PAC Paper No. 1/2026

PORT OPERATIONS COMMITTEE
PILOTAGE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
LOCAL VESSELS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
HIGH SPEED CRAFT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Regularisation of the Use of Central Harbour Transit by Cruise Ships

Purpose

This paper seeks members' support on regularising the arrangement on the use of Central Fairway, Northen Fairway and Western Fairway (collectively referred to as Central Harbour Transit ("CHT")) by specified types of cruise ships[1] berthing at the Kai Tak Cruise Terminal ("KTCT") during the period between 18:00 and 06:00 the next day daily starting from 4 March 2026.

Background

2. Having consulted the four relevant consultative committees[2] under Marine Department ("MD"), a trial scheme was introduced in March 2024 for 24 months (i.e. until 3 March 2026) to allow specified types of cruise ships berthing at the KTCT to transit through the CHT during designated hours without the need of prior approval from the Vessel Traffic Centre ("VTC") of MD. The initial transit window was set between 19:00 and 22:00. To better

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[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, Pilotage Advisory Committee, Local Vessels Advisory Committee and High Speed Craft Consultative Committee.

align with cruise ship operations and having considered the harbour marine traffic flow, MD has consulted the four committees in October 2024 to extend the transit window of the trial scheme to 18:00 to 06:00 the next day. With members' support, the extended transit window of the scheme became effective on 18 November 2024.

Proposed Regularisation

3. Victoria Harbour has all along been one of the key iconic tourist attractions of Hong Kong. The current trial scheme was put in place with a view to boosting the development of cruise tourism by leveraging on the beautiful scenery of Victoria Harbour. In fact, we have received very positive feedback from cruise passengers onboard cruises that were permitted to transit through the CHT even before launching of the trial scheme. Moreover, locals and tourists on both sides of Victoria Harbour were able to appreciate the view of international cruise ships sailing through the harbour, thereby enriching the night scenery of Victoria Harbour.

4. In December 2024, the Government promulgated the "Action Plan on Development of Cruise Tourism" (Action Plan) alongside the "Development Blueprint for Hong Kong's Tourism Industry 2.0". One of the action measures in the Action Plan is to regularise the Central Fairway transit arrangement for cruise ships berthing at KTCT subject smooth implementation of the trial scheme.

5. The trial scheme was welcomed by the cruise industry. A number of cruise lines expressed interest and made enquiries on the arrangement. Although the actual usage was low[3] as the actual implementation hinged on a number of factors, including tidal condition, and actual departure time, the

[3] During the trial period, two cruise ships: (Queen Anne) used the CHT upon departure from KTCT on 19 March 2025 at 20:00, and (Star Navigator) used the CHT to arrive at KTCT on 15 February 2026 at 19:00. Prior to the launch of the trial scheme, VTC permitted CHT of the following cruise ships in recent years: Mein Schiff 5 on 9 March 2023 and Serenade of the Seas on 28 March 2024.

operation was smooth without significant impact to marine traffic. With the regularisation of the arrangement, we expect that more cruise ships would benefit from it which will also further enhance the attractiveness of Hong Kong as a cruise destination.

6. On balance with marine traffic impact and navigational risks, it is proposed to maintain the current transit window, i.e. from 18:00 to 06:00 the next day, and for the current specified types of cruise ships berthing at KTCT. It should also be noted that the arrangement is applicable only to cruise ships berthing at KTCT and those berthing at the Ocean Terminal are excluded. For 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. Proposed updates for the current Berthing Guidelines are at ***Annex*** to reflect the regularisation. Moreover, all other conditions currently under the trial scheme remain valid and shall be followed by relevant stakeholders.

Way Forward

7. Subject to members' support, the proposed regularisation of the arrangement will take effect from 4 March 2026. The Tourism Commission (TC) and MD will continue to monitor the implementation of the regularised arrangement and make adjustments as necessary based on feedback from stakeholders and actual operational conditions. In case of any significant change of marine traffic along the CHT, consideration could be given to suspend the arrangement. Separately, TC will continue to work with the Hong Kong Tourism Board and other stakeholders to promote the arrangement to cruise lines.

Advice Sought

8. Members' support is hereby sought to the proposed regularisation. If members have any comments, please liaise with the relevant committee's Secretariat on or before 3 March 2026.

Tourism Commission
16 February 2026

~~**ON TRIAL**~~

For ~~trial~~ Specified Window between 1800 to 0600 hours

Location: **CHT-PC-~~TSW~~** **Central Harbour Transit – Passenger Ship (Conventional) (~~Trial~~ Specified 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 1800 to 0600 hours		**Time:**	between 1800 to 0600 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 1800 to 0600 hours		**Time:**	between 1800 to 0600 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 1800 to 0600 hours & LW-2 to HW		**Time:**	between 1800 to 0600 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~~ Specified Window between 1800 to 0600 hours for ~~participating~~ conventional passenger ships up to LOA 290m plying to/from KTCT. VTC prior approval is not required for Central Harbour Transit during the Specified Window ~~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~~ Specified Window between 1800 to 0600 hours

Location: **CHT-PH-~~TSW~~** **Central Harbour Transit – Passenger Ship (Highly Maneuverable)(~~Trial~~ Specified 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 1800 to 0600 hours	**Time:**	between 1800 to 0600 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 1800 to 0600 hours	**Time:**	between 1800 to 0600 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 1800 to 0600 hours	**Time:**	between 1800 to 0600 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 1800 to 0600 hours	**Time:**	between 1800 to 0600 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 ≥ 8000HP
   (b) Equipped with azipods.
2. This BGL is set for the ~~trial scheme from 4 March 2024 to 3 March 2026~~ Specified Window between 1800 to 0600 hours for ~~participating~~ highly maneuverable passenger ships plying to/from KTCT. VTC prior approval is not required for Central Harbour Transit during the Specified Window ~~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 the 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 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,
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5. For LOA>270m, one guard boat provided by agents is required to clear the passage between Kellett Buoy and Hung Hom.
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