

立法會

Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(1)1444/09-10
(These minutes have been seen
by the Administration)

Ref : CB1/PL/TP/1

Panel on Transport

**Minutes of meeting held on
Friday, 22 January 2010, at 9:45 am
in Conference Room A of the Legislative Council Building**

- Members present** : Hon CHEUNG Hok-ming, GBS, JP (Chairman)
Hon Andrew CHENG Kar-foo (Deputy Chairman)
Ir Dr Hon Raymond HO Chung-tai, SBS, S.B.St.J., 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 KAM Nai-wai, MH
Hon WONG Sing-chi
Hon IP Wai-ming, MH
Hon Mrs Regina IP LAU Suk-ye, GBS, JP
- Members attending** : Hon CHAN Hak-kan
Hon IP Kwok-him, GBS, JP
- Members absent** : Hon LAU Kong-wah, JP
Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, SBS, JP
Hon Ronny TONG Ka-wah, SC

Public officers attending : **Agenda item IV**

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

Mrs Appollonia LIU
Principal Assistant Secretary for Transport and
Housing (Transport)

Mr Anthony LOO
Assistant Commissioner for Transport/Urban

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 Confirmation of minutes**
(LC Paper No. CB(1)922/09-10 — Minutes of the meeting held
on 23 October 2009)

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 October 2009 were confirmed.

- II Information papers issued since last meeting**
(LC Paper No. CB(1)805/09-10(01) — Administration's paper on
76TI - bus-bus interchanges
on Tuen Mun Road
LC Paper No. CB(1)838/09-10(01) — Submission on road safety
from a member of the
public
LC Paper No. CB(1)838/09-10(02) — Further submission on
Hong Kong Resorts'
proposal to allow taxis and
buses into Discovery Bay
from a member of the
public)

2. Members noted the above papers issued since the last meeting.
3. Referring to the Administration's paper (LC Paper No. CB(1)805/09-10(01)) on 76TI - bus-bus interchanges on Tuen Mun Road (the BBIs), Ms Miriam LAU said that although she appreciated the efforts made by the Administration to provide locations in close vicinity of the BBIs to allow for drop-off/pick-up of passengers taking other transport modes, she considered the proposed locations as set out in the paper inconvenient and hence unsuitable. She requested the Administration to identify better locations in consultation with the relevant District Councils to encourage public use of bus service at the BBIs. Mr Jeffrey LAM added that to prevent the waiting of vehicles from creating congestion, such drop-off/pick-up locations should be properly managed. In the case of remote new towns, park-and-ride facilities instead of drop-off/pick-up locations should be provided. The Chairman requested the Administration to follow up members' views and comments.

III Items for discussion at the next meeting scheduled for 26 February 2010

- (LC Paper No. CB(1)905/09-10(01) — List of outstanding items for discussion
LC Paper No. CB(1)905/09-10(02) — List of follow-up actions)

4. Members agreed to discuss the following items at the next regular meeting on Friday, 26 February 2010, at 8:30 am –
 - (a) Establishment of an assessment system for provision of hillside escalator links and elevator systems;
 - (b) Report of the effectiveness of the new arrangements under the Driving-offence Points System; and
 - (c) Proposed creation of one permanent Principal Transport Officer post in the Bus and Rail Branch of Transport Department.
5. Members also agreed to add the following three items to the Panel's list of outstanding items for discussion –
 - (a) Taxi breakdowns linked to LPG fill-ups;
 - (b) Regulation of motorcycles through a graded licence system; and
 - (c) Drug abuse by motorists.
6. As proposed by Ms Miriam LAU, members further agreed that the item on "Private driving instructors' licences" should be discussed in March 2010.

IV Improving pedestrian environment

- (LC Paper No. CB(1)905/09-10(03) — Administration's paper on improving pedestrian environment
- LC Paper No. CB(1)924/09-10 — Background brief on improving pedestrian environment prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat
- LC Paper No. CB(1)963/09-10(01) — Powerpoint presentation material on improving pedestrian environment)

Management and planning of pedestrian schemes

7. Mr Jeffrey LAM opined that while widening and greening footpaths to implement pedestrian schemes was preferable, there was a need to guard against incidents of corrosive fluid and objects being thrown from a height onto pedestrian precincts. In response to him on measures to reduce such hazards, the Under Secretary for Transport and Housing (USTH) explained that a number of departments, in particular the Home Affairs Department, were responsible for the management of pedestrian precincts. The Police had also been actively investigating the incidents and stepping up patrols in the areas concerned. The Administration noted that despite the incidents, the public in general welcomed the establishment of pedestrian precincts.

8. Mr Jeffrey LAM highlighted complaints about the noise nuisance created by the increase in pedestrian flow and commercial activities as a result of pedestrianization, and urged the Administration to strike a balance between the interests of the pedestrians, residents and shop operators when implementing pedestrian schemes. USTH pointed out that although the relevant enforcement agencies had already stepped up patrols and enforcement actions in pedestrian precincts, resolution of the noise problem hinged on co-operation from the public. USTH further pointed out that the implementation of some pedestrian schemes necessitated road closure and this often created inconvenience to loading and unloading activities and thus aroused the concern of affected shop operators. This often posed a great obstacle to be overcome when seeking support to expand or implement such pedestrian schemes.

9. Highlighting cases where escalators of footbridges were not functioning, Ms LI Fung-ying opined that to enable footbridges to function properly to provide convenience to the public, particularly the disabled and the elderly, satisfactory operation and maintenance of escalators of footbridges should be ensured. The Assistant Commissioner for Transport/Urban (AC for T/U) responded that the cases highlighted should be isolated incidents where

the escalators concerned were likely to be out of order or under maintenance. He undertook to relay the concern to the departments concerned for attention.

10. Mr Albert CHAN expressed support for the implementation of pedestrian schemes to enhance the provision of open space for public enjoyment. He said that the implementation of pedestrian schemes might attract opening of upper floor cafes, bookshops or salons in the buildings in the vicinity. He suggested that the Administration should take the above likely development into consideration when planning pedestrian schemes, and explore the need to relax restrictions on types of activities permitted to be carried out in the premises in the vicinity, so that upon the implementation of the pedestrian schemes such zoning or land use changes could be effected to satisfy justifiable rezoning requests. USTH responded that Mr CHAN's views would be relayed to the relevant bureau(x) and department(s) for consideration.

11. Mr Albert CHAN also made the following suggestions for the Administration's consideration -

- (a) pedestrian streets should be properly designed and managed to guard against obstruction caused by illegal hawking and promotional activities; and
- (b) the funding cap on the construction of footbridges should be lifted to ensure that adequate resources would be made available as necessary for ensuring proper design and provisioning of footbridges to be constructed in major districts.

Views and concerns regarding the proposed pedestrian subway system in Causeway Bay

Provision of underground shops

12. The Deputy Chairman referred to the policy initiative highlighted in the 2009-2010 Policy Address of making "provision at suitable locations to connect the pedestrian subway system in Causeway Bay with the concourse of the MTR station and large shopping malls", and expressed disappointment that the pedestrian subways proposed to be constructed to link the Causeway Bay MTR station with Victoria Park as well as the busy streets in the heart of Causeway Bay and its junction with Happy Valley would in general be only six metres wide, and that underground shops like those in Japan and Taiwan would unlikely be accommodated. He enquired about the technical feasibility of widening the proposed subway to 10 or even 12 metres. Mr Jeffrey LAM and Mr Tommy CHEUNG echoed his views. Mr LAM, in particular, opined that underground shopping streets should as far as practicable be provided in Causeway Bay considering their positive effect in minimizing vehicle-pedestrian conflicts.

13. USTH responded that the Administration also intended to widen the proposed subways as far as possible to facilitate integration with the Causeway Bay shopping area and ground level pedestrian flow. However, the relevant consultancy study had revealed difficulties in this regard. This notwithstanding, the Administration would strive to ensure connectivity to large shopping malls along the way as far as practicable. AC for T/U supplemented that having regard to the usable underground area along the alignment and the limitations in construction imposed by existing buildings, a width of six metres was the maximum that could be allowed for the proposed subways along most sections. In fact, the streets in Causeway Bay were in general narrow and those at the ground level were mostly only seven to 10 metres wide.

Admin

14. The Deputy Chairman requested the Administration to provide further details on the underground conditions of Causeway Bay to show the spots along Great George Street to Leighton Road where underground shops could be accommodated. While agreeing to provide the details, AC for T/U emphasized that the Administration had in fact explored in detail the feasibility of widening the proposed subways. It was found that the scope of increasing the subway width was limited. It might however be possible to provide vending machines and ATM machines that would not affect pedestrian movement at certain locations in the proposed subway system.

Alignment options

15. Mr Tommy CHEUNG considered it unacceptable that the Administration on the one hand recommended the alignment option via Matheson Street for the proposed subway extension from Kai Chiu Road to Wong Nai Chung Road, and on the other hand, further recommended that the construction of the Matheson Street section be held in abeyance on grounds that there were buildings along both sides of Matheson Street and the road was too narrow. He expressed concern that, as presently informed by the Administration, the site could only accommodate a subway of a width of three metres pending redevelopment of the buildings concerned. Pointing out that the completion of the full length of this proposed subway extension might as a result take years, Mr CHEUNG questioned why the Administration should have recommended the above alignment option in the first place. He also enquired whether other alignment options such as the option via Percival Street could be explored. In his view, the Wan Chai District Council (WCDC) might prefer other alignment options if it was aware of the above situation. Moreover, the proposed subway extension should be provided early considering the Administration's undertaking to construct it to link up Causeway Bay with Happy Valley when deciding not to provide a MTR station in Happy Valley.

16. USTH responded that other alignment options had already been explored but they were found technically difficult if not infeasible for various reasons, e.g. the existence of a large culvert under Canal Road and tramlines along Percival Street. The alignment option via Matheson Street was therefore the most viable although a subway width of three metres would be inadequate to mitigate the danger that might arise from possible serious crowdedness and confusion. He assured members that the Administration was aware of the wish of the public to extend the proposed subway system to the vicinity of Happy Valley, and was in fact already seriously exploring other alignment options.

17. At Mr WONG Kwok-hing's request, AC for T/U briefed members on the details of the four alignment options considered for the proposed subway extension from Kai Chiu Road to Wong Nai Chung Road as well as the factors considered when deciding on the option to take forward, namely, pedestrian flow, attractiveness to pedestrians, construction/engineering constraints, traffic impact and possible public nuisance during construction. Members noted that Matheson Street's pedestrian flow (6 000 per hour) was the largest, followed by those of Percival Street and the other two alignment options at only 3 000 per hour or less. The Administration therefore preferred the Matheson Street option, and would further explore in the context of the detailed technical feasibility study whether the section could be widened to more than three metres. He also explained that WCDC, though aware of the above width constraint, still supported the Matheson Street option, and had urged the Administration to continue to explore ways to overcome the constraint. In response to Mr WONG Kwok-hing, AC for T/U advised that the Administration was also re-considering the alignment option via Percival Street to see whether the tramline constraint mentioned above could be overcome.

18. Mr WONG Kwok-hing requested to put on record his view that if a subway of three or four metres wide were really built, it would be useless. He considered that the Administration should re-consider this and not to build such a narrow subway.

Other views and concerns

19. Noting that street entrances/exits with lift(s) and escalator(s) respectively would be provided at Russell Street, Mr KAM Nai-wai expressed concern about narrowing of the footpath concerned considering the large pedestrian flow that might gather during New Year count-downs at the adjacent Times Square. AC for T/U responded that notwithstanding narrowing of the footpath, it was expected that upon completion of the proposed subways, congestion at ground level outside Times Square would be relieved. Nevertheless, he undertook that Mr KAM's concerns would be taken into consideration when conducting detailed design of the proposed subways.

20. In response to Mr KAM Nai-wai's enquiry on whether the Administration was going to construct all sections of the proposed subway system in Causeway Bay at the same time, USTH advised that a staged-implementation approach would be pursued, so that the subway from Victoria Park to Russell Street would be constructed first to avoid being held up by the width constraint of the Matheson Street section.

Views and concerns regarding the proposed pedestrian footbridges in Mong Kok

Public consultation

21. Noting that improvements to the pedestrian environment of Mong Kok would take over two years to implement, Ms LI Fung-ying urged the Administration to properly assess and mitigate the impacts of the relevant works to ensure public acceptance. In particular, she cautioned that the proposal to construct pedestrian footbridges to link up the two MTR stations (Mong Kok and Mong Kok East) to the vicinity of Tai Kok Tsui through central Mong Kok (the proposed footbridges) would affect residents and private properties, and stressed the need to conduct thorough public consultation.

22. In response, USTH and AC for T/U recalled that the public had not raised any strong opposing views when the existing Mong Kok Road footbridge was constructed. Members of Yau Tsim Mong District Council (YTMDC) and the Area Committees concerned were also in general supportive of the proposed footbridges. This notwithstanding, the Administration undertook to conduct thorough consultation and map out effective mitigation measures to alleviate the impacts of construction of the proposed footbridges.

23. The Chairman said that to allow sufficient time for discussion, he would extend the meeting by 15 minutes.

24. Ms LI Fung-ying urged the Administration to ensure smooth implementation of infrastructure projects through sincere efforts to address public concerns and comprehensive consultation on the project details. Mr IP Wai-ming shared her views, and quoted as an example Langham Place, which in his view was out of place in Mong Kok and its construction would have met with opposition if residents had been thoroughly consulted beforehand. Ms Miriam LAU, however, considered that Langham Place was very popular among young people and it had in fact helped revitalize Mong Kok.

25. In response, USTH assured members that having regard to the scale of the proposed footbridges, sufficient public consultation would be conducted. He added that construction of the proposed footbridges would be gazetted under the Roads (Works, Use and Compensation) Ordinance (Cap. 370), and

any person affected by the proposed works or the use in relation to a road scheme might lodge an objection within 60 days after the gazettal.

26. Mr IP Wai-ming was unassured, pointing out that members of the public seldom paid attention to gazette notices. To obviate disputes, the Administration should actively consult the parties concerned. In response, USTH reiterated that the Administration was mindful of the need to conduct active consultation with all affected parties, including the shops in the vicinity, before and after the gazettal of the road works. In fact, the Administration had already consulted YTMDC and local personalities regarding the proposed footbridges and their initial response was supportive.

Impacts of the proposed footbridges

27. Mr IP Wai-ming raised concern that foundations of the proposed footbridges, which would occupy part of the roads underneath and narrow them, might decrease their vehicular capacity and affect air quality. Ms Miriam LAU expressed similar views in relation to the proposed footbridge along Argyle Street. AC for T/U responded that greening and streetscaping of the roads underneath might help mitigate the above impacts and that their initial investigation showed that traffic flows would not be unduly affected. He assured members that their views would be taken into consideration when conducting detailed design of the footbridges.

28. Though supportive of the proposal to link the existing Mong Kok Road footbridge to Mong Kok East Station to provide direct connection, Ms Miriam LAU expressed grave concern about the impacts of the construction of the proposed Argyle Street footbridge on the already congested Argyle Street. In her view, the existing pedestrian subways linking Langham Place with the Mong Kok Station and Argyle Centre should be extended to obviate the need to construct this footbridge. She urged the Administration to consider adopting a subway option instead of footbridge.

29. USTH and AC for T/U responded that various options including the above subway option had been carefully explored during consultation. Most YTMDC members considered that as the Mong Kok Road footbridge was already in existence, the option of expanding the existing footbridge system was appropriate, the construction and maintenance cost of which would be less costly than subways. AC for T/U assured members that the Administration would work out effective temporary traffic management measures to minimize disruptions during construction. A phased approach would also be adopted and the Tong Mi Road to Langham Place section of the proposed Argyle Street footbridge would be taken forward in the first instance, while construction of the remaining section from Langham Place to Sai Yee Street would not commence until commissioning of the proposed Central Kowloon Route in

time to divert traffic away from Argyle Street to help minimize the above disruptions.

V Any other business

30. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 10:45 am.

Council Business Division 1
Legislative Council Secretariat
26 March 2010