

**Proposed provision of monthly ticket passages
for the “Central - Cheung Chau” ferry route**

Purpose

This paper briefs Members and seeks their views on the proposed provision of monthly ticket passages for fast ferry service of the “Central - Cheung Chau” ferry route at the Cheung Chau Ferry Pier and Central Pier No. 5.

Background

2. At present, the “Central - Cheung Chau” ferry route is operated by the New World First Ferry Services Limited (“NWFF”). The route provides ordinary and fast ferry services for passengers to choose. The carrying capacity of an ordinary ferry vessel is about 1 500 and that of a fast ferry vessel about 200 or 400. The frequency of the route during peak hours on weekdays (i.e. from 7 a.m. to 10 a.m. for Central bound and from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. for Cheung Chau bound) is 5 to 30 minutes per headway and that during off-peak hours is 30 minutes per headway. As for Sundays and public holidays, the route operates at a headway of 30 minutes.

3. In 2015, the average daily patronage (two-way) of the “Central - Cheung Chau” route was around 26 000 passenger trips, which was the highest among all the outlying island ferry routes. If only the patronage on weekdays (i.e. from Mondays to Saturdays except public holidays) was calculated, the average daily patronage (two-way) of the route was around 24 717 passenger trips. On the other hand, if only the patronage on Sundays and public holidays was calculated, the average daily patronage (two-way) in 2015 was 33 000 passenger trips, which was 34% higher than that on weekdays.

4. Since the passenger demand for the “Central - Cheung Chau” route was higher on holidays, the NWFF has arranged additional sailings on holidays to meet passenger needs where resources permitted. According to on-site surveys conducted by the Transport Department (TD) on several long weekends this year, with the deployment of spare vessels by the NWFF, the route could operate at a headway of 12 to 15 minutes during holiday peak hours (i.e. from 10 a.m. to 1

p.m. for Cheung Chau bound and 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. for Central bound on holidays). The average patronage reached about 83%, indicating that the services could generally meet the passenger demand. Nonetheless, some local residents reflected to the TD that as fast ferries serving the “Central - Cheung Chau” route were sometimes full during holiday peak hours, passengers who were rushing to work had to wait for the next departing ferry. In this connection, some local residents suggested that temporary special passages be provided at the Cheung Chau Ferry Pier and Central Pier No. 5 during holidays so that passengers who were rushing to work can make use of such passages to enter the piers and go direct to the ticket turnstiles for fast ferry service.

Considerations given by the TD

5. Regarding the proposed provision of additional special passages for the “Central - Cheung Chau” route, the TD has met with local residents on several occasions over the past few months to exchange views and holistically review the relevant factors. Such factors included the service level of the existing “Central - Cheung Chau” route, passenger demand and patterns, pier facilities, requisite adjustments to daily operation of the ferry operator, views from relevant departments (including the Hong Kong Police Force, works departments and Islands District Office, etc). After deliberation, the TD would like to put forward proposals as stated in paragraphs 6 and 7 below based on the following grounds:

- (1) The passenger demand pattern of the “Central – Cheung Chau” route on holidays differs greatly from that on weekdays. Apart from the fact that the patronage on holidays is 34% higher than that on weekdays, the demand mostly arose within a short period of time¹, making it difficult for the ferry operator to fully meet the demand for fast ferry service during this short period of time even by deploying as much available resources it can to arrange for additional sailings; and
- (2) There is a genuine need for some people, such as healthcare workers, security guards and service sector workers, to travel to and from Cheung Chau for work during peak hours on holidays. They are

¹ At present, the patronage of the “Central - Cheung Chau” route from 7 a.m. to 10 a.m. for Central bound and from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. for Cheung Chau bound on weekdays accounts for around 30% of the average daily patronage. Meanwhile, the patronage during peak hours of long weekends (e.g. Labour Day holiday period from 1 to 2 May this year), i.e. from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. for Cheung Chau bound and from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. for Central bound, accounts for 53% of the average daily patronage on holidays.

inevitably affected under the aforementioned special passenger demand pattern of the “Central - Cheung Chau” route on holidays.

The proposal

6. Having regard to the above considerations, the TD would like to put forward its proposal as follows:

- (1) It is proposed that software modification be carried out for one of the Octopus turnstiles at the **turnstile gate for fast ferry service** of the “Central - Cheung Chau” route at Cheung Chau Ferry Pier and Central Pier No. 5 respectively. This will allow the turnstile to switch to one for exclusive use by monthly ticket holders (i.e. monthly ticket turnstiles) on specified days and switch back to its existing mode for use by all passengers on non-specified dates. Moreover, associated railings and queuing facilities are proposed to be provided at the two piers to facilitate provision of monthly ticket passages through which monthly ticket holders can go straight from the pier entrance to the monthly ticket turnstiles for card-swiping before proceeding to the ferry waiting area. The NWFF will be responsible for the software modification work while the Architectural Services Department (“the ArchSD”) will provide the relevant railings and queuing facilities. Please see the **Annex** for the location of the turnstiles and monthly ticket passages at the Cheung Chau and Central piers.
- (2) On the specified dates listed below, in order to cater to the **special passenger demand pattern during busy holidays**, NWFF will make special arrangements to facilitate smooth flow of monthly ticket holders from the pier entrances to the monthly ticket turnstiles and to maintain queuing order. These measures will include **switching the turnstiles for fast ferry service to monthly ticket turnstiles at both ferry piers**, as well as **enhancing management of the monthly ticket passages** by deploying additional manpower to maintain order at the entrance of the passages and reminding passengers that the passages are for exclusive use by monthly ticket holders and all other passengers should make use of ticket counters or the remaining two turnstiles:
 - All Sundays between July and August (i.e. summer holiday); and
 - Throughout the year, if any public holiday fall on any of the two days before Sunday (i.e. Friday or Saturday) or on Monday, enhanced

management of the monthly ticket passages will be put in place on the Sunday and public holiday concerned as well as the intervening Saturday. Examples are given below:

Examples of introducing monthly ticket turnstiles and enhancing management of monthly ticket passages during busy holidays

Friday (public holiday)	Saturday (non-public holiday)	Sunday	Monday (public holiday)
✓	✓	✓	✓
Friday (non-public holiday)	Saturday (public holiday)	Sunday	Monday (public holiday)
X	✓	✓	✓
Friday (non-public holiday)	Saturday (public holiday)	Sunday	Monday (non-public holiday)
X	✓	✓	X
Friday (non-public holiday)	Saturday (non-public holiday)	Sunday	Monday (public holiday)
X	X	✓	✓
Friday (non-public holiday)	Saturday (non-public holiday)	Sunday	Monday (non-public holiday)
X	X	X (except July and August)	X

- (3) **During the Cheung Chau Jiao Festival/Bun Carnival**, as the number of passengers is much higher than that on regular busy holidays and the Police needs to implement extensive crowd management measures in the vicinity of Cheung Chau Ferry Pier, **all passengers, including monthly ticket holders, will be required to**

queue for entry outside the piers according to the instructions of the Police, as with the arrangements previously implemented.

- (4) Monthly ticket passages are designed to provide a more convenient passage for use by passengers who need to travel regularly between the urban area and Cheung Chau for work on busy holidays. The passages will allow such passengers to enter the piers direct to wait for fast ferry services, thereby alleviating the impact on them under the special passenger demand pattern of the “Central - Cheung Chau” route on holidays. **However, for the sake of fairness and to avoid undermining the operating efficiency of fast ferry service, there will not be reserved seats for monthly ticket holders.**

Impact of the proposal

7. **Should one of the turnstiles at the turnstile gate for fast ferry service be switched to one for exclusive use of monthly ticket holders on the above specified dates and enhanced management of the monthly ticket passages be put in place, all passengers other than monthly ticket holders will then have to make use of the remaining two turnstiles or ticket counters for entry into the ferry waiting area.** The provision of monthly ticket passages on the above specified dates means that the waiting area for passengers not holding monthly tickets at the piers will be reduced. This will probably result in longer queue outside the pier waiting for entry, and hence longer boarding time for passengers. However, considering that monthly pass holders currently account for about 15% of the total number of passengers on holidays and the passengers’ boarding time for each fast ferry sailing will be lengthened by no more than five minutes, we expect that the situation will still be acceptable. Nonetheless, operation of fast ferry service will inevitably be affected. Given the limited space outside Cheung Chau Ferry Pier, some of the bicycle parking spaces there may have to be cancelled or relocated in the long run to tie in with the queuing arrangements.

Implementation Timetable

8. According to preliminary estimation, the NWFF expects that the related software modification work will take nine to twelve months to complete. Meanwhile, the ArchSD will commence retrofitting works at Cheung Chau Ferry Pier and Central Pier No. 5. The proposed measures can be implemented upon completion of these works.

9. Subject to the support given to the proposal, the TD will review the relevant arrangements one year after implementation of the proposal.

Advice Sought

10. Members are invited to give their views on the above proposal.

**Transport Department
October 2016**