

**PROPERTY****SF Development earmarks B67bn for Megacity****Hotels, mixed-use elements in the works**

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SF Development Co, the developer of Megabangna shopping mall, will spend 67 billion baht to complete its mixed-use Megacity project in the Bang Na area within the next 14 years.

The company will add hotels, office buildings, residential and other mixed-use components to the Megacity project in the future. This excludes the 12-billion-baht Megabangna shopping complex, which has been developed on Bang Na-Trat Road over the past five years.

Of the total 67 billion baht budget, 2 billion will be used this year to add another 40,000 square metres of retail space at Megabangna, bringing the total space to 240,000 sq m, said managing director Christian Olofsson.

Among that 40,000 sq m, about 10,000 sq m will house 40 restaurants and cafes such as Dean & DeLuca, Bon Chon and Starbucks; a large Tops Food & Wine supermarket; and parking space for 1,200 cars.

Construction of this zone is already underway and is due to open in December this year. With new anchors, the company expects the retail expansion will increase its monthly visitors by 10% this year, up from 3.5 million currently.

Another 3 billion baht will be spent next year to develop a four-star hotel with 240 rooms near Megabangna mall. The company will chose a hotel management chain by the end of this year. Property consultant Jones Lang LaSalle has been appointed to assist in the hotel chain selection.

Mr Olofsson said that the company wants to have another hotel in the same area as the Megabangna project, but it will be financed by outside investors under free-hold conditions.

The second hotel will be launched within the next several years.

Thomas Malmberg, the shopping centre

director of Ikano Retail Asia, envisions that Megabangna and Ikea Bang Na will be the centrepieces of a modern community in the Bang Na area.

"Retail is its core business but we know that Megabangna has potential that goes well beyond being just a great place to shop," he said.

Apart from the retail expansion and two hotels, SF Development plans to have 50,000 residential units, modern office towers for up to 30,000 workers and a large, green space for the Megacity project.

The company will form joint ventures with investors to develop the office buildings. It has already sold a five-rai plot to a property developer to build condominiums in this compound.

"We intend to build the Megacity project as a place where people can live and work with easy access to places to shop, meet, play and socialise," he said.

SF Development is open to other investors and developers who want to take part in this massive mixed-use project in the long-term.



Mr Olofsson says the company is pushing forward with the development of the 400-rai Megacity on Bang Na-Trat Road.