

PILOTAGE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Proposal of Optimizing the Use of Central Harbour Transit

Purpose

Currently, specified types of cruise ships¹ at the Kai Tak Cruise Terminal (“KTCT”) may ply through the Central Fairway, Northern Fairway and Western Fairway (collectively called the “Central Harbour Transit (CHT)”) during the period between 19:00 and 22:00 hours (“transit window”) daily without the need to obtain prior approval from the Vessel Traffic Centre of the MD (“VTC”). This paper serves to seek members’ comments and supports with regard to the proposal of optimizing the aforementioned transit window.

Background

2. In February 2024, the relevant consultative committees² under the Marine Department (“MD”) collectively endorsed the relevant consultation papers³ on the establishment of a 24-month trial scheme. The trial scheme commenced on 4 March 2024 with the establishment of the transit window to allow specified types of cruise ships berthing/unberthing at KTCT, whilst meeting the berthing guidelines (“BGL”) (*Annex I*), to ply through CHT without the need to obtain prior approval from MD’s Vessel Traffic Centre (“VTC”).

3. For any cruise ships intending to use CHT outside the transit window or not belonging to the specified types of cruise ships, the ships are still required to apply to VTC for permission on a case-by-case basis in accordance with the existing practice.

1 i.e. highly maneuverable ocean-going passenger vessels (“OGPV”) under 345m Length Overall (“LOA”); and conventional OGPVs under 290m LOA.

2 Port Operations Committee (POC); Pilotage Advisory Committee (PAC), Locals Vessels Advisory Committee (LVAC) and High Speed Craft Consultative Committee (HSCCC).

3 PAC Paper No. 6/2023; LVAC Paper No. 16/2023; POC Paper No. 4/2023; and HSCCC Paper No. 3/2023 and the relevant supplementary notes to these papers.

Current Situation of the Trial Scheme and the Proposal of Optimizing the Transit Window

4. The Government has always actively propelled and strengthened the development of cruise tourism. Indeed, the spirit of implementing⁴ the trial scheme aims to draw a balance between navigational safety of vessels using CHT and the development of cruise tourism. Although no cruise ship has ever taken the route of CHT through the scheme since its implementation, some cruise lines have already expressed their intention to regularly ply through CHT when planning for their future homeporting operations, thereby enhancing the attractiveness of their cruise itineraries in source markets worldwide and bringing more visitors to Hong Kong. Meanwhile, the MD also observes that the operations of the majority of cruise ships for berthing/unberthing at KTCT are conducted outside the transit window.

5. In consideration the current harbour marine traffic flow is lower than the time when a study, as commissioned by the Tourism Commission (“TC”), was conducted in recent years, the MD considers that there is room to optimize the transit window thus **proposing to adjust the transit window from its existing period to the period of 1800 hours of a day to 0600 hours the next day (“newly proposed transit window”)**, without the need to obtain prior approval from VTC but subject to comply with the relevant BGL (*Annex II*).

6. Any cruise ships intending to use CHT outside the newly proposed transit window or not the specified types of cruise ships are still required to follow existing practice of seeking approval from VTC.

7. Apart from the newly proposed transit window, all other conditions such as specified types of cruise ships; mitigation measures; KTCT operator to publish CHT transit schedule in advance to inform harbour users and the general public etc. under the trial scheme (as contained in the documents listed in Footnote 3) remain valid and be followed by relevant stakeholders.

8. In view of the newly proposed transit window, the earliest and latest pilot on board time for inbound vessels and terminal departure time for outbound vessels have also been amended accordingly (*Annex III*).

Way forward

9. The newly proposed transit window is still under the 24-month trial

4 The VTC permitted CHT of Serenade of the Seas berthing at KTCT on 28 Mar 2024, which was the maiden call of the ship.

scheme as commenced on 4 March 2024. The MD and TC will continuously monitor the smoothness of the operation of the trial scheme and, subject to actual circumstances as warranted, appropriate further adjustments as needed upon consultation with stakeholders may not be excluded.

10. Subject to the views of members and other relevant consultative committees about the proposal and the BGL amendments, it is anticipated that the newly proposed transit window may be implemented around mid to end of November 2024.

Advice Sought

11. Members' supports are hereby sought. If members have any comments, please liaise with relevant committee's Secretariat on or before 11 November 2024.

**Marine Department
October 2024**

Berthing Guidelines

Endorsed – w.e.f. 04 Mar. 2024

ON TRIAL**For trial window between 1900 and 2200 hours**

Location: **CHT-PC-TW** **Central Harbour Transit – Passenger Ship
(Conventional) (Trial Window)**

010	East Bound	LOA: Max 230m	011	West Bound	LOA: Max 230m
Draft:	Max 9.0m (min 10% UKC)		Draft:	Max 9.0m (min 10% UKC)	
Time:	between 1900 and 2200 hours		Time:	between 1900 and 2200 hours	
Tugs:	1 escort		Tugs:	1 escort	
Remarks:			Remarks:		
020	East Bound	LOA: Max 270m	021	West Bound	LOA: Max 270m
Draft:	Max 9.0m (min 10% UKC)		Draft:	Max 9.0m (min 10% UKC)	
Time:	between 1900 and 2200 hours		Time:	between 1900 and 2200 hours	
Tugs:	1 escort		Tugs:	1 escort	
Remarks:			Remarks:		
030	East Bound	LOA: Max 290m	031	West Bound	LOA: Max 290m
Draft:	Max 9.5m (min 10% UKC)		Draft:	Max 9.5m (min 10% UKC)	
Time:	between 1900 and 2200 hours & LW-2 to HW		Time:	between 1900 and 2200 hours & HW+1 to LW+1	
Tugs:	2 escort		Tugs:	2 escort	
Remarks:	2 pilots 1 guard boat to clear the passage		Remarks:	2 pilots 1 guard boat to clear the passage	

General Remarks:

1. All passenger ships, other than those classified as highly maneuverable under CHT-PH, are considered as conventional.
2. This BGL is set for the trial scheme from 4 March 2024 to 3 March 2026 for participating conventional passenger ships up to LOA 290m plying to/from KTCT. VTC prior approval is not required for vessels participating in the trial scheme subject to:
 - (a) Strict adherence to (3) below; and
 - (b) Sailing schedule being publicized in the agreed manner and listed on KTCT website at <https://www.kaitakcruiseterminal.com.hk/schedule/>.
3. The operation of this BGL shall be postponed when:
 - (a) Visibility is less than 1 n.mile;
 - (b) Wind force in the harbour area is greater than 21 knots, and/or strong monsoon signal is hoisted, and/or typhoon signal No.3 or above is hoisted, whichever is applicable;
 - (c) Major event at sea is being held in the harbour as promulgated by Marine Department Notice; or
 - (d) Major marine work is being conducted within the relevant fairways.
4. Unless otherwise specified, escort tug/tugs for Central Harbour Transit is/are required for the passage:
 - (a) via Western Fairway: between berth and GI,
 - (b) via Ma Wan Fairway: between berth and Tsing Ma Bridge.
5. For LOA>270m, one guard boat provided by agents is required to clear the passage between Kellett Buoy and Hung Hom.
6. This BGL is intended for PASSENGER SHIP transiting Central Harbour via Northern Fairway and Central Fairway. For berthing/unberthing requirements please refer to separate BGL of the related terminal.
7. No head-on/overtaking actions are allowed by cruise ships to any other vessels during Central Harbour Transit (for Northern Fairway, only limited to the portion between buoys Northern 1 and 4).

ON TRIAL**For trial window between 1900 and 2200 hours**

Location: **CHT-PH-TW** **Central Harbour Transit – Passenger Ship
(Highly Maneuverable)(Trial Window)**

010	East Bound	LOA: Max 230m	011	West Bound	LOA: Max 230m
Draft:	Max 9.0m (min 10% UKC)		Draft:	Max 9.0m (min 10% UKC)	
Time:	between 1900 and 2200 hours		Time:	between 1900 and 2200 hours	
Tugs:	1 escort		Tugs:	1 escort	
Remarks:			Remarks:		
020	East Bound	LOA: Max 270m	021	West Bound	LOA: Max 270m
Draft:	Max 9.0m (min 10% UKC)		Draft:	Max 9.0m (min 10% UKC)	
Time:	between 1900 and 2200 hours		Time:	between 1900 and 2200 hours	
Tugs:	1 escort		Tugs:	1 escort	
Remarks:			Remarks:		
030	East Bound	LOA: Max 290m	031	West Bound	LOA: Max 290m
Draft:	Max 9.5m (min 10% UKC)		Draft:	Max 9.5m (min 10% UKC)	
Time:	between 1900 and 2200 hours		Time:	between 1900 and 2200 hours	
Tugs:	2 escort		Tugs:	2 escort	
Remarks:	2 pilots. 1 guard boat to clear the passage.		Remarks:	2 pilots. 1 guard boat to clear the passage.	
040	East Bound	LOA: Max 345m	041	West Bound	LOA: Max 345m
Draft:	Max 9.5m (min 10% UKC)		Draft:	Max 9.5m (min 10% UKC)	
Time:	between 1900 and 2200 hours		Time:	between 1900 and 2200 hours	
Tugs:	2 escort		Tugs:	2 escort	
Remarks:	2 pilots. 1 guard boat to clear the passage.		Remarks:	2 pilots. 1 guard boat to clear the passage.	

General Remarks:

1. Highly maneuverable passenger ships should meet the following requirements:
 - (a) Bow thrusters of total power ≥ 8000 HP
 - (b) Equipped with azipods.
2. This BGL is set for the trial scheme from 4 March 2024 to 3 March 2026 for participating highly maneuverable passenger ships plying to/from KTCT. VTC prior approval is not required for vessels participating in the trial scheme subject to:
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 - (c) Major event at sea is being held in the harbour as promulgated by Marine Department Notice; or
 - (d) Major marine work is being conducted within the relevant fairways.

4. Unless otherwise specified, escort tug/tugs for Central Harbour Transit is/are required for the passage:
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ON TRIAL

**For trial window ~~between 1900 and 2200 hours~~
between 1800 to 0600 hours**

Location: **CHT-PC-TW** **Central Harbour Transit – Passenger Ship
(Conventional) (Trial Window)**

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<p>020 East Bound LOA: Max 270m Draft: Max 9.0m (min 10% UKC) Time: between 1900 and 2200 hours between 1800 to 0600 hours Tugs: 1 escort Remarks:</p>	<p>021 West Bound LOA: Max 270m Draft: Max 9.0m (min 10% UKC) Time: between 1900 and 2200 hours between 1800 to 0600 hours Tugs: 1 escort Remarks:</p>
<p>030 East Bound LOA: Max 290m Draft: Max 9.5m (min 10% UKC) Time: between 1900 and 2200 hours & between 1800 to 0600 hours & LW-2 to HW Tugs: 2 escort Remarks: 2 pilots 1 guard boat to clear the passage</p>	<p>031 West Bound LOA: Max 290m Draft: Max 9.5m (min 10% UKC) Time: between 1900 and 2200 hours & between 1800 to 0600 hours & HW+1 to LW+1 Tugs: 2 escort Remarks: 2 pilots 1 guard boat to clear the passage</p>

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**Estimated Timelines on CHT window
Ngan Chau Pilot Station (18:00 – 06:00)**

Departure	Terminal	Pilot boarding (at berth)	ETA TST Buoy	ETA Northern 1 Buoy	Average Speed	Pilot disembarkation	Journey time/Distance
	From KTCT	1800 (earliest)	1820	1830	About 10 knots (not more than 8 knots within the Central Harbour)	1930	1 hr. 45 min /about 15.5 NM
		0445 (latest)	0520	0530		0630	
Arrival	Terminal	Pilot boarding	ETA Northern 1 Buoy	ETA TST Buoy	Average Speed	Pilot disembarkation (at berth)	Journey time/Distance
	To KTCT	1730 (earliest)	1830	1845	About 10 knots (not more than 8 knots within the Central Harbour)	1915	1 hr. 45 min /about 15.5 NM
		0430 (latest)	0530	0545		0615	

Urmston Road Pilot Station (18:00 – 06:00)

Departure	Terminal	Pilot boarding (at berth)	ETA TST Buoy	ETA Northern 1 Buoy	Average Speed	Pilot disembarkation	Journey time/Distance
	From KTCT	1800 (earliest)	1820	1830	About 12 knots (not more than 8 knots within the Central Harbour)	1955	2 hr. 10 min /about 23.5 NM
		0445 (latest)	0520	0530		0625	
Arrival	Terminal	Pilot boarding	ETA Northern 1 Buoy	ETA TST Buoy	Average Speed	Pilot disembarkation (at berth)	Journey time/Distance
	To KTCT	1700 (earliest)	1825	1840	About 12 knots (not more than 8 knots within the Central Harbour)	1910	2 hr. 10 min /about 23.5 NM
		0400 (latest)	0525	0540		0610	