

立法會
Legislative Council

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(These minutes have been seen
by the Administration)

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Panel on Transport

**Minutes of meeting held on
Friday, 22 October 2010, at 8:30 am
in the Chamber of the Legislative Council Building**

- Members present** : Hon Andrew CHENG Kar-foo (Chairman)
Hon CHEUNG Hok-ming, GBS, JP (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 LI Fung-ying, SBS, JP
Hon WONG Kwok-hing, MH
Hon LEE Wing-tat
Hon Jeffrey LAM Kin-fung, SBS, JP
Hon Ronny TONG Ka-wah, SC
Hon KAM Nai-wai, MH
Hon WONG Sing-chi
Hon IP Wai-ming, MH
Hon Tanya CHAN
Hon Albert CHAN Wai-yip
- Members absent** : Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, SBS, JP
Hon CHAN Hak-kan
Hon Mrs Regina IP LAU Suk-ye, GBS, JP
Hon LEUNG Kwok-hung

Public officers attending : Agenda item III

Ms Eva CHENG
Secretary for Transport and Housing

Mr Francis HO
Permanent Secretary for Transport and Housing
(Transport)

Mr S M YAU
Under Secretary for Transport and Housing

Mr Joseph LAI
Commissioner for Transport

Mr K K LAU
Director of Highways

Ms Maisie CHENG
Deputy Secretary for Transport and Housing
(Transport)1

Ms Rebecca PUN
Deputy Secretary for Transport and Housing
(Transport)2

Mr Alan CHU
Deputy Secretary for Transport and Housing
(Transport)3

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

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

Miss Pauline NG
Legislative Assistant (1)5

I Information papers issued since the last regular meeting on 23 July 2010

LC Paper No. 2638/09-10(01)	CB(1) - Administration's letter dated 22 July 2010 providing financial information in regard to the Western Harbour Crossing
LC Paper No. 2681/09-10(01)	CB(1) - Administration's paper on Western Harbour Crossing tolls and a background paper prepared by the Western Harbour Tunnel Company Limited
LC Paper CB(1)2682/09-10(01)	No. - Letter dated 29 July 2010 from Hon WONG Sing-chi to the Chairman of the MTR Corporation Limited on the data privacy issues involving Octopus Cards
LC Paper CB(1)2709/09-10(01)	No. - Submission complaining about the error committed by the Transport Department when renewing driving licence as reported in the media from a member of the public
LC Paper CB(1)2709/09-10(02)	No. - Submission proposing the construction of a bridge to link up Kowloon and Hong Kong from a member of the public
LC Paper CB(1)2754/09-10(01)	No. - Submission on Mainland drivers in Hong Kong from a member of the public
LC Paper CB(1)2754/09-10(02)	No. - Submission opposing to the proposed fare increase by The Kowloon Motor Bus Company (1933) Limited/Long Win Bus Company Limited from Civic Party

LC CB(1)2754/09-10(03)	Paper	No. - Submission complaining about the driving behaviours of red minibus drivers from a member of the public
LC CB(1)2812/09-10(01)	Paper	No. - Submission from the H.K. Public Light Bus Owner & Driver Association
LC CB(1)2862/09-10(01)	Paper	No. - Submission on litter on roads from a member of the public
LC CB(1)2862/09-10(02)	Paper	No. - Submission on the design of the vehicle licence from a member of the public)

Members noted the above papers issued since the last regular meeting on 23 July 2010.

II Items for discussion at the next meeting scheduled for 26 November 2010

(LC Paper No. CB(1)54/10-11(01) - List of outstanding items for discussion

LC Paper No. CB(1)54/10-11(02) - List of follow-up actions)

2. Members agreed to discuss the following items proposed by the Administration at the next regular meeting on 26 November 2010 –

(a) Proposals to combat drug driving; and

(b) Fare increase application from the Kowloon Motor Bus Company (1933) Limited and Long Win Bus Company Limited.

3. Members expressed concern about the Tsuen Wan Line train fault incident on the previous day (the Incident) in which train services between Yau Ma Tei and Jordan were suspended for three hours as a result of a broken overhead line contact wire at Yau Ma Tei Station. Ms Miriam LAU, the incumbent Chairman of the Subcommittee on Matters Relating to Railways (the Subcommittee), informed members that the Incident had been scheduled for discussion at the Subcommittee meeting on 4 November 2010 at 8:30 am.

4. The Chairman reminded members that a special meeting had been scheduled for 9 November 2010 at 8:30 am to discuss "Consultancy Study on Rationalizing the Utilization of Road Harbour Crossings (RHCs)". The Secretary for Transport and Housing (STH) confirmed that the consultancy study had explored different options of solutions for tackling the uneven distribution of traffic among the three RHCs, including the buy-back option. STH further informed members that apart from consulting the Panel, public consultation would also be conducted on the findings and recommendations of the consultancy study.

VII Briefing by the Secretary for Transport and Housing on the transport policy initiatives featuring in the 2010-2011 Policy Address

(LC Paper No. CB(1)53/10-11(01) - Administration's paper on policy initiatives of the Transport and Housing Bureau under the 2010-2011 Policy Address and Policy Agenda

Address by the Chief Executive at the Legislative Council meeting on 13 October 2010 - "Sharing Prosperity for a Caring Society"

The 2010-2011 Policy Address - "Policy Agenda")

5. STH briefed members on the new and on-going land transport-related policy initiatives of the Transport and Housing Bureau (THB) featured in the 2010-2011 Policy Address.

The Tsuen Wan Line train fault incident on 21 October 2010 and railway safety

6. Mr WONG Kwok-hing was keen to ensure adequacy of resources devoted to keeping up proper maintenance of old railway lines to uphold railway safety. The Chairman questioned whether deteriorating maintenance quality was the cause of the Incident. STH responded that the MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL) had put in place a detailed monitoring system to ensure that its maintenance work met the required standards. In case of railway incidents, both the Transport Department (TD) and the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD) would follow up with MTRCL and request for an incident report. EMSD and TD would monitor the progress made by MTRCL in identifying the cause of the incident and implementing improvement measures.

7. Mr Jeffrey LAM shared the concern about the increasing frequency of railway incidents, and emphasized the need to ensure proper maintenance of every part of the MTR system including even physical structures such as railway tunnels. He considered it necessary for MTRCL to provide details of its maintenance system to the Panel.

8. Ms LI Fung-ying stressed that it was necessary to conduct an overall review of the management of the MTR system to prevent recurrence of railway incidents considering the travelling public's reliance on rail service. Mr WONG Sing-chi shared her views, pointing out that the frequency of railway incidents that spanned over 30 minutes was high but no improvements were made. STH acknowledged that a large number of people had been affected by the Incident. She stressed that the Administration attached great importance to the monitoring of railway safety.

9. Mr Albert CHAN highlighted past railway incidents involving different parts of the MTR system, and expressed regret that a high railway service quality could not be maintained. He opined that to rectify the situation, the salary level of MTRCL's senior management should be linked to MTRCL's incident rate. The Chairman considered that if each time when incidents occurred, the Administration simply accepted MTRCL's incident reports without issuing any warning letters to or imposing any penalties on the Corporation, railway incidents would only become more frequent and serious. Considering that the public had become increasingly concerned about the situation, the Chairman urged the Administration to keep incident statistics to provide an objective basis upon which MTRCL would be penalized where necessary in order to hold its senior management accountable.

10. In response, STH reiterated that the Administration attached a great deal of importance to railway safety and, in recognition of the seriousness of the Incident and the great inconvenience caused to the commuting public, an investigation would be conducted to find out the causes of the Incident and action would be taken to ensure MTRCL would seriously implement all necessary improvement measures. She stressed the need to act according to the law and the Operating Agreement. While the Administration would explore the suggestion of using statistics on railway incidents as an indicator for reference in monitoring the performance of MTRCL, the establishment of any new systems as proposed by members above would require careful study.

11. Mr LAU Kong-wah expressed concern about the recurrence of railway incidents and highlighted the importance of maintaining the standard of MTRCL's service. He said that he was not sure whether aging of the railway system, or rather manpower constraint as a result of MTRCL's business expansion overseas, was the real cause of railway incidents. He urged the Administration to draw the attention of the MTRCL Board of Directors to the following –

- (a) The need to ascertain whether it was because of MTRCL's expansion into building and operating railways and other businesses on the Mainland that it could no longer focus on its core transport business in Hong Kong as before, as some of its professional staff might need to be redeployed to oversee its Mainland business; and
- (b) The MTRCL Board of Directors should ensure that MTRCL's management would be held accountable for the occurrence of railway incidents considering their impacts on the commuting public and Hong Kong as a whole.

12. STH said she noted that the MTRCL staff responsible for the operation and maintenance of railway service in Hong Kong would not be redeployed for undertaking overseas projects. She added that MTRCL was keen to maintain the quality of the railway service in Hong Kong in recognition that this was the Corporation's core business.

13. Addressing Mr WONG Kwok-hing's concerns about the chaos arising from the Incident, STH said that the Administration had requested MTRCL to submit an incident report on the details, such as the cause(s), contingency measures and improvements to be made. The Administration would also examine with MTRCL how incidents involving key sections of the MTR system could be more efficiently handled, and how information on railway incidents could be updated as recovery work progressed, so that affected passengers could make informed decisions for their journeys.

14. Ms LI Fung-ying highlighted the chaos that had arisen from the Incident at Yau Ma Tei Station and the cross-harbour tunnel bus stops situated at the entrance/exit of the Cross Harbour Tunnel on the Hung Hom side, and urged the Administration and MTRCL to improve handling of railway incidents. STH responded that the Administration was already discussing with MTRCL to not only review its overall emergency plan but also ensure that each station would devise its own station-specific

contingency plans for deployment to handle extended train service disruptions under different scenarios, including manpower deployment, crowd control, and how communication between MTRCL's technical staff and platform staff could be enhanced to advise passengers of the causes of incidents, loop service patterns and alternative transport routes/modes.

15. Highlighting the confusion in the dissemination of incident information to stranded passengers and the mobilization of emergency buses (e-buses) during the Incident, Mr Albert CHAN and Ms LI Fung-ying considered that MTRCL's contingency arrangements should be improved. To facilitate assessment of the adequacy and appropriateness of the contingency measures taken during the Incident, Mr CHAN considered it necessary for the Administration and MTRCL to disclose details on MTRCL's established contingency arrangements, such as the types of bus operators to be notified, how quick were the e-buses required to report for duty, the number of e-buses to be deployed, etc. In this regard, he estimated that over 200 000 people would otherwise have travelled along the affected section of the railway during peak hours every hour if not for the Incident. He considered the number of e-buses deployed gravely insufficient to serve these passengers during the Incident.

16. While agreeing to request MTRCL to disclose the requisite information, STH pointed out that there were general guidelines on mobilization of e-buses and notification of other public transport operators for provision of relief transport service. To ensure effective handling of incidents, STH agreed that contingency measures should be suitably adjusted by taking into consideration the circumstances and emergency level of the railway incidents concerned. She reiterated that station-specific contingency plans should be drawn up by MTRCL.

17. Mr LAU Kong-wah urged the Administration to ensure that proper contingency arrangements would be made by both MTRCL and the Administration to minimize the impacts of railway incidents. In particular, the Administration should map out its own contingency plan in this regard to ensure the early provision of necessary support services.

18. STH responded that TD and EMSD would examine the report on the Incident to identify areas for improvements and review the need to modify contingency measures. It was important to provide to all parties concerned clear and precise information when railway incidents occurred, e.g. train services which were still available and the operation of e-buses to enable the commuting public to take alternative transport modes/routes;

and to broadcast such information in a timely manner. Meanwhile, the Administration would continue to actively follow up the Incident by requesting MTRCL to provide the report early, and to work out improvements to its implementation of the contingency arrangements.

19. Miss Tanya CHAN asked whether any deadline had been set for MTRCL to submit the report on the Incident, and whether it would be made open. She also enquired when the Administration was notified of the Incident on the previous day and how it had worked with MTRCL in handling the Incident. STH responded that EMSD and TD would follow up with MTRCL and a report would be submitted to the Railways Subcommittee before its meeting on 4 November 2010.

20. Ir Dr Raymond HO highlighted the importance of timely dissemination of incident information, and considered it necessary for MTRCL to provide radio reception or upgrade its information dissemination system on board its trains to provide passengers with the latest information about railway incidents, such as the exits leading to e-bus service pick-up points. He also considered the deployment of additional station staff to help handle railway incidents necessary. STH responded that as learnt from MTRCL previously, major works for the establishment of a new broadcast system were necessary to provide radio reception on board trains. Detailed negotiation with MTRCL to work out the resources required and the feasibility would therefore be necessary. Ir Dr HO highlighted the substantial profits made by MTRCL every year, and said that considering the low technology and great benefits involved in ensuring radio reception, STH should as a member of the MTRCL Board ensure provision of such basic service. The Chairman shared Ir Dr HO's views and urged the Administration to take on board members' views in this regard.

21. Mr IP Wai-ming expressed regrets that the Administration and MTRCL had failed to implement appropriate contingency measures during the Incident and prevent chaos from arising. Worse still, the call upon the commuting public to use the Tseung Kwan O Line or the Tung Chung Line to cross the harbour had only resulted in serious congestion at the North Point Station. He therefore considered it necessary for the Administration to explain, in the paper to be submitted to the Subcommittee, what role TD had performed in the Incident, particularly on whether TD's Emergency Transport Co-ordination Centre (ETCC) had come into operation during the Incident and if not, the reasons. The Commissioner for Transport said that ETCC operated round the clock. On the day of the Incident, as soon as ETCC was alerted by MTRCL of

the Incident, it immediately took action. Apart from urging MTRCL to take contingency measures and mobilize e-bus services as required, TD had also alerted other public transport operators, including ferry operators, for the provision of supplementary relief transport, in particular cross-harbour tunnel bus service. TD had also liaised with the mass media immediately for dissemination of news about the service suspension and the interim service arrangements. The Commissioner for Transport undertook to provide further details in the paper to be submitted to the Subcommittee.

22. Mr LEE Wing-tat considered that no railway incident in the past ten years had been handled properly. In particular, he pointed out that chaos in the boarding activities for e-buses during the Incident could have been avoided if MTRCL had advised affected passengers to take the short walk from Yau Ma Tei to Jordan (and vice versa) to use the loop services then available between Tsuen Wan Station and Yau Ma Tei Station, and between Jordan Station and Central Station. The Chairman added that to facilitate prompt, efficient response to railway incidents, the Administration should consider requiring MTRCL to maintain its own e-bus fleet, and maintain sufficient MTR in-house staff instead of relying on contractor staff for handling urgent needs during incidents. The Administration noted members' views and suggestions on necessary improvements.

(Post-meeting note: An information paper entitled "MTR Tsuen Wan Line Train Service Disruption on 21 October 2010" provided by the Administration was issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(1)277/10-11(02) on 2 November 2010.)

Transport planning

23. Ms Miriam LAU said that the Administration had been forward looking in transport planning in the eighties and nineties, e.g. it conducted the Comprehensive Transport Study (CTS) every ten years to gauge changes in the overall traffic conditions of Hong Kong, in particular the increase in cross-boundary traffic. She considered that the absence of plans for conducting the Fourth CTS (CTS-4) was undesirable because the Third CTS had only formulated a transport strategy up to 2016. Moreover, the Ten Major Infrastructure Projects were not all transport-related and hence could not address traffic changes. Furthermore, unlike before, environmental polices and transport policies were presently separately overseen by THB and the Environment Bureau (ENB). If CTS-4 was not conducted to help enhance co-operation

between the two bureaux, there might be difficulty in ensuring that due regard would be given to environmental issues in addition to budgetary constraints when determining what to do to achieve and maintain efficient transport services for passengers and freight.

24. STH expressed agreement with Ms Miriam LAU on the need for forward planning, and pointed out that the majority of the Ten Major Infrastructural Projects, namely, the South Island Line (East) (SIL), the Shatin to Central Link (SCL), the Tuen Mun-Chek Lap Kok Link and the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link (XRL) were results of forward planning to meet the medium and long term transport needs of Hong Kong. The Administration would make sustained efforts and submit its application for funding to review and update the Railway Development Strategy 2000 to the Subcommittee for discussion at its meeting on 4 November 2010. She further said that THB and ENB were in fact co-operating satisfactorily. To help encourage the use of environmentally-friendly buses, THB had introduced provisions in relevant franchise agreements to require the bus companies concerned to adopt, as far as reasonably practicable, the latest commercially available and proven technologies to reduce exhaust and noise emissions in setting specifications for acquiring new buses. STH said that CTS-4 would be conducted when appropriate, adding that the existing and the transport infrastructures under implementation were able to meet traffic service demands as far beyond as 10 to 20 years later.

Local railway projects

25. Mr WONG Kwok-hing and the Deputy Chairman considered that the Northern Link (NOL) was important to Hong Kong's development and enquired about its implementation timetable. Mr WONG Sing-chi sought details on the planned transport services, in particular rail services, for the proposed Kwu Tung New Development Area (NDA) and the Fanling North NDA, the development of which was under consultation. Pointing out that the large Frontier Closed Area was also going to be opened, Mr WONG Sing-chi opined that planning of rail services for Northwest New Territories (NWNT), including NOL, should start early. STH responded that the Administration recognized the need to construct NOL to link up the East Rail and the West Rail to serve residents of NWNT. However, there was a need to set priorities for various railway projects and the review and update of the Railway Development Study 2000 would include a review of NOL.

26. Ms Miriam LAU shared Mr WONG Sing-chi's view on the need to construct NOL early. She recalled that the Administration had recognized the need for NOL as early as 2005 but later deferred it as priority was given to the implementation of the Hong Kong section of XRL, which however would not serve residents of NWNT.

27. The Deputy Chairman highlighted the need to construct a rail line to link up the Tsuen Wan Line and the Light Rail in Tuen Mun, and asked whether the Administration had any plans to study the above rail link and if so, the timetable. STH responded that as the West Rail was available to serve NWNT, it might not be desirable to construct the above rail link lest there would be duplication of service. Moreover, since the link would inevitably run along the coastline and hence need to be enclosed in an underground tunnel to minimize its visual impacts, significant costs would be incurred for its construction. The Administration therefore considered construction of the link neither cost-effective nor environment-friendly.

28. Miss Tanya CHAN enquired about the timetable for the construction of the North Hong Kong Island Line to improve road-based traffic congestion in the area concerned. STH responded that similar to NOL, the North Hong Kong Island Line would be examined at a later stage in the context of the review and update of the Railway Development Study 2000. At present, it was planned that the North Hong Kong Island Line would be connected to Admiralty by SCL via interchange at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre. It was hoped that by further extending the railway line to Western District, the rail service for residents of North Hong Kong Island could be further improved.

29. Mr KAM Nai-wai asked about the Administration's latest estimate of SIL's construction cost, which as reported earlier would exceed \$10 billion. He also asked about the funding arrangement for the project, in particular whether the property development above the Wong Chuk Hang Station would be granted to MTRCL to fill the funding gap, and whether other funding options were available. He further enquired whether construction works for SIL would commence in 2011 as scheduled.

30. In response, STH made the following points –

- (a) The cost first quoted for SIL, at \$7 billion, had been worked out according to the 2006 price level. However, the prices of construction materials such as steel went up significantly in the past few years. Even though no changes had been made

to the project scope, the cost of SIL had still gone up 55% by 2009. Since various changes needed to be made to the design of the project, such as changes to the rail alignment for the section adjacent to the Tung Wah Group of Hospitals Jockey Club Rehabilitation Complex, the final cost estimates had yet to be worked out. However, the details would be reported to the Legislative Council (LegCo) in due course; and

- (b) As to whether property development rights would be granted to bridge the funding gap, it had originally been proposed that the Wong Chuk Hang Estate site and the site to the north of the Ocean Park Station would both be reserved for private housing development for the purpose. However, after considering the low to medium building development density of the latter site, it was decided that only the Wong Chuk Hang Estate site would be allocated for private housing development.

Cross-boundary traffic and infrastructure projects

31. In response to the Deputy Chairman's enquiry about the progress of the Hong Kong-Shenzhen Western Express Line (WEL), STH elaborated that the preliminary feasibility study on it had confirmed the technical feasibility of its alignment. Apart from enhancing the co-operation between the Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA) and Shenzhen Airport, another major function of WEL was to promote the development of Qianhai and NWNT. As such, there was a need to ascertain the scale and pace of the development of these two areas before detailed design of WEL could proceed. With the development of Qianhai and NWNT being pushed ahead, more planning parameters would be available to enable the Administration to conduct more in-depth studies on WEL, and to examine various alignment options and their respective patronage forecasts, the functionality of the railway, its technical standards, operational and service requirements, etc. STH further elaborated that WEL would serve as a rail connection between the two airports to create a split hub with synergy from the complementary strengths of the two airports, i.e. with Shenzhen handling domestic flights and Hong Kong focusing on international routes. Mainland travellers could fly overseas from HKIA, and Hong Kong travellers could fly to other Mainland cities from the Shenzhen Airport.

32. Mr Jeffrey LAM enquired about the implementation timetable of WEL, and questioned if there was really a need to wait till planning details of Qianhai and NWNT were available before WEL could be further planned. In response, STH reiterated that to ensure WEL could cater to the needs of the two development areas, there was a need to ascertain the planning parameters, such as details of the NDA of Hung Shui Kiu, before planning of WEL could further proceed. The implementation timetable of WEL was therefore unavailable but the Administration would closely monitor the planning progress of the two areas.

33. Referring to the Hong Kong section of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge (HZMB), Mr Jeffrey LAM expressed concern about the scale of the works concerned, the need for land resumption, the benefits HZMB could bring to the economy and the logistics industry of Hong Kong. He asked when the preliminary design proposal of the Hong Kong section would be ready for the Panel to consider. STH responded that with the required funding already secured, international tendering was underway for the HZMB Main Bridge Project. As for the local works, site investigation and design works for the Hong Kong Link Road were underway and no large-scale land resumption would be required. For the Hong Kong Boundary Crossing Facilities, an international design competition had been organized. The Deputy Secretary for Transport and Housing (Transport)1 (DS(T)1) added that the Administration's plan was to report on the relevant progress to the Panel in the first half of 2011.

34. Ms Miriam LAU highlighted the increase in cross-boundary traffic with the introduction of ad hoc quotas at the Shenzhen Bay Port and, with the construction of HZMB, cross-boundary traffic was expected to be further increased. Ms LAU stressed the need to establish a system for mutual recognition of the results of inspection of cross-boundary vehicles, so as to facilitate the issue of cross-boundary motor vehicle insurance to obviate the need for cross-boundary vehicles to take out vehicle insurance separately in Hong Kong and on the Mainland. STH indicated agreement with Ms LAU on the need to explore room for co-operation on cross-boundary traffic, and reported that as far as the proposed introduction of ad hoc quota was concerned, experts from both sides agreed to sort out implementation details with a view to rolling out a trial scheme in the following years.

35. Mr LEE Wing-tat asked about the progress in rehousing villagers of Choi Yuen Tsuen (CYT), which had to be cleared to make way for the construction of XRL. He recalled that the Administration had

undertaken not to request the villagers to relocate before completion of the new village reprovioned to relocate them. He expressed concern about delays in this regard, and enquired whether the timetable for clearance and relocation could be adjusted. He also enquired about the status of villagers who were not verified as genuine farmers and could not even seek rehousing in public rental housing (PRH). In his view, flexibility should be exercised to rehouse these villagers in PRH even if they could not meet the relevant requirements.

36. DS(T)1 responded that the clearance exercise would be conducted in phases. The exercise was in its first stage with hoarding being erected, followed by resumption of deserted farmland, and demolition of structures already surrendered to the Administration. Where possible, works would be conducted on these cleared sites first, and the Administration would adopt a compassionate approach in handling households with special needs. In fact, the Administration had been closely liaising with the villagers, and would actively consider their requests for assistance. As to the some 40 villagers who were short-term tenants and stayed in the temporary structures for a few years only, they could only be rehoused to PRH or interim housing. Except for a few cases which were still being vetted, most of those who qualified for PRH were already selecting flats and over ten had in fact already done so. About ten households were not eligible for PRH. The Administration was fully prepared to make arrangement for them to move to interim housing if they wished so. Highlighting the need to give special consideration to the situation of CYT villagers, Mr LEE Wing-tat called upon STH to exercise discretion to rehouse these villagers in PRH as requested.

37. To allow sufficient time for discussion, the Chairman sought members' agreement to extending the meeting by 30 minutes. No members expressed objection.

Other transport-related projects

38. Mr Ronny TONG queried why there was no mention of local transport initiatives in the 2010-2011 Policy Address. In response to him on plans to construct the fourth RHC, STH responded that care had to be exercised in making such plans considering the following –

- (a) the need for connecting road networks;

- (b) the difficulty in justifying harbour reclamation to provide land for the ingress/egress and connecting roads of the fourth RHC;
- (c) the fact that SCL, also a cross-harbour link, was already being taken forward; and
- (d) the need to encourage use of mass transport services rather than driving, etc.

STH said that there was at present no plan to construct the fourth RHC given the above considerations.

39. Mr IP Wai-ming enquired about the progress and priority of the construction of HKIA's third runway as he was concerned that the capacity of HKIA might reach its design capacity in 2017. STH responded that the possibility of building a third runway was being studied under the Hong Kong International Airport Master Plan 2030 Study. Upon completion of the Study, there would be a public consultation process, which was expected to take place in the first half of 2011. In the meantime, with the implementation of a new air traffic control system and the provision of more air traffic controllers, the airport mid-field expansion project would increase the handling capacity of the airport to 70 million passengers and 6 million tonnes of cargo per annum in 2020.

40. Mr WONG Kwok-hing asked when the plan to improve the pedestrian environment in Yuen Long town centre would be ready for consultation with the Panel. The Director of Highways (D of Hy) responded that a public engagement exercise on the project was undertaken to facilitate finalization of project details in end 2010, thereafter the Yuen Long District Council would be consulted again. If large-scale projects were required in response to public views, the Administration would report back to LegCo for funding approval. Where improvement projects were minor in scale, the cost incurred could be met by existing funding resources earmarked for minor works.

41. Mr WONG Kwok-hing requested the Administration to conduct feasibility studies on the 11th and 12th proposals prioritized for provision of hillside escalator links and elevator systems using the relevant assessment system, particularly the Kwong Fai Circuit in Kwai Chung Estate, which had been ranked the 11th and hence was marginally not included in the initial round of technical feasibility studies covering only

the top 10 proposals but had a justified case for provision of the facilities. STH responded that due to resource considerations, the Administration would adopt a rolling approach in taking forward the feasibility studies, and would not wait until after completion of the feasibility studies on the top 10 proposals before commencing feasibility studies on the next batch of proposals.

42. To facilitate monitoring, Mr WONG Kwok-hing requested the Highways Department to provide information on the progress of and timetable for retrofitting noise barriers and enclosures for the 37 existing road sections for which preliminary investigations had shown that retrofitting works were technically feasible. D of Hy responded that the noise barriers concerned would be taken forward progressively and public views would need to be sought in the process given known concerns over the visual impacts of such structures. At Mr WONG's request to consult LegCo on the matter, D of Hy agreed to liaise with ENB on the matter and to consult LegCo when the design for the noise barriers was ready.

Other transport-related initiatives

Transport-related environment-friendly measures

43. Ms LI Fung-ying questioned the proposal to fund the full cost of procuring six hybrid buses for use by the franchised bus companies along busy corridors to test these buses' operational efficiency and performance. In response to her on the reasons behind, STH explained that this was a policy initiative of ENB aiming to encourage bus companies to switch to zero emission buses or the most environmental-friendly buses when replacing existing ones.

44. Miss Tanya CHAN noted that the excavated materials given rise to by transport infrastructure projects could be reused, and asked whether and how the Administration would liaise with relevant departments to ensure reuse of these materials in other construction sites. D of Hy responded that under the usual contract terms, contractors were already required to minimize the generation of construction waste. They were also required to reuse inert construction waste including excavated materials as backfilling on site or in other suitable construction sites as far as possible. Where necessary, excavated materials would be transported for storage at the public fill bank for future use.

45. While supportive of the proposal to introduce amendments to the Road Traffic Ordinance (RTO) (Cap. 374) to combat drug driving, Ms LI Fung-ying was keen to ensure that to avoid creating nuisance to the public, appropriate measures should be made available to differentiate between drivers who had really abused drugs and those who took drugs for medical purposes, given that many common drugs might also adversely affect a person's ability to properly control a vehicle.

46. STH responded that according to the existing section 39 of RTO, it was already an offence for a person to drive a motor vehicle under the influence of drugs to such an extent as to be incapable of having proper control of the motor vehicle. The relevant legislative amendments under contemplation served to facilitate enforcement of the said provision by enhancing clarity and objectivity. To this end, preliminary tests such as an impairment test would be proposed to be conducted by police officers to screen out drug driving cases, so that they could proceed to require the suspected driver to give specimens of oral fluid or blood or other body fluid specimens for laboratory analysis to ascertain whether he had taken any drugs. STH added that further details like threshold of impairment test and proposed statutory defence etc. would be discussed at a separate panel meeting in November 2010.

IV Any other business

47. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 10:15 am.