

Information Paper for LegCo Panel on Transport
Operation of Cross Boundary Passenger Ferry Services
at Tuen Mun Pier

PURPOSE

This paper informs members of the Administration's consideration of the proposals to convert the Tuen Mun Pier to a cross boundary passenger ferry terminal.

BACKGROUND

Proposals received

2. The Government has received proposals ("the proposals") from the private sector to use Tuen Mun Pier to operate cross boundary passenger ferry services to Macau and other cities in the Pearl River Delta Region ("the PRD region"). There are also requests from residents in Tuen Mun for provision of cross boundary passenger ferry services in Tuen Mun.

Existing Provision of Cross Boundary Ferry Terminal Facilities

3. Cross boundary ferries are the main provider of frequent service to/from Macau and also perform a useful role in providing an alternative to road-based transport modes for travelling to/from other cities in the PRD region. There are two existing cross boundary ferry terminals ("CBFTs") with a total of 25 berths for operation of passenger ferry services to Macau and the Mainland. They are the Macau Ferry Terminal in Sheung Wan and the China Ferry Terminal at Tsim Sha Tsui. The total maximum handling capacities of these two terminals are about 26 million passengers per annum.

Passenger Demand

4. The combined annual passenger throughput of the two existing CBFTs reached a peak level of 20.7 million in 1996. It dropped to 18 million in 1997, 16.9 million in 1998 and then remained rather steady at 16.1 million in 1999 and 16.9 million in 2000. The average utilization rate of the terminals in 2000 is 65%.

Current Use of Tuen Mun Pier

5. Tuen Mun Pier was designed for domestic operation of passenger ferry services when it was built in 1985. At present, one domestic passenger ferry service between Tuen Mun and Chek Lap Kok (via Tung Chung) is operated from the pier.

PRESENT POSITION

6. The Government is examining the proposals. Since the proposals would entail turning Tuen Mun Pier into a boundary control point and thus require new resources and funding, the Government needs to consider the traffic and transport implications as well as other relevant factors relating to the setting up and operation of a new boundary control point. The factors that need to be considered are explained below.

7. Taking into account the patronage trend and utilization rate of the existing CBFTs as described above, there is no immediate need for another CBFT. On the other hand, we have noted the views expressed by some members of the public that the proposed CBFT at Tuen Mun could enhance the convenience for residents in the New Territories, in particular those from North West New Territories, to travel to/from Macau and the PRD region.

8. We are reviewing the likely passenger demand and service level of the proposed CBFT. We are also examining the local transport facilities and services that are needed to connect with Tuen Mun Pier and the staffing and resource requirements to support the operation of the proposed new control point at Tuen Mun Pier. Other relevant factors such as possible relief to land-based cross boundary crossing points and internal traffic in Hong Kong's roads and harbour will also be taken into consideration.

9. At the same time, we have conducted preliminary assessment on the technical and operational feasibility of turning the Tuen Mun Pier into a terminal which would allow the continuation of the existing local passenger ferry service as well as the operation of cross boundary ferry services. The Pier would need to be modified e.g. reinforcement of the pier structure and reconfiguration of the internal pier layout. Moreover, given the site constraint and the limited number of berths at Tuen Mun Pier, the two different types of ferry services would need to be carefully coordinated to ensure efficient use of the pier facilities.

11. We are examining the proposals taking into account the relevant factors described above and hope to come to a conclusion in the near future.