For discussion
on 22 May 2009

Legislative Council Panel on Transport

Establishment of an Assessment System for Provision of Hillside Escalator Links and Elevator Systems

PURPOSE

This paper briefs Members on the proposed assessment system for provision of hillside escalator links and elevator systems.

BACKGROUND

2. In view of the growing number of requests from the public for the provision of hillside escalator links and elevator systems, the Chief Executive announced in the 2008-09 Policy Address that the Administration would establish an assessment system for the provision of these pedestrian facilities. The proposed assessment system aims at providing a more comprehensive set of objectives and transparent evaluation criteria in determining the merits and priority of proposals on hillside escalator links and elevator systems.

3. The Transport Department has commissioned a consultancy study to establish the proposed assessment system. The consultant has found that there is no overseas experience in setting up a similar assessment system for hillside escalator links and elevator systems. With reference to the existing seven assessment criteria used in Hong Kong (**Enclosure**) which were presented to the Panel on Transport of the Legislative Council in 2002, the consultant proposes an assessment system comprising an initial screening and a scoring system.

THE ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

4. The proposed initial screening helps screen out proposals which are obviously infeasible or unjustifiable for implementation. A proposal will not be taken forward if it has any of the following characteristics –

(a) land unavailability – inadequate land and / or infeasible land resumption to possibly accommodate the proposed facility;

(b) redundancy – similar facility / facilities is / are already provided or committed in close proximity[1] to the proposed facility;

(c) insurmountable construction or operational difficulties ; or

(d) small level difference – level difference to be overcome is less than six metres (m).

5. Proposals which pass the proposed initial screening will be evaluated by the proposed scoring system based on the following set of evaluation criteria –

(a) Circumstantial factors
- (i) existing population / employment within catchment[2] ;
- (ii) existing population of 65 year-old or above within catchment ;
- (iii) topographical conditions, i.e. steep gradient / level difference ;
- (iv) connectivity with other existing / committed pedestrian facilities ;
- (v) connectivity with existing / committed mass public transport facilities within catchment ;
- (vi) connectivity with existing / committed centres of activity within catchment ;
- (vii) steadiness of existing pedestrian flow ;

(b) Beneficial factors
- (viii) revitalization of / benefits to local community ;
- (ix) journey time / cost saving ;
- (x) improvement to existing traffic conditions ;
- (xi) improvement to existing pedestrian conditions ;
- (xii) road safety ;
- (xiii) tourism promotion;

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[1] A facility located within 300 m of the proposed facility is generally regarded as one within close proximity.

[2] Catchment is defined as the area within the radius of 300 m from every entrance/access point of the proposed facility.

(c) Implementation factors

(xiv) land requirement ;

(xv) technical / environmental constraints ; and

(xvi) cost-effectiveness.

6. According to the relative importance of the circumstantial, beneficial and implementation factors, weightings of 40, 35 and 25 are allocated to the factors respectively to form a total score of 100.

7. Higher scores would be given to a proposal which is comparatively more beneficial, ready for construction and cost-effective. Based on the scores obtained, the relative rankings among various proposals on hillside escalator links and elevator systems will be determined in an objective manner. Those proposals with higher rankings will obviously have priority to proceed to the next stage of planning and investigation to ascertain their technical feasibility, to be followed by public engagement exercises as necessary.

8. However, the proposed assessment system will not be applicable to the following proposals –

(a) proposals which cross a single road – they will be evaluated under the criteria for footbridge construction;

(b) proposals which entirely fall within the boundary of public housing estates – the Housing Department will consider the feasibility of the escalator and elevator systems within the boundary of public housing estates separately; or

(c) proposals which form an integral part of major projects – justifications for them will be considered as part of the respective major projects.

WAY FORWARD

9. We aim at finalizing the proposed assessment system in the second half of 2009.

ADVICE SOUGHT

10. Members are invited to note and comment on this paper.

Transport and Housing Bureau
May 2009

Enclosure

The Existing Criteria for Provision of Hillside Escalator Links and Elevator Systems

- The catchment of the proposed system should either be reasonably populated, or there exists a commercial element which would be further enhanced to attract users.

- There should be a steady flow of users throughout the day. Areas where usage is confined to certain short periods of the day, such as school area, do not alone justify the provision of the system.

- The gradient of the area should be steep. Escalator links would be suitable for streets with steep gradient whereas elevator systems would be more appropriate for linking areas with large drop in vertical level.

- Priority should be given to systems that can connect to railway stations or major public transport interchanges.

- Environmental considerations (e.g. whether the provision could encourage the habit of walking which is environmentally friendly and would reduce the reliance on vehicular transport).

- Consideration would also be given to developed areas with severe physical constraints for building additional road links or expanding public transport services, and yet where major re-development schemes are anticipated to generate substantial traffic demand.

- Social benefits arising from the provision of escalator links/elevator systems (e.g. beneficial effects on those with disabilities, the elderly and tourists).