

LCQ16: West Kowloon waterfront promenade

Following is a question by the Hon James To and a written reply by the Secretary for Home Affairs, Dr Patrick Ho, in the Legislative Council today (January 10):

Question:

After putting the West Kowloon Cultural District development project on hold temporarily, the Government has provisionally developed the site into a waterfront promenade, but the number of people going there is small. It is learnt that the Government has allocated an additional \$9 million last year to provide additional facilities at the waterfront promenade, and will make greater efforts to tackle the problem of supporting transport facilities. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(a) of the works progress of the facilities, including the open air cafes, at the above waterfront promenade;

(b) whether the number of visitors to the 10-day Mid-Autumn lantern display organised by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department at that waterfront promenade last year meets the target of 6,000; whether it has reviewed the adequacy of supporting transport facilities during the period of the display and the suitability of the venue concerned for holding large-scale activities;

(c) whether it plans to organise activities at the waterfront promenade during Lunar New Year or other specified dates on its own or in collaboration with other organisations in order to attract more visitors; if so, please list out the information of such activities, including their names, types and organisers, according to the dates of the activities; and

(d) as I was told by the Transport Department that it would discuss with green minibus operators on the provision of feeder transport service at that waterfront promenade, of the progress of such discussion; and whether the Government will consider implementing a trial scheme, whereby scheduled feeder service will be arranged on holidays for people travelling to and from the waterfront promenade,

when the provision of such service by green minibus operators cannot be arranged?

Reply:

Madam President,

(a) The Government conducted enhancement works for the water promenade in the middle of 2006. The enhancements aim to provide for a more vibrant and attractive open space along the West Kowloon harbour front for public enjoyment, and meet public aspirations with better public facilities along the both sides of the Victoria Harbour. The enhancement project includes extending the existing timber boardwalk with lantern lighting and the cycling track northwards by 300 metres and 800 metres respectively to the New Yau Ma Tei Typhoon Shelter. Upon completion, the timber boardwalk and the cycling track will be extended to 700 metres and 1,500 metres respectively. In addition, a 300-metre walking trail will be provided at the northern end of the timber boardwalk to extend the water promenade close to the bus stops near the Kowloon portal of the Western Harbour Crossing and the Kowloon Station of the Mass Transit Railway (MTR) so as to enhance accessibility to the feeder transport service. At the same time, there will be bicycle renting/sale facilities at the extended cycling track and a mini cycling ground in the middle of the promenade to provide more areas and space for activities. A new lawn and landscape area will be created along the extended portion of the boardwalk and cycling track. The existing children's playground will be enlarged with more facilities. Other supporting facilities such as pergolas, toilets, seating benches and directional signs will also be provided. The above enhancement works are near to completion and are expected to open for public use in February this year. Regarding the light refreshment restaurant, the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) has completed the drafting of the tender documents for this restaurant within the promenade and will shortly identify a suitable operator in accordance with established tendering procedures. The light refreshment restaurant is expected to come into operation in May this year.

(b) The 10-day small-scale Mid-Autumn Lantern Display held last year attracted about 7,455 visitors, a number higher than the anticipated 6,000. As the promenade was a bit away from the main road nearby, visitors who arrived by bus or the MTR had to walk for some distance for the activities. Provision of other supporting facilities, such as electricity supply and sewage disposal, were also limited. Moreover, the level of noises generated from the activities was another consideration since there were domestic premises near the venue. The experience shows that the venue is more

suitable for passive activities, activities of a smaller scale and do not produce too much noise.

(c) For the coming Lunar New Year, the LCSD will organise another 10-day small-scale lantern exhibition from February 16 to 25. Besides, bicycle renting/sale facilities will be provided in the promenade to facilitate visitors and encourage people to participate in cycling activities there. The LCSD has launched a tender exercise for the bicycle renting/sale service. The new bicycle renting/sale facility is expected to commence operation in April this year. In order to attract more people to make use of the promenade for cycling and other activities, the LCSD plans to organise a Cycling Fun Day cum Artistic Cycling Demonstrations and Family Fitness Fun Day within the area at a later time. The LCSD will also closely liaise with the Yau Tsim Mong District Council, Yau Tsim Mong District Office and relevant local bodies and invite them to organise activities in the promenade to make it more attractive.

(d) At present, visitors may take KMB bus route no.8 or GMB bus route No.77M and alight at the west entrance to walk into the promenade. The Transport Department (TD) has liaised with other green minibuses operators with a view to increasing transport services to the promenade. However, the operators have no plans to reroute their existing services via the promenade or introduce special services to it at this moment because they expect that the number of passengers for the promenade will be limited. Taking into account the nature and the anticipated number of participants of future activities, the LCSD will discuss with TD whether it is possible to arrange for the provision of special transport services by franchised bus or green minibus operators.

Ends/Wednesday, January 10, 2007

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