

LCQ6: Tourism facilities in Repulse Bay

Following is an oral reply by the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, Mrs Rita Lau, to a question by the Hon Paul Tse in the Legislative Council today (December 3):

Question:

Some members of the tourism trade have related to me that Repulse Bay, being a major tourist attraction, should be provided with comprehensive supporting facilities. However, after the demolition and redevelopment of the Repulse Bay Shopping Arcade, the owner of the premises has yet to arrange for leasing the shopping arcade to tenants, and the tourism business in the locality is thus adversely affected. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council whether:

(a) it has assessed if the building being left vacant for a prolonged period of time has caused inconvenience to tourists and adversely affected the other tourist attractions in Repulse Bay and its vicinity; if it has, of the assessment results;

(b) it has found out the reasons for the building being left vacant for a prolonged period of time; if it has, of the details; and whether the Government will provide assistance to the owner concerned so that the building can be leased by shops and eateries expeditiously, with a view to improving the supporting tourist facilities in the locality and catering for the needs of the tourists; if it will, of the details; and

(c) any short-term and long-term plans are in place to enhance the supporting tourism facilities in Repulse Bay and its vicinity; if so, of the details of such plans?

Reply:

President,

(a) & (b) The Repulse Bay is one of the tourism attractions in Southern District. With its natural beach environment, it is popular among both locals and visitors. According to information provided by the Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB), the Repulse Bay has all along been one of the top 10 popular tourist spots in Hong Kong.

The redevelopment referred to in the question should be the redevelopment now taking place on the Remaining Portion of Rural Building Lot No 368. The issue of compliance of the redevelopment with the Government Lease for the Lot is the subject of a court action and as such, it would not be appropriate for us to disclose nor discuss any suggestions related to the case publicly.

(c) As regards part (c) which concerns plans for tourism-related facilities, Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) has all along provided comprehensive management and maintenance support for the beach, and has worked continuously for its improvement. To further enhance the area's appeal to locals and visitors, LCSD will embark on beautification works for the beach and its vicinity, and renovate the recreational facilities for children next year. In addition, the Tourism Commission (TC) has also installed a network of visitor signage in the area, and has been liaising closely with relevant departments to ensure adequate and convenient loading and unloading facilities for our visitors. The TC also works closely with the HKTB and the tourism sector and implements suitable arrangements to improve tourism supporting facilities in the light of their views and suggestions.

Separately, as the Repulse Bay is already a developed area with private residential development being the dominant use, the amount of space for further development will be limited. At present, a tourism-related development for the shopping arcade at No.109 Repulse Bay Road has already obtained planning permission for extension works. In the longer term, the Government intends to re-zone the Seaview Building and its adjacent site, in the northwest of the beach, into a comprehensive development area for provision of hotel and other commercial facilities. Development of the area, however, can only commence after completion of the statutory planning procedures.

Ends/Wednesday, December 3, 2008

Issued at HKT 14:33