

**Administration's Responses to Hon. Kam Nai Wai's Questions
on Redevelopment of Victoria Park Swimming Pool Complex**

(1) Why does the Administration propose to convert an outdoor swimming pool where attendants can enjoy sunbath and breeze into an indoor swimming pool?

The existing Victoria Park Swimming Pool Complex (VPSPC) was built over 50 years ago. The swimming pools in VPSPC are non-heated pools. Given its prominent location, it is one of the most popular swimming pool complexes in the urban areas. Although VPSPC is under regular maintenance, its facilities have been worn out and are outdated. In view of its popularity, heavy use and existing conditions, the standard of the pool facilities should be improved to provide better services to the public.

There is an increasing demand from the public for all weather swimming facilities, in particular, for indoor heated pools as Hong Kong people become more health conscious. At present, there is no standard indoor heated pool in the Eastern District. There are only an indoor training pool and fun pool in Island East Sports Centre. Another indoor heated pool with training pool facility in Siu Sai Wan is under construction for completion in 2010. In view of the increasing demand for indoor heated pool facilities, and that the VPSPC is one of the major swimming pool complexes in Hong Kong, we consider it necessary to upgrade it to an indoor heated swimming pool complex.

The Eastern District was consulted and strongly supported the project and requested for early implementation.

(2) Why does the Administration propose to convert the existing swimming pool complex with five pools into a complex having only two pools, reducing the choices of swimmers and causing crowded situation?

Under our proposal, while the number of pools will be changed from 5 to 2, the total water surface area is increased from about 1,700 square metre in the existing VPSPC to about 2,100 square metre in the new VPSPC. Hence, the total number of people to be admitted at any one time is increased. Moreover, by introducing two movable bulkheads and movable floors in the main pool, the main pool can further segregate into 3 different pools with various depths, which can be used by different groups of users for different purposes. Together with the multipurpose pool, there can be four pools in the complex. In addition, the new pool complex can provide up-to-standard facilities for diversified aquatic sports such as diving, water polo and synchronized swimming.

(3) Why does the estimated cost exceed \$1 000 million?

The estimated cost of the project is \$1 074 million at September 2008 price level. This is higher than the cost of a general swimming pool complex due to the following major factors -

- (a) The project include the following works apart from construction of the swimming pool complex:
 - (i) replacement of large underground stormwater drain;
 - (ii) demolition of the existing swimming pool complex; and
 - (iii) refurbishment/reprovisioning of the affected park facilities.
- (b) Additional structural cost is required to overcome the constraints imposed by the future MTR's North Island Line (NIL) underneath the proposed complex;
- (c) Curved building form is adopted to respond to the Town Planning Board's comments to minimize the mass effect of the swimming pool to the public;
- (d) To meet the standards for an international competition venue the swimming pool complex has a spectator capacity of 2500 which is higher than the spectator capacity of not exceeding 1 200 in most other swimming pool complexes; and
- (e) In order to enhance flexibility in use of swimming pool facilities, special pool equipment such as movable floors, movable bulkheads, etc. are provided for the proposed complex to enable the pools to be used by different age groups for different purposes.

(4) VPSPC is popular and heavily used in Hong Kong. Has the Administration considered measures to allow the public and organizations who have been using the swimming facilities in VPSPC to continue to enjoy the facilities during the construction period of the new VPSPC which lasts for about 5 years?

The project will be implemented by phases. The phase 1 works include construction of the new swimming pool complex at the location of existing tennis courts and roller skating rink while phase 2 works mainly include demolition of the existing swimming pool complex and reprovisioning of the handball court and roller skating rinks. As the existing VPSPC will be demolished only after completion of the new VPSPC, swimming pool services can be maintained without disruption during the construction period of the new VPSPC.

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