

**Legislative Council Panel on Transport
and Legislative Council Panel on Security**

**Transport Arrangements Associated with
the Introduction of 24-hour Passenger Crossing at
Lok Ma Chau Control Point**

PURPOSE

This paper sets out the transport and other related arrangements to tie in with the introduction of 24-hour passenger crossing at Lok Ma Chau (LMC) Control Point.

BACKGROUND – EXISTING PUBLIC TRANSPORT SERVICES

2. At present, there are over 44,000 passenger and 24,000 vehicle crossings every day at LMC. Cross boundary public transport services include the LMC-Huanggang cross boundary shuttle bus service, cross boundary coach services and hire cars.

The LMC-Huanggang shuttle bus service (the “shuttle bus”)

3. The shuttle bus service operates between San Tin in LMC and Huanggang Control Point in Shenzhen via the LMC Control Point. At present, it operates between 6:30 am and midnight daily at frequencies of 5 to 10 minutes. The two-way carrying capacity is about 1,680 passengers per hour or 28,560 per day. It charges a fare of \$7.0 for each single journey. Currently, the shuttle bus service carries an average of about 20,000 passengers daily on two directions.

Cross boundary coach service

4. The number of crossings for cross boundary coaches is regulated by a quota system. With the grant of a quota, the operators can provide service according to the allocated crossing time. At present, there are two types of quota, viz. regular and ad hoc quota. Ad hoc quota is additional to regular quota

to meet non-regular demand during weekends and long holidays e.g. Chinese New Year. The number of regular and ad hoc quotas is mutually agreed by the HKSAR Government and the relevant Mainland authorities. At present, cross boundary coaches carry about 17,000 passengers a day.

Hire cars

5. About 60 hire cars are also permitted to operate cross boundary services via LMC on a pre-booking basis. The number of hire cars permitted is controlled by a quota system mutually agreed by the HKSAR Government and the relevant Mainland authorities.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE EXTENDED PERIOD

Lok Ma Chau-Huanggang Cross Boundary Shuttle Bus Service

6. To tie with the introduction of 24-hour passenger crossing, the operator would extend its existing shuttle bus service to cover the period between midnight and 6:30 am (“the extended hours”), at frequencies of not more than 30 minutes per trip. The existing single journey fare of \$7.0 will be maintained.

7. To provide the services, the operator will have to employ additional drivers and operational staff to provide the service and regulate passenger boarding and queuing at the two termini and the interchange at LMC Control Point, and it may also need to add vehicles to its licensed fleet. Transport Department is working out the detailed arrangements with the Mainland authorities.

Connecting overnight public transport services to San Tin PTI

8. There are three existing franchised bus and green minibus (GMB) services which terminate at the San Tin Public Transport Interchange. They are: Franchised Bus Route 277 connecting with Yuen Long town centre; GMB Route 44B connecting with Tuen Mun town centre; and GMB Route 77 connecting with Tin Shui Wai town centre. These three areas are major nodes

of overnight public transport network connecting with other districts in the territory. To tie in with the 24-hour operation, the operators of these three routes will provide overnight services at frequencies of 15 to 20 minutes during the extended hours. In addition, the operator of the existing bus route 76K which plies through San Tin will introduce a shortworking overnight service between Sheung Shui and San Tin.

9. There are taxi stands at the San Tin PTI. There are also laybys adjacent to the San Tin PTI to facilitate loading/unloading of passengers by other types of vehicles such as red minibuses, coaches and private cars. These laybys will be available for use by these transport modes during the extended hours.

Cross Boundary Coach Services

10. The cross boundary coach trade has expressed interests to introduce fixed-schedule services from different areas in Hong Kong to the main cities in the Pearl River Delta Region (e.g. Shenzhen, Dongguan, Penyu and Guangzhou etc.). We will discuss with the Mainland authorities on the allocation of regular overnight quotas for the proposed new services.

11. We will also actively pursue with the Mainland authorities to issue ad hoc overnight coach quotas starting from the coming Chinese New Year holidays such that the existing operators will be able to meet passenger demand.

Hire Cars

12. During the extended hours, hire cars will be allowed to operate subject to the existing quotas as agreed with the Mainland authorities.

Monitoring and Review of Arrangements

13. The above-mentioned cross boundary passenger services via the LMC Control Point and the connecting public transport services at San Tin are expected to be able to meet passenger demand during the extended period. Transport Department will monitor the traffic pattern closely. We will also review the arrangements after implementation to see if any changes are required.

Operation of Taxis and Public Light Buses (PLBs) in LMC Control Point

14. At present, there are serious space constraints at the LMC Control Point and the vehicular access facilities are limited. There is also the need to control access to the restricted area at LMC as it is important to ensure that the orderly operation of the immigration and custom facilities are strictly maintained. Therefore, shuttle buses and cross boundary coaches which have larger carrying capacity are relied upon as the main transport modes at LMC to carry cross boundary passengers. This is to avoid congestion and more importantly to ensure the smooth operation of freight transportation through the limited access facilities.

15. In spite of the constraints explained above, we are prepared to examine the feasibility of a trial scheme to allow regulated access of taxis/PLBs to the LMC Control Point during the extended hours. In working out the details of the trial scheme, we need to explore ways to address the following practical issues :

- (i) to have a realistic assessment of the passenger demand pattern arising from 24-hour crossing at LMC Control Point for planning additional shuttle bus services to cater for taxi/PLB passengers;
- (ii) to sort out the arrangement for taxi/PLB passengers to board the shuttle buses, and to pay for it in an orderly manner in order to travel from LMC Control Point to Huanggang, and to agree with the shuttle bus operator and the relevant Mainland authorities on the arrangement for special additional shuttle bus services; it is not acceptable if under a very crowded situation that there are disputes between passengers from the shuttle buses and taxi/PLB passengers after they have gone through the immigration procedures at the LMC Control Point;
- (iii) to maintain smooth operation of the Control Point, as the trial would require the use of the **only** emergency vehicular access to the south of the immigration clearance hall; and to identify a suitable location within the limited space in the Control Point for designation as a passenger pick up/drop off point and to ensure a

safe pedestrian passageway connecting with the immigration clearance hall;

- (iv) to avoid interruption to the improvement works at the Control Point which are carried out in full swing after midnight and to avoid disruption to the smooth operation of freight transportation at the Control Point; and
- (v) to discuss with the trades on appropriate arrangements to regulate operation of taxis/PLBs in the Control Point and their access to the restricted area during the trial period.

16. We are actively considering the details of a trial scheme and have been in active discussion with the taxi/PLB trades on the related issues. We will maintain dialogue with the trades on this matter.

Environment, Transport and Works Bureau
January 2003