

LCQ7: Transport of Ma Wan

Following is a question by the Hon Tam Yiu-chung and a written reply by the Secretary for Transport and Housing, Ms Eva Cheng, at the Legislative Council meeting today (March 16):

Question:

Recently, quite a number of residents of Ma Wan (including Park Island) have relayed to me that, while the population in Ma Wan has continued to increase in recent years, apart from urban taxis (from 8pm to 7am only), buses of four routes and permitted vehicles, all other means of public transport are not permitted to access Ma Wan at present, the external transport service available in Ma Wan is therefore far from adequate to meet the demand. Meanwhile, Ma Wan residents travelling to the airport by taxis are now required to pay a double toll as much as \$60 for using Lantau Link at present, which is twice the \$30 toll payable for travelling from Kowloon to the airport by taxis. These residents have requested that urban taxis be permitted to access Ma Wan round-the-clock and the toll collection arrangement of Lantau Link be reviewed so that Ma Wan residents travelling to the airport by urban taxis will not be required to pay a double toll. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(a) whether it knows the average daily number of urban taxis accessing Ma Wan at present; and

(b) whether the Transport Department has considered relaxing the time restriction on urban taxis accessing Ma Wan, and reviewing, on the basis of the special circumstances of Ma Wan, the toll collection arrangement of Lantau Link, so that Ma Wan residents travelling to the airport by urban taxis will not be required to pay a double toll; if it has, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

(a) At present, a daily average of about 155 urban taxis enter the taxi pick-up/drop-off point near Pak Lam Road roundabout (public road) in Ma Wan.

(b) As the Lantau Link is the only trunk road leading to the airport and Tung Chung, the Government has been taking appropriate measures to maintain smooth flow of its traffic. Further, vehicles travelling to and from Ma Wan have to route through the Lantau Link and Ma Wan Road. In order to reduce the long-term impact on the traffic of the Lantau Link, Ma Wan Road and all roads in Ma Wan have been designated as a 24-hour prohibited zone, where only vehicles with permits issued by the Transport Department (TD) and specified vehicles may enter during specified time periods.

After detailed consideration of the relevant factors to meet the needs of Ma Wan residents, effective from July 4, 2008, TD has allowed urban taxis to access Ma Wan and operate at the taxi pick-up/drop-off point near Pak Lam Road roundabout from 11pm to 7am every day. Since August 26, 2009, TD has further extended the access period, which has become from 8pm to 7am. Recently, residents and locals of Ma Wan as well as representatives of the taxi trade have separately requested TD to further relax the time restrictions on taxi access to and from Ma Wan. In this connection, TD has considered various options, and intends to discuss with the relevant stakeholders on specific recommendations in due course.

Currently, all types of vehicles are required to pay the appropriate tolls for the use of the Lantau Link in accordance with the Tsing Ma Control Area (Tolls, Fees and Charges) Regulation (Cap 498A). The toll payable by taxis for each trip is \$30.

If a resident of Ma Wan would like to go to the airport by taxi, the taxi concerned has to route via the Lantau Link and Ma Wan Road to enter Ma Wan, and after picking up, the taxi will need to follow the existing road network to the airport and hence route via Ma Wan Road and the Lantau Link again. As the taxi would use the Lantau Link twice, a total toll of \$60 would be incurred and have to be included in the taxi fare. The fare payable for hiring taxis in Ma Wan involving the use of the Lantau Link is specified under Regulation 47 and Schedule 5 of the Road Traffic (Public Service Vehicles) Regulations (Cap 374D).

In fact, all vehicles are required to pay the appropriate tolls for the use of the Lantau Link in every instance. Altering this arrangement would have a fundamental impact on the toll structure. Hence, we have no plan to pursue any change.

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