

立法會

Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(1)2015/06-07

Ref : CB1/PL/TP

Report of the Panel on Transport for submission to the Legislative Council

Purpose

This report gives an account of the work of the Panel on Transport (the Panel) during the 2006-2007 legislative session. It will be tabled at the meeting of the Legislative Council (LegCo) on 11 July 2007 in accordance with Rule 77(14) of the Rules of Procedure of LegCo.

The Panel

2. The Panel was formed by a resolution passed by LegCo on 8 July 1998 and as amended on 20 December 2000 for the purpose of monitoring and examining Government policies and issues of public concern relating to transport matters. The terms of reference of the Panel are at **Appendix I**.

3. The Panel comprises 15 members, with Hon Andrew CHENG Kar-foo and Hon CHEUNG Hok-ming elected as Chairman and Deputy Chairman respectively. The membership list of the Panel is at **Appendix II**.

Major Work

Road Safety

4. Road safety had always been the primary concern of the Panel. During the session, the Panel reviewed the effectiveness of the road safety legislation implemented in the past few years, particularly the ones relating to drink driving, dangerous driving, and installation of reversing aids, safety belts and high back seats on various types of vehicles to enhance safety.

5. The Panel was also briefed on a Member's Bill proposed by Hon Andrew CHENG Kar-foo. The Bill sought to improve the safety of reversing

goods vehicles by introducing mandatory installation of reversing video device on goods vehicles; raise the penalty for causing death by dangerous driving to enhance the deterrent effect; strengthen measures against drink driving; improve driving attitude; and lower to 55 the age for submission of medical examination report when applying or renewing driving licences. Having considered members' views, the Administration agreed to propose the following additional measures to combat drink driving and further enhance road safety –

- (a) to disqualify drink driving offenders from driving for not less than three months on a first conviction;
- (b) to mandate drink driving offenders to attend Driving Improvement Course (DIC);
- (c) to empower the Police to conduct random breath tests;
- (d) to mandate repeat traffic offenders (those accumulating 10 driving-offence points) and offenders of serious traffic offences to attend DICs;
- (e) to raise the penalties for failure to comply with the mandatory DIC requirement by increasing the maximum fines from \$3,000 to \$5,000 and allowing the Commissioner for Transport not to re-issue the suspended driving licences if the drivers fail to comply with the DIC requirement; and
- (f) to raise the maximum imprisonment term for the offence of causing death by dangerous driving from 5 years to 10 years.

Safety of reversing goods vehicles

6. On matters relating to the safety of reversing goods vehicles, the Panel had examined the appropriateness of making it mandatory for all goods vehicles to be fitted with reversing sensors or video systems, which could help drivers to reverse safely. The Panel called on the Administration to actively explore with manufacturers of vehicles to see how such devices could be installed on different types of goods vehicles, with a view to specifying the related technical requirements and standards, so as to facilitate effective implementation. To speed up the related work, the Panel also suggested that the Administration could consider introducing the relevant legislation governing different types of goods vehicles in batches, having regard to the actual technical problems involved and the practicalities of putting in place clear statutory requirements for effective implementation.

7. In respect of improvements to the road environment to enhance safety of reversing goods vehicles, the Panel noted that there were some narrow roads or cul-de-sacs in the older built-up areas, where turning of vehicles might be difficult or impossible and vehicles had to reverse for access inevitably. The Panel had requested the Administration to liaise closely with the District Councils to identify road sections with potential risks for reversing vehicles in each district. Where appropriate, the Transport Department should consider whether it was necessary to implement additional measures, such as provision of facilities to segregate pedestrians and vehicles, installation of signs to warn drivers and pedestrians of possible reversing vehicles, imposition of restrictions on the time or locations of loading/unloading activities or restrictions on access by certain types of vehicles to enhance road safety.

8. Recognizing that the safety awareness and driving attitude of drivers were of prime importance in preventing traffic accidents involving reversing vehicles, the Panel had reminded the Administration to strengthen publicity on road safety awareness for pedestrians, especially the elderly and children.

9. The Panel had also examined the appropriateness of mandating all professional drivers to undergo annual medical examination and to attend road safety refresher courses on a regular basis. The Panel noted the Administration's view that mandating the over one million commercial vehicle driving licence holders to attend road safety refresher courses on a regular basis might not be reasonable or fair to the vast majority of drivers who had good driving practice and were law-abiding citizens. It also caused them inconvenience as well as financial and time costs.

Safety of franchised bus operations

10. The fatal traffic accidents which involved franchised buses at Kwai Chung Road on 17 July 2006, at Waterloo Road on 17 October 2006 and at Tsing Long Highway on 17 February 2007 had aroused wide public concern about the safety of franchised bus operations. During the session, the Panel had held a series of meetings with the Administration and the franchised bus companies to discuss the related matters. The Panel considered that the Administration should seriously consider the proposal to introduce mandatory requirements for installation and wearing of passenger seat belts on franchised buses to enhance bus safety. There was also a need to ensure that bus drivers had sufficient rest time and that refresher and enhancement courses be provided to serving and new drivers to enhance their safety awareness. The Panel also urged the Administration to review the design of bus structure and body with a view to providing maximum protection for bus passengers, and to closely monitor the franchised bus operators' maintenance programmes to ensure the mechanical road-worthiness and safety of buses.

11. The Panel also passed a motion urging the Government to immediately implement measures to enhance the safety of franchised bus operations, which should include the introduction of legislation to require bus passengers to wear seat belts, and requirement of franchised bus operators to install seat belts on their buses and to improve the working schedule and rest-break arrangements for their bus captains, etc to ensure the safety of bus passengers.

Safety of public light bus and school private light bus operations

12. The Panel also reviewed the progress of implementation of different measures to enhance safety of public light buses (PLB) and school private light buses. To better protect PLB passengers in traffic accidents, the Panel considered that all PLBs should be equipped with seat belts and high back seats. Vehicle monitoring system which could keep a full record of the operating conditions of vehicles should also be retrofitted onto PLBs. The Panel welcomed the Administration's plan to introduce legislative proposal to make speed display device a standard requirement on PLBs and to make misuse or malfunctioning of the device an offence, and to require applicants for PLB licences to attend pre-service training courses that focused on driving behaviour and attitude.

13. On measures to enhance safety of school private light buses, the Panel considered that escorts could help monitor the behaviour of school children when a school vehicle was in motion. They also provided assistance to the children whenever such was necessary, such as during boarding and alighting. As such, the Panel urged the Administration to implement as soon as possible its plan to extend the mandatory requirement for the provision of escorts to nanny vans serving primary schools with a seating capacity of 16 or less. Meanwhile, the Administration should speed up the legislative work in respect of the proposal to require newly registered school buses and nanny vans to be equipped with safer seats in accordance with specific standards.

New boundary crossings

14. To cater for the increasing cross-boundary traffic demand, two new boundary crossings, i.e. the Shenzhen Bay Port (SBP) (more commonly known as Hong Kong – Shenzhen Western Corridor) and the Sheung Shui to Lok Ma Chau Spur Line (Spur Line), would be commissioned in 2007. The Panel had reviewed the progress of the projects. Separately, the Panel also discussed with the Administration the preparatory work for another new boundary crossing, namely, the Hong Kong – Zhuhai – Macao Bridge (HZMB).

Shenzhen Bay Port

15. The Panel was gravely concerned about the traffic impact associated with the commissioning of SBP. The Panel noted the Administration's view

that with the existing and committed road network, together with necessary improvement measures, they would be able to cope with the traffic (including those to be generated from SBP and HZMB up to at least 2016). As such, no new major highway infrastructure project would be required.

16. The Panel however was not convinced of the Administration's forecast and considered that upon the commissioning of SBP in mid 2007, the traffic load in Northwest New Territories would substantially increase. In reviewing the transport infrastructure proposals contained in the Northwest New Territories Traffic and Infrastructure Review, the Panel urged the Administration to speed up the construction of the Tuen Mun Western Bypass, the Tuen Mun to Chek Lap Kok Link, as well as the Tuen Mun Eastern Bypass that connected the Deep Bay Link and Route 3, so as to divert the traffic flow from Tuen Mun Road. The Panel also considered that there was a need for the Administration to urgently formulate strategy to divert the traffic from the un-tolled Tuen Mun Road to Route 3. In this respect, the Panel called on the Administration to discuss with the franchisee of Route 3 on the option of extension of franchise upon its expiry in May 2025 in exchange for toll reduction of Route 3 so as to achieve a more even distribution of traffic.

17. When consulted on the following three proposed projects to improve the overall operation of Tuen Mun Road, the Panel indicated their support for the early implementation of the projects –

- (a) widening of the section at Tsing Tin Interchange from a dual 2-lane to dual 3-lane carriageway;
- (b) widening of the Town Centre Section from Yan Oi Town Square to Wong Chu Road from a dual 2-lane to dual 3-lane carriageway; and
- (c) reconstructing and improving of the expressway section to meet the prevailing expressway standard, including the provision of full-width hard shoulder, as far as practicable.

18. With the impending commissioning of SBP, the Panel considered it timely for the Administration to relax the existing cross-boundary vehicle quota system for the benefits of the travelling public. At present, all cross-boundary vehicles other than goods vehicles and the Lok Ma Chau – Huanggang Shuttle Buses were subject to quota restriction. The quota system was jointly administered by the Hong Kong and Guangdong authorities, with the number of quotas set at a level commensurate with the processing capacities of the control points. The Panel considered that the commissioning of SBP provided room for the relaxation of the existing quota arrangements. The Panel noted that the Administration had reached agreement with the

relevant Guangdong authorities on the number of quotas to be issued for cross-boundary private cars and coaches. For private cars, it would initially issue 1 500 new SBP quotas. In addition, to ease congestion at the existing control points, it would encourage existing holders of quotas at other crossings to switch to SBP. The Panel called on the Administration to monitor the traffic situation and operation of the new control point, and liaise with the Mainland authorities with a view to further relaxing the quota system to facilitate more efficient cross-boundary traffic movements.

Spur Line

19. The Panel had reviewed the operational readiness and the fare of the Spur Line which would open for operation in mid 2007. The 7.4 km Spur Line would provide East Rail passengers an alternative crossing to the Mainland with a direct access to Line 4 of the metro system in Shenzhen. It branched off the main line north of Sheung Shui Station, into a tunnel below Long Valley and Kwu Tung before emerging at Chau Tau, to run north on a viaduct terminating at the south embankment of Shenzhen River. In setting the Lok Ma Chau fares, the Panel noted that as the Spur Line was an extension of the East Rail system, it followed the existing fare structure. According to Kowloon-Canton Railway Corporation (KCRC), the decision on fare setting was that the Lok Ma Chau fares be the same as Lo Wu fares. The Panel was not convinced of the explanation given by KCRC. In reviewing the fare structure, the Panel passed a motion, urging the Government and KCRC to conduct a comprehensive review of the rail fare policy, in particular the issue of cross-boundary passengers subsidizing domestic passengers, and to study the provision of concessionary fares and monthly ticket schemes for passengers who frequently use cross-boundary railway service. The Panel had also reviewed the proposed operating hours of the Spur Line and considered that the Spur Line should operate until midnight to facilitate passengers' movement.

Public transport arrangements at the new boundary crossing points

20. The Panel had also examined the layout design of the public transport interchanges (PTIs) and transport arrangements at the two new boundary crossings. It also met with various transport trades to listen to their views on the provision of public transport services at the new boundary crossings.

21. The Panel had expressed grave concern about the design of the PTIs which could only accommodate a limited supply of public transport services. The Panel urged the Administration to monitor closely the traffic situation at the new boundary crossings upon their commissioning, and review the need and feasibility of adjusting the public transport services provided thereat jointly with the Mainland authorities.

Hong Kong – Zhuhai – Macao Bridge

22. The Panel had reviewed the preparatory work for the HZMB. The Panel was particularly concerned about the implementation timetable and the funding arrangement for the project as well as the toll determination mechanism. The Panel noted that the feasibility study for the HZMB had been substantially completed except issues relating to the boundary crossing facilities and financing arrangements. After the relevant proposals had been agreed by the HZMB Advance Work Co-ordination Group set up by the governments of Hong Kong, Guangdong and Macao, the feasibility study report would be finalized and submitted to the Central Government for consideration. Once approval was obtained, the design and construction works of the HZMB would commence. In order to enhance the competitive edge of Hong Kong and facilitate cross-boundary traffic, the Panel called on the Administration to speed up the implementation of the project and to keep the Panel informed of the progress of the project.

23. On the local front, the Panel noted that preparatory work in relation to the North Lantau Highway Connection, which was the infrastructure connecting the HZMB and the North Lantau Highway, would be synchronized with the programme of the HZMB.

Ferry service

24. When consulted on the proposed application by the Hong Kong and Kowloon Ferry Limited to increase the fares of its three licensed ferry services for Lamma Island, the Panel considered that the weighted average rate of increase of 12.2% was too high, taking into account the public acceptability of the proposed fares. The Panel urged the Administration and the ferry operator to review the fare increase application. Having balanced the Company's poor financial position and the public concern against its proposed rate of fare increase, the Administration agreed to approve Hong Kong and Kowloon Ferry Limited to increase its fare by an average rate of 7.3%, which was 31% lower than the 12.2% it had applied for, with effect from 13 May 2007. The Panel recognized that the long-term financial viability of a ferry operator was vital to ensure proper and efficient services. The Panel urged the Administration to introduce a series of measures to strengthen the ferry operators' capability to generate non-fare box revenue and to implement cost-cutting measures. Meanwhile, the Panel also urged the Administration to promote outlying islands to local and overseas visitors so as to boost the patronage of ferry operations.

Operation of taxis and light goods vehicles

25. In March 2006, some members of the taxi trade voiced their concern to the Administration about the possible illegal carriage of passengers for hire or

reward by some light goods vehicles (LGVs) at the airport. They suggested that legislative amendments should be introduced to define “goods” or “personal effects” permitted for carriage by LGVs and to lower the ceiling on passenger seating capacity of LGVs. Individual members of the taxi trade also suggested that LGVs should be prohibited from entering the airport area.

26. In discussing the operation and roles of LGVs and taxis at the meeting in March 2006, the Panel asked the Administration to examine whether there were grey areas in the relevant legislation governing the carriage of passengers for hire or reward and whether administrative measures could be introduced in the airport area to tackle this problem. The Administration was also asked to provide information on the publicity targeted at this kind of offence.

27. In November 2006, the Administration briefed the Panel on the measures taken by the Administration as a follow-up to the meeting in March 2006. To combat illegal transport activities, the Panel urged the Administration to continue its effort in enforcement and enhanced publicity, and implement the designation of a new loading and unloading area for the LGVs at the airport whilst ensuring that the new measures would not affect LGV drivers conducting legitimate freight business at the airport.

Railway matters

28. The Panel had set up a subcommittee to follow up on matters relating to railway planning, implementation and operation.

29. The Subcommittee continued to monitor the planning of the Hong Kong section of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link (ERL) and the Northern Link, and discussed with the Administration and KCRC the best way to proceed with the projects. As the Mainland side had already started its construction works of the Shibi-Longhua section of the ERL, the Panel saw an urgent need for the Administration to speed up the related works regarding the connection between the Hong Kong and the Mainland sections of the ERL, based on the dedicated corridor option.

30. The Subcommittee was gravely concerned about the slippage in the implementation of the Shatin to Central Link (SCL). It had examined the SCL proposal of the KCRC and the proposed SCL Scheme jointly developed by MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL) and the KCRC under the merger discussion. The Subcommittee had requested the Administration to speed up the related work and report to the Subcommittee in late 2007 on the detailed implementation plan for SCL, including the funding arrangements.

31. With the submission of the West Island Line (WIL) Revised Project Proposal to the Government on 31 August 2006, the Subcommittee held a

meeting with the Administration and MTRCL to review the latest planning for the project. The Subcommittee urged the Administration to reach an early agreement with MTRCL on the scope, cost and implementation programme for the WIL so that the project could be submitted to LegCo for approval at the earliest opportunity. In the meantime, members also called on MTRCL to fully consult the local parties on possible impacts caused by the construction of the WIL.

32. The Subcommittee also reviewed with the two railway corporations on major railway incidents that happened in the year. The Subcommittee called on the Administration and the two railway corporations to review the root causes of the incidents and put in place adequate improvement measures to prevent the recurrence of similar incidents in future. Government, being the regulator of railway services, should also step up its monitoring role to ensure the provision of safe and efficient railway services. The report of the Subcommittee to the Panel is in **Appendix III**.

33. The Panel was also briefed on the latest planning for South Island Line (SIL). Given the successive completion of the Ocean Park's Redevelopment Plans from 2008 onwards and that works on the new tourism projects would be launched in Southern District, which were expected to further aggravate the already very heavy traffic in the district, to alleviate traffic congestion, complement tourism development and give impetus to the local economy, the Panel urged the Administration to expedite the construction of SIL whilst ensuring healthy competition among different modes of transport to protect the public's right to choose and their interests.

34. The Panel was briefed on the latest progress of the Kowloon Southern Link (KSL) project. The Panel noted that upon the authorization of the KSL scheme under the Railways Ordinance, construction of the KSL started in the end of 2005 and was scheduled for completion in 2009. The Panel called on the Administration and KCRC to put in place adequate measures to minimize the possible nuisance caused to residents, motorists and retail operators during the construction stage.

35. The Panel was briefed on the application of KCRC's variable pay scheme (VPS) for 2006. It had also reviewed the scorecard of the VPS. Some members of the Panel held a strong view about the continued application of the KCRC's VPS. Concerns had been raised that notwithstanding the incidents such as the East Rail underframe equipment mounting cracks and the West Rail voltage transformer fire incident as well as the incidents and delays involving the railway systems that occurred from time to time in the past few years, the Managing Board of KCRC still considered that payment of variable pay for 2006 should not be influenced by this spate of incidents. These members had called on the Administration and KCRC to repeal the application

of the VPS before the rail merger. Some other members however held the view that the VPS introduced by the Managing Board was controlled by express rules agreed between the Corporation and the staff concerned, and hence the Administration and KCRC should honour the VPS which was based upon a set of pre-determined performance targets set on an annual basis. Any changes to the agreed terms of employment should be mutually agreed between the staff concerned and the Corporation.

Funding proposals

36. The Panel was also consulted on the funding proposals in respect of a number of public works projects prior to their submission to the Public Works Subcommittee and the Finance Committee. These included the reconstruction and improvement to Tuen Mun Road, and the increase of the approved project estimates for two public works projects, namely, improvement to Tung Chung Road between Lung Tseng Tau and Cheung Sha, and the review, detailed design and associated site investigations for the Central Kowloon Route project. The Panel was also briefed on the major components of a bill governing the operation of the Tsing Sha Control Area, i.e. the section of Route 8 between Tsing Yi and Sha Tin. The Tsing Sha Control Area Bill was subsequently introduced into the Council in April 2007.

37. During the period from October 2006 to May 2007, the Panel held a total of 11 meetings.

Council Business Division 1
Legislative Council Secretariat
6 July 2007

Panel on Transport

Terms of Reference

1. To monitor and examine Government policies and issues of public concern relating to transport matters.
2. To provide a forum for the exchange and dissemination of views on the above policy matters.
3. To receive briefings and to formulate views on any major legislative or financial proposals in respect of the above policy area prior to their formal introduction to the Council or Finance Committee.
4. To monitor and examine, to the extent it considers necessary, the above policy matters referred to it by a member of the Panel or by the House Committee.
5. To make reports to the Council or to the House Committee as required by the Rules of Procedure.

**Legislative Council
Panel on Transport**

Membership list for 2006 - 2007 session

| | |
|------------------------|---|
| Chairman | Hon Andrew CHENG Kar-foo |
| Deputy Chairman | Hon CHEUNG Hok-ming, SBS, JP |
| Members | Ir Dr Hon Raymond HO Chung-tai, SBS, S.B.St.J., JP Hon Mrs Selina CHOW LIANG Shuk-ye, GBS, JP Hon LAU Chin-shek, JP Hon LAU Kong-wah, JP Hon Miriam LAU Kin-ye, GBS, JP Hon LI Fung-ying, BBS, JP Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, SBS, JP Hon Albert CHAN Wai-yip Hon WONG Kwok-hing, MH Hon LEE Wing-tat Hon Jeffrey LAM Kin-fung, SBS, JP Hon LEUNG Kwok-hung Hon Ronny TONG Ka-wah, SC (Total: 15 members) |
| Clerk | Mr Andy LAU |
| Legal Adviser | Mr Kelvin LEE |
| Date | 3 July 2007 |

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(1)1957/06-07

Ref : CB1/PS/1/04

**Report of the
Subcommittee on Matters Relating to Railways
for submission to the Panel on Transport**

Purpose

This report gives an account of the work of the Subcommittee on Matters Relating to Railways during the 2006-2007 legislative session.

The Subcommittee

2. The Transport Panel decided at its meeting on 12 October 2006 that the subcommittee formed to oversee the development, implementation and operation of railway projects in Hong Kong should continue its work during the 2006-2007 legislative session.

3. The Subcommittee comprises 12 members, with Hon Miriam LAU Kin-yeo elected as Chairman. The membership list of the Subcommittee is at **Annex I**.

Major work

Northern Link and Hong Kong Section of Guangzhou – Shenzhen – Hong Kong Express Rail Link

4. In April 2006, the Administration briefed the Subcommittee on the implementation of the Hong Kong Section of Guangzhou – Shenzhen – Hong Kong Express Rail Link (ERL). The Subcommittee noted that there were two options for the Hong Kong section of ERL: the Dedicated Corridor Option (DCO) by building a dedicated rail track running from the proposed West Kowloon Terminus to the boundary, or the Shared Corridor Option by using the existing West Rail (WR) rail track from the proposed West Kowloon Terminus up to the existing WR Kam Sheung Road Station, the rail track of the Northern Link and a new rail track to make connection with the Mainland

section of the ERL. As the Hong Kong section of ERL would link Hong Kong to the Shibi Station at Guangzhou through the Longhua Station and Futian Station at Shenzhen, which would form part of the national high-speed rail network, the Subcommittee considered that DCO should be adopted for the Hong Kong section of ERL.

5. In reviewing the progress of the ERL project, the Subcommittee was also concerned that construction works of ERL had already been in progress on the Mainland side whereas the Government was still examining on the choice of alignment options for the Hong Kong section of ERL, resulting in the works on the Hong Kong section of ERL lagging behind that of the Mainland section for six or seven years. The Subcommittee took the view that it was imperative to expedite the construction of the Hong Kong section of ERL lest the patronage of the Hong Kong section of ERL might be adversely affected by other railway lines linking up with the Mainland section of ERL. Once the Longhua and Futian areas were developed into the centres of railway transportation in the Mainland, Hong Kong would be marginalized and put in a disadvantageous position. To cater for the fast pace of development, the Subcommittee called on the Administration to examine the feasibility of building the Hong Kong section of ERL in phases by providing a terminus at Chau Tau in 2010 to tie in with the completion of the Futian station in the Mainland, and then extending the Hong Kong section of ERL to terminate at West Kowloon.

West Island Line

6. The Subcommittee welcomed the Government's decision to invite MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL) to proceed with the preliminary planning and design of the proposed West Island Line (WIL), involving the extension of the heavy rail MTR Island Line from Sheung Wan to Kennedy Town with two intermediate stations at Sai Ying Pun and University. In reviewing the WIL Revised Project Proposal, the Subcommittee called on the Administration to expedite the implementation of WIL with a view to meeting the dire transport needs of the residents in the Western District.

7. The Subcommittee was gravely concerned about the impacts of the WIL construction works on near-by residents. Members were worried about the potential hazard and risks arising from the storage, handling and use of explosives on nearby residents as well as the impacts of blasting operations on nearby buildings. The Subcommittee called on MTRCL to carry out a comprehensive survey on the buildings in the vicinity of the railway corridor before the commencement of the construction works, and appoint an independent surveyor to assess any claims for damages arising from blasting operations and construction of WIL from nearby residents. In the meantime, MTRCL should consult the local bodies regarding the storage, handling and

use of explosives for the construction of WIL as well as the noise and environmental impacts of the vent shafts on the residents in the vicinity.

8. The Subcommittee noted that the funding arrangement for the implementation of WIL was being finalized and would be submitted to the Public Works Subcommittee and Finance Committee for approval in the third quarter of 2007. The Subcommittee called on the Administration to ensure that public interest would not be sacrificed when negotiating with MTRCL on the terms of the financial arrangements for the implementation of WIL.

Shatin to Central Link

9. Shatin to Central Link (SCL) was high on the agenda of the Subcommittee. Members were gravely concerned that as a result of the rail merger, implementation of SCL had been withheld for years. They were worried that with only one railway corporation left after the rail merger, the Administration might have little bargaining power when negotiating with the post-merger corporation on the implementation of and funding arrangements for new railway projects. As a result, public interest would be sacrificed. In view of the uncertainty of the future of SCL, particularly the implementation timetable, alignment design, and funding approach for the project, some members considered that consideration of the rail merger proposal and the SCL project should be bundled together.

10. The Administration pointed out that since the acceptance of the SCL tender bid of Kowloon-Canton Railway Corporation (KCRC) in June 2002, KCRC had made changes to its original proposed SCL scheme, including two major revisions to the original proposal in the year 2004. As a result, Government would need to consider in detail the technical, operational and financial implications on the SCL project in respect of such substantive amendments. On the other hand, the implementation programme for the SCL was also dependent on the progress of the Kai Tak Planning Review and the Wan Chai Development Phase II Review, which had yet to be finalized. Whilst the Government would discuss with the railway corporations the implementation details of SCL, including the funding approach for the project, taking into account the progress of the rail merger exercise, it would be inappropriate and unwise to bundle the two together because that could delay the merger exercise and hence the proposed rail fare reduction that would be made possible by the merger synergy. Early approval of the merger would help ensure the adoption of integrated interchange arrangements for SCL proposed under the merger. The Administration reassured that Government would continue to pursue the SCL which would include a rail link across the harbour. The Administration would finalize the SCL scheme including implementation timetable and report to the Subcommittee in late 2007.

Light Rail

11. The Subcommittee had along been concerned about the performance of the Light Rail (LR). The Subcommittee noted that with the commissioning of WR in end 2003, KCRC had implemented a number of service improvement schemes to maximize the utilization of its resources. As LR had been serving as the major mode of transport for internal travel within the North-west Transit Service Area (TSA), the Subcommittee was concerned that any service improvement plans introduced by KCRC would no doubt affect the travelling habit of a portion of passengers. The Subcommittee called on the Corporation to seriously consider various factors including passengers' demand, existing service level, availability of other public transport modes within the TSA, passengers' and District Councils' opinions collected, etc before implementing any service changes.

12. With a view to providing an efficient LR service, the Subcommittee also requested KCRC to follow up on various suggestions put forward by members. These included the procurement of new train cars to meet the passenger demand, installation of automatic platform gates at LR platforms to enhance railway safety, review of the open fare and ticketing arrangements to minimize potential conflicts between passengers and station staff, improvement to station facilities for use by persons with disabilities, review of the signalized pedestrian crossings across the LR tracks to enhance road safety and facilitate traffic flow, etc. The Subcommittee also urged the Administration and KCRC to consider lowering the fares of LR in the context of the rail merger. In the longer term, the Subcommittee had requested the Administration and the railway corporation to review the role of LR in the overall public transport service market within the TSA and introduce suitable improvement measures to enhance the transport services in the area at reasonable fares.

Railway incidents

Tung Chung Line incident on 13 March 2007

13. On 13 March 2007, a Tung Chung Line (TCL) Train made an unscheduled move and entered the Airport Express Line (AEL) Platform instead of TCL Platform of Kowloon Station (KOW). The Subcommittee was deeply concerned about the incident. It had reviewed the incident with the Administration and MTRCL, and recommended measures to prevent recurrence of similar incident in future.

14. The Subcommittee noted that working of trains was under the control and monitoring of the Automatic Train Protection (ATP) system. ATP system was part of the signaling and train control system, and was a safety critical system governing railway safety, e.g. by limiting the speed of trains, by keeping trains at a safe distance apart, ensuring the system would assign safe

routes for trains to go and giving permission for a train to proceed forward when it was safe to do so. The ATP system would stop the train and not permit it to proceed further if the platform ahead was occupied. Under normal circumstances, train movement was under automatic operation according to train timetable. In timetable mode operation, train route setting would be automatically carried out by the microprocessor-based train control system. However, when the working of trains was required to be altered for operational reasons, the Traffic Controller in the Operations Control Centre would have to manually set the train routes for the specific trains.

15. In the light of the incident on TCL on 13 March 2007 which was the result of an error during the manual route setting process, the Subcommittee called on the Administration and MTRCL to implement a series of measures to minimize the chance of human errors, to examine the feasibility of enhancing its ATP to require the operation staff to double confirm on the system if he had to manually set the routes for specific trains, and reinforce the correct process in manual route setting by strengthening the relevant training courses, knowledge sharing sessions, and table-top exercises.

Tunnel fire incident occurring on WR

16. The Subcommittee was gravely concerned about the tunnel fire incident occurring on WR on 14 February 2007. Although there were no major injuries caused to passengers, the incident had aroused wide public concern about the safety of train operations. The Subcommittee immediately paid a site visit to discuss the related matters with KCRC. The Subcommittee was given to understand that a Voltage Transformer (VT) mounted on the roof of a WR train car caught fire. It tripped the overhead line supply and the train was brought to a stop by the driver for emergency detrainment of passengers. The Subcommittee urged KCRC to ensure the safe operation of the in-service VTs, speed up the full investigation of the root cause of the incident, and formulate long-term improvement measures to prevent recurrence of similar incident in future.

17. In May 2007, the Subcommittee was briefed on the findings and recommendations of the technical investigation on the failure of the concerned VT. It also reviewed the safety and efficiency of the emergency evacuation, contingency arrangements and other recovery measures arising from the incident. The Subcommittee noted that as an additional safeguard, KCRC had proposed to replace all existing VTs on the fleet with a new oil-free and explosion-proof type transformer. This new type of transformer had been developed since 2001 after the first train with roof-top VTs were delivered, and had proven satisfactory service in Europe in the past few years. It also provided far greater endurance for lightning strokes. Whilst welcoming the initiative to replace all existing VTs, the Subcommittee was concerned that the

replacement could only be completed by 2008. To enhance passengers' safety, the Subcommittee urged KCRC to speed up the related works and the Government to strengthen its monitoring role in view of the spate of railway incidents occurred from time to time. In the interim, Government should also closely monitor KCRC's adherence to the implementation of improvement measures for ensuring the safe operation of VTs in the railway system.

18. Regarding the rescue and evacuation operations, the Subcommittee urged KCRC to take into accounts comments made by Fire Services Department (FSD), Hong Kong Railway Inspectorate, and Transport Department, and put in place measures to improve the communication between FSD and KCRC's Liaison Officer during emergencies, install additional signs along the tunnel to indicate directions of the stations, facilitate speedy deployment of staff to provide immediate assistance and relief to the affected passengers during evacuation, carry out passenger education campaigns focusing on emergency detrainment and tunnel evacuation, and strengthen the necessary staff training programme, etc.

Retrofitting of platform screen doors and automatic platform gates

19. The Council had along been concerned about the retrofitting of platform screen doors (PSDs) and automatic platform gates (APGs) at railway stations to ensure the safety of passengers awaiting trains at platforms. Over the years, Members had raised a number of questions at Council meetings, requesting the Administration to examine the feasibility of retrofitting PSDs or APGs at railway stations. In May 1999, the then Mass Transit Railway Corporation decided to proceed with the PSD Retrofit Programme, which involved 74 platforms at 30 underground stations of the Kwun Tong Line, Tsuen Wan Line and Island Line. Since then, Members had been following up with the Administration and the two railway corporations on the funding arrangements for the retrofit programme, the progress of the related works, and the feasibility of retrofitting PSDs and APGs at the remaining stations. During the current session, the Subcommittee had reviewed the difficulties encountered by the two railway corporations on the retrofitting of PSDs and APGs at the at-grade or aboveground MTR stations, East Rail, Ma On Shan Rail and LR stations. The Subcommittee considered that it took too long for the two railway corporations to carry out the related works and passed a motion, strongly requesting MTRCL and KCRC to complete the installation of PSDs or APGs at all of their stations by 2012 and 2013 respectively.

20. During the period from October 2006 to May 2007, the Subcommittee held a total of five meetings. The Subcommittee also paid a site visit to

KCRC to discuss the tunnel fire incident occurring on WR on 14 February 2007.

Council Business Division 1
Legislative Council Secretariat
6 July 2007

**Legislative Council
Panel on Transport**

Subcommittee on Matters Relating to Railways

Membership list for 2006-2007 session

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|----------------------|--|
| Chairman | Hon Miriam LAU Kin-ye, GBS, JP |
| Members | Ir Dr Hon Raymond HO Chung-tai, SBS, S.B.St.J., JP Hon Mrs Selina CHOW LIANG Shuk-ye, GBS, JP Hon LAU Kong-wah, JP Hon Andrew CHENG Kar-foo Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, SBS, JP Hon Albert CHAN Wai-yip Hon WONG Kwok-hing, MH Hon LEE Wing-tat Hon Jeffrey LAM Kin-fung, SBS, JP Hon CHEUNG Hok-ming, SBS, JP Hon Ronny TONG Ka-wah, SC (Total: 12 members) |
| Clerk | Mr Andy LAU |
| Legal Adviser | Mr Kelvin LEE |
| Date | 3 July 2007 |