LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL BILLS COMMITTEE ON TUNG CHUNG CABLE CAR BILL

Information for the Bills Committee

INTRODUCTION

This paper contains information requested by the Legislative Council Bills Committee on the Tung Chung Cable Car Bill (the Bills Committee) at its meeting held on 31 March 2003.

BACKGROUND

2. At the second meeting of the Bills Committee held on 31 March 2003, Members asked for information concerning the Tung Chung Cable Car Project (the Project) in respect of the following issues –

(a) windshear and turbulence data in the vicinity of the Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA);
(b) financial information on the Project; and
(c) the terms of the Private Treaty Grant (PTG) for the development of the themed tourist corridor at Ngong Ping by the MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL).

3. Financial information on the Project will be provided by MTRCL separately.

Safe Operation of the Cable Car System Under Different Weather Conditions

4. Cable car systems operate through a system of cables from which are suspended the passenger cars. These travel between towers, angle stations and the terminals. The magnitude of wind speed (in all directions), rather than wind changes, is a factor in the operation of a cable car system. The design, operation and maintenance of the Tung

Chung Cable Car System will be governed by Aerial Ropeways (Safety) Ordinance (Cap. 211) and its subsidiary legislation, the Aerial Ropeways (Operation and Maintenance) Regulations. The Regulations provide for, amongst others, the safety requirements for operation of the Cable Car System under inclement weather, including requirements to reduce the speed or to stop the operation of the system under prescribed conditions.

5. Design submissions from MTRCL indicate that the Tung Chung Cable Car System is designed to cope with the prevailing weather conditions in Hong Kong, including high winds, monsoon winds, lightning, etc. Wind monitoring devices will be installed to monitor the speed and direction of the monsoon winds to ensure that it is safe to operate the Cable Car System. The design will also incorporate suitable lightning protection devices. Furthermore, a closed-circuit television system will be installed throughout the cable car route to monitor operations of the Cable Car System.

6. In order to gather data on the specific conditions along the route of the Cable Car System, the MTRCL has already installed four temporary wind monitoring stations at the strategic locations in Lantau North Country Park. The Hong Kong Observatory (HKO) had provided advice on the locations of these stations and the data collected will be shared with HKO. As part of the system, permanent monitoring stations will be installed at all cable towers. These will provide real-time information on wind conditions along the cable car route.

7. HKO and MTRCL will share wind data on an on-going basis.

8. Wind speed data is not the same as data related to windshear. Data on windshear events at the HKIA is at Annex A.

Private Treaty Grant for the Ngong Ping Theme Tourist Corridor

9. Ngong Ping is already a significant tourist attraction. Unfortunately, the number of visitors to the area has been in decline over recent years. There is a need to renew and upgrade the facilities to enable the area to become a more important tourism attraction. This

view was shared by Members of the Legislative Council Panel on Economic Services (the ES Panel) who, when consulted in January 2001, expressed the view that there should be complementary developments at Ngong Ping to tie in with the development of the Cable Car System.

10. We have considered the type of tourism development that should be brought to Ngong Ping. Any such development should respect and blend in to the natural and religious setting of the area and its tranquil environment. After careful consideration and extensive discussion with interested parties, an Outline Zoning Plan (OZP) has been drawn up, which envisages a themed tourist corridor leading from the Cable Car Terminal at Ngong Ping. This will provide a total of 6 000m^2 of commercial GFA.

11. Various options for the development of the Tourist Corridor have been considered. In keeping with the principle that public sector involvement should be minimized, options involving Government development or funding for facilities in the "Tourist Corridor" have been ruled out since such an approach would involve the development and management of commercial facilities.

12. We considered that it would be appropriate to pursue the option of granting the development rights for the Tourist Corridor to the future franchisee to provide assurance that the development of the Cable Car System and these facilities dovetail. This option will allow the franchisee to develop and manage the Project and the complementary facilities as an integrated tourist attraction in a coherent manner and hence provide a better assurance of quality and standards. The franchisee would also be able to minimize programme interfacing and technical constraints between the Project and the "Tourist Corridor".

13. Allocation of the land for the "Tourist Corridor" will be by PTG, with terms similar to the commercial GFA for the Project, including a period of 30 years to tie the land grant with the franchise period, and land premium payable at full market value upfront.

14. Under the Ngong Ping Outline Zoning Plan (at Annex B), only uses for exhibition hall, field study centre/visitor, museum,

government use, and park and garden are allowed in Area (b)(ii) at the eastern part of the Tourist Corridor adjoining the future Piazza. Taking into account the concern of Po Lin Monastery on the compatibility of the developments to the heritage setting of Ngong Ping, commercial activities will be confined to the western end in Area (a) and Area (b)(i) of the Ngong Ping core area; and light refreshment outlets and restaurants will be confined to Area (a) immediately adjacent to the Ngong Ping Terminal of the Cable Car System. The development will be subject to various planning restrictions, such as development intensity and building height.

CONCLUSION

15. Members are invited to note the information presented in this paper.

Tourism Commission
Economic Development and Labour Bureau
3 April 2003

Annex A

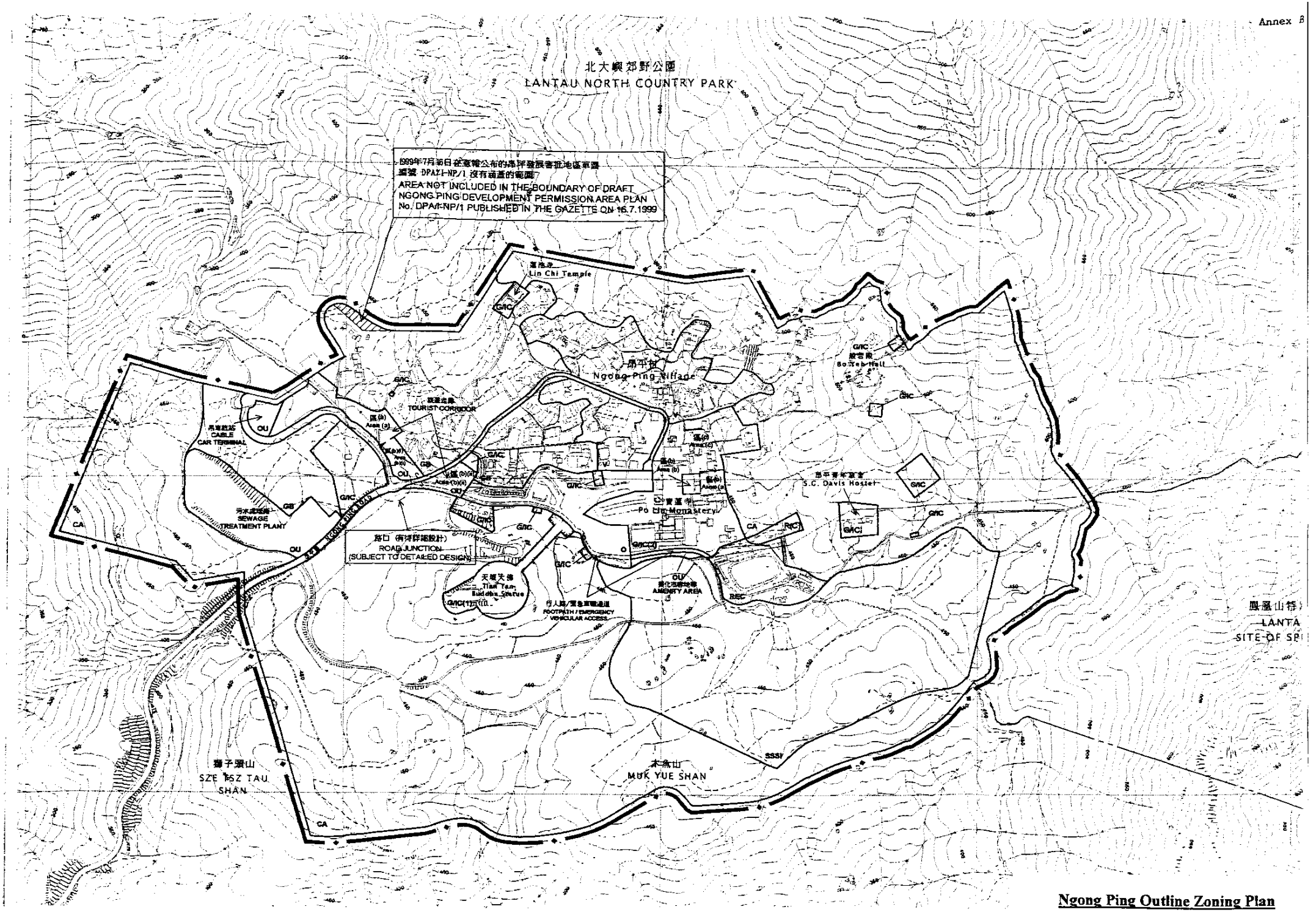
Statistics on Windshear Events at the Hong Kong International Airport

According to the Hong Kong Observatory (HKO), in aviation terms, windshear refers to a change in the wind direction and/or speed for more than a few seconds, resulting in a change in the headwind or tailwind encountered by an aircraft, and causing a change to the lift of the aircraft. A change of 15 knots or more in headwind or tailwind is considered significant windshear which requires timely and appropriate corrective action by the pilot. A majority of windshear events at Hong Kong International Airport occur in Spring, and have been caused by air flowing across the hilly terrain of Lantau Island.

2. Turbulence is caused by rapid irregular motion of air. It brings about rapid bumps or jolts but does not normally influence the intended flight path of an aircraft significantly.

3. Over the four and a half years since the opening of the Hong Kong International Airport in July 1998 to the end of 2002, a total of 1,302 reports of significant windshear were received from pilots. This represents 0.16% of all flights in and out of the airport. During the same period, a total of 345 reports of moderate or severe turbulence were received. This represents 0.04% of all flights in and out of the airport.

Annex B



Ngong Ping Outline Zoning Plan