

For information

Legislative Council Panel on Economic Services Update on Ngong Ping 360

Purpose

This paper provides Members with an update on Ngong Ping 360.

Background

2. Ngong Ping 360 (i.e. Ngong Ping Skyrail and Ngong Ping Village) was opened on 18 September 2006. The entire project is operated and managed by Skyrail-ITM (Hong Kong) Limited (Skyrail), which is appointed by the Mass Transit Railway Corporation Limited (MTRCL).

Patronage

3. Ngong Ping 360 has been in operation for seven months and received over 1.3 million visitors. During the Chinese New Year Golden Week (17 – 25 February 2007), it drew a total of over 96,000 visitors. Its highest daily patronage up to 29 April is 13,000, recorded on 20 February. In accordance with a customer survey carried out by Skyrail, 99% of the visitors were satisfied with their cableway experience. Moreover, visitors are very satisfied with the stability, cleanliness and comfort of the cable car cabins, efficiency of the ticketing offices and staff courtesy, etc.

Enhancement Measures

4. Since its commissioning, Ngong Ping 360 has been, in the light of its operational experience, enhancing its performance in all aspects. These include -

- (a) improving the public notification mechanism;
- (b) increasing manpower for daily maintenance works of the cableway;
- (c) installing an additional new public announcement system at the footbridge of Tung Chung Terminal;

- (d) deploying adequate staff for crowd management and other customer services during peak periods;
- (e) increasing the number and locations of signage to inform passengers of the waiting time as and when necessary; and
- (f) simplifying the refund procedures and providing complimentary vouchers to passengers affected by service delay, etc.

Moreover, Skyrail has been working closely with the relevant parties including the Police, the New Lantao Bus Co. Ltd., the Travel Industry Council and the travel agents to improve the crowd management, queuing arrangement and contingency bus service, and schedule the group visits in advance so as to minimize congestion.

5. In addition to the above measures, Skyrail will further enhance the cable car service, including extending the scope of its on-line ticketing service from travel trade to the general public shortly. This would enable visitors to make advance booking of tickets thereby reducing their waiting time on site.

System Safety and Reliability

6. Safety and reliability of the cable car system of Ngong Ping 360 is the primary concern of MTRCL and Skyrail. The Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD) has also been closely monitoring the operation of the Ngong Ping 360 cable car system, and is of the view that the system is safe. Regarding its reliability, the cable car system has, since its commissioning up to mid April 2007, achieved an overall reliability rate of 98.7%, with the monthly reliability ranging between 98.8% and 99.4%, which is higher than 98.4% and 96.9% in September and October last year respectively when the system commenced. Since the last report of October 2006 to the Legislative Council Panel on Economic Services, Skyrail has suspended the cable car services on a number of occasions due to adverse weather or technical problems, among which four resulted in suspension of services for more than 30 minutes due to technical problems. After investigations, Skyrail, in conjunction with the manufacturer, have implemented improvement measures for the cable car system.

7. With a view to further enhancing the safety and reliability of the cable car system, Skyrail has increased the number of maintenance staff from 16 to 27, enhanced the training of maintenance staff and rendered full-strength

service during the Special Days period. Moreover, MTRCL has commissioned an internationally recognized independent testing and certification agency to conduct an independent system review on the design, components, operation and maintenance of the cable car system. According to MTRCL, when the report is ready, Skyrail will consider the recommendations with a view to further improving the operation of Ngong Ping 360 and enhancing its reliability. The EMSD will also assess and monitor the implementation of the improvement measures.

Special Preparation for the Golden Week

8. Ngong Ping 360 will implement special measures to ensure smooth and safe operation of the system during the Golden Week in May 2007. These measures have been proven to be very effective during the last Christmas and Chinese New Year holidays. They include -

- (a) extending the operating hours to accommodate more passengers;
- (b) working closely with the travel agents to monitor the group booking situation;
- (c) gearing up manpower for all operational sections;
- (d) setting up a dedicated team to manage the crowd and explain the latest situation to visitors on site;
- (e) displaying more signage to inform visitors of the cable car service and ticketing information; and
- (f) working closely with the New Lantao Bus Co. Ltd. for provision of contingency bus service on a need basis, etc.

9. The Government will continue to liaise closely with MTRCL and Skyrail with a view to ensuring the safe and smooth operation of the cable car system.

Economic Development and Labour Bureau
30 April 2007