



With growing economic strength, Zhuhai is an important part of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Zhuhai emerges as a leader in region's economic growth

Coastal city is only mainland area with road links to Hong Kong and Macao

By YUAN SHENGGAO

Zhuhai, a coastal city in South China's Guangdong province, is forging ahead to contribute to the economic and social development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area as a regional gateway, local officials and experts said.

The Bay Area program is a new attempt to promote opening-up and implement the "one country, two systems" policy, Guo Yonghang, Party secretary of Zhuhai, told Nanfang Daily earlier this year.

In the nation's master plan for developing the Bay Area, Zhuhai has been mentioned 20 times, showing its important role and new opportunity in the coming years, he said.

Guo added the city has seen a historic change in its geographic position.

After the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge opened in October 2018, Zhuhai became the only city on the Chinese mainland with bridge links to both Hong Kong and Macao. That distinction will allow Zhuhai to be a base for innovative companies, talent, capital, technology and culture — the basis for continuous vitality of a city, he said.

While building a high-standard transport hub, Zhuhai will further promote high-quality development of its coastal economy and make itself an important gateway of the Greater Bay Area, Guo said.

Du Manchang, associate professor of Zhuhai Party School, told Zhuhai Special Zone Daily that the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge significantly shortens travel time, which will not only attract more



From top: The Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge that becomes operational on Oct 23, 2018. LI JIANSU / FOR CHINA DAILY A China-Israel tech investment forum is one of the important international events held last year in Zhuhai. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

tourists to Zhuhai but also boost the cooperation between the city and Hong Kong and Macao.

It now only takes 30 minutes to drive from Zhuhai to Hong Kong, compared with three hours of driving before. A new customs clearance procedure also saves time for cargo flow, according to the local government.

The city has participated in the development of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong-Macao Technological Innovation Corridor. It has built multiple innovative platforms, such as the Guangdong-Macao Traditional Chinese Medicine

Science and Technology Industrial Park, the Hengqin Science City and the Hengqin-Macao Youth Entrepreneurship Valley.

Zhuhai encourages regional exchanges of tech talent, research fund and commercialization of research results, on the way to building itself into an international scientific innovation center, according to the local government.

The city is also developing provincial or national-level laboratories, such as a southern maritime science and engineering laboratory. It has cooperated with the Chinese Academy of Sciences to build an intelli-

gent computing center to innovate chips' design and inspection that will back artificial intelligence development.

Emerging industries, such as information technology, advanced equipment manufacturing, biological medicine, new energy vehicles, digital innovation and new materials, are also highlighted.

As the host city for major international and national conventions and exhibitions like the China International Aviation & Aerospace Exhibition, the China-Israel Investment Summit and China-LAC Business Summit, the city expects to further improve its modern services industry and attract more projects that support regional economy.

Officials said Zhuhai will also learn to integrate its advanced manufacturing industry with the modern services industry in Hong Kong and Macao, to improve the city's commerce, tourism, logistics, finance and other service-related industries. Cultural, agricultural and sports exchanges, such as sailing, tennis, car racing and organic agriculture, are also in the pipeline.

To better serve Hong Kong and Macao's residents who live and work in Zhuhai, the city gives them the same rights in house purchases, children' education and medical care in the Hengqin New Area — a pilot area in Zhuhai for its cooperation with Hong Kong and Macao — as Zhuhai's residents.

Liang Junjie, vice-president for market research and development at Hong Kong-Macao Intelligent City (Hengqin) Project Development Co, told local media that he was impressed by the high efficiency of the local government.

"Many of our projects involve affairs that need approvals from the government. Every department is helping us simplify the procedures and expedite the approval period, which saves a lot of time," he said.

Bridge anniversary celebrated as number of tourists increases

By YUAN SHENGGAO

The one-year anniversary of the opening of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge will be celebrated this month and Zhuhai locals say it has made the city better.

As the only city on the Chinese mainland that connects both Hong Kong and Macao with a bridge, Zhuhai enters a new era for tourism development thanks to the bridge and other newly added facilities.

During the recent National Day holiday on Oct 1 - 7, the city welcomed more than 2.71 million visits, up 7.2 percent year-on-year. It was among the 10 most popular cities for individual tourists during the period, as reported by Chinese major online travel services platform Ctrip.

Foreign visitors came from countries like the United States, Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, Vietnam and Australia.

The most visited popular tourism sites in the city are the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge; Zhuhai Opera House, a shell-shaped building on an island; a landmark statue of fisher maiden; the Zhuhai Chimelong Ocean Kingdom and amusement park, the outdoor hot spring tourism resort in Doumen district and the newly opened Lion Gate films experience entertainment backed by virtual reality.

According to the development plan for the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area released in February, the Bay Area aims to build an excellent environment for living, business and travel.

The plan also said the sea and coastal resources should be made most use of to develop a marine

2.71 million

the number of visits to Zhuhai during the recent National Day holiday

economy and a world-class attraction.

This year, the city government put forward an idea to develop three touring sites for the public to further beautify the environment — a range of parks that the locals called the "city balcony", the Yeli island and Yinkeng peninsula.

The "city balcony" will have various facilities for marine sight-seeing such as pavilions and trails stretching along the long coastline of the city. It will also introduce culture, tourism and commerce-related business. The project is expected to improve the well-being of local residents while attracting tourists.

The Hengqin New Area is on track to becoming an international leisure tour island to integrate with the economy of neighboring Macao. The orientation is set according to a proposal by the National Development and Reform Commission in April.

The Wanshan district of Zhuhai is famous for its many islands. In May, Lyu Hongzhen, director of the management committee of the district, said at a news conference in Beijing that the district is developing a wedding service industry base, an outdoor sports center and offshore fishing tours.

The district held its first coastal wedding carnival, a food season, mountain marathon and sailboat racing this year as part of its goal to build a high-end marine and island vacation destination.



Cultural activities like concerts are frequently held in Zhuhai to improve the local quality of life. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Expatriates laud project for making travel much easier

By YUAN SHENGGAO

The Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge, which has been in operation for a year, is making travel much easier among the three cities, said expatriates in Zhuhai.

An expat with the given name Lorelei, who is from Los Angeles, the United States, has lived and worked in Zhuhai for the past five years.

She had taught in a local international school for four years and now runs an educational media company in Zhuhai.

She said the bridge is making life much easier for expats as well as tourists.

"Since the bridge opened, I have been to Hong Kong about once a month or every other month. I also go to Macao for dining and visiting friends. I now have a Hong Kong Disneyland pass and can travel there more often," Lorelei said.

"From my apartment to the Hong Kong airport, it now takes me less than an hour (by taking the airport bus)," she added.

The traditional method of travel to Hong Kong is via ferry.

"With the bridge, I no longer worry about running late, being slowed down by traffic or the weather and I don't worry about ferry tickets being sold out," Lorelei said.

A frequent visitor to Disneyland, Lorelei said it is faster for her to get to Disneyland in Hong Kong than from



The Zhuhai WTA Elite Trophy is one of the international sports events that expats and locals can enjoy in this coastal city. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

her LA home to Disneyland in Anaheim because she can take the same airport bus, stopping further along the route.

"Flying frequently between Hong Kong and Los Angeles, the bridge makes life much easier, not just for me but friends and family," Lorelei said.

Blazo Popovic from Serbia shares the same views with Lorelei. He has been in Zhuhai for one year and is trying to start a business consulting company.

"I use not only the bridge to go to Hong Kong, sometimes I use the ferry," Popovic said.

"For me, the bridge is the much better, easier and faster way," he added. "All you need to do is to take a taxi to the bridge port and then take the bus or the car from the port to Hong Kong or Macao. It's very convenient and very fast."

He thinks the bridge is very important for expats in Zhuhai like himself because they often use Hong Kong airport when they travel to Europe or other destinations around the world. And the Hong Kong airport has more international flights than its neighbors.

While helping tourists' travels among the three cities, Popovic said

the bridge itself is a main tourist attraction.

"Every day in Zhuhai I see tourists taking pictures with the bridge in background," Popovic said.

Victor Ladreda from Spain is head of Zhuhai Hengqin Free Trade Zone's trade and investment representative office in Spain, who flies frequently between Spain and Zhuhai.

Ladreda said the bridge is among the most impressive projects in the world and will help boost the integration of the three cities of Hong Kong, Macao and Zhuhai.

He said Hong Kong and Macao are major destinations for foreign busi-



A Russian aerobatic team performs during the biennial Airshow China in Zhuhai. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

“The bridge would be a good starting point. This is not just about getting financial return on the massive investments that have been made by all sides. It's about getting economic and social dividends.”

Leung Chun-ying, former chief executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region

nesspeople and tourists. And the bridge will further bring the two cities closer to the Chinese mainland and the rest of the world.

The bridge can greatly promote the flow of cargo and people among the three cities and will create more job opportunities in many sectors, Ladreda said.

"For companies, better connectivity will save time and costs," he added.

Leung Chun-ying, former chief executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, said the bridge's potential is yet to be fully explored.

"The bridge would be a good starting point," Leung said. "This is not just about getting financial return on the massive investments that have been made by all sides. It's about getting economic and social dividends."

However, he said "So far we have not used the bridge to its fullest potential".

According to Leung, in the first 10 months of operation, average daily flow was 3,800 vehicles. On a 12-hour basis, the flow was equivalent to five vehicles per minute.

"The flow is small because existing policies allow only a small number of vehicles to cross the bridge. The number of dual-licensed vehicles in Hong Kong plus vehicles that are allowed under the existing quota system are too small," he explained.

He suggested the quota be adjusted depending on resultant traffic conditions and applications by drivers be made online with instant approval.