

**For discussion
on 26 May 2009**

Legislative Council Panel on Development

Development of a Permanent Government Helipad at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre

PURPOSE

This paper seeks Members' support for the proposal to upgrade project **67GI** to Category A for the development of a permanent government helipad at the north-eastern corner of the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre (HKCEC) for use by the Government Flying Service (GFS) and for the spare capacity to be made available for the provision of domestic commercial helicopter services.

BACKGROUND AND JUSTIFICATION

The need for a permanent government helipad near the HKCEC

2. It is GFS's statutory function to provide flying services to support the work of various government departments and agencies and to provide round-the-clock emergency services, such as search and rescue operations, casualty evacuation, fire-fighting and air ambulance services.

3. Since the closure of the Central Helipad at Lung Wui Road in January 2004 to make way for the implementation of the Central Reclamation Phase III project, GFS has been operating at the temporary government helipad at the former Wan Chai Public Cargo Working Area. As this site will be required for harbour-front enhancement for public enjoyment under the development plan for Wan Chai North, there is a need to re-provision the government helipad to ensure uninterrupted delivery of government flying services.

4. After a territory-wide site search, the site at the north-eastern corner of the HKCEC has been identified as the most suitable location for a permanent government helipad for the following reasons –

- (a) For casualty evacuation and search and rescue operations, the airlifted patients and casualties are normally taken to Pamela Youde Nethersole Eastern Hospital (PYNEH) direct. When

weather conditions do not permit GFS's helicopters to land at the PYNEH, the airlifted patients and casualties will be transferred to other nearby hospitals by land transport. The proposed site is very conveniently located for such transfer purpose;

- (b) The proximity of the proposed location to the Hong Kong Police Force Headquarters will facilitate speedy transfer of police officers and equipment by GFS's helicopters to other parts of the territory to support law enforcement operations of the Police;
- (c) The proposed location meets aviation safety and GFS's operational requirements by providing two obstacle-free take-off climb and approach surfaces; and
- (d) The proposed location is relatively distant from residential developments, thus minimising the noise impact of helicopter operations on residents.

Shared use with commercial helicopter operators

5. Since 1998, the Government has conducted repeated rounds of site searches to identify a suitable site for a domestic commercial helipad¹. Taking account of the views expressed by the former Panel on Economic Services and the former Panel on Planning, Lands and Works of the Legislative Council², the Administration proposed to the two Panels that while priority must at all times be given to the Government's emergency and essential flying services at the permanent government helipad in the vicinity of the HKCEC, the spare capacity of the helipad would be open to commercial uses at a charge to be determined by the Government. The two Panels had no objection to the proposal. Under the shared-use arrangement, it is projected that the permanent government helipad will provide sufficient capacity to meet the forecast demand for domestic commercial helicopter

¹ A waterfront site near the Western Park Sports Centre at Sheung Wan was once identified as a possible site, but the proposal did not have the support of the helicopter industry which considered the proposed site not suitable as it fell outside the central business district.

² At the joint meeting held on 28 February 2005, the former Panel on Economic Services and the former Panel on Planning, Lands and Works passed a motion, urging "the Government to expedite the provision of a permanent commercial heliport and associated facilities in the central business district of the Hong Kong Island, and, under the principle of no unlawful reclamation, allow the heliport at the HKCEC to accommodate both commercial uses by helicopter operators and government uses".

services up to at least 2020³.

PROJECT SCOPE

6. The project scope covers –
- (a) construction of a permanent government helipad⁴ of about 2 700 square metres in area and associated facilities, including a two-storey passenger terminal building, vehicular access⁵, noise mitigation structures and an underground refuelling tank;
 - (b) demolition of an existing building at the proposed permanent government helipad site and, after the proposed permanent government helipad is in operation, demolition of the existing temporary government helipad at the former Wan Chai Public Cargo Working Area;
 - (c) reprovisioning of a public toilet⁶ next to the Golden Bauhinia Square (GBS); and
 - (d) provision of environmental mitigation measures and monitoring works during the construction period.

A site plan showing the layout of the proposed government permanent helipad is at **Annex A**. We plan to commence the proposed construction works in December 2009 for completion in December 2011.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

7. The estimated capital cost of the project is \$59.1 million in money-of-the-day (MOD) prices. A breakdown is at **Annex B**.

³ We expect commercial helicopter flight movements to reach about 20 000 movements a year by 2020, which is worked out having regard to the number of domestic helicopter movements in 2004 and assuming an annual average growth rate of 6.3%.

⁴ Comprising three pads, namely one landing/taking-off pad, one take-off pad and one parking pad.

⁵ This vehicular access will form an integral part of the open space at the Golden Bauhinia Square for use by the general public when not used by vehicles.

⁶ A public toilet in the existing building at the proposed permanent government helipad site, which is mainly used by tourists, will be demolished together with the building and will be reprovisioned in the vicinity.

8. The proposal will entail an additional recurrent cost of \$654,000 in a full year, mainly for the appointment of contract staff for traffic control, running expenses and repair and maintenance. Charges payable by commercial helicopter operators for using the proposed permanent government helipad to provide domestic commercial helicopter services will be determined at a later stage.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

9. The proposed development of the permanent government helipad near the north-eastern corner of the HKCEC received general public support during the public engagement exercise entitled “Harbour-front Enhancement Review – Wan Chai, Causeway Bay and Adjoining Areas”, but the Hong Kong Regional Heliport Working Group, comprising industry players with an active interest over the development of the helipad, still considers that a larger helipad should be constructed. We consider that the proposal for a larger helipad could be reviewed as and when demand warrants it.

10. We consulted the former Panel on Economic Services and the former Panel on Planning, Lands and Works of the Legislative Council on the proposed construction of a permanent government helipad near the HKCEC and the proposed shared-use arrangement for commercial use at their joint meetings on 25 July 2005 and 24 October 2005. Members had no objection to the proposal. On 25 February 2008, during the discussions at the Panel on Economic Development on the results of the technical feasibility study for the subject, some Members expressed concerns about the operational arrangements for the shared-use proposal and urged the Administration to liaise more closely with the industry. Some Members also requested the Administration to expedite the provision of facilities for commercial helicopter services to cope with the forecast demand.

11. On 18 March 2008, we briefed the Wan Chai District Council on the results of the technical feasibility study for the project and consulted it on the proposed shared-use arrangement of the permanent government helipad. The Wan Chai District Council did not object to the proposal. It suggested that the Government should co-ordinate the development of the permanent government helipad with other future developments in the area, and asked the Government to give due consideration to the detailed design of the helipad. A suggestion was also made that there should be a cap on the number of commercial flights at the beginning. We will take these views into account when drawing up the design of the helipad and the operational procedures.

12. We will continue to engage the public on the exterior design of the terminal building and the associated structures of the proposed government helipad. Views received from the public will be forwarded to the Town Planning Board for approval of the exterior design.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

13. As the proposed project is not a designated project under the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Ordinance (Cap. 499), there is no need to conduct an environmental impact assessment. We will implement appropriate environmental mitigation measures for the project. During construction, we will control noise, dust and surface runoff through appropriate monitoring and measures specified in the works contract.

14. At the planning and design stages, we have considered measures to reduce the generation of construction waste where possible. In demolishing the existing building at the proposed permanent government helipad site, we will retain the existing piled deck, which supports the building, and convert it to form the helipad platform in order to reduce demolition work. In addition, we will encourage the contractor to reuse inert construction waste (e.g. broken concrete) in other suitable construction sites as far as possible in order to minimise the disposal of inert construction waste to public fill reception facilities⁷. We will encourage the contractor to maximise the use of recycled or recyclable inert construction waste, as well as the use of non-timber formwork to further minimise the generation of construction waste.

15. We will require the contractor to submit for approval a plan setting out the waste management measures, which will include appropriate mitigation means to avoid, reduce, reuse and recycle inert construction waste. We will ensure that the day-to-day operations on site comply with the approved plan. We will require the contractor to separate the inert portion from non-inert construction waste on site for disposal at appropriate facilities. We will control the disposal of inert construction waste and non-inert construction waste to public fill reception facilities and landfills respectively through a trip-ticket system.

16. We estimate that the project will generate in total about 6 300 tonnes of construction waste. Of these, we will deliver 5 900 tonnes (94%) of

⁷ Public fill reception facilities are specified in Schedule 4 of the Waste Disposal (Charges for Disposal of Construction Waste) Regulation (Cap. 354N). Disposal of inert construction waste in public fill reception facilities requires a licence issued by the Director of Civil Engineering and Development.

inert construction waste to public fill reception facilities for subsequent reuse. In addition, we will dispose of 400 tonnes (6%) of non-inert construction waste at landfills. The total cost for accommodating construction waste at public fill reception facilities and landfills sites is estimated to be \$209,300 for this project⁸.

HERITAGE IMPLICATIONS

17. This project will not affect any heritage sites, i.e. all declared monuments, proposed monuments, graded historic sites/buildings, sites of archaeological interest and government historical sites identified by the Antiquities and Monuments Office.

LAND ACQUISITION

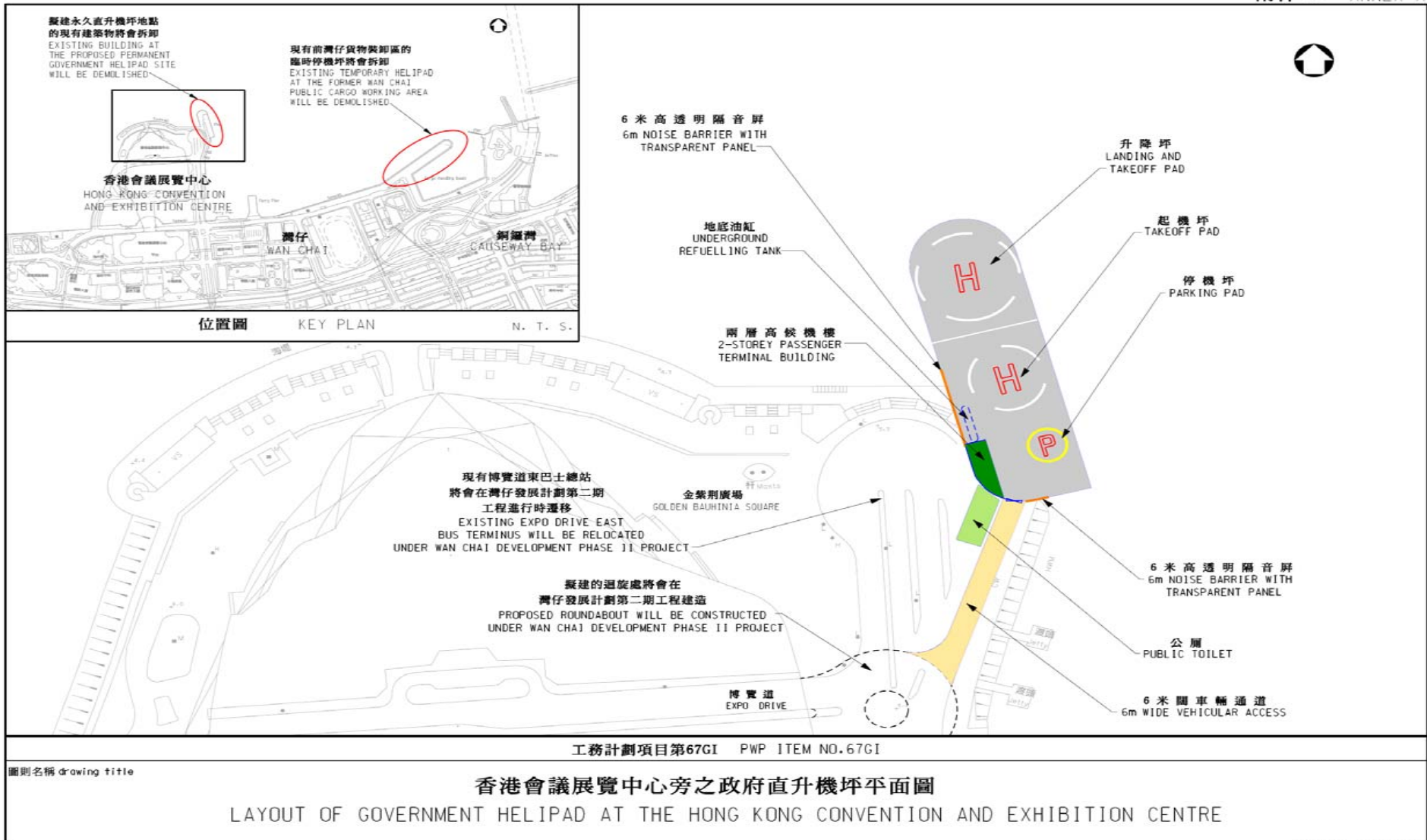
18. This project does not require land acquisition.

WAY FORWARD

19. Subject to Members' views, we will seek the endorsement of the Public Works Subcommittee in June 2009 and the funding approval of the Finance Committee in July 2009.

Security Bureau
Transport and Housing Bureau
May 2009

⁸ Based on a unit cost of \$27/tonne for disposal at public fill reception facilities and \$125/tonne at landfills



**Estimated Capital Cost of Project 67GI –
Development of a Permanent Government Helipad
at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre**

<u>Item</u>	<u>Cost</u>	
	\$ million	
(a) Permanent government helipad and associated facilities	36.2	
(b) Demolition of an existing building at the permanent government helipad site and the temporary government helipad	3.2	
(c) Re provisioning of a public toilet	5.4	
(d) Environmental mitigation measures and monitoring works	0.8	
(e) Consultants' fees for contract administration	0.3	
(f) Resident site staff costs	4.4	
(g) Contingency	5.0	
	Sub-total	55.3 (in September 2008 prices)
(h) Provision for price adjustment	3.8	
	Total	59.1 (in MOD prices)