

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(1)1517/01-02
(These minutes have been seen
by the Administration)

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Legislative Council
Panel on Transport

Minutes of meeting held on
Friday, 15 March 2002, at 10:45 am
in Conference Room A of the Legislative Council Building

Members present : Hon Miriam LAU Kin-ye, JP (Chairman)
Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, JP (Deputy Chairman)
Ir Dr Hon Raymond HO Chung-tai, JP
Hon Mrs Selina CHOW LIANG Shuk-ye, JP
Hon LAU Chin-shek, JP
Hon LAU Kong-wah
Hon Andrew CHENG Kar-foo
Hon TAM Yiu-chung, GBS, JP
Dr Hon TANG Siu-tong, JP
Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, JP
Hon Albert CHAN Wai-yip
Hon LEUNG Fu-wah, MH, JP
Hon LAU Ping-cheung

Members absent : Dr Hon David CHU Yu-lin, JP
Hon Albert HO Chun-yan
Hon CHAN Kwok-keung
Hon Andrew WONG Wang-fat, JP
Hon WONG Sing-chi

Public officers : **Agenda Item IV**
attending

Transport Bureau

Miss Margaret FONG
Deputy Secretary for Transport

Transport Department

Mr George LAI Fuk-kan
Deputy Commissioner/Planning and Technical Services

Mr Lawrence KWAN Chi-wai
Chief Traffic Engineer/Hong Kong

Highways Department

Mr Raymond HO
Chief Highway Engineer/Hong Kong Region

Agenda Item V

Transport Bureau

Miss Margaret FONG
Deputy Secretary for Transport

Transport Department

Mr George LAI Fuk-kan
Deputy Commissioner/Planning and Technical Services

Mr Lawrence KWAN Chi-wai
Chief Traffic Engineer/Hong Kong

Highways Department

Mr Thomas WONG Hang-chi
Assistant Director/Headquarters

Mr YEUNG Kwok-keung
Chief Highway Engineer/Kowloon

Hong Kong Police Force

Mr William TANG How-kong
Chief Superintendent of Police (Traffic)

Clerk in attendance : Mr Andy LAU
Chief Assistant Secretary (1)2

Staff in attendance : Ms Alice AU
Senior Assistant Secretary (1)5

Action

I Confirmation of minutes and matters arising

(LC Paper No. CB(1)1120/01-02 - Minutes of joint meeting held with Environmental Affairs Panel on 15 January 2002)

The minutes of the joint meeting held with Environmental Affairs Panel on 15 January 2002 were confirmed.

II Information papers issued since last meeting

(LC Paper No. CB(1)1237/01-02(01) - Submission on Route 10 and Deep Bay Link; and

LC Paper No. CB(1)1240/01-02(01) - The Administration's reply on the concessionary MTR fares for full-time students aged above 25)

2. Members noted the above information papers issued since last meeting.

III Items for discussion at the meeting on 26 April 2002

(LC Paper No. CB(1)1266/01-02(01) - List of outstanding items for discussion; and

LC Paper No. CB(1)1266/01-02(02) - List of follow-up actions)

3. Members agreed to discuss the following items as suggested by the Administration at the next meeting to be held on 26 April 2002:

(a) Electronic Audible Traffic Signal; and

(b) Central Kowloon Route.

4. Members agreed to include a new item "Measures to improve traffic signs and direction signs" in the list of outstanding items for discussion by the Panel.

(Post-meeting note: A relevant information paper on "Measures to improve traffic signs and road markings" was issued to members via LC Paper No. CB(1)205/00-01(01) in November 2000.)

IV Provision of escalator link/elevator system

(LC Paper No. CB(1)1266/01-02(03) - Information paper provided by the Administration)

5. At the invitation of the Chairman, the Chief Traffic Engineer/Hong Kong of the Transport Department (CTE/HK) briefed members on the proposed escalator and elevator systems at Centre Street and Fortress Hill.

Overall policy

6. Referring to the policy to address noise impact of existing roads, Mr Albert CHAN remarked that the Administration should likewise formulate a set of guiding principles for the provision of elevator/escalator links and apply these principles to identify the potential locations for installation and their priority on a territory-wide basis. He was gravely concerned that priority was now given to the wealthy class on Hong Kong Island without going through an objective assessment on a territory-wide basis. Without considering the cost-effectiveness of individual proposals, he found it hard to support the proposed schemes at Centre Street and Fortress Hill.

7. CTE/HK explained that the Administration had initially identified Centre Street and Fortress Hill as two potential locations for the installation of escalator/elevator link systems. Other proposals in the pipeline included the following:

- (a) an elevator system at the redeveloped Shek Pai Wan Estate to link with the town centre in Aberdeen; and
- (b) an elevator system at Ap Lei Chau Bridge Road to link with Main Street Ap Lei Chau.

8. CTE/HK further explained that as most of the uphill areas on Hong Kong Island were developed areas with severe physical constraints for building additional road links to cater for the traffic and transport needs of the travelling public, priority was being given to installing elevator/escalator links on Hong Kong Island in accordance with the recommendations of a planning study conducted by the Planning Department. The Administration would continue to identify suitable locations in other parts of the territory for installation and consider each case on its own merits. In this regard, Mr LAU Chin-shek remarked that Tsz Wan Shan and Choi Wan Estate were relevant sites for further consideration. Mr Albert CHAN also stated that apart from Hong Kong Island, there was also a pressing need for installation of similar facilities in other parts of the territory in Kowloon and the New Territories.

9. Whilst agreeing that there was a need for the Administration to conduct an overall review of the programme for the provision of elevator/escalator links, the majority of the members did not consider it necessary to defer the implementation of the proposed schemes in Centre Street and Fortress Hill, pending the completion of the review. Some members also expressed reservation about the remark given by Mr

CHAN that priority was now given to the wealthy class on Hong Kong Island. In their opinion, the main consideration of the proposed schemes should be more on traffic and transport grounds, having regard to the steep topography in the selected areas on Hong Kong Island. As such, there was no question of granting privilege to individual areas. After all, the projects would bring about overall benefits to the general public.

10. Regarding the cost-effectiveness of the proposed schemes, the Chief Highway Engineer/Hong Kong Region of the Highways Department (CHE/HK) advised that the estimates for the Centre Street and Fortress Hill escalator/elevator links were \$40 million and \$35 million in 2001 prices respectively. CTE/HK added that it was difficult to quantify the social benefits of the provision of elevator/escalator link, hence its economic return. The relevant consideration was that it could help encourage the travelling habit of walking which was environmentally friendly and would reduce the reliance on vehicular transport. It could also improve pedestrian accessibility to the uphill areas.

11. Apart from cost consideration, Ir Dr Raymond HO and Mr TAM Yiu-chung opined that the social benefits of the provision of escalator link should also be taken into account in the review process, particularly the benefits brought about by the system to the elderly. It also helped promote physical development for the younger generation. Citing the Central Mid-Levels Escalator Link between Central and the Mid-Levels as an example, Mrs Selina CHOW also remarked that the provision of escalator links could also be seen as an important infrastructural development for promoting tourism in Hong Kong. It would also bring about substantial economic benefits as a result of intensified development and pedestrian movements in the surrounding areas. In planning the related facilities, consideration should also be given to connecting escalator links with major bus interchange/bus stops.

12. Mr CHENG Kar-foo opined that the Democratic Party was in support of the policy and proposal to provide escalator/elevator links to improve pedestrian accessibility to the uphill areas. It however considered that there was a need to conduct an overall review with a view to identifying potential sites for installation, and their priority for implementation. In determining the priority for individual areas, consideration should also be given to the transport costs of the travelling public, particularly when the assessment scores for individual projects were on a par with each others based on other guiding principles. The Deputy Commissioner for Transport (DC for T) remarked that it was the practice to take into account both savings in travelling time and cost in the assessment.

Admin

13. The Deputy Secretary for Transport (DS for T) took note of the members' suggestion and responded that the Administration would conduct an overall review on the provision of elevator/escalator links on a territory-wide basis. It would revert to the Panel in about two months' time with a study proposal and programme for the review.

Proposed escalator link at Centre Street

14. In response to members' questions, CTE/HK advised that in view of the steep gradient of the uphill section and for safety consideration, an escalator link system was proposed for implementation at Centre Street instead of a travelator system. He also confirmed that due to insufficient road width, two-directional escalator link could not be provided at Centre Street and the present planning intent was to provide an uphill escalator link during operation stage. Mrs Selina CHOW and Ir Dr Raymond HO remarked that as a matter of policy, two-directional travelator/escalator links should be provided as far as practicable.

15. Noting that the system would eventually be linked up to the future Sai Ying Pun MTR Station of the West Hong Kong Island Line, Mr CHENG Kar-foo opined that the related works should be carried out at this stage to enhance cost-efficiency. DC for T replied that in order to avoid abortive works and to achieve optimal efficiency, the detailed design of the extended section of the escalator link would only be carried out when the exact location of the concerned exit of the future Sai Ying Pun MTR Station was finalized.

16. Mr Tommy CHEUNG was concerned about the reprovisioning arrangements for stall operators along Centre Street. He called on the Administration to consult the affected operators and make suitable arrangements to avoid future dispute. CTE/HK advised that provision had been made to relocate the affected stall operators to Sai Ying Pun Market Phase 2 for continued operation. There was also established mechanism to deal with relocation of this kind. Noting the Administration's reply, Mrs Selina CHOW opined that the reprovisioning arrangements should take into account the need to retain the local character of the district to promote tourism. She called on the Administration to identify suitable replacement site in the vicinity.

17. Mr Abraham SHEK was concerned about the disruption caused to shop owners along Centre Street during construction period and enquired whether the construction period could be shortened. CHE/HK advised that the project would take about 30 months to complete. As Centre Street lied in an old district, the utility companies would take the opportunity to replace the utility installations there.

Proposed elevator system at Fortress Hill

18. Mrs Selina CHOW opined that the proposed elevator system at Fortress Hill did not allow sufficient flexibility for pedestrian movement, taking into account the limitation in capacity, the waiting time involved and the possible suspension of service due to maintenance. As such, she considered it more desirable to replace the proposed elevator system with escalator link. Mr LEUNG Fu-wah also remarked that consideration could be given to installing escalator link at Fortress Hill.

19. DC for T explained that during the morning peak period, the uphill and downhill pedestrian traffic at Fortress Hill was roughly the same. Due to site

constraint, it might not be feasible to install a two-directional escalator link at the concerned location. As such, an elevator system was proposed for implementation. CTE/HK added that apart from cost consideration, the proposed elevator system could also cater for the need of the disabled. In order to provide sufficient capacity, consideration could be given to installing two elevators. The Administration would conduct further study at the detailed design stage, taking into account the possible conflict of pedestrian movements at the waiting areas along King's Road.

20. Mr TAM Yiu-chung and Mr LAU Ping-cheung were also concerned about the possible conflict of pedestrian movement, given that the elevator system would be located outside a MTR exit with bus stops and signalized pedestrian crossing on the road side. Mr TAM reminded the Administration to conduct site investigations during peak periods to ascertain the situation.

21. Mr LEUNG Fu-wah was concerned about the capacity of the proposed elevator system and its speed of operation. CTE/HK advised that the Administration would conduct further studies to ascertain the demand for the system. The Administration aimed at using the most efficient system for movement purpose.

22. In view of members' concern about the pedestrian movement at the proposed location and the resulting conflict among different groups of road users, the Chairman asked the Administration to examine further the proposal to replace the elevator system with escalator link.

Design and tendering

23. Mr Albert CHAN remarked that at present, the majority of the maintenance contracts for elevator/escalator link systems was monopolized by the original manufacturers as other contractors could not obtain the necessary spare parts in the market for maintenance. In order to uphold the principle of impartiality and fairness in the tendering of contracts, he called on the Administration to give preference to tenderers whose recommended systems were not subject to restriction of this kind.

24. Mr Albert CHAN and Ir Dr Raymond HO remarked that in designing for the new system, the Administration should explore various ways for landscaping and/or beautifying stilted structures.

25. Given the associated economic benefits brought forward by the proposed installation of escalator links, Mrs Selina CHOW opined that preference should be given to tenderers who could complete the projects within a shorter timeframe.

26. CHE/HK took note of the members' suggestions.

27. Mrs Selina CHOW called on the Administration to identify measures to assist the elderly in using escalator links.

Admin

28. The Chairman concluded that members were in support of the proposal to provide escalator links to improve pedestrian accessibility to the uphill areas. She asked the Administration to take note of members' views expressed at the meeting and revert to the Panel in two months' time with recommendations on the way forward in taking forward the initiative to provide escalator links and elevators on a territory-wide basis.

V Regulation of traffic during road openings

(LC Paper No. CB(1)1266/01-02(04) - Information paper provided by the Administration)

29. CTE/HK briefed members on the salient points of the information paper as set out in LC Paper No. CB(1)1266/01-02(04).

30. Mrs Selina CHOW said that she had repeatedly requested the Administration to address the problem relating to the regulation of traffic movements during road openings, in particular, the non-compliance of traffic light signals by motorists but in vain. Despite the Administration's effort, the situation had not been improved. In her opinion, the provision of Red Light Cameras (RLC) together with portable traffic signals would be an effective means to tackle the problem.

31. DC for T responded that up to now, suitable equipment in terms of cost effectiveness and precision for use with roadworks had yet to be identified. He explained the physical limitations and practical difficulties associated with the installation of RLC along side with portable traffic lights. He said that it was necessary to position the RLC to capture both the red signal aspect and the registration plate of the offending vehicle on one photograph. It would be extremely difficult to find such a suitable location for a RLC at roadworks site, due to the much lower height of portable signals which could easily be blocked by vehicles. The continuous movement of vehicles and the short distance of the gap between the vehicle jumping a red light and the vehicle in front/behind also made it difficult, if not impossible, to capture both the red signal aspect and the registration plate of the offending vehicle.

32. The Chief Superintendent of Police (Traffic) added that with the presence of police officers in uniform, motorists would certainly comply with the red light of portable signals. However, this could only have short-term effect and was considered not an effective means to address the issue. In 2001, the Administration had filed six cases against offenders for failing to comply with the traffic signs under regulation 59 of the Road Traffic (Traffic Control) Regulations and five were convicted with fines ranging from \$450 to \$1 000. He clarified that an offence under regulation 59 was not subject to driving-offence points deduction. However, the offender might be prosecuted for careless driving if circumstances warranted. The Police would continue to assist the Administration to search for suitable automatic enforcement equipment to ensure compliance.

33. Mrs Selina CHOW relayed the concern of the general public that the Police was not enthusiastic over complaints of failure to comply with the traffic signs under regulation 59.

Admin 34. Mrs Selina CHOW also remarked that the Administration should continue to look for new technology development in the installation of RLC. Arrangements could be made to invite local universities/companies to develop a new technology to meet the unique and operational needs of Hong Kong. At the request of Mrs CHOW, DS for T agreed to seek the advice from the expert group formed under the Intelligent Transport Systems and revert to the Panel in due course.

Admin 35. Mrs Selina CHOW also suggested that in the meantime, the Administration should consider requesting roadworks agents to deploy an assistant to log down the registration marks of offending vehicles for onward submission to the Police for prosecution actions. Mr Abraham SHEK remarked that roadworks agents should not be required to undertake enforcement duties which were under the purview of the Police. The Chairman stated that the Police should step up enforcement action and launch a publicity campaign to arouse the awareness of motorists of the need to comply with the red light of portable signals. At the request of members, the Administration was requested to examine further on the suggestions and revert to the Panel in due course.

36. Members noted that roadworks agents would be responsible for introducing appropriate lighting, signing and traffic control requirements in accordance with the Excavation Permit conditions. Highways Department would carry out regular audit site inspections to ensure the road opening were carried out in accordance with the conditions. However, at present, detection of failure to comply with traffic signs was not the responsibility of roadworks agents.

VI Any other business

37. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 12:40 pm.