

# **MDR**

*Quality, Dedication & Expertise*

*Prepared for*

***Central Policy Unit***

**Household Survey on 24-hour  
Passenger Clearance at Land  
Boundary Control Points**

**- Executive Summary -**

## **Background**

1. Round-the-clock operation of the land boundary control points for passengers is a long-term objective of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government and the Mainland authorities. In view of the increasing volume of passenger traffic on both sides of the boundary, the extension of the operating hours of the boundary control points is a natural development to meet practical needs.
2. Opening the control points round-the-clock, however, involves complicated issues such as the likely number of passengers, the resource implications and economic benefits that need to be examined. There are also different public views on the socio-economic impacts of such arrangement.

## **Survey Objective**

3. The objective of this household survey is to collect data on the possible behavioural changes of the public if 24-hour passenger clearance at land boundary control points is introduced.

## **Survey Coverage**

4. The survey covered all land-based households in Hong Kong, excluding the following sparsely-populated areas —
  - (a) all islands except Lantau Island. In the case of Lantau Island, only Mui Wo, Discovery Bay and Tung Chung were included in the survey;
  - (b) frontier closed areas; and
  - (c) country parks.
5. The target respondents were persons aged 15 and over.

## **Data Collection Method**

6. Survey data were collected by face-to-face interviews during household visits based on a structured questionnaire. To test the applicability of the questionnaire and the fieldwork procedures, a pilot survey covering 30 households was conducted on 19 and 20 January 2002.

## **Sample Frame, Sample Allocation and Sample Selection**

7. The Frame of Quarters maintained by the Census and Statistics Department was used for sample selection.

8. Since residents living in districts near the boundary (i.e. North and Yuen Long) are more likely to be affected by the 24-hour operation of the land boundary control points, it is important to have sufficient number of these households for analyses. Therefore, a disproportionately larger sample was allocated to households living in North and Yuen Long.

9. The data collected were weighted in accordance with the number of persons in Hong Kong by sex and age in North, Yuen Long and other districts to derive unbiased overall results.

10. For quarters with two or more households living there, all of them were interviewed to maintain an equal selection probability of households. In each sampled household, all persons of age 15 and over were interviewed individually.

## **Fieldwork Period and Enumeration Results**

11. Fieldwork was conducted between 28 January and 17 March 2002. 5 573 households were successfully interviewed, with 1 139 living in North or Yuen Long. The overall response rate was 77%. In the 5 573 households that were successfully interviewed, there were a total of 14 244 persons of age 15 and over.

## **Survey Findings**

12. A summary of the key survey findings is presented below.

### **A. General trip pattern**

13. Among Hong Kong residents aged 15 and over –

- (a) 3 584 300 (63.9%) had visited the Mainland through land or water boundary control points in the past 12 months, with 61.8% having crossed the boundary through land boundary control points and 10.8% through water boundary control points.

- (b) 213 300 (3.8%) visited the Mainland through land or water boundary control points at least once a week, 386 500 (6.9%) less than once a week but at least once a month, and 578 200 (10.3%) less than once a month but at least once every three months.

14. For those 1 178 000 persons (representing 21.0% of all persons aged 15 and over) who visited the Mainland through land or water boundary control points at least once every three months, their usual trip pattern is given below –

Purposes of trips to the Mainland

- (a) Their main purposes of visiting the Mainland were “for work” (27.5%), “to visit relatives other than spouse and children” (19.0%), “for shopping” (13.5%), “for sightseeing” (12.9%), “for leisure” (7.8%), “for going home”<sup>(1)</sup> (7.2%), “to visit residential properties in the Mainland” (7.1%), and “to visit friends” (3.4%).

Mostly visited location in the Mainland

- (b) Most (97.0%) usually visited Guangdong province while 2.5% other provinces. Within Guangdong province, Shenzhen area (50.4%) was the most common destination, followed by Dongguan area (13.0%), Guangzhou area (7.8%), Huizhou area (3.7%) and Zhongshan area (3.7%).

Usual duration of trips to the Mainland

- (c) 31.0% usually did not stay overnight in the Mainland while half (49.8%) stayed two to three days per trip and 10.8% four to seven days. Only 5.1% stayed in the Mainland for more than a week per trip. The remaining 3.4% said that their duration of stay in the Mainland was not fixed.

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<sup>(1)</sup> Persons who went home in the Mainland where they lived alone or with their spouse or children.

Control point mostly used

- (d) The majority (85.9%) crossed the boundary through Lo Wu Control Point on most occasions and 7.0% through Lok Ma Chau Control Point. Less than 3% crossed the boundary through the other control points.

Usual day and time crossing the boundary to the Mainland

- (e) 63.0% usually crossed the boundary to the Mainland during weekdays and 43.5% during weekends. 10.8% usually visited the Mainland on public holidays. 18.5% said that their day of travel was not fixed.
- (f) 31.1% usually crossed the boundary to the Mainland between 6 a.m. and 9 a.m., 61.0% between 9 a.m. and 9 p.m. A small proportion (3.0%) crossed the boundary after 9 p.m., with a higher proportion recorded for the following persons — those aged 20 to 29 (7.6%); single persons (5.6%); persons having spouse or children in the Mainland (5.3%); goods vehicle drivers (6.0%); service workers / shop sales workers (7.1%); plant and machine operators / assemblers (excluding drivers) (5.9%); craft and related workers (4.6%); persons who visited the Mainland mainly “for going home” (6.7%), “for leisure” (5.8%) and “for sightseeing” (4.5%); and persons living in North or Yuen Long (4.2%).
- Of those persons who visited the Mainland mainly “for work”, 1.3% usually crossed the boundary after 9 p.m.

**B. Views on 24-hour passenger clearance at land boundary control points**

*Views on existing arrangement of passenger clearance at land boundary control points*

15. In the survey, all persons aged 15 and over were asked whether or not they considered the existing arrangement of passenger clearance at land boundary control points convenient.

- (a) The majority (82.5%) answered in the positive while 8.2% said the opposite. A small proportion (0.6%) considered that the existing arrangement was convenient at some but not all land boundary control points. Another 8.7% did not express any views.
- (b) The major reasons for considering the existing arrangement inconvenient were “too crowded when crossing the boundary during peak hours on weekends and public holidays” (78.4%) and “too crowded when crossing the boundary during peak hours on weekdays” (38.5%). “Absence of 24-hour passenger clearance” was mentioned by only 2.7% of the respondents.

16. For those persons who considered the existing arrangement of passenger clearance inconvenient at all or some land boundary control points (representing 8.8% of all persons aged 15 and over), they were asked to indicate which arrangement they considered as most convenient to them. The findings show that “to reduce congestion during peak hours on weekends and public holidays” was the arrangement preferred by most (44.9%), followed by “to reduce congestion during peak hours on weekdays” (18.5%), and “to open control points round-the-clock on days before and after long holidays” (12.9%). “To open control points round the clock every day” was mentioned by 11.4% of the respondents.

***Views on 24-hour operation of land boundary control points***

17. In the survey, all persons aged 15 and over were asked whether or not they considered 24-hour operation of land boundary control points useful to them.

- (a) The majority (86.7%) answered in the negative.
- (b) 12.5% answered in the positive. The dominant reason was that “it allows them to cross the boundary at any time when there is a need” (74.0%). Other reasons were that “they would often cross the boundary during the extended hours for returning home in Hong Kong” (30.1%), “for going to work in the Mainland” (3.2%), “for shopping / leisure / meals in the Mainland” (2.8%), “for going to work in Hong Kong” (2.8%) and “for visiting relatives other than spouse and children in the Mainland” (2.5%).

18. For those persons who considered 24-hour operation of land boundary control points useful (representing 12.5% of all persons aged 15 and over), they were further asked to express their views in regard to the following aspects –

**Preferred time for implementing 24-hour operation of land boundary control points**

- (a) 49.9% suggested that 24-hour operation of land boundary control points should be implemented as soon as possible and 16.9% within the next 12 months. This was mainly because “it allows them to cross the boundary at any time when there is a need” (86.0%).
- (b) However, 12.5% considered that 24-hour operation of land boundary control points should be implemented one year later and 2.1% even said that the later it was implemented the better it would be. The major reasons cited were “no urgent need for crossing the boundary during the extended hours” (48.2%), “the Government needs time to make arrangements ” (30.4%), and “did not want to put Hong Kong’s economy under pressure so soon” (22.9%).
- (c) The remaining 18.7% did not have any preference for the time of implementing 24-hour operation of land boundary control points.

Number of land boundary control points for 24-hour operation

- (d) Two-thirds (67.8%) considered it suffice to open one land boundary control point for 24-hour operation while 28.1% thought the opposite. 4.1% said that it would depend on which control point would operate round-the-clock.

Land boundary control point desired by most for 24-hour operation

- (e) Lo Wu Control Point (84.0%) was desired by most for 24-hour operation, followed far behind by Lok Ma Chau Control Point (7.7%), Hung Hom Control Point (6.1%), Man Kam To Control Point (1.6%) and Sha Tau Kok Control Point (0.5%).

19. All persons aged 15 and over were further asked whether they would cross the boundary during the extended hours if 24-hour passenger clearance was provided at land boundary control points. 2.9% answered in the affirmative while the majority (86.8%) said not. 10.3% were uncertain. Further analyses of the 2.9% reveal that a higher proportion of the following persons would cross the boundary during the extended hours –

- Persons aged 30 to 39 (4.3%) and persons aged 40 to 49 (3.9%) (as against 1.2% to 3.0% for persons aged 15 to 29 and 0.8% to 2.9% for persons aged 50 and over)
- Persons having spouse or children in the Mainland (8.4%) (as against 2.7% for persons not having spouse nor children in the Mainland)
- Goods vehicle drivers (11.0%), managers / administrators (7.0%), and service workers / shop sales workers (4.9%) (as against 2.3% to 4.0% for other occupation groups)
- Persons who need to work in the Mainland frequently (12.3%) (as against 3.1% for person who did not need to work in the Mainland frequently)

- Persons who visited the Mainland through land or water boundary control points at least once a week (20.9%), persons who visited the Mainland less than once a week but at least once every two weeks (10.8%), persons who visited the Mainland less than once every two weeks but at least once a month (9.1%) and persons who visited the Mainland less than once a month but at least once every three months (6.0%) (as against 1.5% for persons who visited the Mainland less than once every three months and 0.6% for persons who had not visited the Mainland in the past 12 months)
- Persons who visited the Mainland through land or water boundary control points mainly “for leisure” (18.0%), “for going home” (15.3%), “for work” (11.6%), “for visiting friends” (10.8%), and “for shopping” (9.7%).
- Persons living in Yuen Long (4.8%) (as against 2.6% for persons living in North and 2.8% for persons living in other districts in Hong Kong)

20. For those persons who would cross the boundary during the extended hours if 24-hour passenger clearance was provided at land boundary control points (representing 2.9% of all persons aged 15 and over), they were asked how often and for what purpose they would cross the boundary during the extended hours. The results are given below –

Expected frequency of crossing the boundary during the extended hours

- (a) 28.1% would cross the boundary during the extended hours frequently and 59.4% occasionally while 12.6% would seldom do so.

Perceived main purpose for crossing the boundary during the extended hours

- (b) “For going home in Hong Kong” (56.5%) was the most common purpose for crossing the boundary during the extended hours, followed by “for urgent matters” (24.6%), “for shopping / leisure / meals in the Mainland” (5.6%), “for going home in the Mainland” (3.7%) and “for work in Hong Kong” (3.6%).

**C. Impact on pattern of trips to the Mainland if 24-hour passenger clearance was provided at land boundary control points**

*Number of visits to the Mainland and duration of stay per trip*

21. Of those persons aged 15 and over who had visited the Mainland through land or water boundary control points in the past 12 months (representing 63.9% of all persons aged 15 and over) –

- (a) 7.0% said that they would make more visits to the Mainland if 24-hour passenger clearance was provided at land boundary control points while 0.1% would make fewer visits. Most (92.9%), however, would make similar number of visits to the Mainland.
- (b) Most (90.4%), would maintain their duration of stay per trip to the Mainland. 8.5% said that they would stay longer per trip to the Mainland if 24-hour passenger clearance was provided at land boundary control points while 1.2% would shorten their trips.
  - The dominant reason for lengthening their trips to the Mainland was “staying longer for entertainment in the Mainland” (83.2%), followed by “staying longer for work in the Mainland” (12.1%) and “staying overnight in the Mainland more often” (8.7%).
  - The only two reasons for shortening their trips to the Mainland were “staying overnight in the Mainland less often” (83.5%) and “returning to Hong Kong more often” (22.5%).

***Activities in the Mainland***

22. For the 421 700 persons who would change their number of visits to the Mainland or their duration of stay per trip to the Mainland (representing 7.5% of all persons aged 15 and over), they were asked which types of activities they would be engaged in more often or less often in the Mainland. The results are given below –

- (a) The most common activities they would be engaged in more often in the Mainland were “having meals / drinks” (27.1%), “participating in leisure activities” (25.8%) and “going shopping” (24.1%). Other activities were “visiting relatives other than spouse and children” (15.8%), “going to work” (13.7%), “staying overnight in the Mainland” (12.7%) and “visiting friends” (10.5%). About one-tenth (9.6%), however, said that there would not be any activity they would be engaged in more in the Mainland.
- (b) In regard to the activities they would be engaged in less often in the Mainland, the dominant one was “staying overnight in the Mainland” (18.8%). The majority (80.2%), however, said that there would not be any activity they would be engaged in less often in the Mainland.

***Monthly expenditure in the Mainland***

23. Of those persons who visited the Mainland at least once a month and would change their number of visits or their duration of stay per trip to the Mainland (representing 2.5% of all persons aged 15 and over), 63.0% said that they would spend more in the Mainland per month if 24-hour passenger clearance was provided at land boundary control points while 4.7% would spend less. The remaining 32.3% said that the amount of their monthly expenditure in the Mainland would be more or less the same.

**D. Impact on housing demand in Hong Kong if 24-hour passenger clearance was provided at the land boundary control points**

***Impact on housing demand in Hong Kong***

24. Of all persons aged 18 and over, it was estimated that 35.9% currently owned residential properties in Hong Kong and 5.3% had plans to purchase residential properties in Hong Kong in the next three years.

- (a) Of those persons who currently owned residential properties in Hong Kong (representing 35.9% of all persons aged 18 and over), nearly all (98.0%) would keep their residential properties in Hong Kong even if 24-hour passenger clearance was provided at land boundary control points. 2.0% said that they would sell their properties in Hong Kong.
- (b) As for those persons who had plans to purchase residential properties in Hong Kong in the next three years (representing 5.3% of all persons aged 18 and over), the majority (89.5%) said that the implementation of 24-hour passenger clearance at land boundary control points would not affect their plans. However, 7.0% said that they would delay their plans and 2.3% would even cancel their plans while 1.1% would speed up their plans.
  - The dominant reason for delaying or cancelling their plans of purchasing residential properties in Hong Kong was “they worry that property prices in Hong Kong would drop” (85.7%). Other reasons were “they would take up residence in the Mainland” (9.1%) and “they would purchase a residential property in the Mainland” (8.8%) if 24-hour passenger clearance was provided at land boundary control points.

***Impact on housing demand in the Mainland***

25. Of all persons aged 18 and over, it was estimated that 10.4% currently owned or rented residential properties in the Mainland; and 2.8% had plans to purchase, build or rent residential properties in the Mainland in the next three years.

(a) Of those persons who had plans to purchase, build or rent residential properties in the Mainland (representing 2.8% of all persons aged 18 and over), the majority (73.1%) said that the implementation of 24-hour passenger clearance at land boundary control points would not affect their plans. However, 24.7% said that they would speed up their plans while 1.3% would delay their plans and 0.9% would cancel their plans.

- The major reasons for speeding up their plans to purchase, build or rent residential properties in the Mainland were “they would visit the Mainland more often” (52.4%), “they would take up residence in the Mainland” (30.8%) and “they expect that property prices in the Mainland would rise” (22.8%).

(b) Of those persons who did not have plans to purchase, build or rent residential properties in the Mainland in the next three years (representing 97.2% of all persons aged 18 and over), nearly all (97.9%) said that they would not consider doing so even if 24-hour passenger clearance was provided at land boundary control points. However, 0.4% would and 1.7% might consider doing so because “they would visit the Mainland more often” (55.8%), “they would take up residence in the Mainland” (32.9%) and “they expect that the property prices in the Mainland would rise” (12.9%).

***Impact on aspiration to take up residence in the Mainland***

26. In the survey, all household heads were asked whether their entire households intended to take up residence in the Mainland in the next three years. It was estimated that some 19 400 households (0.9%) had such an intention while most (99.0%) did not.<sup>(2)</sup>

- (a) Of those households that had an intention to take up residence in the Mainland in the next three years (representing 0.9% of all households), the majority (79.1%) said that the implementation of 24-hour passenger clearance at land boundary control points would not affect their plans. However, the remaining 20.9% would speed up their plans.
- (b) Of those households that did not intend to take up residence in the Mainland in the next three years (representing 99.0% of all households), 0.1% said that they would probably take up residence in the Mainland if 24-hour passenger clearance was provided at land boundary control points while most (99.4%) would not. The remaining 0.6% were uncertain.
- (c) Of those households that intended to take up residence in the Mainland in the next three years and those that would consider taking up residence in the Mainland if 24-hour passenger clearance was provided at land boundary control points (representing 1.6% of all households), 46.4% would return their present accommodation in Hong Kong to the owners when they took up residence in the Mainland. 24.8% would keep it for self-occupation while about one-tenth would lease it out (11.5%) or sell it (10.8%).

27. For cases where the household heads said that their entire households did not intend to take up residence in the Mainland in the next three years, their household members aged 18 and over were asked individually about their intention to take up residence in the Mainland. Including the members of cases where the entire household intended to take up residence in the Mainland in the next three years, the survey results indicate that 1.4% of all persons aged 18 and over (or some 76 600 persons) had an intention to take up residence in the Mainland in the next three years while most (98.1%) did not have such an intention.<sup>(3)</sup>

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(2) A very small proportion (0.04%) said that they were already residing in the Mainland.

(3) A small proportion (0.5%) said that they were already residing in the Mainland.

- (a) Of those 76 600 persons who intended to take up residence in the Mainland in the next three years, 19.8% said that they would speed up their plans if 24-hour passenger clearance was provided at land boundary control points because “it allows them to return to Hong Kong at any time when there is a need” (94.3%) and “they can return to the Mainland even when they work late in Hong Kong” (11.3%). However, the majority (79.3%) said that the implementation of 24-hour passenger clearance at land boundary control points would not affect their plans and 0.8% would delay their plans.
- (b) Of those persons who did not have an intention to take up residence in the Mainland in the next three years, most (98.9%) said that they would not consider taking up residence in the Mainland even if 24-hour passenger clearance was provided at land boundary control points. However, 0.2% would or might consider doing so because “it allows them to return to Hong Kong at any time when there is a need” (88.3%).

**E. Impact on employment in Hong Kong if 24-hour passenger clearance was provided at land boundary control points**

28. The survey results indicate that one-tenth (9.7%) of employed persons aged 15 and over (representing 56.5% of all persons aged 15 and over) had to work in the Mainland frequently. Of the remaining 90.3% of employed persons, 39.8% said that they would accept taking up employment that required them to work in the Mainland frequently while 49.0% would not.

29. Of those unemployed persons aged 15 and over, 49.3% would accept taking up employment or business opportunity that required them to work in the Mainland frequently while 41.1% would not.

30. Taking together employed and unemployed persons who would not accept taking up employment and / or business opportunity that required them to work in the Mainland frequently (representing 1 869 900 persons or 33.3% of all persons aged 15 and over), 5.8% said that they would accept if 24-hour passenger clearance was provided at land boundary control points.

- The dominant reason was “it allows them to return to Hong Kong at any time when there is a need” (95.9%).

31. All economically active persons were asked whether or not they would consider taking up work of a different job nature or business nature if 24-hour passenger clearance was provided at land boundary control points. A very small proportion (0.3%) answered in the affirmative while most (97.9%) said not.

**F. Impact on family relationship in Hong Kong if 24-hour passenger clearance was provided at land boundary control points**

32. In the survey, all persons aged 15 and over who were living with their spouse, children and / or parents in Hong Kong were asked whether or not the implementation of 24-hour passenger clearance at land boundary control points would affect their gathering time and relationship. The results are presented below –

- (a) Most said that the implementation of 24-hour passenger clearance at land boundary control points would not affect their gathering time with their spouse (97.1%), children (97.5%) and parents (97.5%). A very small proportion said that their gathering time would increase (0.5%, 0.4% and 0.2% respectively) or decrease (2.3%, 2.1% and 2.3% respectively).
- (b) Similarly, nearly all said that their relationship with their spouse (98.2%), children (98.9%) and parents (99.4%) would remain unchanged. A very small proportion said that their relationship would improve (0.4%, 0.3% and 0.1%) or deteriorate (1.4%, 0.8% and 0.5%).

**G. Impact on law and order in Hong Kong if 24-hour passenger clearance was provided at land boundary control points**

33. All persons aged 15 and over were asked whether they considered the implementation of 24-hour passenger clearance at land boundary control points would affect the law and order in their district of residence when keeping all other factors constant.

- (a) Most (92.4%) considered that there would not be any impact on law and order.
- (b) However, 7.3% considered that law and order in their district of residence would become worse, especially for persons living in North (19.5%) and Yuen Long (12.0%).
  - The major reasons were “more people would pass through their districts” (67.0%), “criminals would flee to the Mainland conveniently” (22.5%), and “there would be more illegal immigrants from the Mainland” (6.2%).

**H. Views of frequent travellers on 24-hour passenger clearance at land boundary control points**

34. It is estimated that 213 300 persons aged 15 and over were frequent travellers who visited the Mainland through land or water boundary control points at least once a week. A comparison was made between these frequent travellers and all persons aged 15 and over, and the results indicate the following variations in their pattern of trips to the Mainland as well as their views on 24-hour operation of land boundary control points –

	<u>Persons aged 15 and over</u> %	<u>Frequent travellers</u> <sup>1</sup> %	<u>Infrequent travellers</u> <sup>2</sup> %
<b>General trip pattern</b>			
<i>(among persons who visited the Mainland through land or water boundary control points at least once every three months)</i>			
Persons who visited the Mainland mainly “for work”	27.5	<b>66.3</b>	18.9
Persons who usually stayed in the Mainland for two to seven days	60.6	<b>69.7</b>	58.5
Persons who usually visited the Mainland during weekdays	63.0	<b>91.5</b>	56.7
<b>Views on 24-hour operation of land boundary control points</b>			
<i>(among all persons aged 15 and over)</i>			
Persons who considered the existing arrangement of passenger clearance at land boundary control points inconvenient	8.2	<b>20.0</b>	9.8
Type of arrangement being considered as most convenient			
<i>(among persons who considered the existing arrangement inconvenient)</i>			
• To reduce congestion during peak hours on weekdays	18.5	<b>32.8</b>	18.4
• To reduce congestion during peak hours on weekends and public holidays	44.9	<b>30.1</b>	44.8
• To open control points round-the-clock every day	11.4	<b>21.0</b>	11.3
Persons who considered 24-hour passenger clearance at land boundary control points useful	12.5	<b>46.8</b>	14.0
Persons who said that they would cross the boundary during the extended hours	2.9	<b>20.9</b>	3.2
Note:	1. Frequent travellers referred to persons aged 15 and over who visited the Mainland through land or water boundary control points at least once a week		
	2. Infrequent travellers referred to persons aged 15 and over who visited the Mainland through land or water boundary control points less than once a week		

35. Further analyses reveal that the implementation of 24-hour operation of land boundary control points would have a greater impact on the trip pattern to the Mainland of frequent travellers –

	<u>Persons aged 15 and over</u> %	<u>Frequent travellers</u> <sup>1</sup> %	<u>Infrequent travellers</u> <sup>2</sup> %
<b>Impact on trip pattern to the Mainland</b> <i>(among persons who had visited the Mainland through land or water boundary control points in the past 12 months)</i>			
Persons who would make more visits to the Mainland	7.0	<b>16.5</b>	6.4
Persons who would lengthen their duration of stay per trip to the Mainland	8.5	<b>16.8</b>	7.9
Persons who would shorten their duration of stay per trip to the Mainland	1.2	<b>3.8</b>	1.0
Persons who would spend more or less the same in the Mainland per month <i>(among persons who visited the Mainland at least once a month and would change the number of visits or duration of stay per trip to the Mainland if 24-hour passenger clearance was provided at land boundary control points)</i>	32.3	<b>36.7</b>	29.4
Note: 1. Frequent travellers referred to persons aged 15 and over who visited the Mainland through land or water boundary control points at least once a week 2. Infrequent travellers referred to persons aged 15 and over who visited the Mainland through land or water boundary control points less than once a week			

## **I. Conclusion**

36. Cross-boundary travel between Hong Kong and the Mainland has become an increasingly common experience for many Hong Kong people. Statistics showed that, in the past 12 months, two-thirds (63.9%) of the general public (referred to those aged 15 and over) had visited the mainland through land or water boundary control points. 3.8% had made trips to the Mainland as frequently as once or more per week. In general, cross-boundary travellers were quite satisfied with the existing arrangement of passenger clearance at land boundary control points, with 82.5% of the general public considering the arrangement convenient. Of the 8.2% who found the arrangement inconvenient, the major cause of their complaint was congestion at peak hours during weekends and public holidays, and most of them preferred the arrangement of reducing congestion during peak hours on weekends and public holidays.

37. In fact, the survey findings revealed that, the public in general who travelled between Hong Kong and the Mainland, took the view that 24-hour passenger clearance at land boundary control points would not be particularly useful to them given that few of them (2.9%) would cross the boundary during the extended hours. Only a small proportion (12.5%) considered 24-hour passenger clearance useful, particularly in a sense that it would allow the flexibility of crossing the boundary at any time when need arose (74.0%).

38. The scenario was, however, a bit different for those whose visits to the Mainland were mainly necessitated by work. Of them, nearly half (43.7%) crossed the boundary at least once a week and a considerably larger proportion (34.0%) considered 24-hour passenger clearance useful. 11.6% said that they would cross the boundary during the extended hours for purposes such as returning home in Hong Kong (58.6%), dealing with urgent matters (30.4%), going to work in the Mainland (7.0%) or Hong Kong (3.3%). Nevertheless, two-thirds of them considered that it would suffice to open one land boundary control point for 24-hour operation.

39. Overall speaking, apart from the anticipation that people would take up more readily jobs that required frequent travels to the Mainland and that a small proportion would spend more during their visit to the Mainland, the perceived 24-hour passenger clearance at land boundary control points did not seem to have a significant impact over the socio-economic activities of the public at large. Over 90% of the general public claimed that they would neither travel more frequently to nor stay longer in the Mainland. Similarly, it was most unlikely that property owners would sell their properties in Hong Kong. Most said that the implementation of 24-hour passenger clearance would not affect their plans to purchase residential properties in Hong Kong though a very small proportion considered that such arrangement would prompt them to take up residence in the Mainland. As far as family relationship was concerned, the majority said that their relationship and the time spent with family members would remain unchanged. The chance that 24-hour passenger clearance would give rise to youth problems was also slim given that only 3.1% of those who would cross the border during the extended service hours were youngsters. On law and order, the public at large believed that social order would remain unaffected in their respective districts of residence even if the land boundary points were operated round-the-clock.

40. It was worth noting that, of those living in districts adjacent to the border, such as the North and Yuen Long, a relatively larger proportion tended to worry that law and order in their district would deteriorate given the expected increase in passenger flow through their neighbourhood. However, their perceived impact of 24-hour passenger clearance on their travelling pattern, housing demand, employment and family relations did not seem to differ distinctly from that of the general public.