

立法會

Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(1)1611/08-09
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by the Administration)

Ref : CB1/PL/TP/1

Panel on Transport

Minutes of meeting held on Friday, 20 March 2009, at 8:30 am in Conference Room A of the Legislative Council Building

- Members present** : Hon CHEUNG Hok-ming, SBS, JP (Chairman)
Hon Andrew CHENG Kar-foo (Deputy Chairman)
Ir Dr Hon Raymond HO Chung-tai, SBS, S.B.St.J., JP
Hon LAU Kong-wah, JP
Hon Miriam LAU Kin-ye, GBS, JP
Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, SBS, JP
Hon WONG Kwok-hing, MH
Hon Jeffrey LAM Kin-fung, SBS, JP
Hon LEUNG Kwok-hung
Hon Ronny TONG Ka-wah, SC
Hon KAM Nai-wai, MH
Hon WONG Sing-chi
Hon IP Wai-ming, MH
Hon Mrs Regina IP LAU Suk-ye, GBS, JP
- Members absent** : Hon LI Fung-ying, BBS, JP
Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, SBS, JP
Hon Albert CHAN Wai-yip
Hon LEE Wing-tat
- Public officers attending** : **Agenda item III**
Mr YAU Shing-mu, JP
Under Secretary for Transport and Housing

Mrs Hedy CHU
Principal Assistant Secretary for Transport and
Housing(Transport)4

Mr K M WOO
Assistant Director/ Railways
Electrical and Mechanical Services Department

Mr Albert YUEN
Assistant Commissioner/Bus & Railway
Transport Department

Miss Alice AU YEUNG
Principal Transport Officer/Bus & Railway 2
Transport Department

Agenda item IV

Mr YAU Shing-mu, JP
Under Secretary for Transport and Housing

Miss Rosanna LAW
Principal Assistant Secretary for Transport and
Housing (Transport) 2

Mr TSANG King-man
Assistant Commissioner / Technical Services
Transport Department

**Attendance by
invitation**

: Agenda item III

MTR Corporation Limited

Mr Henry LAM
General Manager – Kowloon Southern Link/Tseung
Kwan O South

Mr CHOI Tak-tsan,
Acting Head of Operations

Ms Maggie SO
Senior Manager – Projects and Property
Communications

Clerk in attendance : Ms Joanne MAK
Chief Council Secretary (1)2

Staff in attendance : Ms Sarah YUEN
Senior Council Secretary (1)6

Miss Winnie CHENG
Legislative Assistant (1)5

Action

I Information papers issued since last meeting

- (LC Paper No. CB(1)944/08-09(01) - Administration's paper on road safety (Road Safety Bulletin)
- LC Paper No. CB(1)1039/08-09(01) - Submission on environmental issues related to bus operation from Green Sense
- LC Paper No. CB(1)1039/08-09(02) - Submission on the location of the tunnel portal of Central Kowloon Route from a member of the public
- LC Paper No. CB(1)1051/08-09(01) - Administration's paper on 785TH - Trunk Road T2
- LC Paper No. CB(1)1075/08-09(01) - Referral from Complaints Division on policy on outlying island ferry services)

Members noted the above papers which had been issued after the last meeting.

II Items for discussion at the next meeting scheduled for 24 April 2009

- (LC Paper No. CB(1)1049/08-09(01) - List of outstanding items for discussion

LC Paper No. CB(1)1049/08-09(02) - List of follow-up actions)

2. Members agreed to discuss the following items proposed by the Administration at the next regular meeting on Friday, 24 April 2009, at 8:30 am –

(a) PWP Item 6819TH - Traffic improvements to Tuen Mun Road Town Centre section; and

(b) Private Driving Instructors' Licences.

(Post-meeting note: at the suggestion of the Administration and with the concurrence of the Chairman, the agenda for the April meeting was subsequently revised to substitute the item on "Private Driving Instructors' Licences" with financial proposals relating to "Hong Kong–Zhuhai–Macao Bridge", and to include an additional item on "Bus fare adjustment mechanism".)

3. As proposed by Mr WONG Kwok-hing, members agreed to consider at the next regular meeting whether the Panel would be able to discuss "Changes made by MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL) to staff welfare" at the regular meeting in May 2009.

III Tseung Kwan O Extension (Phase II) progress update and fares

(LC Paper No. CB(1)1049/08-09(03) - Paper on Tseung Kwan O Extension (Phase II) progress update and fares provided by MTR Corporation Limited;

LC Paper No. CB(1)1091/08-09(01) - Leaflet on LOHAS Park Station & Tseung Kwan O Line passenger guide;

LC Paper No. CB(1)1091/08-09(02) - Submission from SKTKO Caucus, Liberal Party;

LC Paper No. CB(1)1091/08-09(03) - Submission from a group of Tseung Kwan O residents; and

LC Paper No. CB(1)1049/08-09(04) - Legislative Council question raised by Hon Andrew CHENG Kar-foo and the Administration's reply)

4. With the aid of a power-point presentation, the Acting Head of Operations/MTRCL (Atg HO/MTRCL) briefed members on the progress of the MTR Tseung Kwan O Extension (Phase II) (the TKO Extension), which was expected to commence service in mid-2009, as well as the following new

service arrangements of the Tseung Kwan O Line (the TKO Line) planned in connection with the opening of LOHAS Park Station, terminus of the TKO Extension –

- (a) For trains from North Point during peak hours, the first three out of every four trains would terminate at Po Lam Station while the fourth train would terminate at LOHAS Park Station (the new "3+1" service pattern); and
- (b) During off-peak hours, all trains from North Point would terminate at Po Lam Station. Trains would shuttle between LOHAS Park Station and Tiu Keng Leng Station and passengers to/from LOHAS Park Station and North Point Station could interchange at Tseung Kwan O Station (TKO Station).

(Post-meeting note: The presentation material was issued to members by e-mail on 20 March 2009.)

The new service arrangements

5. Ms Miriam LAU considered the above new service arrangements different from those of other railway lines and publicity should be geared up to alert passengers to prevent them from boarding the wrong train. Atg HO/MTRCL responded that more LCD display boards would be installed at the platforms of all stations between the North Point Station and TKO Station to advise passengers which train would go to Po Lam and which to LOHAS Park. 200 service ambassadors would also be deployed to platforms and concourses of all TKO Line stations to provide assistance to passengers, and on board trains to LOHAS Park Station to remind passengers to Hang Hau or Po Lam to change train at TKO Station.

6. Mr IP Wai-ming pointed out that elderly passengers would in particular have difficulty in adapting to the new arrangements. He cautioned that the implementation of different service arrangements for peak and off-peak hours might cause confusion. In response, Atg HO/MTRCL and the Senior Manager – Projects and Property Communications/MTRCL (SM-PPC/MTRCL) made the following points –

- (a) If the new "3+1" service pattern was operated all day long instead of only during peak hours, the headway of trains for LOHAS Park Station would be 16 minutes per train instead of 10/12 minutes per train;
- (b) If shuttle train service was provided all day long instead of only during off-peak hours, all trains from LOHAS Park

Station would terminate at Tiu Keng Leng Station and not North Point Station. As a result, all passengers from LOHAS Park Station to North Point would need to change train at Tiu Keng Leng Station and the station would be over-crowded. In fact, Kwun Tong Line passengers interchanging to TKO Line towards North Point might change train at Tiu Keng Leng Station;

- (c) After examining all available options, it was found that the above new service arrangements were best able to maximize the hourly capacity of trains running between Tiu Keng Leng and North Point to 60 000; and
- (d) Publicity could be further geared up to help passengers adapt to the new service arrangements, such as by organizing meetings with community organizations.

7. In reply to Ms Miriam LAU, Atg HO/MTRCL confirmed that when trains shuttled between LOHAS Park Station and Tiu Keng Leng Station during off-peak hours, passengers to/from LOHAS Park Station and North Point Station could interchange at the same platform at TKO Station without having to walk downstairs or upstairs.

Reduction of train service frequency for Po Lam and Hang Hau Stations

8. Mr IP Wai-ming declared that he lived in Po Lam. Mr IP considered it unacceptable that upon opening of LOHAS Park Station and implementation of the new "3+1" service pattern, the headway of trains for Po Lam Station and Hang Hau Station during peak hours would change from 2 minutes 40 seconds at present to 2.5 minutes/2.5 minutes/5 minutes. He said that the plan would significantly reduce the number of trains running between Po Lam Station and North Point Station by four from 22 to 18 in an hour. He considered that MTRCL's paper was misleading as it failed to mention this. He also pointed out that trains from Po Lam and Hang Hau Stations were already very crowded during the morning peak hours, and would not have spare capacity for picking up more passengers. Members in general shared the concerns about the overcrowded situation at the Po Lam and Hang Hau Stations and asked MTRCL to explore room for enhancing the train frequency.

9. Atg HO/MTRCL responded that the headway of most trains for Po Lam Station and Hang Hau Station would change from 2 minutes 40 seconds at present to 2.5 minutes. The number of trains running between TKO Station and North Point Station during peak hours would be increased from 22 to 24 in an hour, with frequency enhanced from 2 minutes 40 seconds per train to 2.5 minutes per train. The arrangement would benefit most of the TKO Line passengers. As to the loading of trains from Po Lam Station and Hang Hau

Station, according to passenger statistics, the number of passengers had yet to reach the design capacity of trains. Moreover, additional staff would be deployed to direct passenger flow to ensure a more even distribution of passengers on station platforms and in different train cars.

10. SM-PPC/MTRCL supplemented the following points –

- (a) Po Lam and Hang Hau Stations were planned in the 1990s based on the population forecast in the areas and subsequent population changes had also been taken into account. The passenger capacity of trains running from Po Lam/Hang Hau Stations would be able to meet the transport needs of residents concerned although they might be affected by the above frequency reduction plan;
- (b) After the opening of LOHAS Park Station, MTRCL would continue to closely monitor the passenger flow and actual passenger figures, and would deploy appropriate measures to ensure a smooth flow of passengers and enhance train service frequency if necessary; and
- (c) Presently TKO Line passengers from the TKO Industrial Estate were carried to Hang Hau Station or Po Lam Station by feeder buses. After opening of LOHAS Park Station, feeder buses would carry these passengers to LOHAS Park Station instead. Such transfer of passengers from the northern end of the TKO Line to its new southern end could effect a more even distribution of passengers along the Line.

11. Ms Miriam LAU urged MTRCL to respond quickly if actual operation indicated a need for service enhancement at Po Lam and Hang Hau Stations. In response to Mr WONG Sing-chi, SM-PPC/MTRCL explained that, upon opening of LOHAS Park Station, the hourly capacity of the TKO Line would be increased from 55 000 to 60 000 in preparation for further population growth in LOHAS Park and the Industrial Estate. The Deputy Chairman queried how a mere 5 000-increase in hourly capacity could enable the TKO Line to meet the transport needs of the populations of LOHAS Park and the TKO Industrial Estate, which as he understood would reach 60 000 and over 10 000 respectively over time. He also requested the Administration to provide peak and off-peak passenger figures to substantiate paragraph 10(a) above.

Admin

Possible alternatives to minimize frequency reduction

12. To avoid reducing train service frequency for Po Lam Station and Hang Hau Station, Mr WONG Sing-chi proposed that the Kwun Tong Line be

extended to terminate at LOHAS Park Station. Atg HO/MTRCL responded that this was infeasible because, should this be adopted, trains of the Kwun Tong and TKO Lines would have to share the tracks between Yau Tong and TKO Stations

13. Mr IP Wai-ming and the Deputy Chairman asked whether the train frequency for Po Lam and Hang Hau Stations could be reduced by one instead of four trains per hour. Atg HO/MTRCL explained that given the present signalling system and track configuration, the proposed train frequency was infeasible.

Train service of the Tseung Kwan O Line in general

14. Noting that the number of trains of the Tsuen Wan Line could reach 30 per hour, Mr Jeffrey LAM enquired whether there was scope for increasing the number of trains per hour for the TKO Line to more than 24. The Deputy Chairman also enquired whether the frequency of trains running between TKO Station and North Point Station could be further enhanced to 2 minutes 10 seconds per train (i.e. number of trains further increased to 28 in every hour).

15. Atg HO/MTRCL responded that given the existing signalling system and track configuration, train service arrangement at 2.5-minute headway (i.e. 24 trains per hour) was already the highest train service frequency for the TKO Line. Mr Jeffrey LAM said that if this was the case, there would be difficulty in responding to service breakdown or increase in service demand. He enquired about the contingency plan to evacuate passengers and supply alternative transport services in the event of service breakdown. Ms Miriam LAU and the Deputy Chairman also considered that MTRCL would be able to increase the number of trains to 30 per hour if required.

16. Atg HO/MTRCL elaborated that under the contingency plan, emergency buses would be mobilized immediately in the event of service suspension. SM-PPC/MTRCL confirmed that the scale of emergency bus deployments would vary according to the seriousness of the incident. She further explained that if it was anticipated that service would not resume within a certain period of time, MTRCL would issue service disruption warnings to the public through the media and platform announcements, and co-ordinate with other transport operators for arrangement of feeder buses as necessary to carry affected passengers.

17. Responding to members' query on why train frequency was not enhanced, SM-PPC/MTRCL responded that since increase of train service frequency depended on the signalling system and other related railway infrastructure, including station platforms, so that rail construction and system redesign would be involved, enhancement would take years to effect even if funding was available.

Other views and concerns

18. Ms Miriam LAU expressed concern about the Island Line's capability in accommodating the significant passenger growth resulting from the commissioning of the TKO Extension. Atg HO/MTRCL responded that MTRCL would monitor the service demand and where necessary, increase the number of trains of the Island Line towards Central during peak hours.

19. While welcoming the opening of LOHAS Park Station, Mr WONG Kwok-hing criticized the Administration and MTRCL for failing to honour their undertaking of constructing the Tung Chung West Station near Yat Tung Estate. He pointed out that over 50 000 residents had moved in there for eight years and the population would grow to 100 000, while that in LOHAS Park was only some 6 000 at present and was expected to grow to 60 000 over time. He considered that the failure to construct the Tung Chung West Station was unfair to residents of Yat Tung Estate as many of them had moved into this remotely located estate because they had believed in the Administration's and the then MTR Corporation's undertaking. He considered that the Administration was obliged to provide free interchange service between Yat Tung Estate and Tung Chung Station.

20. SM-PPC/MTRCL responded that it was originally planned that if there would be further reclamation for the expansion of the Tung Chung new town, an area in the proposed reclamation in the western part of Tung Chung would be reserved for provision of a railway station. Since the proposed reclamation works had not materialized, there was no plan to provide a Tung Chung West Station. She further clarified that MTRCL had not openly made any commitment regarding the construction of the station. The Under Secretary for Transport and Housing (USTH) invited members to note that USTH had given a detailed response to a question which was also raised by Mr WONG Kwok-hing on the same issue earlier. Mr WONG Kwok-hing opined that the Housing Department, which had issued relevant leaflets to residents of Yat Tung Estate, should be held responsible for misleading the residents. He urged USTH to look into the matter.

Further discussion on this item

21. In view of members' general concern about the reduction in the number of trains running between Po Lam Station and North Point Station by four from 22 to 18 in an hour, the Deputy Chairman opined that the Panel should further discuss this item. SM-PPC/MTRCL suggested that a site visit to Po Lam and Hang Hau Stations could be organized when the relevant facilities were ready, so as to introduce to members the new service arrangements. The Deputy Chairman said that the suggestion might be considered when the subject was further discussed.

- Admin 22. The Deputy Chairman requested information on the cost and time required for implementing the system enhancement works to enhance the frequency of trains running between TKO Station and North Point Station during peak hours to 2 minutes 10 seconds so that the number of trains would be increased to 28 in every hour, and on the cost and time for extending the Kwun Tong Line to LOHAS Park Station. Ms Miriam LAU
- Admin requested figures on patronage on the TKO Line from Po Lam Station /Hang Hau Station towards North Point during peak hours before and after opening of LOHAS Park Station, and the future passenger figures at LOHAS Park Station. After discussion, members agreed to add this item to the agenda of the next regular meeting in April 2009.

IV Proposed Speed Map Panels in the New Territories and progress update on the Intelligent Transport Systems

(LC Paper No. CB(1)1049/08-09(05) - Administration's paper on proposed Speed Map Panels in the New Territories and progress update on the intelligent transport systems

LC Paper No. CB(1)1050/08-09 - Background brief prepared by LegCo Secretariat)

23. USTH briefed members on the Administration's proposal to upgrade 6028TC "Speed Map Panels (SMPs) in the New Territories" to Category A, at an estimated cost of \$70.7 million, for the construction of five SMPs in the New Territories. He also briefed members on the progress of the development and implementation of the Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS) in Hong Kong. The Assistant Commissioner/Technical Services (AC/TS), with the aid of a power-point presentation, explained how SMPs operated to provide real-time traffic information to facilitate motorists to make informed route choices.

(Post-meeting note: The presentation material was issued to members by e-mail on 20 March 2009.)

Views and concerns about the proposed SMPs

Locations and number of SMPs

24. Highlighting extracts of the minutes of a meeting of the Yuen Long District Council (YLDC), which was tabled at the meeting, Mr WONG Kwok-hing considered the Administration's claim that members of the relevant DCs supported the current proposal as set out in its paper was misleading. He said that to his understanding, the Administration had yet to respond to YLDC's

request for the construction of additional SMPs in locations they had proposed. He opined that YLDC's support for the proposed SMPs should be ascertained before the Finance Committee discussed the current proposal.

Admin

25. AC/TS responded that while requesting the installation of more SMPs, YLDC had supported the current proposal. He explained that the Administration's plan was to experiment with SMPs on roads with high traffic flows first and if found useful, more SMPs would be constructed in due course. Mr WONG Kwok-hing opined that the Administration should supplement details of YLDC's views, including whether they supported the proposed locations of SMP numbered "S4" and "S5" set out in enclosure 1 to the Administration's paper and what other locations at which additional SMPs were proposed by YLDC for construction, and how YLDC's proposal would be addressed. He urged the Administration to provide a supplementary paper in this regard before the relevant meeting of the Public Works Subcommittee (PWSC). He added that he would not support the current proposal unless the requisite information was provided.

26. Pointing out that different DCs might have different requests regarding the installation of SMPs in their respective districts, Ms Miriam LAU enquired about how the Administration would handle such requests. Ms LAU considered that, instead of immediately installing more SMPs as requested, to ensure SMPs would be of real use to motorists, it might be more advisable to install SMPs at major locations first, and increase their number only after their effectiveness to motorists in districts concerned had been ascertained.

27. USTH pointed out that SMPs were newly introduced in Hong Kong, and the proposed SMPs would be installed on roads with the highest traffic flows and in advance of traffic divergent points where alternative routes were available. Installation of additional SMPs would be considered at the next stage taking into account the benefit brought by the proposed SMPs after their installation. He further clarified that while requesting the construction of more SMPs, YLDC in fact supported the current proposal.

Admin

28. Mr WONG Kwok-hing suggested that the Administration should also consult relevant trade organizations, in particular the Motor Transport Workers General Union, on the locations of the proposed SMPs since professional drivers were major road users. The Chairman requested the Administration to consult the trade before the relevant PWSC meeting.

29. Noting that some of the proposed SMPs would be constructed on expressways, Mr WONG Kwok-hing requested the Administration to ensure that the road sections that they would be located would allow motorists sufficient time to make route choices. AC/TS responded that this factor had already been taken into due consideration. As such, while the proposed SMPs would be sufficiently large to draw attention, the messages to be shown thereon

would be simple and concise. The SMPs would also be installed in advance of traffic divergent points where alternative routes were available. Motorists would become familiar with the use of the proposed SMPs over time and in perusing the messages thereon.

Their implementation programme

30. Referring to paragraph 6 of the Administration's paper and highlighting the need to expedite the development of ITS, the Deputy Chairman questioned why the proposed SMPs would take as long as two years and three months to construct. In response, AC/TS put forward the following justifications –

- (a) The construction of the relevant overhead sign gantries would necessitate the erection of gigantic mounting poles, and might involve piling works;
- (b) Most of the SMPs would be constructed on expressways. Lane closure might be required. In order to reduce the traffic impact, there might be a need to schedule the relevant construction works during non-peak hours, when traffic flow was lower;
- (c) There might be many underground cables and conduits under the roads concerned and care had to be exercised in relocating the facilities; and
- (d) To collect real-time data, vehicle speed detectors would need to be installed along the concerned routes every 1.5 kilometres.

SMP's design and relevant support measures

31. Ms Miriam LAU asked why some of the proposed SMPs would provide estimated journey time information while some would not, and expressed concern on how the latter type of SMPs could help motorists make informed route choices. AC/TS responded that the above difference had stemmed from the need to keep the relevant route maps simple and concise. As New Territories East was linked to the urban area via different tunnels and the SMPs concerned had to show all these options, to avoid complicating the route maps these SMPs would not further provide estimated journey time information. Instead, the information would be separately provided along the road. Ms LAU called for the conduct of trial runs to ensure that motorists could understand the traffic information on the SMPs and react in a timely manner to avoid being caught in congestion. The Chairman commented that

motorists would need time to adapt to SMPs.

32. Ms Miriam LAU requested the Administration to ensure that the traffic signs on the roads concerned would be improved in keeping with the installation of the proposed SMPs to direct motorists to alternative routes as necessary. AC/TS responded that as shown in the power-point presentation slide on San Tin Highway southbound near the Fairview Park, numbers were assigned to exits along expressways to assist motorists in choosing correct routes to destinations. In this regard, Ms LAU opined that in general, direction signs on expressways should be given well ahead of critical diversion points and repeated a few times. AC/TS responded that normally a set of three signs, namely, "Advance Direction Sign", "Final Advance Direction Sign" and "Direction Sign" would be provided at all junctions or locations at which there was a slip road branching from the main road to provide drivers with sufficient advance information.

Views and concerns about the Intelligent Transport Systems

33. The Deputy Chairman highlighted the difficulty in applying Global Positioning System in Hong Kong due to the density of the local population and tall buildings, and expressed concern that these factors might also affect similarly the effective operation of the Transport Information System (TIS), including the Intelligent Road Network and the Driving Route Search Service. In recognition that the successful implementation of ITS in Hong Kong would hinge on the effectiveness of the above TIS applications, he requested the Administration to provide an information paper on the effectiveness of the Intelligent Road Network and the Driving Route Search Service for members' perusal.

Admin

34. AC/TS responded that TIS was a centralized data warehouse for the collection, processing and dissemination of comprehensive transport information. He assured members that with TIS's installation completed in 2008 for internal use, applications for public use had been and would be launched by phases in 2009 as follows –

- (a) The Road Traffic Information Service had been launched in February 2009 to provide real-time predicted traffic speed on major roads, traffic conditions via Closed-Circuit Television images and special traffic news, thus allowing users to plan their journeys to avoid congestion;
- (b) The Public Transport Enquiry Service would be launched in April 2009 to enable passengers to, through the Internet, search for possible routes based on fare, estimated journey time and number of interchanges;

- (c) The Intelligent Road Network would be launched in the latter half of 2009 to enable value-added service providers in the private sector to develop applications of ITS, such as car navigation, fleet management systems and personalized information services for the public; and
- (d) The Driving Route Search Service would be launched in end 2009 to enable motorists to, through the Internet, search for their optimum driving routes on the digitized map based on options such as distance, time and toll.

35. The Deputy Chairman opined that SMPs might not be able to update motorists of traffic conditions downstream quickly enough to enable them to plan their journeys to avoid congestion. As such, to ensure timely search of the best route, traffic channel(s) on radio should also be provided to disseminate emergency traffic and transport news, and corresponding message signs should be installed along expressways to alert motorists to the need to tune in to the traffic channel(s) when necessary.

36. AC/TS responded that the Administration was actively examining a similar suggestion arising from the Feasibility Study on Deploying Advanced Technologies in Incident Management commissioned by the Transport Department in 2007. Through the traffic channel so established, information on traffic conditions at road harbour crossings and traffic accidents could be disseminated to the public.

37. Ms Miriam LAU pointed out that there were some obsolete electronic message signs along Tuen Mun Road. Expressing concern that they would block motorists' sight-lines and were misleading, Ms LAU called for their early removal.

38. Summing up, the Chairman said that the Panel supported submission of the current proposal to PWSC for further consideration.

V Any other business

39. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 10:20 am.