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LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
PANEL ON WELFARE SERVICES

Subcommittee on Improving Barrier Free Access and Facilities for Persons with Disabilities

Responses to Issues Raised by Members at the Meeting on 20 July 2011

Responses provided by The Link Management Limited (The Link), the Transport Department (TD), the Hospital Authority (HA) and the Transport and Housing Bureau (THB) to the following issues raised by Members at the meeting on 20 July 2011 are set out in the Annexes respectively -

(a) the number of improvement works items, together with a breakdown by types of facilities such as lifts and ramps, to be carried out in The Link's properties upon completion of all the upgrading works of barrier-free facilities under the three-phase programme. Relevant paper provided by The Link is at **Annex A**;

(b) the follow-up action taken by TD in respect of the outstanding issues required of MTR Corporation Limited as raised at meetings of the Working Group on Access to Public Transport by People with Disabilities. Relevant paper provided by TD is at **Annex B**;

(c) details of the improvement/upgrading works under the three phases of review on enhancing the barrier free facilities in hospitals/clinics under the management of HA. Relevant paper provided by HA is at **Annex C**; and

(d) the expected completion dates of the feasibility studies on the provision of hillside escalator links and elevator systems, the

expected commencement dates of individual proposals, as well as details of the assessment systems for determining the merits of the hillside escalator links and elevator proposals and the relative priorities for conducting feasibility studies. Relevant paper provided by THB is at **Annex D**.

Labour and Welfare Bureau
Transport and Housing Bureau
Transport Department
The Link Management Limited
Hospital Authority

November 2011

Annex A

The Link Management Limited's Responses to Issues Raised by Members at the Meeting on 20 July 2011

The Link Management Limited (The Link) made an announcement in January this year to upgrade all of its retail outlets with Barrier Free Access (BFA) facilities under the Best Practicable Principle, and at a budget of no less than HK$200M, to comply with the standards set out in the Buildings Department: "Design Manual: Barrier Free Access 2008" and other associated requirements. The whole BFA upgrade programme is in 3 phases with 90% of the upgrading works will be scheduled for completion by 2014 and the remaining works will be completed by 2016.

All of the retail outlets under The Link's portfolio including 151 shopping centres and around 330 car parks will equip with BFA facilities which will be in compliance with the above mentioned standards. The Link is now working close with Housing Department to ensure all the interfaces of the BFA facilities equipped by the two parties are connected well and fit for use by the local communities.

The upgrading works of the BFA facilities will, after taking into consideration on the onsite situation and environment factors, provide meet-the-needs facilities particularly for people with disabilities, the elderly, people with physical limitations, pregnant women and families with young children. Such provisions include tactile guide paths, accessible customer service counters, accessible toilets, visual fire alarm systems, disabled car parks, ramps, Braille layout plans and accessible lifts.

Given the vast amount of retail outlets under The Link's portfolio, the major types of the BFA provisions and the estimated breakdown by types are as follows:

Types of works items	Estimated number of provision
Tactile guide paths	To be installed in 151 shopping centres. For those shopping centres where are adjacent to public housing estate, The Link and Housing Department will work close to

	ensure a good connection of these tactile guide paths in the common premises.
Accessible customer service counters	To have low podium counter in about 40 shopping centres where currently have such provision.
Accessible toilets	To have one accessible toilet on each floor of each shopping centres. If taking an average of two floors for each shopping centre, the total number of installation in all 151 shopping centres will be more than 300.
Visual fire alarm systems	To be installed in common area in each of the 151 shopping centres.
Disabled car parks	At least one disabled car park will be provided in each of the around 330 car parks under The Link portfolio. However the provision and the timetable of disabled car park installation are subjected to the waiver approval by the Lands Department.
Ramps	Ramps will be provided at key passageway in most of the 151 shopping centres.
Braille Layout Plan	One Braille layout plan will be provided in each of the 151 shopping centres.
Accessible Lifts	Lift is the key facility in the shopping centre to allow customers to travel between floors. The Link is still investigating the total number of lifts to be installed in its 151 shopping centres and will provide the total number of installations at a later stage.

This is just an estimation of the provision of the eight major BFA items under The Link portfolio. Given the overall budget of $200 million, The Link will make adjustments on any of these provisions during the process of upgrading in order to provide a better living environment for the people living around The Link's properties.

The Link regularly updates and informs the public on its latest plan and progress of the BFA works via press release and website postings. A new list of retail properties on BFA upgrading works will be regularly announced on a quarterly basis and at the same time to report or conclude the works that have been done in the past three months.

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Annex B

Transport Department's Responses
to Issues Raised by Members at the Meeting on 20 July 2011

Discussions on the Provision of barrier-free access and facilities by the MTR Corporation Limited in Transport Department's Working Group Meeting on Access to Public Transport by People with Disabilities

Follow-up Actions on Individual Issues - Supplementary Information

At the meeting of the above Subcommittee held on 20 July 2011, Members reviewed the "Gist of Discussions on the Provision of barrier-free access and facilities by the MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL) in Transport Department's Working Group (WG) Meeting on Access to Public Transport by People with Disabilities from 2008 to 2010" (Paper No. CB(2)2371/10-11(05)) and requested the Administration to supplement information on the follow-up actions on individual issues. The supplementary information is provided hereinafter for Members' reference:

Discussed Items	Reponses from MTRCL
1. Request for installation of a lift at Exit D of Kwun Tong Station.	As persons with disabilities could make use of the existing lifts at Exit A and APM Shopping Mall to/from Kwun Tong Station, MTRCL had no plan to provide an additional lift at Exit D of Kwun Tong Station. WG members appreciated the situation and took no further follow up action.
2. Request for removal of the vertical steel poles and installation of anti-collision materials in the interim, e.g. leather covers or soft cushions for the poles to enhance the safety of passengers with visual	MTRCL erected steel poles as a measure to restrict the passengers with bulky luggage to use escalators. MTRCL had no plan to increase the number of poles. Balancing the effectiveness of the poles and the persons with disabilities' views after a review,

Discussed Items	Reponses from MTRCL
impairment;	MTRCL removed the poles at Wong Tai Sin Station on trial. WG members were satisfied with the arrangement. Moreover, MTRCL had completed the design of the cushion materials. MTRCL would conduct an on-site trial and consult the WG members soon.
3. Request for speeding up the lift installation programme in view of frequent breakdown of stair lifts. Enquiry on progress of lift installation at Sai Wan Ho Station.	MTRCL had entrusted consultants to conduct technical feasibility studies on lift installation at stations without provision of lift to roadside level. There were plans to provide lifts at Jordan Station, Yau Ma Tei Station, Tsim Sha Tsui Station, Cheung Sha Wan Station, Shek Kip Mei Station, Sham Shui Po Station, Lai Chi Kok Station, Wong Tai Sin Station, Sai Wan Ho Station, Admiralty Station, Sheung Wan Station and Prince Edward Station.
4. Lack of tactile warning strips at platforms of Lo Wu Station.	MTRCL installed the tactile warning strips at platforms of Lo Wu Station and kept the WG members of the action taken.
5. Request for installation of external announcement systems at Light Rail trains or at platforms to facilitate passengers with visual impairment.	MTRCL had conducted a trial on installation of external announcement systems on light rail vehicles but the result was unsatisfactory. After a study, on-site trial and consultation with persons with disabilities, external announcement systems were installed at platforms of light rail stops to announce “Next Train” information. WG members were satisfied with the arrangement.

Discussed Items	Reponses from MTRCL
6. Unstable performance of broadcasting system at rail stations.	MTRCL arranged prompt inspections of the systems at the concerned stations and made appropriate adjustment accordingly.
7. Enquiry on availability of facilities to communication between hearing -impaired passengers and MTRCL station staff	MTRCL had installed Induction Loops at each Customer Service Centre to assist hearing aid users; and provided Information Card to facilitate communication between hearing-impaired passengers and station officers.
8. Proposed installation of tactile guide paths to help passengers with visual impairment to access to Exits A and D of Lam Tin Station.	A tactile guide path had already been provided in the concourse of Lam Tin Station leading passengers to Exit B. Over-provision of tactile guide paths in a station might undermine its function and fail to provide clear guidance to persons with disabilities. WG members appreciated the situation and took no further follow up action.
9. Proposed improvement of the connection points of tactile guide paths at Lok Fu and Quarry Bay Stations.	MTRCL completed the proposed improvement.
10. Proposed improvement of the location of the tactile guide path to Exit A of Quarry Bay Station	MTRCL completed the proposed improvement.
11. Progress of installation of audible devices at escalators in Kowloon Bay, Ngau Tau Kok and Chai Wan Stations	Audible devices were installed at the concerned stations but due to the site constraint, its sound volume was not up to the required level. Recently, MTRCL had finalized the improvement plans with persons

Discussed Items	Reponses from MTRCL
	with disabilities. MTRCL would arrange an on-site trial and consult persons with disabilities soon.
12. Alleged mal-functioning of audible devices at escalators in Admiralty, Yau Ma Tei and Chai Wan Stations during night times.	MTRCL arranged prompt inspections of the systems at the concerned stations and had the faults fixed accordingly.
13. The high sound level of Cable TV news broadcast in East Rail train compartments posed difficulties for passengers to attend to the messages of stop announcement system clearly.	The sound of Cable TV programme should automatically be turned off when the stop announcement system was in operation in the East Rail Line. MTRCL arranged prompt inspections of the system and confirmed its proper functioning.

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Annex C

Hospital Authority's Responses to Issues Raised by Members at the Meeting on 20 July 2011

The Hospital Authority (HA) embraces the philosophy of barrier free access and endeavours to comply with the latest barrier free access requirements proactively. The requirements as set out in the "Design manual : Barrier Free Access 2008" (the Manual) have been incorporated in all newly constructed facilities and those with major renovation designed and completed after December 2008. For other existing facilities, HA is progressively incorporating the requirements while ensuring that disruption to patient services is minimised.

As the total floor area of existing HA facilities is in excess of 2,500,000 m^2, there is a need to prioritise the barrier free access implementation works in order to maximise benefits to patients soonest possible. HA general out-patient clinics have been given priority in this regard because of their high patient volume, around 5 million attendance per annum, in relatively confined floor areas.

The initiative of barrier free access enhancements has been rolled out to all seven clusters with works for 26 clinics now planned. Eight of those clinics already have their works completed or nearing completion, while works for nine other clinics are planned for completion in 2011/12 and nine other clinics in 2012/13. For those remaining general out-patient clinics which are in buildings jointly used by Department of Health (DH), HA is liaising with DH to ensure that enhancements may be carried out to tie in with DH's current schedule for similar works as much as practicable, so as to minimise disruption to patient services. HA aims to complete works to all remaining general out-patient clinics by end 2014.

HA is now progressing to plan the works for 16 acute hospitals providing accident and emergency services. Professional consultants are being engaged to carry out the necessary preparatory work, which will entail compliance checking, feasibility study, and development

of enhancement proposals. It is anticipated that the implementation works will be completed by the fourth quarter of 2014.

For the remaining HA hospitals and facilities, HA plans to engage consultants to progress with the necessary preparatory work in the first quarter of 2013 for completion in the third quarter of 2014. Subject to funding availability, the implementation of the enhancement works will be completed in the fourth quarter of 2016.

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Annex D

Transport and Housing Bureau's Responses to Issues Raised by Members at the Meeting on 20 July 2011

Provision of Hillside Escalator Links and Elevator Systems

PURPOSE

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

BACKGROUND

2. The Transport Department commissioned a consultancy study in May 2008 to establish an assessment system for the provision of hillside escalator links and elevator systems. The 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. We consulted the Legislative Council Panel on Transport on the ranking system at its meetings in May 2009 and February 2010.

THE ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

3. The assessment system on provision of hillside escalator links and elevator systems comprises initial screening and scoring stages.

4. The 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 initial screening will be evaluated by the 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 ;

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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.

(xiii) tourism promotion;

(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. Based on the scores obtained, various proposals on hillside escalator links and elevator systems will be prioritized for further planning and feasibility studies.

8. However, the 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.

The Assessment Result

9. Based on the ranking system, we have assessed a total of 20 proposed hillside escalator and elevator systems, including 4 in Hong Kong Island, 5 in Kowloon, and 11 in the New Territories. The final

scores of the proposals range from 29.1 to 51.5. A list of the 20 proposals with the final scores and resultant rankings of the proposals are tabulated in Appendix.

Progress of Feasibility Studies

10. Having regard for the available resources, we take forward the top 10 ranked proposals for the feasibility studies, in order to determine the technical feasibility and the estimated cost for each proposal. The lower ranked proposals would be taken forward after the feasibility studies of the top 10 proposals are on track for implementation.

11. Highways Department is carrying out the feasibility studies for the top 10 ranked proposals. It is anticipated that the feasibility studies would be completed in 24 to 48 months, depending on the complexities of the proposals. The result of each study would be reported in the corresponding District Council. Highways Department will commence the detailed design for the technically feasible proposals and the implementation programme shall depend on the results of feasibility studies, project extent and scale, and the resource availability. The feasibility studies of 5 proposals have been completed as at September 2011 and the studies of the remaining 5 proposals are ongoing.

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Appendix

Scores, Resultant Rankings and Progress of Feasibility Study of the Hillside Escalator Link/Elevator System Requests

Rank	District	Requested System		Circumstantial Sub-total Score (Max 40)	Beneficial Sub-total Score (Max 35)	Implementation Sub-total Score (Max 25)	Total Score (Max 100)		Commencement of Feasibility Study
1	Wong Tai Sin	Pedestrian Link at Tsz Wan Shan		28.5	13.4	9.6	51.5		Completed*
2	Eastern	Pedestrian Link at Braemar Hill[1]	Option A[2] - From MTR Fortress Hill Station to Wai Tsui Cresent and Braemar Hill Road	20.4	16.1	10.7	47.2	47.2	Completed
			Option B - From MTR North Point Station to Braemar Hill Road	20.1	15.7	6.3	42.1		
3	Kwai Tsing	Lift and Pedestrian Walkway System between Tsing Yi Road West and Tsing Yu Street		13.9	17	15.6	46.5		Completed
4	Central & Western	Second Escalator Link System in the Western Mid-level		17.1	12.0	16.2	45.3		Completed
5	Kwai Tsing	Lift and Pedestrian Walkway System between Kwai Shing Circuit and Hing Shing Road		7.8	19.7	14.8	42.3		5.2011
6	Kwai Tsing	Lift and Pedestrian Walkway System between Castle Peak Road and Kung Yip Street		15.1	13.7	12.9	41.7		5.2011
7	Kwai Tsing	Lift and Pedestrian Walkway System between Lai Cho Road and Wah Yiu Road		9.8	16.6	12.1	38.5		4.2011
8	Wong Tai Sin	Pedestrian Link at Chuk Yuen North Estate		10.7	17.4	8.7	36.8		2.2011

Rank	District	Requested System	Circumstantial Sub-total Score (Max 40)	Beneficial Sub-total Score (Max 35)	Implementation Sub-total Score (Max 25)	Total Score (Max 100)	Commencement of Feasibility Study
9	Kowloon City	Lift and Pedestrian Walkway System at Waterloo Hill	7.8	12.6	15.9	36.3	Completed
10	Kwai Tsing	Lift and Pedestrian Walkway System between Lai King Hill Road and Lai Cho Road	10.7	10.5	14.7	35.9	5.2011
11	Kwai Tsing	Lift and Pedestrian Walkway System between Wo Tong Tsui Street and Kwai Hing Road	10.8	8.6	16.1	35.5	-
12	Kwun Tong	Lift and Pedestrian Walkway System at Luen On Street	8.7	13.0	13.5	35.2	-
13	Kwun Tong	Escalator System at Yuet Wah Street	11.4	8.2	15.5	35.1	-
14	Sai Kung	Escalator Link between Hong Sing Garden and Po Hong Road	12.4	14.5	7.9	34.8	-
14	Kwai Tsing	Lift and Pedestrian Walkway System between Lai King Hill Road and Princess Margaret Hospital	5.4	12.1	17.3	34.8	-
16	Sha Tin	Lift and Pedestrian Walkway System between Saddle Ridge Garden and Sai Sha Road	7.8	11.0	14.7	33.5	-
17	Kwai Tsing	Lift and Pedestrian Walkway System between Hing Shing Road and Tai Wo Hau Road	9.8	8.6	13.5	31.9	-
18	Sha Tin	Escalator Link between Sha Tin Sui Wo Court and Footpath leading to MTR Fo Tan Station	10.7	14.1	4.3	29.1	-
NA	Central & Western	Additional Escalator System between Central and Mid-levels[3]	Screened Out in Initial Screening Stage				
NA	Southern	Escalator System at Ap Lei Chau[4]	Screened Out in Initial Screening Stage				

Note 1: For Pedestrian Link at Breamer Hill, three options were considered and assessed using the ranking system.

Note 2: Option A which scores the highest point, is selected to represent the Pedestrian Link at Breamer Hill.

Note 3: The Additional Escalator System between Central and Mid-levels is screened out in initial screening stage of the ranking system as similar facility, the existing Escalator System between Central and Mid-levels, is already provided in close proximity.

Note 4: The Escalator System at Ap Lei Chau is screened out in initial screening stage of the ranking system as its level difference does not exceed 6m.

*works will be implemented under the Shatin to Central Link project by MTRCL