

CB(1)1912/03-04(18)

Allan Zeman, Jp  
Chairman

Thomas J. Mehrmann  
Chief Executive



香港海洋公園

OCEAN PARK HONG KONG

Submission to Legco Transport Panel, 21 May 2004  
on  
Future Transport Needs for Ocean Park  
and the Aberdeen Tourism Corridor

**Context**

Over the past year, Ocean Park has, under the guidance of the Task Force on Ocean Park and the Aberdeen Tourism Corridor chaired by the Financial Secretary, been preparing plans for a new facility at its dramatic headland setting overlooking Aberdeen and the Lamma Channel. Planning is now at an advanced stage, with the Park's Development Group aiming to present detailed plans to the Financial Secretary's Task Force in the final quarter of this year.

Exciting and ambitious plans are being drawn up which we are confident will contribute strongly to the regeneration of the Aberdeen area over the coming decades. They will transform the existing Park, which after 27 years serving the leisure and recreation needs of several generations of Hong Kong children, is in urgent need of new and updated facilities. They will create an attraction of which Hong Kong can be proud well into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, and which not only attracts locals and tourists alike, but also stays true to its long-standing commitment to nature conservation and education.

In short, much rests on the successful redevelopment of Ocean Park, both as a stimulus to Aberdeen's economy, and as an important contributor to our future "tourism offering" in Hong Kong. But this redevelopment is unlikely to be viable without the addition of a responsible and effective transportation link to Ocean Park and the south of Hong Kong island.

**The critical importance of an efficient transport infrastructure**

As Ocean Park's redevelopment plans have been drawn up, it has become clear that no transformation can succeed without radical improvement of the transport infrastructure surrounding the Park, and providing access to the area.

In 2004, the Park is expected to attract around 3.6 million visitors – the second best attendance year in the Park's 27-year history. While this is an achievement we are proud of, we are not proud of the fact that during all public holidays and during most fine weekends (amounting to about 100 days last year) many of our visitors suffer long delays in reaching the Park because of acute traffic congestion. This congestion not only creates gridlock for long periods in the immediate vicinity of the Park, but also creates frequent tailback traffic jams into the Aberdeen Tunnel upon entry and exit to the Park in the morning and the evening.

**香港海洋公園****OCEAN PARK HONG KONG**

This is already an irritant to many visitors – who accurately complain that they can today reach the amusement parks of Shenzhen more speedily than they can Ocean Park – and provides good reason for urgent detailed examination of how road access to Aberdeen and the south of Hong Kong island can be improved.

### **The Transport Implications of a new Ocean Park**

Imagine, then, how acute such traffic problems are likely to be if – as planned – Ocean Park develops a new and world leading attraction that by 2010 is attracting around 6.0 million visitors a year. Our planners have no doubt that without both a radical improvement in Aberdeen's road infrastructure, and major relief that would come from construction of a South Island mass transit railway line, traffic gridlock in the Aberdeen area will become a daily routine well before the end of this decade.

This prediction is based exclusively on the challenge of getting visitors to Ocean Park. It takes no account of additional traffic pressures that would be caused by the stimulus to the Aberdeen Harbour area that is likely to result from the successful development of a new Ocean Park. This stimulus is likely to be large – and indeed is one of the main reasons for the Government attaching such high priority to the redevelopment of Ocean Park.

### **Effective transportation links, such as: a Railway, and improved Roads are needed**

We are aware that a number of bus companies and minibus and taxi drivers' associations have expressed concern to the Government and members of the Legco Transport Panel that the development of a South Island Line could put their livelihoods in jeopardy.

We would share their concern (since the Park will continue to rely heavily on buses, minibuses and taxis to deliver to the Park a large proportion of its visitors) except for our knowledge that the incremental pressures that will build up in the Aberdeen area as Ocean Park's redevelopment reaches completion call clearly for effective transportation links of both a rail system, and improved roads.

In contrast to their concerns, we believe that construction of the South Island line may be an important positive contributor to their livelihoods a decade from now. Without a rail link, and with severe traffic gridlock in the Aberdeen area for large parts of the year, buses, minibus drivers and taxi drivers would no longer be able to make a reasonable living as they spent an increasing proportion of their working day stuck in traffic jams. Their livelihood clearly depends on smooth traffic flow, and the only means of providing the necessary relief is to divert a proportion of visitors to the Aberdeen area to rail.

While plans have yet to be finalized, we foresee a major "park and ride" hub being developed at the Ocean Park rail station which would do much to ease traffic congestion between the north and the south of Hong Kong island. This would take many private cars off the roads to and from Central, and would provide an invaluable hub for road-based public transport providers.



**香港海洋公園**  
**OCEAN PARK HONG KONG**

---

**Conclusion**

- Ocean Park's redevelopment is pivotal to the regeneration of the Aberdeen Harbour area and will be one of the important "tourism offerings" for Hong Kong.
- The redevelopment of Ocean Park and the ancillary/related development of the surrounding area, concurrently or thereafter, will significantly increase the transportation needs in/out of the Aberdeen area and present a bigger market opportunity to all forms of transportation means.
- Concerns over future traffic gridlock in the Aberdeen area are so severe that Ocean Park redevelopment is unlikely to be viable without an efficient transportation infrastructure.
- Ocean Park strongly supports the need for a responsible and effective infrastructure improvement for traffic management, which would include the South Island rail link.
- Ocean Park also supports road improvements that will, together with the railway line, preempt potentially disastrous gridlock in the Aberdeen area towards the end of this decade.



Thomas J. Mehrmann  
Chief Executive