

**Subcommittee to Study the Transport Needs
and Provision of Concessionary Public Transport Fares for
Persons with Disabilities**

Information Paper for Meeting on 22 May 2007

PURPOSE

This paper presents details of existing service provided by Rehabus, its utilization situation as well as proposed measures to enhance Rehabus service to meet the demand from persons with disability (PWDs).

AN OVERVIEW OF REHABUS SERVICE

2. Rehabus is a specialized transport service operated by the Hong Kong Society for Rehabilitation (HKSR) under the subvention from Health, Welfare and Food Bureau (HWFB) to serve PWDs who have no alternative means of point-to-point public transport in meeting their transport needs for employment, education, training, medical treatment and social participation. Transport Department (TD) monitors the operation of Rehabus by HKSR. In 2006/07, the Administration allocated \$26.4M to HKSR to run Rehabus service, representing about 80% of the annual recurrent cost for the service with the remaining 20% recurrent cost from the fare revenue received.

3. At present, HKSR has a total of 95 vehicles of which 86 vehicles are for daily operation and the remaining 9 vehicles are spare vehicles for relieve purpose. Most of the vehicles are having the seating capacity of 10 to 11. As at end 2006, the average age of vehicles is 5.8 years, ranging from 1 month to 12 years. Rehabus provides three types of services including (i) Scheduled Route Service (SRS), (ii) Dial-a-Ride Service (DAR) and (iii) Feeder Service (FD). In view of the special needs of PWDs, carers can accompany PWDs during the Rehabus trips. Details of fare table, operating period and vehicle allocation for these services are at Annex I.

Schedule Route Service (SRS)

4. SRS is a regular peak hour transport service that runs from 7.00 a.m. to 10.00 a.m. and from 3.00 p.m. to 7.00 p.m. from Monday to Friday, and from 7.00 a.m. to 10.00 a.m. and from 12 noon to 2.00 p.m. on Saturday to serve PWDs who travel to and from destinations such as workplaces, schools, training centers and medical institutions. As passengers take the service regularly, SRS provides different scheduled routings to serve them. SRS includes a cross-harbour service

and a non-cross-harbour service, which charge a monthly fare of \$264 and \$184 respectively. In case passengers only take trips of one peak period, half-monthly passes are also available at \$132 and \$92 for cross-harbour service and non-cross-harbour service. 62 vehicles are now deployed for SRS.

Dial-a-Ride Service (DAR)

5. DAR is a personalized round-the-clock pre-booked service taking PWDs to clinics, shops, sports centers and leisure facilities. At present, 24 vehicles are for DAR full time, whereas 62 SRS vehicles are redeployed to provide DAR service during off-peak period. Apart from a standardized booking charge, DAR fare varies according to service duration, distance travelled and the number of passengers carried during the trip. Besides, for passengers travelling regularly on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays having similar origins or destinations, a pooled DAR service is also provided.

Feeder Service (FD)

6. FD supplements the DAR and provides frequent direct transport services to and from hospitals, clinics and railway stations. There are four feeder routes serving Southern District, Kowloon City, Shatin and Lai King areas⁷. These feeder services operate in the daytime on specific weekdays at a fare between \$3.0 to \$4.0. The vehicles are redeployed from SRS and DAR services.

THE UTILIZATION SITUATION OF REHABUS

Schedule Route Service (SRS)

7. In 2006, SRS carried 264,887 passenger trips representing 5.9% increased as compared with 2005. Details are at Annex II. The principal trip purposes include working, schooling, training and medical treatment. Regarding the waiting list for the SRS, about 85% of the wait-listed bookings in 2006 could be filled within 2 months. To cater for the increasing demand, the Administration added 3 vehicles in 2006 (i.e. increase from 59 to 62 vehicles). Number of applicants waiting for the SRS has reduced from 53 as at end 2006 to 39 (including 32 PWDs and 7 carers) in end March 2007. There are no PWDs having no alternative means of transport to their work place on the waiting list.

Dial-a-Ride Service (DAR)

8. DAR is similar in nature to a chartered transport service or a taxi service. DAR users include individual PWDs and PWD service organizations. In 2006,

⁷ Some of these feeder services are on a trial basis and the detail is listed in Annex I.

HKSR received 88,213 DAR orders, and there were 8,173 rejected orders (about 22 rejected orders per day), representing about 9.3% of the orders received. There are more rejected orders during the peak periods when only full time DAR vehicles are available. To address the increasing need, the Administration has in 2006 added 5 vehicles full day (increase from 19 to 24 vehicles) and 3 vehicles during off peak (increase from 59 to 62 vehicles). The detailed trend of DAR service utilization is at Annex II.

Feeder Service (FD)

9. There were 3 FD routes operated in 2006 with 21,497 passenger trips. In response to requests from the public, one additional feeder route was introduced in January 2007 for trial.

Passengers' Feedback on Rehabus Service

10. To collect passengers' feedback on the service, Rehabus has formed a User Liaison Group (ULG) comprising representatives from Rehabus and users. Meeting of ULG is held on a quarterly basis and representative from the TD sits-in at the meeting. In 2006, Rehabus recorded 40 complaints. The main categories of complaints include staff attitude, drivers' attitude and service operation arrangement. To address the complaints, Rehabus has organized training and refresher programmes for its staff and drivers to improve their customer service quality. In addition, 17 aging vehicles (about 20% of fleet size as at end 2004) have been replaced by new vehicles with wheelchair lifting device of capacity up to 300 kg to address user groups' concern about vehicle conditions and insufficient lifting capacity. Details of the replacement program are at Annex III.

MEASURES TO IMPROVE REHABUS SERVICE

11. There is a trend of increasing demand for Rehabus service. The measures to encourage PWDs to work or study in ordinary schools lead to more demand on SRS. Special events such as free admission for PWDs offered from time to time by theme parks and territorial-wide social inclusion activities also result in more frequent participation by PWDs in social functions. In addition, some PWDs who can use public transport service or have an access to other means of transport do prefer and apply for Rehabus service. In response to the demand, the Administration and HKSR have adopted the following measures to meet passenger demand and to improve service quality :

(a) Schedule Route Service (SRS)

(i) Additional Vehicle

The Administration will add one vehicle to SRS in 2007-08 to help

enhancing the service to meet the demand.

(ii) Route Rationalization

As a high proportion of SRS schedules serve passengers with greatly similar routings, HKSR regularly reviews the routings and timetable to meet the needs of new applicants and better serve existing passengers. From January to March 2007, HKSR implemented 136 rationalizations to serve 59 new passengers.

(b) Dial-a-Ride Service (DAR)

(i) Additional Vehicles

3 additional vehicles will be added in 2007-08 to increase the full-time DAR vehicles from 24 buses to 27 to help reducing the number of rejected orders. Besides, the newly added SRS vehicle, as mentioned in subparagraph (a)(i) above, will also be available during its off-peak period to provide DAR service to help reduce order rejections.

(ii) Computer System Enhancement

At present, trip scheduling and vehicle allocation are done manually at HKSR. The manual system greatly restricts the implementation of the shared DAR operation where passengers at nearby locations travelling to destinations in the same areas and with similar routing and timing can be grouped together in one trip to enhance vehicle efficiency. To facilitate the implementation of the shared DAR, HKSR plans to enhance its computer system to perform computerized vehicle allocation and route scheduling functions by end 2008.

(iii) Increase Feeder Service (FD)

Since many DAR orders are for PWDs attending medical treatments, increase in FD between clinics, hospitals and pick-up and drop-off points along the railway lines can ease the demand for DAR. At the request of disabled organizations, two feeder routes are now operating on a trial basis⁸. TD will continue to explore with HKSR and disabled organizations on the feasibility to operate more feeder services to ease the demand for DAR.

⁸ These two feeder services are: (i) service in Southern District (on Friday and Saturday) and (ii) service in Lai King. The details of these services are in Annex II.

c. Vehicle Replacement

The Administration will replace 9 aging vehicles of 10 to 12 years in 2007-08 by new vehicles with wheelchair lifting capability of up to 300 kg. These 9 vehicles together with the 4 new vehicles for SRS and DAR in the same year will cost about \$8.220M. These vehicles are expected to commence operation by late 2007 or early 2008. By then, the average age of the Rehabus fleet will be reduced from 5.8 years to 5.4 years.

12. The Administration will continue to closely monitor the demand and supply of the Rehabus service.

Transport Department
Health, Welfare and Food Bureau

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Rehabus Services

Type of Service	Operating Period	No. of Vehicles	Fare		
Scheduled Route Service (SRS)	Peak Period on Weekdays	62	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uniform monthly fee of \$184 for non-cross-harbour service and \$264 for cross-harbour service. • Half monthly pass of \$92 for non-cross harbour service and \$132 for cross-harbour service. 		
Dial-a-Ride Service (DAR)	24 hours	24 for full-day service (62 for off-peak dial-a-ride from Scheduled Route Service)	Weekdays		
			1-3 pax	4-12 pax	13-30 pax
			\$24 per hour	\$38 per hour	\$58 per hour
			\$1.2 per km	\$1.9 per km	\$2.9 per km
			<p><u>Notes:</u> (1) A minimum 1 hour will be charged; (2) \$5 order charge; (3) additional parking fee and tunnel toll will be charged as appropriate. In addition, disabled passengers receiving CSSA are entitled to half fare.</p>		
			Sundays and Public Holidays		
	Basic charge \$96	Basic charge \$152	Basic charge \$232		
Pooled Dial-a-ride service operates on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays			\$160 per month		

Type of Service	Operating Period	No. of Vehicles	Fare
Feeder Service	<p>(i) <u>Kowloon City</u> <u>Tuesday and Thursday</u> 8.30 a.m. to 5.35 p.m.</p> <p>(ii) <u>Shatin</u> <u>Monday to Friday</u> 7.45 a.m. to 6.15 p.m. <u>Sunday</u> 8.30 a.m. to 5.15 p.m.</p> <p>(iii) <u>Southern District</u> <u>Friday and Saturday (on trial)</u> 9.30 a.m. to 5.55 p.m. <u>Sunday</u> 8.15 a.m. to 5.20 p.m.</p> <p>(iv) <u>Lai King</u> <u>Friday and Saturday (on trial)</u> 9.30 a.m. to 5.20 p.m.</p>	Redeployed from SRS and DAR	<p>Kowloon City: \$4 per trip</p> <p>Shatin: \$4 per trip</p> <p>Southern District: \$3.5 per trip</p> <p>Lai King: \$3 per trip</p>

Utilization of Rehabus Services

	2004	2005	2006	2007 (up to end March)
(i) Scheduled Route Service				
Number of Pax Trips carried	251 000	250 195	264 887	69 672
Vehicle Allocation	59	59	62 ¹	62 (63) ²
Waiting List as at end of year ³	45	45	53	39
(ii) Dial-a-Ride				
Number of Pax Trips carried (including Feeder Services)	296 000	299 623	320 285	82 450
Vehicle Allocation	19	19	24 ⁴	24 (27) ⁵
Number of Orders Received	84 846	82 392	88 213	22 456
Number of Orders Rejected	5 567	6 657	8 173	2 173

¹ 2 vehicles added in January and 1 vehicle added in December 2006

² 1 additional vehicle planned to be added in late 2007

³ Figures include PWD and carers

⁴ 3 vehicles added in January and 2 vehicles added in December 2006

⁵ 3 additional vehicles planned to be added in late 2007

Replacement and Procurement Program of Rehabuses

	2004	2005	2006	2007
Number of Rehabuses Replaced	6	10	7	9 ¹
Number of New Rehabuses Procured	0	0	8	4 ¹
Total Number of Rehabuses by year ended (including spare vehicles)	87	87	95	99

¹ Plan to be implemented in late 2007