

For discussion on
26 October 2015

Legislative Council Panel on Economic Development

The Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile ("FIA") Formula E Championship – Hong Kong ePrix

Purpose

This paper aims to brief Members on the proposal of staging the FIA Formula E Championship – Hong Kong ePrix in Hong Kong in October 2016 and the Government's support to facilitate the staging of this event.

Background

2. Over the years, Hong Kong has been hosting a diverse variety of mega events, such as the Hong Kong Sevens, Hong Kong Marathon and Hong Kong Wine & Dine Festival. These mega events not only add colour and vibrancy to our city but also enrich visitors' experience. Spectacular mega events may entice visitors to make a special trip to Hong Kong, which will in turn benefit various tourism-related sectors. In addition, hosting of mega events with international fame is a good way to attract overseas media coverage that helps burnish Hong Kong's image as an international metropolis and reinforce our status as the events capital of Asia. FIA Formula E Championship is one of those attractive large events.

FIA Formula E Championship

3. The FIA Formula E Championship is the first international racing series competing between electric-powered single-seater racing cars sanctioned by the FIA, which is the international governing body of motorsports. The Championship comprises a series of races to be staged in different cities around the globe. The series was inaugurated in season 2014/15. In its second season of 2015/16 which will kick off on 24 October 2015, races will be held in ten cities, including Beijing, Los Angeles, Paris, Moscow and London, etc..

4. The organizer of the FIA Formula E Championship, the Formula E Holdings Limited (“FEH”), and the Formula Electric Racing (Hong Kong) Limited (“FERHK”), the license holder for operating the Championship in Hong Kong, are committed to introducing this novel car race to Hong Kong in the third season of the Championship in 2016/17. The proposed Hong Kong ePrix is scheduled for 9 October 2016 (Sunday), which will be the first stop of that season. The organizer is keen to make the race an annual event of Hong Kong in the years ahead.

5. The FIA Formula E Championship races typically take place on “street circuits”. The organizer plans to stage the race in the new Central Harbourfront area, mainly along Lung Wo Road, with the magnificent view of Victoria Harbour and Central as backdrop. The proposed design of racetrack alignment as agreed by the FIA is at Annex.

6. The pitlane and main grandstand for the races are proposed to be erected in the existing Central Harbourfront Event Space. Exact locations of spectator stands to be erected in the nearby area are being examined and temporary safety barriers will be installed along the racetrack to ensure the safety of both racing car drivers and spectators. Races aside, the organizer is planning to host other supporting events and entertainment activities at the abovementioned site and other locations in Hong Kong during the same weekend to enhance the overall carnival ambience and encourage participation from the community and visitors. The organizer will fully fund the operation cost of the race as well as relevant events and activities.

Benefits to Hong Kong

7. The FIA Formula E Championship is the world’s first-ever international fully-electric racing series, which is new and unique in the motorsports world. It is likely to offer various benefits to Hong Kong.

8. From the tourism perspective, hosting this world-class, unique and novel motorsports event in Hong Kong is in line with our policy objective of enriching the overall tourism appeal of Hong Kong by introducing more attractive high-end mega events in town. Other than the car racing crews coming from all over the world to Hong Kong, it is reasonably expected that, with extensive overseas publicity, the race has potential to appeal to overnight non-local high-spending visitors, motorsports lovers in particular, to come to Hong Kong for the race. At the same time, staging this race could further reinforce Hong Kong’s status as the events capital of Asia and showcase our formidable

organizational capability to host mega events which is conducive to the long-term tourism development of Hong Kong.

9. The Championship will also help spread the message of environmental protection, as it features racing cars fully powered by electric energy which generate no tailpipe emission during operation. It is in line with the Government's environmental policy objective to promote the use of electric vehicles to alleviate roadside air pollution and reduce greenhouse gas emission. Meanwhile, it will help generate public awareness and interest in electric vehicles as well as promote the use of clean and sustainable energy.

10. There have also long been calls in Hong Kong for events that can satisfy the local appetite for motorsports. At present, the majority of motorsports events in which Hong Kong participates are staged outside of Hong Kong. The Championship will be the first time Hong Kong stages an FIA approved circuit race. This will not only showcase our capability to host a world-class motorsports event, but also pave the way for other mega events that require the use of a street circuit in Hong Kong. This event will therefore be a catalyst to the further development of sports using racetrack in Hong Kong.

11. From the harbourfront enhancement's point of view, the Championship will make use of the existing roads in the Central Harbourfront area to create an exciting and challenging temporary street circuit, thereby adding vibrancy to the harbourfront by attracting a broad demographic of local residents and non-local visitors to visit and enjoy this prominent waterfront location. At the same time, with worldwide TV broadcast of the race, it will further reinforce the profile of Victoria Harbour as a world-class asset.

Government's support

12. Taking into account the potential benefits to be brought by the Championship, over the past two years, the Tourism Commission ("TC") has been coordinating the Government's efforts in liaising with the organizer to facilitate the latter in bringing the race to Hong Kong. Similar to other hosting cities of the Championship, the HKSAR Government will provide a range of necessary support to the organizer.

13. Firstly, the Government agrees to provide necessary municipal services, such as the maintenance of law and order, crowd control, fire prevention and emergency rescue, etc. during the race day.

14. Secondly, some road sections in the new Central Harbourfront area do not conform entirely to the prevailing safety standard as prescribed by the FIA for setting up a temporary street circuit for the Championship. In order to facilitate the provision of an up-to-standard temporary street circuit, which is essential to protect both car racers and spectators, the Government agrees to carry out necessary minor modifications to those road sections.

15. The road modification works concerned will involve primarily the conversion of some existing footpaths, central profile barriers and planting strips to carriageway; tree transplantation, felling and compensatory works; and relocation of some street lightings and traffic signs, etc. at Yiu Sing Street, Man Yiu Street, Man Kwong Street and Lung Wo Road. The estimated cost of the above minor road works is around \$20 million. The extent of the works is highlighted in green and pink as appropriate in the map at the Annex.

16. The road alignment, traffic lane configuration and pedestrian routes of the works area will remain unchanged upon completion of the road works. The road works concerned do not involve the construction of new road or major extensions of existing roads. In sum, the works do not have material impact on road users, and will not pose any constraint on future harbourfront development.

17. The relevant road works have commenced in mid-October 2015 and are expected to complete by early September 2016. Similar to other road maintenance works in general, to minimize the inconvenience caused to road users during the works period, suitable temporary traffic arrangements have been put in place, and the works will be carried out in evening and night-time if necessary to minimize disruption to traffic.

Latest Development

18. The organizer formally announced on 9 October 2015 its plan to host the FIA Formula E Championship Race – Hong Kong ePrix in its third season of 2016/17 on 9 October 2016. In the meantime, the organizer will embark on a series of preparatory work. It will also carry out public relations and publicity activities in the coming months to garner the local community's support and raise public awareness.

19. In anticipation that relevant stakeholders will be interested in the event details especially the traffic management measures to be taken for the race, the organizer has commissioned a traffic impact assessment

consultancy study to ensure that necessary measures and temporary traffic arrangements will be undertaken to facilitate the installation of safety barriers and staging of the race. The organizer will consult the relevant Government departments to ensure that possible disruption to the traffic and road users during the race day be minimized as far as possible. It will also inform the relevant stakeholders of the updated event proposal in due course.

Advice Sought

20. Members are invited to note the proposal of staging the FIA Formula E Championship in Hong Kong and the latest development.

**Tourism Commission
Commerce and Economic Development Bureau
October 2015**

The Proposed Racetrack Alignment of the FIA Formula E Championship – Hong Kong ePrix

