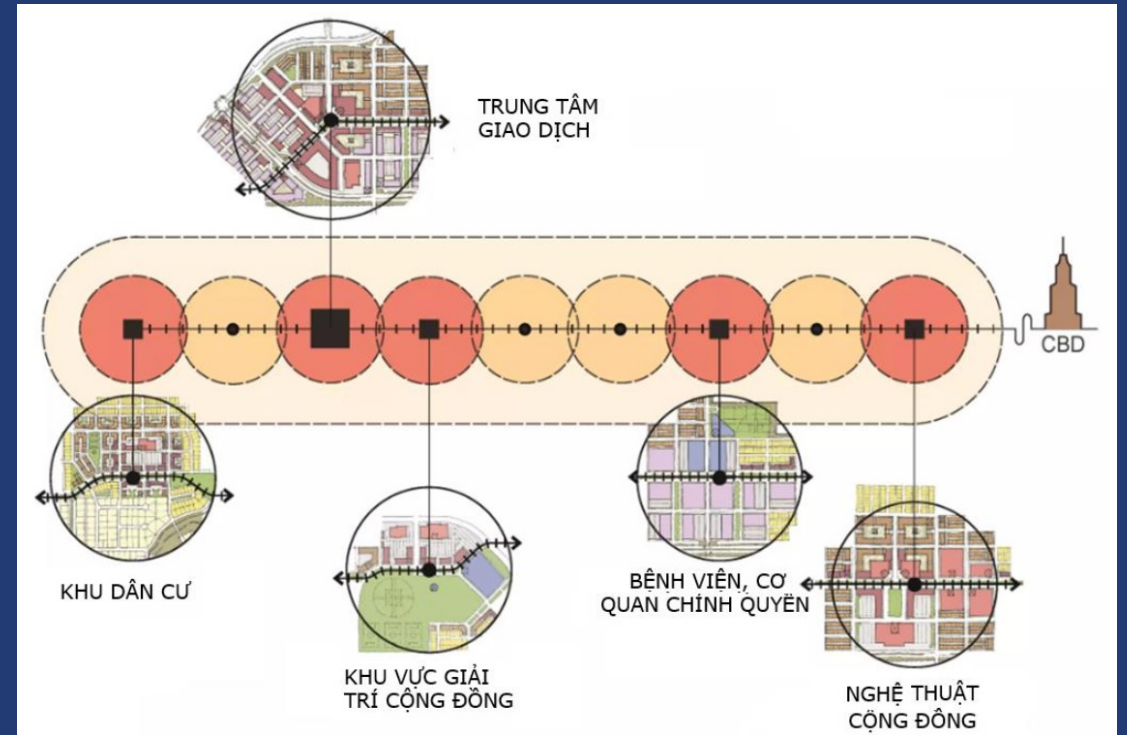
Prioritise locations with land reserves, labour demand, transport connectivity and social infrastructure.



Pilot directions: Metro 2 • Ring Road 3 • Tan Kien–An Ha • Long Binh–Truong Tho • Phu My–Cai Mep

THANK YOU

Social housing integrated with public transport expands urban opportunity for low-income groups and supports a more balanced urban spatial structure.



Doãn Minh Khôi · Cao Thành Nghiệp

VGU Scientific Conference Presentation