

立法會

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

Purpose

This report gives an account of the work of the Panel on Transport during the Legislative Council session 1999-2000. It will be tabled at the meeting of the Council on 21 June 2000 in accordance with Rule 77(14) of the Rules of Procedure of the Council.

The Panel

2. The Panel was formed by resolution of the Council on 8 July 1998 for the purpose of monitoring and examining Government policies and issues of public concern relating to transport matters. The terms of reference of the Panel are at **Appendix I**.

3. The Panel comprises 16 members, with Hon Mrs Miriam LAU Kin-yee and Hon LAU Kong-wah elected as Chairman and Deputy Chairman respectively. The membership list of the Panel is at **Appendix II**.

Major Work

4. The new transport strategy which was drawn up on the basis of the 1990 White Paper on Transport Policy having regard to the latest findings of the Third Comprehensive Transport Study (CTS-3) was high on the agenda of the Panel. In the course of examination, members shared the Administration's view that transport infrastructure and services should be provided in an environmentally acceptable manner so as to ensure the sustainable development of Hong Kong. Members endorsed the principle that transport and land use planning should be integrated to reduce the public's reliance on road-based transport and that greater emphasis should be placed on the needs of pedestrians. In reviewing the proposal to introduce pedestrian schemes at some of the crowded and polluted spots in Hong Kong, members urged the Administration

to assess the implications of the scheme on road users, residents and shop owners nearby and take appropriate measures to ease traffic congestion and minimize conflict between pedestrian and vehicles in the vicinity of the concerned areas. They also called on the Administration to consult the affected parties to ensure smooth implementation.

5. The Panel recognized that the quality of life in Hong Kong was directly related to the quality of the environment. Improvement of air quality had to be pursued from all angles, in particular on the transport front. During the session, the Panel held a series of joint meetings with the Panel on Environmental Affairs to review measures to control emissions from diesel vehicles to improve air quality as well as the development of an environmentally sustainable transport system in the context of CTS-3. Members urged the Administration to introduce practical and clean alternatives to diesel vehicles and ensure proper maintenance of in-use vehicles. The joint Panels also met with representatives of the trade and other interested parties and explored with them the means to assist the trade to upgrade their maintenance standard with a view to alleviating the pollution problem. While supporting the launch of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) taxi scheme, the joint Panels stressed the need to provide financial incentives to motivate taxi drivers to replace the diesel fleet, to put in place adequate supporting measures, including LPG filling stations, maintenance workshops and mechanics for servicing LPG taxis and to keep the price of automobile LPG and the operating cost of LPG taxis at reasonable levels to facilitate conversion.

6. On the planning and implementation of the railway projects in Hong Kong, the Panel had reviewed the Railway Development Strategy 2000 which maps out a blueprint for planning and implementing the next phase of railway network expansion to meet Hong Kong's needs up to 2016. Members recognized that the Strategy would be vital to providing a sustainable infrastructure to support the economic, social and population growth in Hong Kong in the next 15 years and would facilitate closer economic and social linkage between Hong Kong and the Mainland. They called on the Administration to put in place adequate resources to speed up the delivery of various railway projects. The Panel continued to monitor the progress of construction of the West Rail (Phase I) and Mass Transit Railway (MTR) Tseung Kwan O Extension. To meet cross-boundary traffic demand, members took note of the Administration's plan to build a spur line which would connect the Kowloon-Canton Railway (KCR) at Sheung Shui with Lok Ma Chau. The spur line was scheduled for completion in 2004. As part and parcel of the Disney Theme Park development, the Panel also noted that the Penny's Bay Rail Link would be built and completed in time for the opening of the Theme Park. On the detailed planning and design of the Ma On Shan to Tai Wai Rail Link (MOS Rail) and KCR Extension to Tsim Sha Tsui, members identified a number of problems including their interface with other rail links in the urban area and the impact on the existing railway line, such as the passenger capacity

of Tai Wai Station. Members urged the Administration to expedite the completion of the proposed extension of the MOS Rail from Tai Wai to the urban area to improve the financial viability of the project and to meet the transport needs of residents in the areas. They also took the opportunity to review the design of the proposed pedestrian subways linking the MTR Tsim Sha Tsui Station and KCR East Tsim Sha Tsui Station and explore the feasibility of providing travelators in the subways in a more cost effective manner.

7. On the review of transport infrastructure, members urged the Administration to review the actual need for individual projects and the exact timing of the implementation. They also emphasized the need to take into account future demands in cross boundary passenger and freight movements in the planing of infrastructure. During the session, the Panel had examined jointly with the Panel on Planning, Lands and Works the funding proposal in respect of the engagement of a consultant to undertake the detailed design of the southern section (i.e. from North Lantau to So Kwun Wat) of the proposed Route 10 from North Lantau to Yuen Long Highway. The Panel also reviewed the design of the proposed Lantau north-south link between Tai Ho Wan and Mui Wo and urged the Administration to speed up the delivery of the project within the environmental constraints.

8. The Panel also reviewed a number of measures to enhance the efficiency of bus services, including the inter-district bus-only lane scheme and the bus-bus interchange scheme. Despite the rationalization of bus services and the Administration's new strategy to give priority to railway developments, members generally considered that there was a need to maintain parallel and long haul bus services to meet the transport needs of the commuting public and to ensure adequate choices for them. The Panel also called on the Adminstration to improve the bus-bus interchange schemes with a view to maximizing the utilization of valuable road space.

9. On waterborne transport, members noticed that the Administration would commission a consultancy study on a wide range of issues relating to the operation of ferry services with a view to identifying potential areas of development to meet overall transport demand. They urged the Administration to formulate a strategy which would enable the provision of a viable and good quality ferry services at acceptable fare levels.

10. The Panel was gravely concerned about the two ferry incidents in August 1999, both involving unauthorized occupation of an Hongkong and Yaumati Ferry Company Limited (HYF) ferry vessel by outlying island ferry passengers. The Panel examined with the Administration the factors which had led to the incidents, and identified ways to prevent similar incidents from recurring in the future and ways to resolve them more quickly and effectively if they did recur. In connection with the changeover of HYF's licensed ferry

services to New World First Ferry Services Limited on 15 January 2000, the Panel reviewed the transitional arrangements for the ferry changeover and other related improvements for the new company.

11. The Panel had regularly reviewed the report on parking demand and supply and progress of improvement measures. To address the shortage of parking spaces, members asked the Administration to explore whether a flexible approach could be adopted in assessing applications from developers for excluding the provision of parking spaces from the calculation of the maximum plot ratio stipulated in the Building Ordinance for various developments, having regard to the public interest at large.

12. Following the Government's announcement to privatize a substantial minority share of Mass Transit Railway Corporation (MTRC) through an Initial Public Offering, the Panel conducted a joint meeting with the Financial Affairs Panel to review the benefits of privatization of MTRC and address some of the key concerns expressed by the community on the issue, particularly the fare determination mechanism and the performance of MTR including the safety of the railway after privatization. They urged the Administration to put in place an efficient and effective mechanism which would help balance the interests of both the commuting public and the shareholders of the future privatized Corporation.

13. In reviewing the operation of green minibus (GMB) operation in Kowloon, Sai Kung and areas along the KCR East Rail Corridor, the Panel called on the Administration to monitor the operation of GMBs to ensure their financial viability and operational efficiency.

14. In assessing the toll increase application from the Tate's Cairn Tunnel Co. Ltd, the Panel expressed grave concern about the magnitude of the increase and the associated traffic impact on other tunnels. To improve the financial position of the company, members urged the Administration to explore other measures to increase the vehicle throughput of the tunnel or to put in place a better operating environment to facilitate the company's debt restructuring other than simply revising its toll from time to time.

15. In reviewing the operation of the Octopus ticketing system, the Panel had expressed concern about the availability and reliability of Octopus processors on various public transport modes. They also examined whether the Octopus card could be put into wider and more diversified uses such as for parking payment. Meanwhile, members also reminded the Administration to take into account technological advancement in the development and promotion of an omnibus travel card which provided convenience to the commuters.

16. Noting that the existing construction for light goods vehicles and public light buses did not support the proper installation of seat belts, members urged

the Administration to speed up its discussion with car manufacturers with a view to extending seat belt legislation to these two class of vehicles. In the interim, the Administration should continue to explore other in-vehicle protection measures to enhance passenger safety. The Panel also reviewed the various measures adopted and proposals made by the Administration in tackling speeding activities by public light buses. When consulted by the Administration on the proposal to introduce a Driver Improvement Scheme (DIS) in Hong Kong as an alternative to penalty for minor traffic offences, members were concerned about the effectiveness of the proposal. Members considered that apart from introducing the DIS, the driver concerned should also be subject to a reduction in the number of driving-offence points in respect of that offence.

17. The Panel was generally in support of the Administration's proposal to allow the co-existence of on-street driver training through private driving instructors (PDIs) and off-street training through driving schools. With the majority support from the trade on the grouping of PDIs and the issuing of new PDI licences under a balloting arrangement, members urged the Administration to speed up the legislative amendments required for the issue of new PDI licences.

18. The Panel was consulted on a number of legislative proposals before their introduction into Legislative Council. These proposals included the proposal to legislate against the use of a hand-held mobile phone while driving, the proposal to introduce measures to deter the more serious speeding offences and the proposal to replace the existing offences of "reckless driving causing death" and "reckless driving" with "dangerous driving causing death" and "dangerous driving" respectively.

19. Regarding the proposal to increase the penalty levels for serious speeding offences, members were of the view that the Administration should streamline the existing structure of the speed limit categorization and review the existing speed limits of roads before considering the proposal to increase the penalty levels for speeding offences. On the legislation relating to dangerous driving, members requested the Administration to review the proposed penalties, having regard to the existing penalties for dangerous driving in the United Kingdom in particular those relating to disqualification. They also asked the Administration to improve the drafting of the legislation so that drivers could better understand the driving behaviours which would constitute an offence under the Road Traffic Ordinance.

20. During the period from October 1999 to May 2000, the Panel held a total of 16 meetings of which six were joint meetings with other Panels, and one on Y2K compliance exercise.

Legislative Council Secretariat
2 June 2000