

**For discussion
on 19 December 2018**

Legislative Council Panel on Economic Development

**Measures to Mitigate the Impact of
Increasing Number of Inbound Tourists on Tung Chung Community
since the Commissioning of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge**

Purpose

Hon Holden CHOW wrote to the Chairman of the Panel on 15 November 2018 regarding measures to mitigate the impact of increasing inbound tourists on Tung Chung since the commissioning of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge (“HZMB”), proposing enhancement of shopping and dining facilities at the Hong Kong Port of HZMB so as to satisfy the demand of visitors. This paper sets out the Government’s response and the measures taken to alleviate the situation in Tung Chung.

Government’s Response to Hon CHOW’s Suggestion and Measures Tackling the Situation in Tung Chung

2. The Government attaches great importance to the sustainable and healthy development of the tourism industry. Whilst ensuring the industry’s stable and orderly growth, we also seek to minimise as far as possible the impact of tourist activities on the local community. Since the commissioning of HZMB on 24 October 2018, there have been considerable inbound tour groups visiting Tung Chung, thereby affecting the residents in the community. In view of the recent situation in Tung Chung, the Government has convened several inter-departmental meetings and rolled out multi-pronged measures within a short time with a view to alleviating the pressure of the Hong Kong Boundary Crossing Facilities (“BCF”) and its nearby areas, and improving the relevant situation.

3. The Government has been monitoring closely the vehicular and visitor flows crossing the border through HZMB and the operation of BCF since the

commissioning of HZMB. In the first few weeks after the commissioning of HZMB, around one-fifth of visitors arriving at Hong Kong through HZMB's BCF did not leave BCF to visit other districts in Hong Kong by taking local public transport services. The proportion concerned has dropped subsequently¹. It is estimated that the relevant visitors arriving at Hong Kong through HZMB's BCF primarily intended to visit HZMB only and might not be keen to enter Hong Kong. The Government is exploring with relevant Mainland authorities the opening of HZMB's East Artificial Island to the aforementioned group tourists, so as to allow such tourists to visit HZMB and return to Zhuhai or Macao from the East Artificial Island without crossing the border of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

4. At present, there are restaurants and convenience stores in the HZMB's BCF. The Government is arranging to set up temporary small-scale shops or booths in HZMB's BCF to satisfy the shopping needs of travellers. The first temporary shop commenced operation on 1 December. We are also exploring introducing food trucks to serve travellers in the vicinity of BCF.

5. Since 21 November, the Transport Department ("TD") has implemented new measures concerning the operating arrangements of domestic tour coaches at BCF. Under the new measures, registered coach operators who have submitted an application and completed the simple procedures via TD's online system before 9pm each day may enter the BCF pick-up area to pick up passengers the following day. This arrangement can facilitate co-operation between the receiving travel agents in Hong Kong and the Mainland inbound travel agents, and is conducive to diverting visitors to various tourist attractions, hence would reduce the influx of visitors into Tung Chung.

6. Furthermore, shuttle bus operators implemented an online pre-booking system on 23 November. Travel agents or organisers of tour groups may, through the online system, purchase shuttle bus tickets (including return tickets in one single operation) for designated dates and time slots from 24 November onwards. The new arrangement helps manage and regulate visitor flows at all time slots, thereby preventing group visitors from entering and leaving Hong Kong at the same time, as well as reducing the waiting time of visitors.

¹ As at early December 2018, the proportion concerned was about 10%.

7. The Tourism Commission (“TC”) has assisted in co-ordinating the local trade in easing the visitor flow near BCF, including requesting the local trade to arrange travellers to use other means of transport (such as cross-boundary ferries) as far as practicable. TC also encourages the trade, including tourist attractions, to launch travel itineraries and products such as half-day tours so as to help divert travellers.

8. In view of the large number of passengers going to Tung Chung, the bus company concerned has implemented a series of measures starting from 10 November to improve the queuing arrangement of Route B6 at Tung Chung, including arranging passengers to buy return tickets in advance, arranging passengers to get aboard two buses at a time during peak hours, and deploying more staff to facilitate boarding. These measures have shortened the time for boarding the buses, and long queues were no longer observed during most of the peak hours. Besides, setting barriers at the bus stop has allowed the queues to proceed in an orderly manner and minimise the impact on local residents. Recently, the number of passengers using Route B6 has dropped when compared with that during the peak in mid-November. TD and bus companies will continue to closely monitor the demand of various feeder bus routes and take appropriate measures as necessary. In addition, the Police will continue to closely monitor the situation of Mainland tour groups visiting Hong Kong, and deploy additional manpower from time to time to maintain public order and public safety on site.

9. TC has communicated with the Guangdong Provincial Culture and Tourism Department (“the Department”) on the situation concerned in early November. The Department attached great importance to the matter, and has issued notices to various municipal tourism authorities in the province, urging them to strengthen market regulation and request the tourism operators in various cities to strictly abide by the laws and regulations in Hong Kong and Macao, as well as to step up relevant promotion, encouraging tourists to travel in an orderly manner. The Department has also issued advices on the itinerary arrangements for tour groups using HZMB to encourage tourists to avoid travelling at weekends, as well as to appeal to travel agents to organise tours of more than two days, such that more tourists could stay overnight in Hong Kong, thereby alleviating the pressure borne by the HZMB’s nearby districts. The Guangzhou Tourism Administration also issued a document on 22 November 2018 requesting travel agents concerned to reasonably arrange one-day tours to HZMB, to encourage tourists to participate in

Hong Kong and Macao tours of two days or more, and avoid arranging such tours during weekends as far as possible so as to avoid the peak traffic periods of HZMB. As at early December, about 10% of visitors arriving at Hong Kong through HZMB's BCF did not leave BCF to visit other districts in Hong Kong by taking local public transport services.

Follow-up on the Situation

10. According to our latest observation, the situation in Tung Chung has improved since late November. The passenger flow of HZMB in the first two weekends of December is about 20% less than that of the peak in mid-November. In addition, the Travel Industry Council of Hong Kong ("TIC"), which is responsible for trade regulation, had conducted spot checks in Tung Chung in November and December. According to the sampled data arisen from TIC's survey, since the commissioning of HZMB, a significant proportion of Mainland inbound tour groups visiting Hong Kong through the HZMB is accompanied by Hong Kong tourist guides, with the highest figure reaching about 90%.

11. TD and relevant public transport operators will continue to review public transport services and bus stop arrangements in the areas concerned and will consult relevant District Councils and stakeholders as necessary, striving to provide efficient public transport services to the public. TC will also keep a close eye on the travel patterns of Mainland tourists, and maintain communication with relevant departments so as to minimise the impact of relevant activities on the districts concerned.

Commerce and Economic Development Bureau
Transport and Housing Bureau
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