

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(1)839/12-13
(These minutes have been seen
by the Administration)

Ref : CB1/PL/TP/1

Panel on Transport

**Minutes of meeting held on
Friday, 18 January 2013, at 10:45 am
in Conference Room 3 of the Legislative Council Complex**

Members present : Hon CHAN Kam-lam, SBS, JP (Chairman)
Hon Gary FAN Kwok-wai (Deputy Chairman)
Hon LEE Cheuk-yan
Hon James TO Kun-sun
Hon WONG Kwok-hing, MH
Hon Ronny TONG Ka-wah, SC
Hon CHAN Hak-kan, JP
Hon Mrs Regina IP LAU Suk-yee, GBS, JP
Hon LEUNG Kwok-hung
Hon Michael TIEN Puk-sun, BBS, JP
Hon NG Leung-sing, SBS, JP
Hon Frankie YICK Chi-ming
Hon WU Chi-wai, MH
Hon CHAN Han-pan
Dr Hon KWOK Ka-ki
Dr Hon Elizabeth QUAT, JP
Hon POON Siu-ping, BBS, MH
Hon TANG Ka-piu
Ir Dr Hon LO Wai-kwok, BBS, MH, JP
Hon CHUNG Kwok-pan
Hon Christopher CHUNG Shu-kun, BBS, MH, JP
Hon Tony TSE Wai-chuen

Members attending : Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, SBS, JP
Dr Hon CHIANG Lai-wan, JP

Members absent : Hon Jeffrey LAM Kin-fung, GBS, JP
Hon Albert CHAN Wai-yip

Public Officers attending : **Agenda item IV**

Prof Anthony CHEUNG, GBS, JP
Secretary for Transport and Housing

Mr Joseph LAI, JP
Permanent Secretary for Transport and Housing
(Transport)

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

Mrs Ingrid YEUNG, JP
Commissioner for Transport

Mr Peter LAU, JP
Director of Highways

Ms Rebecca PUN, JP
Deputy Secretary for Transport and Housing
(Transport) 1

Mr Andy CHAN
Deputy Secretary for Transport and Housing
(Transport) 2

Mr Patrick CHAN, JP
Deputy Secretary for Transport and Housing
(Transport) 3

Agenda item V

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

Mr Patrick CHAN, JP
Deputy Secretary for Transport and Housing
(Transport)3

Miss Gillian LAM Yuk-ting
Assistant Secretary for Transport & Housing
(Transport)2A

Mr Albert SU Yau-on
Assistant Commissioner/Management &
Paratransit
Transport Department

Mr Michael NG Shi-hung
Principal Transport Officer/Management
Transport Department

Clerk in attendance : Ms Sophie LAU
Chief Council Secretary (1)2

Staff in attendance : Mr Andy LAU
Assistant Secretary General 1

Miss Evelyn LEE
Assistant Legal Adviser 10

Ms Macy NG
Senior Council Secretary (1)2

Ms Clara LO
Legislative Assistant (1)9

Miss Ariel SHUM
Clerical Assistant (1)2

Action

- I Confirmation of minutes of meeting**
(LC Paper No. CB(1)407/12-13 - Minutes of special meeting
on 30 October 2012)

The minutes of the special meeting held on 30 October 2012 were confirmed.

II Information papers issued since last meeting

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| (LC Paper No. CB(1)353/12-13(01) | - Information paper provided by the Administration on Route 3 (Country Park Section) Tolls |
| LC Paper No. CB(1)353/12-13(02) | - Letter dated 24 December 2012 from Route 3 (CPS) Company Limited on Route 3 Country Park Section (R3CPS) Toll Adjustment |
| LC Paper No. CB(1)361/12-13(01) | - Information paper provided by the Administration on Western Harbour Crossing Tolls |
| LC Paper No. CB(1)361/12-13(02) | - Paper provided by Western Harbour Tunnel Company Limited on the Company's background brief |
| LC Papers Nos. CB(1)325/12-13(01) and CB(1)413/12-13(01) | - Letter dated 13 December 2012 from Hon TANG Ka-piu and the Administration's response |
| LC Paper No. CB(1)395/12-13(01) | - Further submission from Our Bus Terminal on parking spaces for coaches) |

2. Members noted the above papers issued since the last meeting.

III Items for discussion at the next meeting scheduled for 22 February 2013

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| (LC Paper No. CB(1)409/12-13(01) | - List of outstanding items for discussion |
| LC Paper No. CB(1)409/12-13(02) | - List of follow-up actions) |

3. Members agreed to discuss the following items at the next regular meeting on 22 February 2013 –

- (a) Certificate of Particulars of Motor Vehicle; and
- (b) Tseung Kwan O – Lam Tin Tunnel – detailed design and site investigation.

4. Referring to the papers provided by the Administration and tunnel operators in relation to the toll adjustments of the Western Harbour Crossing ("WHC") and Route 3 (Country Park Section) ("Route 3 (CPS)") respectively (LC Papers Nos. CB(1)353/12-13(01) and (02), and CB(1)361/12-13(01) and (02)), Dr KWOK ka-ki expressed concern about the impact of the above tunnel toll adjustments on the public. He suggested and members agreed to discuss "Toll adjustments of WHC and Route 3 (CPS)" at the next regular meeting.

5. Mr TANG Ka-piu requested that the Administration should be requested to report to the Panel on Transport ("the Panel") the progress of reviewing the Fare Adjustment Mechanism ("the FAM") of the MTR Corporation Limited ("MTRCL") as soon as possible. The Chairman said he would ask the Administration on when it would be ready to report the relevant progress to the Panel. The Chairman's enquiry made to the Secretary for Transport and Housing ("STH") and STH's reply were laid down in paragraph 28 below.

IV Briefing by the Secretary for Transport and Housing on the transport policy initiatives featuring in the Chief Executive's 2013 Policy Address

- (LC Paper No. CB(1)409/12-13(03) - Administration's paper on transport-related policy initiatives of the Transport and Housing Bureau under the 2013 Policy Address
- Address by the Chief Executive at the Legislative Council meeting on 16 January 2013)

6. Upon invitation, STH briefed members on the new and on-going transport-related policy initiatives of the Transport and Housing Bureau ("THB") featured in the 2013 Policy Address.

Bus services and fares

Rationalization of bus routes

7. Mr WONG Kwok-hing and Mr Christopher CHUNG noted that the Transport Department ("TD") and the franchised bus companies would adopt in future a more macro approach in taking forward the bus route rationalization through trying out an "Area Approach". Under this approach, the entire district, instead of individual routes, was to be used as the basis for reviewing and rationalizing bus services to ensure effective use of resources. They pointed out that among the bus routes on Hong Kong Island, the fares of cross-harbour routes after they crossed the harbour were higher than those of local services even though they were running parallel sections, thus discouraging passengers and resulting in low utilization rate of a certain leg of the former. They urged the Administration to request the relevant bus companies to lower the section fares of those cross-harbour routes running on Hong Kong Island after they crossed the harbour to enhance their patronage.

8. Mr Christopher CHUNG also expressed concern over the schedule of implementing bus route rationalization, the estimated number of bus routes involved, and the problems encountered in its implementation. Mr Michael TIEN considered that in order to provide an incentive for the public to accept the relevant rationalization plans, the Administration should negotiate with bus companies to implement Bus-bus Interchange ("BBI") fare concession schemes ("BBI Schemes") so that passengers interchanged would pay a cost lower than originally required.

9. In response, STH said that the Government and the franchised bus companies had all along been pursuing route rationalization as an annual exercise according to, amongst other things, passenger demand and patronage of individual bus routes. The Administration's objective was to minimize wastage by cancelling under-utilized routes or reducing their frequency, with a view to redirecting the resources so saved to routes with keen demand. As such, there was no pre-set target for the number of bus routes to be rationalized. The Administration would study any proposals which would help take forward bus route rationalization, including provision of fare concessions.

10. STH noted that there were some objections from the District Councils and local communities concerning bus route rationalization. The Administration would listen to their views as far as possible. He said that rationalization of bus routes was one of the major transport policy

initiatives in the Policy Address. The Administration hoped to achieve a win-win situation in implementing the bus route rationalization as it could help, amongst other things, relieve traffic congestion, optimize the use of resources and minimize roadside emission.

Enhancement of interchange services

11. Noting that the Administration would make reference to the successful experience of Tuen Mun Road BBI and provide similar BBIs at suitable locations, Mr WU Chi-wai asked about the specific proposal of the Administration, in particular, whether BBIs would be provided at the Kai Tak Development Area.

12. Commissioner for Transport ("C for T") replied that the Administration had identified two suitable locations for providing BBIs in the North District. In light of the crowdedness in urban areas, it would not be easy to identify suitable location for constructing large-scale BBIs. Nevertheless, arrangements had been made to provide BBI Schemes and enhance the facilities of bus stops where passengers interchanged routes.

Lost bus trip rate

13. In response to Mr TANG Ka-piu's concern on the high lost trip rate of New World First Bus Services Limited ("NWFB"), C for T said that TD had been closely monitoring the lost bus trip rate of NWFB and had urged NWFB to improve the situation. If NWFB failed to make timely improvement, TD would issue warning letter(s) to NWFB according to the mechanism specified under the relevant ordinance. She said that the lost bus trip problem of NWFB, in particular on the Hong Kong Island, was caused by a combination of factors like traffic congestion and diversions, road closure, and manpower issues.

Review on the fare adjustment arrangement ("the FAA") of franchised buses

14. Dr Elizabeth QUAT recalled that Panel members had raised concern earlier that The Kowloon Motor Bus Company (1933) had adopted financial tactics in presenting its financial status. For instance, income earned from property development and income of RoadShow Holdings Limited were excluded from KMB's franchise account. She asked whether the Administration would review the items covered in the bus franchise account in the course of reviewing the FAA and consult the public in this respect. STH said that a new round of FAA review was due. The Panel would be informed of the details of the review in due course.

Review and Update of the Railway Development Strategy 2000 ("RDS-2U")

15. Mr Ronny TONG criticized that no concrete proposals on the RDS-2U were made in the Policy Address. He quoted paragraph 173 of the Policy Address as an example which did not specify what local enhancement schemes for existing railway lines would be studied by the Administration in Stage 2 of RDS-2U.

16. STH said that the public engagement exercise of RDS-2U would be conducted in two stages. Stage 1, which had already been conducted from April to July 2012, aimed to consult the public on the proposals of three major regional railway corridors whereas Stage 2, which would commence in the first quarter of 2013, would focus on local enhancement schemes for existing railway lines. Following the Stage 2 public engagement exercise, the consultants would thoroughly consider all the public comments collected at both stages, and make recommendations on the planning and development of future major regional railway corridors and local enhancement schemes.

17. Mr CHAN Han-pan noted that in the Stage 1 public engagement exercise, photomontages of the Coastal Railway between Tuen Mun and Tsuen Wan (Tuen Mun to Tsuen Wan Link) ("TMTWL") and its railway station were shown in the consultation document whereas no similar photomontages were shown for the remaining two railway corridors. He suspected that those TMTWL photomontages, which showed a viaduct to be constructed near a residential estate, had projected a biased picture to the public. He queried whether it was a deliberate attempt of the Government to present TMTWL in such a way to discourage public support regarding the construction of TMTWL. He also asked whether the Administration would publicize the views collected during the Stage 1 public engagement exercise before conducting the Stage 2 exercise. Mr Michael TIEN also asked about the Administration's plan on constructing the Northern Link ("NOL"), which was one of the three major regional railway corridors under study in RDS-2U.

18. STH clarified that the Administration had no intention to project a biased picture to the public and it had all along been keeping an open mind on TMTWL, and the proposed NOL covered in the Stage 1 public engagement exercise. The Administration planned to consolidate the public's comments collected at both stages and discuss the relevant recommendations with the Panel in one go.

19. Mr Christopher CHUNG expressed support for the Administration's railway development strategy as it would relieve the problems of traffic congestion and air pollution. He asked whether the suggestion of extending the Island Line to Siu Sai Wan would be covered in RDS-2U.

20. STH said that the demand for railway services in different districts would be studied in the Stage 2 public engagement exercise of RDS-2U. In deciding how the existing railway lines could be enhanced, the Administration would consider various factors, including the transport demand, cost-effectiveness and the pace of development of new development areas.

21. Mr WU Chi-wai asked whether the Administration would also review the coordination between railway and bus services in the Stage 2 public engagement exercise.

22. STH responded that the Government's long-term planning for public transport would revolve around a railway-based network complemented by franchised bus services. The Administration would rationalize public transport services, including franchised bus services, with the commissioning of the new railway lines.

23. Mrs Regina IP noted that the Administration had been actively considering to lift the moratorium on development in Pok Fu Lam and the Mid-Levels as one of the measures to increase land supply. She also noted that the International Culinary College was also proposed to be built at Pok Fu Lam to cater for 2 000 students. Mrs IP expressed concern over the traffic implications of the relevant developments and asked whether the Administration would expedite the implementation of the proposed South Island Line (West) ("SIL(W)"). She also highlighted that there was currently traffic congestion problem at the Mid-Levels, particularly at Caine Road and Conduit Road.

24. STH replied that the study on the feasibility of relaxing or lifting the moratorium in Pok Fu Lam and the Mid-Levels for housing developments was in progress and a conclusion had not been arrived at yet. If the proposal was taken forward, separate assessment on its traffic and environmental impacts, as well as planning permission from the Town Planning Board, would be required. He assured members that planning for public transport would be considered in tandem with development of residential property. STH further said that the proposed SIL(W) would be examined under RDS-2U.

Review on the FAM of MTRCL and railway services

25. Mr POON Siu-ping noted that the Administration was conducting a five-yearly review of the FAM with MTRCL. He referred to the Administration's paper and asked about the Administration's approach in arriving at a "win-win" agreement with MTRCL such that the community could share the fruit of MTRCL's success. He also expressed dissatisfaction with the congested MTR station platforms at Admiralty and Causeway Bay during peak hours.

26. STH said that the Government's objective on the review of MTRCL's FAM was to enhance the mechanism, with a view to incorporating service performance and profit level of MTRCL, as well as public affordability as factors in the FAM. He stressed that although MTRCL was a listed company, it was not just another company. Over the years, it had been supporting the development of the Government's mass transport policy.

27. In respect of the congestion problem at station platforms, STH and Permanent Secretary for Transport and Housing (Transport) ("PSTH(T)") said that the Administration had been urging MTRCL to enhance its service performance. In fact, MTRCL had strengthened its services by increasing the train frequencies to the technical and safety limits. PSTH(T) added that measures to solve the congestion problems of MTR would be one of the major items covered in the Stage 2 public engagement exercise of RDS-2U.

28. The Chairman asked about the schedule of concluding the discussion with MTRCL on the review of MTRCL's FAM. STH replied that the discussion with MTRCL was in progress and expected to conclude it by end of March 2013. The Chairman suggested that the Panel should revisit the matter by that time.

29. Mr WONG Kwok-hing considered that part of the proceeds of MTRCL should be used to establish a fare stabilization fund to moderate the fare increase. Sharing similar views, Mr Tony TSE said that given the substantial profits earned by MTRCL from rental of commercial premises, the Administration should consider requiring MTRCL to use part of its rental income to subsidize MTR fares. Mr Ronny TONG opined that profits earned by MTRCL, including those from property development, should be included in the FAM so as to contain the rate of fare increase.

30. STH replied that the Administration had no plan to use public money to establish a fare stabilization fund as it was inappropriate for the Government to subsidize the operation of railway services. However, it was open-minded on the suggestion of using the proceeds of MTRCL to establish the relevant fund. He said that in the course of discussing with MTRCL the review of its FAM, all feasible proposals would be considered.

31. STH supplemented that about 20% of MTRCL's profit was generated from fares and rental of commercial premises respectively. In the past, the Government had granted MTRCL the right to carry out property development projects above stations along railway lines to finance new railway projects which otherwise could not be financially viable. The Administration was in the course of discussing with MTRCL on how the profits earned by MTRCL could be factored in the FAM.

32. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan and Mr Michael TIEN asked whether the Administration would just seek to enhance the formula adopted under the current FAM or would amend the FAM such that the MTR fare adjustment would be vetted and approved by the Executive Council ("ExCo") or Legislative Council ("LegCo"). Mr TIEN considered that the fare adjustment rates computed under the revised formula of the FAM should not be higher than that of the current one. Otherwise, the revised formula would not be accepted by the public.

33. STH responded that the Administration was open as to the suggestion of making ExCo the gate-keeper on MTR fares. He said that at present, ExCo took into account three factors, namely, service performance, profitability and public affordability, when considering fare adjustment proposals put forth by franchised public transport operators. As such, the Administration did not think that MTRCL should be an exception. Given that the adoption of a formula under the FAM was stipulated in the Operating Agreement signed between the Government and MTRCL, the Administration considered that a formula with factors acceptable by the public should be adopted as far as practicable.

34. Individual members made further suggestions on MTR fares as follows –

- (a) Mr TANG Ka-piu and Mr Michael TIEN suggested that territory-wide monthly tickets applicable to all railway lines should be introduced;

- (b) Dr KWOK Ka-ki and Mr Tony TSE considered that the existing distance-based fare structure of MTR should be changed in order to relieve the burden of high travelling expenses on those living in remote districts;
- (c) Dr KWOK Ka-ki and Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung opined that purchasing back MTRCL should be considered so that the Government could take charge of MTR fares; and
- (d) Dr KWOK Ka-ki noted that the traffic congestion problem was due to the overlapped routes of railway and buses. He considered that the problem could be solved if the fares of both railway and buses of similar routes could be standardized.

35. STH noted the above views. He indicated that the fare structure of MTR would be one of the aspects to be covered by the FAM review.

Measures to improve the traffic distribution among the three road harbour crossings

36. Members noted that in order to effectively improve the traffic distribution among the three road harbour crossings, the Administration planned to conduct public consultation on some specific toll adjustment options which involved increasing the toll fees for the Cross Harbour Tunnel ("CHT") and reducing those for the Eastern Harbour Crossing ("EHC"), so as to provide incentive for motorists to switch from using CHT to EHC to achieve traffic diversion and ease congestion at CHT. In addition, the Administration proposed to implement the toll adjustment at EHC through Government subsidy.

37. Some members expressed doubt on the effectiveness of the Administration's proposal and considered that the relevant impact would be temporary. They pointed out that EHC was already very congested during peak hours. Moreover, it was questionable whether subsidization of toll adjustment at EHC by public money was justified. They called on the Administration to introduce long-term strategies to address the traffic congestion problem at the road harbour crossings.

38. Dr Elizabeth QUAT and Dr CHIANG Lai-wan said that the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong ("DAB") had suggested the Administration to buy back WHC or build a new road harbour crossing to improve the traffic distribution among the three road harbour crossings. However, those suggestions were not

addressed in the Policy Address. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung also considered that the Administration should buy back EHC and WHC. Mr Christopher CHUNG considered that the toll fees of WHC should indeed be lowered. Dr KWOK Ka-ki opined that if the Administration's proposal to increase the toll fees for CHT was ultimately adopted, the relevant toll fees should be reverted to their previous levels when the Government took back the ownership of EHC in 2016. He observed that some people who were living near CHT have no choice but to use CHT.

39. Noting the views of members, STH said that the Administration would explain in detail the different options considered by the Administration to improve the traffic distribution among the three road harbour crossings when consulting the Panel and the public in the 2012-2013 legislative year.

40. Mr TANG Ka-piu asked whether the Administration aimed to attract taxis or lorries to shift to use EHC. He pointed out that taxis contributed to only 21% and 26% of the total traffic volume of EHC and CHT respectively. If the Administration aimed to attract lorries using EHC, the Government's subsidy would be substantial given the big toll difference between EHC and CHT for lorries.

41. STH said that the consultant's proposal to provide financial incentives to encourage tunnel users to adopt EHC in place of CHT was discussed at previous Panel meetings. The Administration would assess the effectiveness of the proposal and its impact on different modes of transport and the society as a whole. He said that the Administration had not formed a final view yet, and was willing to listen to the views of the public.

Improving the issuing mechanism of Certificate of Particulars of Motor Vehicle ("the Certificate")

42. Mr James TO referred to paragraph 39 of the Administration's paper which mentioned the Administration's plan to introduce legislative amendments to improve the issuing mechanism of the Certificate to provide better privacy protection to the registered vehicle owners whose personal information was contained in the register of motor vehicles and to ensure the proper use of such information. He expressed concern that the proposed legislative amendments might undermine the public's right to know and obstruct media reporting. He stressed that collecting information on personal particulars of the registered vehicle owners was

necessary in different circumstances, such as for legal proceedings or sale and purchase of vehicles.

43. STH responded that the Panel and related associations had been consulted on the subject previously. The Administration would endeavour to strive a balance between privacy protection and the public's right to know. He said that the revised proposal would be submitted for members' consideration shortly.

Hillside Escalator Links and Elevator Systems

44. In connection with Mrs Regina IP's concern on the traffic congestion problem at the Mid-Levels in paragraph 23, Mr Abraham SHEK recalled that long time ago, the Administration had studied the provision of several hillside escalators links/elevator systems between the Mid-Levels and Central with a view to relieving traffic congestion there. He asked whether the Administration would revisit the provision of those systems when considering the relaxation and lifting of a moratorium on development in Pok Fu Lam and the Mid-Levels.

45. STH and Director of Highways ("DHy") confirmed that the Administration had conducted a study on providing escalators at the Mid-Levels ("the escalator study"). Among various proposals, the Central Mid-Levels Escalator Link ("the Escalator Link"), which started at Des Voeux Road Central and ended at Conduit Road, was finally built as a pilot scheme to enable the proper assessment of the cost-effectiveness of mechanized walkway system. A "Before and After" Study of the Escalator Link carried out by the Administration concluded that the Escalator Link had promoted walking and attracted a certain amount of users who would otherwise rely on public transport. However, it had not induced motorists to give up driving to the extent of reducing traffic congestion in the area. Meanwhile, an escalator link was under construction along Centre Street in the Western District and another escalator link along Pound Lane was being studied.

46. Mr Abraham SHEK declared that he was a non-executive director of MTRCL. He said that given the changes in the traffic network over the years, the Administration should duly study the feasibility of providing the remaining escalators as suggested in the escalator study. STH agreed to review the need to provide additional escalators at the Mid-Levels.

Promoting "bicycle friendly" environment

47. Mr WU Chi-wai expressed support for the Administration's proposals to promote "bicycle friendly" and "pedestrian friendly" environment. He asked if the Administration had any concrete plan in pursuing the relevant policy. He opined that the Administration should not only regard cycling as a recreational activity, which was a means for commuting too.

48. STH assured that concrete policies would be worked out in promoting "bicycle friendly" and "pedestrian friendly" environment. The Administration would report its initiatives in detail to the Panel in due course.

Other views and concerns

Traffic implications entailed by land development

49. Dr LO Wai-kwok referred to paragraph 81 of the Policy Address regarding the Administration's plan on reclamation outside Victoria Harbour for long-term land supply. He hoped that the Administration would be more forward looking in planning the provision of necessary public transport support facilities while consulting the public on the relevant proposal.

50. STH agreed that large-scale development projects would entail the provision of public transport support facilities. He said that when there were concrete proposals from the Development Bureau ("DEVB"), THB would join hands with DEVB in the planning and provision of such facilities.

Comprehensive Transport Study ("CTS") and parking spaces for coaches

51. Mr Frankie YICK noted that five railway projects were now underway. With these new lines, areas inhabited by more than 70% of the population in Hong Kong would be brought into the railway catchment area. He urged the Administration to conduct the fourth CTS with a view to providing an indicator for the operators of other public transport modes to take appropriate measures to lower their operating costs. Otherwise, those operators would claim that they had incurred losses due to insufficient patronage and were hence under pressure to increase fares. Mr POON Siu-ping raised similar concern.

52. STH agreed that the commissioning of new railway lines would definitely affect the operation of other public transport modes. He said that although it was the Government's policy of using railways as the backbone of Hong Kong's passenger transport system, the Administration would also pursue development of other public transport modes to provide choices for the public. In considering the construction of a new railway line, the Administration would also consider its impact on other modes of public transport, apart from traffic demand. He said that the Administration would consider the direction and appropriate timing for commissioning the fourth CTS after completing RDS-2U and taking into account the status of implementation of various major infrastructure projects.

53. In response to Mr Frankie YICK's concern on the adequacy of parking spaces for coaches and whether the matter would also be covered in the fourth CTS, STH said that the Government would conduct a review on the supply and demand of coach parking spaces in various districts of Hong Kong and would take appropriate measures when necessary to meet the relevant demand.

Ferry services

54. Mr CHAN Han-pan remarked that the Administration's paper did not mention the Administration's policy initiatives on sea transport. He asked whether and when the Administration would review the problem of high fares for outlying island ferry routes and the operational difficulties of inner harbour routes. He said that DAB had long been pressing the Government to operate ferry services itself and contract out the management duties to ferry companies with a view to reducing the fares. In addition, DAB had also suggested establishing a fuel price stability fund with extra profits or cost savings made when the fuel price was lower than the reference price, so that when the fuel price exceeded the reference price, the fund could release funds to ease the possible surge of fares. He asked about the Administration's stance in this regard.

55. STH responded that the Administration was aware of the operational difficulties of ferry operators due to decreased patronage. In reviewing the performance and financial position of outlying island ferry routes, the Administration would consider whether financial assistance should be provided to those ferry companies. He further said that the Administration would later report to the Panel the outcome of the mid-term review on the performance and financial position of the six major outlying island ferry routes.

Rapid growth of private cars

56. Mr TANG Ka-piu considered that to address the traffic congestion problem, the Administration should establish measures to curb the rapid growth of private cars. He urged the Administration to thoroughly assess the traffic volume in Hong Kong.

57. STH noted the views of Mr TANG. He advised that the adoption of financial measures would be one of the means to discourage private car ownership but the Administration had to be careful in implementing such measures as they would be controversial. He said that TD had all along been aiming at providing a smooth running traffic network in Hong Kong.

Illegal car racing and modification of vehicles

58. Dr Elizabeth QUAT expressed grave concern on the problems of illegal car racing activities and modification of vehicles, which had caused noise nuisance to residents particularly in Tseung Kwan O area during night time.

59. C for T said that illegal car racing and modification of vehicles were serious offences. TD was liaising closely with the Police on law enforcement against those illegal activities. She said that members of the public were welcome to lodge complaints in this regard to TD or the Police. The Chairman urged TD to strengthen the communication with the Police in combating the above problems. C for T agreed.

Others

60. Dr CHIANG Lai-wan asked about the Administration's measures to solve the traffic congestion problem at Tolo Highway and the North district. DHy said that traffic improvement measures were currently implemented at Tolo Highway. He said that the section between Shatin and Tai Po had been widened to dual-4 lane. Widening works between Tai Po to Tai Hang commenced in 2009 and was expected to be completed by 2014. The Administration's plan to widen the section between Tai Hang and Fanling was in the process of tendering and the Administration would seek funding from the LegCo in the near future.

61. In response to Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung's question, STH said that the Transport Advisory Committee would continue to be the major committee to advise the Government on transport matters.

V Amendments to the Schedule to The Road Traffic (Driving-offence Points) Ordinance (Cap. 375)

(LC Paper No. CB(1)409/12-13(04) - Administration's paper on Proposed Amendments to the Schedule of the Road Traffic (Driving-offence Points) Ordinance (Cap. 375))

62. Upon invitation, Under Secretary for Transport and Housing ("USTH") briefed members on the Administration's paper which set out its proposal to introduce technical amendments to the Schedule of the Road Traffic (Driving-offence Points) Ordinance (Cap. 375) ("the RT(DOP) Ordinance"), so that the references (including texts and section numbers) to the provisions of the related traffic offences under the four "Build-Operate-Transfer" ("BOT") tunnel bylaws ("tunnel bylaws") as mentioned in the Schedule would tally with those under the amended tunnel bylaws. The proposed amendments would enable the incurrance of appropriate driving-offence point ("DOP") against offenders convicted under the tunnel bylaws. The Administration also proposed the addition of new scheduled offences related to the BOT tunnels such that DOPs could be incurred on those offences.

63. In response to the Chairman's enquiry, USTH said that although the amendments to the provisions of the four tunnel bylaws had taken effect on 20 July 2012, references to the tunnel bylaws in the Schedule of the RT(DOP) Ordinance had not been amended correspondingly in the same amendment exercise. It had therefore resulted in inconsistencies in the references to the traffic offences between the Schedule of the RT(DOP) Ordinance and the amended tunnel bylaws. He, however, pointed out that enforcement of the four tunnel bylaws would not be affected by the aforementioned inconsistencies. Tunnel companies could still penalize traffic offences according to the relevant provisions in the tunnel bylaws. However, to enable the incurrance of DOPs against persons who were convicted of traffic offences under the amended tunnel bylaws, the Schedule of the RT(DOP) Ordinance had to be amended to align the references therein with that of the traffic offences in the amended tunnel bylaws. He added that the proposed amendments aimed to avoid potential argument during the enforcement of the RT(DOP) Ordinance.

64. USTH further confirmed that the relevant legislative amendments would be submitted to the Legislative Council for approval in the form of subsidiary legislation.

65. No further enquiries were raised by members. The Chairman concluded that the Panel on Transport noted the content of the Administration's paper and had no objection to the Administration's plan to propose amendments to the Schedule of the RT(DOP) Ordinance.

VI Any other business

66. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 12:35 pm.

Council Business Division 1
Legislative Council Secretariat
20 May 2013