

LCQ1: Ancillary transport facilities for new cruise terminal

Following is a reply by the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, Mr Gregory So, to a question by the Hon Paul Tse in the Legislative Council today (October 24):

Question:

Some residents in the vicinity of Kowloon East, the Kai Tak Development area and the new cruise terminal have expressed to me their concern whether there will be adequate ancillary transport facilities carrying tourists disembarking at the cruise terminal, which will be commissioned next year, to and from tourist and shopping areas. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(a) of the ancillary transport facilities under the latest plan for carrying tourists disembarking at the cruise terminal to various tourist and shopping areas; whether it has assessed if a large number of tourists disembarking and heading towards the various tourist and shopping areas at the same time will lead to traffic congestions in Kowloon East; if it has, of the assessment results;

(b) whether it has studied the provision of transport services which are more efficient than the existing ones to connect the cruise terminal and Lei Yue Mun, so as to make it convenient for tourists, boost the local economy and create more employment opportunities; whether the various improvement and beautification works in Lei Yue Mun can be completed in time before the commissioning of the cruise terminal for the enjoyment of the tourists; and

(c) whether it has studied the provision of water taxi services to enhance the accessibility of the Victoria Harbour by connecting the cruise terminal with the tourist spots as well as tourist and shopping areas on the two sides of the Victoria Harbour?

Reply:

President,

The Government is committed to developing Hong Kong into a leading cruise hub in the Asia-Pacific region, and the new cruise terminal at Kai Tak Development (KTD) area is an important part of this strategy. The Kai Tak Cruise Terminal, to be

commissioned shortly in mid-2013, can accommodate the world's largest cruise vessel. It is an iconic landmark at the Victoria Harbour and features a highly functional design. Its Customs, Immigration, Quarantine and Police facilities will be able to clear a maximum of 3 000 passengers per hour. There will also be adequate provision of vehicle pick-up and drop-off areas as well as parking spaces. To tie in with the commissioning of the terminal, the Government will provide an access road to connect the cruise terminal with Cheung Yip Street at Kowloon Bay. In addition to the existing major trunk roads (including Kai Tak Tunnel and Kwun Tong Bypass), the Route 6 that is being planned (including the Central Kowloon Route and road connections at the KTD area) will also link the KTD area with East and West Kowloon. Furthermore, the Shatin-to-Central Link under construction will provide railway service for the KTD area.

My reply to the three parts of Honourable Tse's question is as follows:

(a) When a cruise vessel berths at a terminal, the cruise operator will typically make arrangements for its passengers to disembark in groups. The shipping agent or the shore excursion operator will then arrange coaches to carry the visitors between the cruise terminal and tourist spots. When the Kai Tak Cruise Terminal commences operation, the terminal operator will, together with the cruise operator and shore excursion operator concerned, work out in advance the necessary arrangements according to the passenger volume and berthing duration. This is to ensure that cruise passengers will disembark in an orderly manner and to avoid adding to the traffic load during peak hours.

The Government has conducted a traffic impact assessment of the cruise terminal on the nearby road network. The results indicated that upon the completion of the new road between the cruise terminal and Kowloon Bay as well as the modification works of some of the road junctions in Kowloon Bay, the road network would be able to cope with the traffic flow brought by the cruise terminal. The Civil Engineering and Development Department (CEDD) is carrying out the above road and junction improvement works for completion before the commissioning of the Kai Tak Cruise Terminal. The Government is also planning the next stage of road network development, with a view to enabling the vehicles leaving the cruise terminal to bypass Kowloon Bay and go directly to Kowloon West.

Moreover, the Government is also planning for the provision of public transport services to facilitate public access to the Kai Tak Cruise Terminal based on the

projected passenger flow by a consultancy study. According to the current projection, the Government is of the view that green minibus (GMB) service should suffice for the demand at this stage and is making plans for GMB service connecting the cruise terminal and Kowloon Bay MTR Station. After the commissioning of the remaining cruise berth and if there is demand, the Government will consider the need to increase public transport service at an appropriate juncture. Upon the commissioning of the cruise terminal, the Tourism Commission will continue to liaise actively with the cruise industry and work with relevant departments to provide quality ancillary facilities and services to incoming cruise vessels and their passengers.

(b) As mentioned in part (a) above, cruise operators usually engage shipping agents or shore excursion operators to arrange coaches for transporting visitors to and from the terminal and for joining shore excursion programmes, including those involving Lei Yue Mun. Visitors who do not join any shore excursion programme may take taxis or other public transport at the terminal to go to Lei Yue Mun.

Regarding the Lei Yue Mun enhancement works, the Government is planning to take forth the Lei Yue Mun Waterfront Enhancement Project (LYM Project). The scope of the Project includes the construction of a public landing facility, a breakwater and a waterfront promenade; the provision of several lookout points and streetscape improvement works along the footpath linking up the lookout points; as well as the construction of a new viewing platform, etc.

Gazettal for the marine works of the LYM Project was made in October 2009 under the Foreshore and Sea-bed (Reclamations) Ordinance by the CEDD. The relevant statutory procedures are still in progress. During the gazettal of the project works, we received views concerning the public hygiene situation in Lei Yue Mun. To meet the concern on sewerage problem, the Environmental Protection Department commissioned a consultant in late 2010 to explore possible interim and long-term measures for improving the sewerage handling facilities in the area. The consultant consulted the local community on its sewerage review report in March 2012. The local stakeholders generally agreed to the preferred options for the sewerage improvement schemes proposed by the consultant.

To ascertain the works details of the long-term sewerage scheme, the Drainage Services Department engaged a consultant to conduct a technical study in end September 2012. Subject to the consultant's confirmation on the works details of the sewerage scheme, we will expedite actions to complete the statutory procedures under

the Foreshore and Sea-bed (Reclamations) Ordinance and to implement the project as soon as possible.

The Kai Tak Cruise Terminal is one of the major infrastructures under the KTD project. The LYM Project, which is a government measure to improve the district tourism facilities, is not part of the KTD project. While we will make the best endeavours to take forward the LYM Project, there is no direct link between the LYM Project and the timing of commissioning of the cruise terminal.

(c) The current KTD project has not made any provision for a ferry pier near the cruise terminal or water taxi services. Using railway as the backbone, the public transport system in Hong Kong has comprehensive arrangements by rail, land and sea for transportation across the Victoria Harbour. Indeed, the nature, operational mode, berthing facilities and regulatory framework of the existing water taxi services around the world are all different. Based on the local actual needs and unique environment, the Government needs to consider whether water taxis can be effectively operated in Hong Kong with regard to technology, operation, safety and legislation, etc., so that additional waterborne transport services could be provided to link up both sides of the Victoria Harbour and the Kai Tak Cruise Terminal. Nevertheless, we understand that the cruise terminal operator intends to look into the feasibility of providing a pier near to the terminal to complement the cruise operation. We will actively consider the detailed proposal with the bureaux and departments concerned upon receipt of the same from the operator.

Ends/Wednesday, October 24, 2012

Issued at HKT 12:42