

LCQ20: Development of piazza in Tsim Sha Tsui

Following is a written reply by the Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury, Professor K C Chan, (in the absence of the Acting Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development) to a question by the Hon Frederick Fung in the Legislative Council today (June 22):

Question:

Early this year I raised a question about the relocation of the bus terminus facing the Tsim Sha Tsui (TST) Star Ferry Pier with a view to releasing the site for development into a piazza. It has recently been reported that there are changes to the aforesaid relocation and development plan, and that the "Star" Ferry Company, Limited is planning to construct an additional floor above the TST Star Ferry Pier to provide dining services. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council of the latest progress of the whole revitalisation scheme for the TST Star Ferry Pier (including the pier itself and the piazza, etc.); whether the authorities have given up the relocation of the TST Star Ferry Pier bus terminus and shelved the proposal of developing the piazza; and how the authorities ensure that the proposal of the "Star" Ferry Company, Limited to construct an additional floor can balance public concerns such as conservation, openness and accessibility, etc.?

Reply:

President,

Concerning the project on the relocation of the Tsim Sha Tsui (TST) Star Ferry bus terminus for development of a piazza, in our response to an earlier question from Hon Frederick Fung on the subject on February 23, 2011, we already elaborated on the objectives, scope and progress of the project. The piazza project comprises three parts. The first part includes the construction of a public transport interchange in Mody Road, TST East, which was already completed and commissioned in August 2007. The construction of a new turnaround outside the Hong Kong Cultural Centre (HKCC) at Salisbury Road forms the second phase of the development. The new turnaround will enable the majority of bus routes currently using the TST pier bus terminus to continue to call at the TST Star Ferry Pier when the relocation of bus routes to TST East is completed. The third phase of the development involves the construction of a piazza.

My reply to Hon Frederick Fung's present question is as follows:

Upon the gazettal of works for construction of the new turnaround under the second part of the project in June 2009, the Administration received over 5 000 representations. Concerns over the traffic and transport arrangements focused mainly on the future arrangements for bus service, and possible impact of the piazza project on the traffic flow. Some also considered that the TST pier bus terminus should be conserved so as to preserve the collective memory of the Hong Kong community.

Having regard to the public views collected during the gazettal period, the Administration had amended the design of the turnaround scheme, and presented the revised scheme to the Traffic and Transport Committee (TTC) of the Yau Tsim Mong District Council (YTMDC) in September 2010. TTC members were very concerned about the possible impact of the turnaround and piazza project on the traffic flow in the vicinity of TST, and suggested that the Transport Department (TD) should, under the principle of maintaining smooth traffic flow, actively consider allowing all bus routes currently terminating or calling at the TST Star Ferry to return to the new turnaround in future. The revised turnaround scheme was gazetted in October 2010. Subsequently, over 13 000 representations were received. The views expressed were largely similar to those received under the previous round of gazettal.

Taking into account YTMDC TTC's views and the public views received, we decided to revisit the way forward for the piazza project. We propose to adopt a new design concept which will integrate the piazza with the revitalisation of the TST pier, with an aim to developing the vicinity into a tourism node and creating a new landmark there. Specifically, in response to YTMDC TTC's suggestion, we propose to expand the turnaround being planned to become a new public transport interchange, so that all 15 bus routes currently using the TST pier bus terminus could continue to call at the Star Ferry Pier in future (including retaining the 11 bus routes now terminating at the Star Ferry Pier). This arrangement would facilitate passengers in using bus service and interchanging with Star Ferry. The new transport interchange would occupy an area of about 3 700 square metres, and would provide necessary bus stops and terminus for the original 15 bus routes, a taxi stand which could accommodate 16 queueing taxis and a taxi unloading bay. The existing pedestrian crossing facility running from Star House to HKCC would be retained, but its location would be slightly adjusted to cater for the design of the new turnaround. The proposal would not only preserve the function of the area as a public transport interchange, but

also improve the pedestrian environment outside the pier.

Since there is a need to expand the area of the new transport interchange, the area of the piazza has to be reduced accordingly by 40%. To cope with this change, in planning the development of the future tourism node, we would showcase the area's history as a public transport interchange so that both the public and visitors can reminisce about the history of this vicinity. We are actively exploring displaying a decommissioned train compartment and an antique bus, as well as other artifacts related to the history of Star Ferry Pier at the future tourism node.

We learn that The "Star" Ferry Company Limited (Star Ferry Co. Ltd.) also hoped that the Government could revitalise and expand the TST pier. Their preliminary proposal includes upgrading the existing facilities and extending the pier's boundary, so as to provide more area for retail shops, restaurants and public open space, hence allowing members of the public to enjoy the scenery of the Victoria Harbour. The proposal is also based on the principle of conserving the original architectural characteristics of the pier as far as possible. The Harbourfront Commission's Task Force on Harbourfront Developments in Kowloon, Tsuen Wan and Kwai Tsing had a preliminary discussion on Star Ferry Co. Ltd.'s proposal on May 31, 2011. The Task Force welcomed the suggestion, and considered that if the proposal was to be taken forth, its design should go in harmony with that of the TST piazza being planned by the Government. Since the Star Ferry Pier is a government property, the revitalisation works has to be implemented by the Government in future. We plan to carry out the design work of the tourism node in this direction.

We would consult the YTMDC on the new conceptual scheme of the tourism node and the related traffic and transport arrangements on June 23, 2011. If the proposal receives the support of the YTMDC, the Administration would arrange gazettal of the newly revised turnaround scheme in the second half of September 2011, and further consult the TTCs of other affected District Councils. We would also consult the Harbourfront Commission, and conduct a technical feasibility assessment on the revitalisation of Star Ferry Pier, and commence work for the design of the tourism node including the pier. We would further consult the YTMDC when a more concrete design proposal for the tourism node is available.

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