

LCQ3: Ancillary transport and accommodation facilities of Kai Tak Cruise Terminal

Following is a question by the Hon Mrs Regina Ip and a reply by the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, Mr Edward Yau, in the Legislative Council today (March 17):

Question:

Due to the rampant epidemic, it has been months since cruise vessels last berthed at the Kai Tak Cruise Terminal (KTCT). The KTCT operator has pointed out that in the past, most of the cruise passengers experienced great inconvenience as they had to queue up for a long time, while carrying bulky luggage, for taxis to travel to and from KTCT and hotels, the airport or their homes. On the other hand, in respect of six sites near KTCT originally reserved for hotel use, the Government has rezoned four of them for building residential flats, and is studying the rezoning of the remaining two sites for residential use as well. Some members of the tourism industry consider that the Government should expeditiously improve the ancillary transport and accommodation facilities of KTCT, so as to offer a better travel experience for the cruise passengers who will return after the epidemic has come to an end. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether it has plans in the coming three years to provide car parks on the idle sites near KTCT, so that local residents going on a cruise trip may choose to travel to and from KTCT by private cars, thereby shortening the queue for taxis; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(2) whether it has plans in the coming three years to introduce water taxi service plying between KTCT and the Kwun Tong Public Pier for use by cruise passengers, thereby shortening the queue for taxis and alleviating the traffic load on roads; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(3) whether it will keep the aforesaid two sites for hotel use, so as to address the accommodation needs of cruise passengers in future; if not, of the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

Thank you for the Hon Mrs Regina Ip's question. Having consulted the Development Bureau (DEVB) and the Transport and Housing Bureau, I provide a consolidated reply as follows:

Having regard to the overall development at Kai Tak, the Transport

Department (TD) has all along been enhancing public transport services thereat so as to meet the development needs and the transport demand of cruise passengers. At present, there are daily franchised bus and green minibus routes serving the Kai Tak Cruise Terminal (KTCT), Kwun Tong and Kowloon City, as well as ferry service connecting North Point, Kwun Tong and Kai Tak Runway Park during weekends and public holidays.

When there are ship calls at KTCT, the terminal operator will also arrange shuttle bus services for cruise passengers and provide ship call information to the taxi trade in order to cater for the extra transport demand during the ship call. According to TD's survey conducted in early 2020 before the epidemic, the waiting time for taxis at KTCT was about five minutes in general.

In addition, the Civil Engineering and Development Department has already completed the road improvement works connecting KTCT and Kowloon Bay. It expects that construction works for the Road D3 (Metro Park Section) located at the north of the former runway would be substantially completed by 2022, providing a direct vehicular linkage between KTCT and MTR Kai Tak Station.

On the basis of the existing road and railway infrastructure as well as public transport services at Kai Tak, the Government also proposes to implement a "multi-modal" Environmentally Friendly Linkage System that consists of electric bus/minibus services, travellers network, pedestrian and cycling paths, water taxis, etc. so as to connect the railway stations, business districts and public transport interchanges at Kai Tak, Kwun Tong, Ngau Tau Kok and Kowloon Bay. This would enhance the connectivity in the area and at the same time, facilitate cruise passengers.

In response to the three questions raised by the Hon Mrs Regina Ip, my specific reply is as follows:

(1) Immigration services at KTCT are currently suspended due to the epidemic. When we resume receiving cruise ships, the public transport services (including taxis and shuttle buses) that I mentioned just now should be sufficient to meet cruise passengers' demand. The Government also encourages cruise passengers to use public transport to travel to and from KTCT. The Government has not planned to provide a substantial number of parking spaces in the vicinity of KTCT for use by cruise passengers. In fact, KTCT already provides about 120 public parking spaces for private cars, and the adjacent Kai Tak Tourism Node also reserves another some 100 public parking spaces for private cars.

(2) In respect of waterborne transport, as mentioned earlier on, there is ferry service plying between Kwun Tong and Kai Tak during weekends and public holidays, and TD would discuss with the operator for service enhancement if necessary. TD is also working with the relevant operator on the "water taxi" service connecting Kai Tak, Hung Hom, Tsim Sha Tsui Promenade, West Kowloon Cultural District and Central, and part of the trial service is expected to be launched in the second half of 2021.

(3) Taking into account the latest economic situation and market response, DEVB is examining the feasibility of rezoning five commercial sites (including hotel use) in Kowloon East for residential use, three of which are located next to KTCT. For the Kai Tak Tourism Node adjacent to KTCT, the successful tenderer will be required to provide a minimum of 15 per cent of the total gross floor area for hotel use.

In general, cruise passengers' demand for hotel accommodation near KTCT is not high given that non-local cruise passengers normally have their accommodation arranged on-board and they would travel to different places in Hong Kong upon arrival at KTCT for sightseeing at tourist attractions, shopping or other accommodation experience instead of just staying around KTCT. In any event, we will closely monitor the hotel demand of cruise passengers, and continue to review the overall hotel supply in Hong Kong in consultation with relevant bureaux and departments. Thank you.