

## **Progress Report**

### **Motion Debate on “Facing up to the transport needs of people with disabilities” Legislative Council Meeting on 22 October 2008**

#### **Background**

At the Legislative Council meeting on 22 October 2008, the following motion on “Facing up to the transport needs of people with disabilities” moved by the Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung was carried –

“That this Council passed motions on a number of occasions over the past few years calling for improvement to transport facilities for people with disabilities and offer of concessionary transport fares to them, but the Administration, some statutory transport corporations and other public transport operators still fail to face up to and give effect to the motions; this Council strongly demands that the Administration and various public transport operators immediately respond positively and give effect to the relevant motions previously passed by this Council and the Report of the Council’s Subcommittee to Study the Transport Needs of and Provision of Concessionary Public Transport Fares for Persons with Disabilities in the last term, which include that:

- (a) in order to effectively assist people with disabilities in integrating into society, the Administration must adopt legislative, administrative and financial measures to press various major public transport operators to offer concessionary fares to them;
- (b) the Government must put forth, in the near future, specific proposals and a timetable for introducing half-fare concession for people with disabilities, so as to help them integrate into society and improve their life;
- (c) the Government must allocate additional resources to comprehensively improve the Rehabus service and, in particular, should enhance such service for people with disabilities living in remote areas and new towns; and

- (d) the Government must step up consultation with people with disabilities to fully realize the concept of ‘Transport for All’, and strictly regulate the public transport operators in providing barrier-free facilities, so as to enable more people with disabilities to use public transport and integrate into society.”

2. This report informs Members of the follow-up actions that have been taken by the Administration.

### **Provision of Concessionary Public Transport Fares for People with Disabilities (“PWDs”)**

3. Regarding the levels of fares for major public transport services, the Administration has put in place fare adjustment mechanisms to effectively regulate the basic fares. In addition to regulating basic fares, we have been encouraging public transport operators to introduce fare reductions or concessions as far as possible to help reduce passengers’ travelling expenses, taking into account their respective operating conditions and overall economic environment. At present, major public transport operators offer various kinds of fare concession schemes to passengers to alleviate their burdens of travelling expenses.

4. The Administration will continue to encourage public transport operators to offer fare concessions to passengers taking into account their respective operating conditions, in order to alleviate passengers’ burden of travelling expenses. We will also continue to reflect to public transport operators the demands of the public on fare concessions, so that they could understand and consider the public’s expectations when making decisions. We hope public transport operators could continue to provide proper and efficient public transport services while maintaining reasonable levels of fares. As for persons with special needs, the Administration has been providing assistance via implementation of specific measures.

5. In tandem, the Administration agrees that providing transport supplement will help encourage PWDs to participate more in activities away from home and enhance their contact with the community, thereby achieving the rehabilitation policy objective of promoting inclusiveness. In this regard, we have allocated an additional annual provision of \$230 million under the welfare

portfolio to provide a monthly transport supplement of \$200 to recipients of Comprehensive Social Security Assistance with 100% disability aged between 12 to 64 and recipients of Disability Allowance of the same aged group since July this year in order to facilitate their integration into society.

6. The rate of transport supplement will be adjusted annually according to the movement of the Social Security Assistance Index of Prices. In accordance with the established mechanism, the Administration has sought the funding approval of the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council at its meeting on 12 December 2008 to adjust the monthly transport supplement to \$210 with effect from 1 February 2009.

### **Additional Resources to improve Rehabus Service**

7. The Administration is mindful of the great demand for Rehabus service for PWDs and always strives to improve the service. The Labour and Welfare Bureau will continue to review the service demand and bid for additional resources for enhancing the Rehabus fleet having regard to the transport needs of PWDs and competing priorities for rehabilitation services. In 2008-09, additional resources are allocated to procure 32 buses, including 8 new buses and replacement of 24 old buses. As a result, the Rehabus fleet has increased to 109 buses and its average vehicle age reduced from 5.3 years to 3 years, and all old buses equipped with obsolete single-arm tail-lift in the Rehabus fleet have been replaced. Apart from strengthening the Dial-a-ride service, the new buses will also be deployed for providing scheduled route service to meet the demand of PWDs on the waiting list, including those residing in new towns and remote areas.

8. In 2009-10, the Administration will continue to consider allocating additional resources for the procurement of new buses and replacement of old buses to further enhance the Rehabus service. Rehabus will continue to rationalize its existing routes to meet users' demand. In tandem, its "Rehabus Information Management System" is being upgraded to facilitate optimal deployment of fleet resources to provide more services to PWDs.

## **Improvement on Public Transport Facilities**

9. To enhance the accessibility of public transport services to PWDs, the Administration will continue to uphold the vision of “Transport for All”. In fact, public transport operators have been supportive of this vision through enhancing public transport facilities to better serve passengers with disabilities. The progress made by major public transport operators in this respect is at the Annex. The Administration will continue to work together with public transport operators to enhance facilities to benefit more PWDs.

Labour and Welfare Bureau  
Transport and Housing Bureau  
December 2008

Enhancement Program on Transport Facilities by  
Public Transport Operators

Railways

1. All railway stations (except Racecourse Station) are equipped with barrier-free access.
2. Except Racecourse Station and Light Rail stops, all stations are equipped with tactile guide paths.
3. Portable ramps are provided at all MTR stations (except West Rail Line stations of which the platform gaps are small) for easy boarding and alighting by wheelchair users.
4. Audible devices, which announce the fare charged and remaining values of the Octopus cards, have been installed in the exit gates led by tactile guide paths at all stations of Tsuen Wan Line, Island Line, Kwun Tong Line, Tseung Kwan O Line, Tung Chung Line, Airport Express Line and most East Rail Line stations to benefit visually impaired passengers.
5. Flashing neon lights have been installed at East Rail Line stations with wider platform gaps to caution passengers.
6. Ticket vending machines with an interactive voice message function are provided at all stations of East Rail Line, Ma On Shan Line and West Rail Line to benefit visually impaired passengers.
7. In 2008, stairlifts at Tsim Sha Tsui, Mei Foo, Diamond Hill, Admiralty and Jordan Stations are put into service. Two passenger lifts connecting station concourse and street level are provided at Mei Foo Station. The staff lift at Admiralty Station linking the concourse and platform levels is converted to passenger lift as well.

8. Ramp access is available at all Light Rail stops. Lifts are provided at all Light Rail interchanges with West Rail Line. In addition, low-height Octopus entry / exit / enquiry processors are installed at Light Rail stops to facilitate the use by wheelchair users. All Octopus entry/exit processors are equipped with brailles to facilitate the use by visually impaired passengers.
9. Multi-use spaces are provided in all trains. Wheelchair parking spaces are provided on West Rail Line and Light Rail trains.
10. Info-panels displaying information on the coming station and other operational messages have been installed in all trains running on Kwun Tong Line, Tsuen Wan Line, Island Line and Tseung Kwan O Line trains whilst Newslane Express screens displaying similar information have been installed in trains running on East Rail Line, West Rail Line and Ma On Shan Line.
11. Audio induction loops to assist hearing aid users have been installed at Customer Service Centres and Ticket Offices of all stations.
12. Information cards to facilitate communication between staff and passenger are available at the Customer Service Centres of all stations (except West Rail Line stations and Light Rail stops).
13. Tactile station layout maps have been installed at all stations along the East Rail Line, West Rail Line and Ma On Shan Line, as well as some stations along Kwun Tong Line, Tseun Wan Line, Island Line and Airport Express.
14. Installation works of tactile guide path at all Light Rail platforms and audible devices at the Octopus exit processors of all Light Rail stops are being carried out. This improvement programme is expected to be completed by 2010.
15. The Corporation announced in October 2008 its plan to install lifts for Tsim Sha Tsui, Yau Ma Tei, Jordon and Sham Shui Po stations.

## Franchised buses

1. Franchised bus operators will continue their programmes to replace older buses with low-floor buses -
  - All franchised bus companies except New Lantau Bus Company Limited (“NLB”) agreed that all the new buses to be purchased would be wheelchair accessible. As regards NLB, its operation is largely on Lantau Island and deployment of wheelchair accessible buses is not suitable for most of its routes due to constraints of the terrain. However, NLB has planned to purchase wheelchair accessible buses for deployment on routes where the terrain permits so as to cater for the transport needs of PWDs as far as possible.
  - The number of wheelchair accessible bus has increased from 2,329 in 2003 to 2,820 in October 2008.
2. The franchised bus operators will continue to install bus stop announcement system where feasible. The number of bus installed with bus stop announcement system has been increased from 2,825 in 2003 to 4,209 in October 2008. The number accounts for 73% of the total bus fleet.