

LCQ2: Transport arrangements of West Kowloon Cultural District

Following is a question by the Hon So Cheung-wing and a reply by the Secretary for Transport and Logistics, Ms Mable Chan, in the Legislative Council today (January 15):

Question:

There are views that the West Kowloon Cultural District (WKCD) is one of the largest cultural projects in the world and the most important base for cultural experience in Hong Kong, which often attracts a large number of people and visitors. However, the existing public transport routes plying the WKCD are insufficient and rather infrequent, the walking distance from MTR exits to the relevant galleries is long, and there is also a lack of parking spaces for private cars in the WKCD, causing travelling inconvenience to tourists and people working in the WKCD. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the respective numbers of public transport routes plying between the WKCD and the Hong Kong West Kowloon Station of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link as well as between the WKCD and the MTR Austin Station at present; the frequency of the services concerned; whether special traffic arrangements are implemented on the roads concerned on Saturdays, Sundays and during major festivals;

(2) whether it has considered providing public car parks or hourly parking spaces in the WKCD to meet the demand for private car parking spaces; if so, of the timetable; if not, the reasons for that; and

(3) how it will solve the problem of inconvenient public transport in the WKCD as a whole to better bring into play its functions?

Reply:

President,

The West Kowloon Cultural District (WKCD) is an important strategic cultural infrastructure investment of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government with more than 20 arts and cultural facilities and venues for hosting different mega events. The WKCD is not only a popular choice for the public to participate in cultural activities and spend their leisure time, but also one of the must-see attractions welcomed by tourists. The Government and the West Kowloon Cultural District Authority (WKCD Authority) have all along attached importance to enhancing the connectivity of the WKCD to cope with the flow of visitors.

Having consulted the Culture, Sports and Tourism Bureau and the WKCD Authority, our reply in response to the question raised by Dr the Hon So Cheung-wing is set out below:

(1) We encourage members of the public and tourists to make use of the diversified and convenient public transport network to access the WKCD, including the MTR, six franchised bus routes, five green minibus (GMB) routes and water taxi.

At present, franchised buses and GMBs provide services to/from the WKCD via different districts on the Hong Kong Island and in Kowloon as well as Tseung Kwan O District in the New Territories. Information on the routes is set out at Annex. The above-mentioned franchised bus routes also include three tourist routes that offer tourist day passes, linking up various scenic spots and tourist attractions in different parts of the territory and the WKCD for the convenience of visitors. Members of the public and tourists may also make use of some 25 bus routes passing through the Western Harbour Crossings and alight at the bus interchange of the Kowloon exit/entrance of the tunnel and walk for about five to 10 minutes to reach the WKCD.

GMB route No. CX1 and KMB route No. W4 currently provide services for journeys between the WKCD and the West Kowloon Station of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link (XRL) as well as the MTR Austin Station. The usual headway of GMB route No. CX1 is at 10 minutes. The operator has also increased the frequency of services subject to passenger demand, enhanced the headway to six minutes during peak hours or set off when seats were filled up. KMB route No. W4 provides services on Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays with a headway at 15 to 20 minutes. The Transport Department (TD) will maintain constant communication with the WKCD and liaise with the operators to suitably increase the frequency of services and extend the service hours in light of the anticipated passenger flow. According to TD's understanding, these two routes can adequately meet the current demand of passengers.

Moreover, water taxi, which mainly provides tourists with sightseeing and tourism services, berths at West Kowloon on Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays to provide services heading to Tsim Sha Tsui East, Wan Chai and Central. The Government is constructing a southern landing facility located opposite to M+ museum, which is expected to be completed within this year (in 2025). By then, the berthing point of water taxi in West Kowloon will be relocated to the new landing facility to provide passengers with more convenient services. The Government and the WKCD will maintain close communication with the water taxi operator and enhance services where necessary.

To facilitate members of the public and tourists to visit the WKCD, the TD and the WKCD have installed additional directional signs and signage at major roads leading to the WKCD and within the district respectively to provide visitors with clearer information on walking routes. In addition, the Austin Road Pedestrian Linkage System as well as the Artist Square Bridge were put into service in March and December 2021 respectively. This has greatly enhanced the overall accessibility between the WKCD and nearby MTR stations. After alighting at the MTR Kowloon Station or Austin Station, visitors can walk for about 10 to 15 minutes to the WKCD.

In case of large-scale activities in the WKCD or its vicinity, such as

fireworks display, the Police will implement temporary traffic management measures as necessary, including road closure, in the WKCD and its vicinity. During the road closure period, visitors can walk to MTR stations or nearby places to take public transport after the end of large-scale activities. For major festivals in the past two years, the relevant arrangements have been working smoothly.

(2) Regarding parking spaces, there are five car parks in the WKCD, providing a total of about 650 parking spaces for private cars. Through the WKCD mobile application, the Government's mobile application "HKeMobility" and the electronic display panels on the roads near the WKCD, motorists will know in real time the number of parking spaces available at various car parks of the WKCD. The MTR Kowloon Station and the West Kowloon Station of the XRL also provide around 260 and 500 parking spaces respectively.

The WestK Performing Arts Centre is under construction and will be completed next year, i.e. in 2026. By then, about 230 additional parking spaces will be provided in the WKCD. In the long-run, the WKCDA will continue to increase the supply of public parking spaces through new venues and development projects.

(3) The Government will continue to liaise with the WKCDA to keep the traffic conditions of the WKCD under review and strengthen the overall accessibility of the WKCD through a diversified and convenient public transport network. Together with the enhancement in real-time dissemination of information on public transportation as well as parking spaces, visits to the WKCD will be more convenient.

Thank you, President.