

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(1)1105/13-14
(These minutes have been seen
by the Administration)

Ref : CB1/PL/TP/1

Panel on Transport

**Minutes of meeting held on
Friday, 17 January 2014, at 10:15 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, BBS, MH
Hon Jeffrey LAM Kin-fung, GBS, JP
Hon Ronny TONG Ka-wah, SC
Hon CHAN Hak-kan, JP
Hon Mrs Regina IP LAU Suk-ye, GBS, JP
Hon Paul TSE Wai-chun, JP
Hon LEUNG Kwok-hung
Hon Albert CHAN Wai-yip
Hon Frankie YICK Chi-ming
Hon WU Chi-wai, MH
Hon CHAN Han-pan
Dr Hon Elizabeth QUAT, JP
Hon POON Siu-ping, BBS, MH
Hon TANG Ka-piu
Ir Dr Hon LO Wai-ki, BBS, MH, JP
Hon Christopher CHUNG Shu-kun, BBS, MH, JP
Hon Tony TSE Wai-chuen
- Members attending** : Hon WONG Kwok-kin, BBS
Hon CHAN Yuen-han, SBS, JP

Members absent : Hon Michael TIEN Puk-sun, BBS, JP
Dr Hon KWOK Ka-ki

Public Officers attending : **Agenda item IV**

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

Miss Amy CHAN Yuen-man
Principal Assistant Secretary for Transport and
Housing (Transport) 6

Mr Wilson CHIU Wing-sheung
Principal Executive Officer/VALID & Licensing
Transport Department

Mr Paul Edwin STRIPP
Chief Superintendent (Traffic)
Hong Kong Police Force

Agenda item V

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

Ms Ivy LAW Chui-mei
Deputy Secretary for Transport and Housing
(Transport) 3

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

Staff in attendance : Ms Macy NG
Senior Council Secretary (1)2

Ms Emily LIU
Legislative Assistant (1)2

Action

I Confirmation of minutes of meeting

(LC Paper No. CB(1)669/13-14 - Minutes of meeting on
15 November 2013)

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 November 2013 were confirmed.

II Information papers issued since the last meeting

(LC Paper No. CB(1)611/13-14(01) - Administration's response to
the joint letter from Hon
WONG Kwok-hing, Hon
TANG Ka-piu and Hon
KWOK Wai-keung on the
operation of taxi trade

LC Paper No. CB(1)660/13-14(01) - Administration's response to
the letters from Dr Hon
KWOK Ka-ki and Hon
Gary FAN Kwok-wai on the

- LC Paper No. CB(1)713/13-14(01) - incident of a protruding screw on Tuen Mun Road
- LC Paper No. CB(1)714/13-14(01) and (02) - Further referral memorandum from the Public Complaints Office of the Legislative Council Secretariat relating to the road transportation network of the Central and Western District
- LC Papers Nos. CB(1)736/13-14(01) and (02) - Referral memoranda to the Panel the views and concerns raised by Kwai Tsing District Council members on the works of hillside escalator links and elevator systems and the public transport service in Northeast Kwai Chung
- LC Paper No. CB(1)746/13-14(01) - Letter from Hon TANG Ka-piu on the study of establishing a fare surcharge mechanism for taxis
- LC Papers Nos. CB(1)736/13-14(01) and (02) - Letters from Hon WONG Kwok-hing and Hon Frankie YICK Chi-ming on the use of smart phones by taxi drivers while driving
- LC Papers Nos. CB(1)737/13-14(01) and (02) - Letters from Hon WU Chi-wai and Hon Gary FAN Kwok-wai on the operation of public light buses)

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

III **Items for discussion at the next meeting on 21 February 2014**

- (LC Paper No. CB(1)702/13-14(01) - List of outstanding items for discussion
- LC Paper No. CB(1)702/13-14(02) - List of follow-up actions)

3. Members agreed to discuss the following items at the next regular meeting to be held on 21 February 2014 –

- (a) Cross Bay Link, Tseung Kwan O – detailed design and site investigation; and
- (b) Public Lighting in Hong Kong.

4. Referring to the concerns raised by Mr WONG Kwok-hing and Mr Frankie YICK in their letters over the issue of using smart phones by taxi drivers while driving, the Chairman proposed and members agreed that the issue should also be included in the agenda of the next meeting.

IV Proposed revision to fees and charges relating to road traffic

(LC Paper No. CB(1)702/13-14(03) - Administration's paper on proposed revision to fees and charges relating to road traffic

LC Paper No. CB(1)702/13-14(04) - Paper on revision to fees and charges relating to road traffic prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat (background brief))

5. At the invitation of the Chairman, Under Secretary for Transport and Housing ("USTH") briefed members on the Administration's proposed revision to seven fee items relating to the provision of road traffic services by the Hong Kong Police Force and the Transport Department ("TD"). The proposed increases ranged from +6% to +15%. Members noted that all the seven fee revision proposals required amendments to the relevant legislation and the Administration planned to table the relevant legislative proposals within the 2013-2014 legislative year.

6. Noting that the proposed revision to the seven fee items had not been revised for seven years or more, Mr WONG Kwok-hing asked about the reasons for not revising them by phases in the past and whether there would be more upcoming proposals for fee revision. In his view, the Administration should consider conducting review annually or biennially and adjust the fees in a moderate manner to avoid a steep fee increase. Mr Frankie YICK echoed with Mr WONG and considered that a biennial

review on government fees and charges would be more acceptable to the public.

7. USTH said that policy bureaux and departments would regularly review fees and charges under their purview, and submit proposals for revision. To avoid affecting people's livelihood by frequent adjustments, the Administration would adjust fee levels when the accumulated adjustment rate had reached a certain level. He advised that there would be other fee items for revision and the Administration would submit the relevant proposals to the Legislative Council in due course. He highlighted that the Administration would first deal with fees that did not directly affect people's livelihood.

8. The Chairman and Mr WU Chi-wai considered that the Administration should achieve full cost recovery for punitive fee items as far as practicable and set out a timetable for achieving the target.

9. USTH responded that the Administration would achieve full cost recovery gradually by adopting the established guidelines. He said that it would however be difficult to work out a timetable to achieve full cost recovery given the complicated cost calculations and the number of government departments involved.

10. After discussion, the Chairman concluded that the Panel supported the Administration's legislative proposal to revise the seven fee items to be submitted later in 2014.

V Briefing by the Secretary for Transport and Housing on the transport policy initiatives featuring in the Chief Executive's 2014 Policy Address

(LC Paper No. CB(1)702/13-14(05) - Administration's paper on transport-related policy initiatives of the Transport and Housing Bureau under the 2014 Policy Address)

11. Upon invitation, Secretary for Transport and Housing ("STH") briefed members on the transport-related policy initiatives of the Transport and Housing Bureau ("THB") featured in the 2014 Policy Address. At the request of Mr WONG Kwok-hing, STH agreed to send a copy of his speech for members' reference.

(*Post-meeting note: STH's speech was issued to all Members on 20 January 2014 vide LC Paper No. CB(1)757/13-14(01).*)

Railway development

12. Mr WONG Kwok-hing was delighted to note that the Administration would actively consider taking forward the South Island Line (West) to address the additional transport demand entailed by the future redevelopment of Wah Fu Estate. He asked whether the railway and the housing redevelopment projects would be implemented in parallel. He also asked about the Administration's stance in response to the strong request of Siu Sai Wan residents regarding the extension of the Island Line to Siu Sai Wan.

13. Mr Christopher CHUNG asked whether a station would be provided in Aberdeen district to cater for the transport demand particularly at Tin Wan if the Administration was going to implement the South Island Line (West). In light of the anticipated huge increase in population in Wah Fu Estate, he asked whether the Administration would consider ultimately connecting the South Island Line (West) to West Island Line. He also asked about the Administration's stance in taking forward the Siu Sai Wan Extension.

14. STH responded that the Government had commissioned a consultant to conduct a study for the Review and Update of the "Railway Development Strategy 2000" ("RDS2000") to map out the future railway development. Having considered the consultant's overall recommendations, the Government would announce the way forward for the new railway proposals later in 2014.

15. Mr CHAN Hak-kan was disappointed that the Policy Address did not mention the way forward for the Northern Link to cater for the anticipated increase in transport demand as a result of the Government's plan to develop the North East New Territories and Hung Shui Kiu, which would be accommodating a new population of about 70 000. He also considered that a station should be provided in the Fanling North New Development Area. Echoing with Mr CHAN Hak-kan, Mr CHAN Han-pan indicated that he would move a motion urging the Government to implement the Northern Link project as well as provide a station in the Fanling North New Development Area.

16. Ir Dr LO Wai-kwok considered that since the Administration had planned to develop the area close to Wah Fu Estate and in the northern New

Territories, it was a must to implement the South Island Line (West) and the Northern Link to satisfy the transport demand.

17. STH responded that the Northern Link was one of the major regional railway corridors covered in the Stage 1 of Public Engagement exercise of the Review and Update of the RDS2000. The Government would consider the consultant's overall recommendations in formulating the blueprint for railway development beyond 2020, having regard to transport demand, cost-effectiveness and development needs of New Development Areas.

Study on the long-term development and strategy of public transport

18. Mr WU Chi-wai noted that the Government would launch a study on the long-term development and strategy of public transport ("the Public Transport Study") after the completion of the Review and Update of the RDS2000 and in light of the planning and implementation of various large-scale transport infrastructure. Considering the time required for conducting the Public Transport Study, he opined that the Administration should consider first conducting a preliminary study on the role of different transport modes in Hong Kong. Mr WU further suggested that the Administration should consider allowing the public light bus ("PLB") operators to bid for the bus route services cancelled as a result of bus route rationalization to meet the transport demand. He also requested the Administration to consider relaxing the restriction on the number of seats on each PLB to enhance efficiency.

19. Mr TANG Ka-piu also raised concern over the roles, viability, and drivers' livelihood of public transport in view of the expansion of railway network. He urged the Administration to conduct the Fourth Comprehensive Transport Study ("CTS") as soon as possible.

20. Mr Frankie YICK pointed out that the PLB trade was facing great operational difficulties and urged the Administration to commence the Public Transport Study as soon as possible. He urged the Administration to take appropriate measures to help maintain the financial viability of PLB operators, such as allowing PLBs to provide feeder services to railway stations. He said that the PLB trade had suggested that the Administration should allow more drop-off/pick-up points for PLBs on the roads and rationalize some PLB routes.

21. STH responded that the Administration planned to launch the Public Transport Strategy Study after the completion of the Review and Update of the RDS2000, and preparation for the Study was in progress. He pointed

out that instead of conducting the Fourth CTS which was large-scale and would take several years to complete, the Administration would take forward the Public Transport Strategy Study, which would be more thematic and would focus on reviewing the roles of different public transport modes. The Administration recognized that the commissioning of new railway lines would inevitably affect to a certain extent the operation of other public transport modes. The Public Transport Strategy Study would assist the Administration in formulating the public transport strategy.

22. Mr Tony TSE said that given the advantages of railway services, he believed that the majority of the public would support the Government's policy of using railways as the backbone of Hong Kong's transport system. Nevertheless, he was concerned over the "monopoly" of railway services as a result and the Administration's measures, if any, to ensure the viability of other public transport modes. He also expressed concern over the rapid increase in the number of private cars in recent years, which led to traffic congestion, as well as the problem of defective road surface particularly on Hong Kong Island which would lead to safety problems.

23. STH said that it was the Government's policy of using railway as the backbone of Hong Kong's passenger transport system due to its high efficiency and capacity, as well as low emission. The policy was the outcome of the Third CTS. He said that about 90% of the population used public transport and that taking into consideration the new railway lines to be commissioned, patronage of railway and franchised buses accounted for about 40% and 30% respectively of the total public transport patronage. STH added that as such, buses would continue to play an important role in the public transport system. He said that the Public Transport Strategy Study would review how franchised bus services could be better coordinated to complement the railway-based network to ensure that the commuting public would have a choice of different transport modes.

24. STH suggested that the increase in the number of private cars and the related traffic congestion issue would be separately covered in future transport studies. He also advised that the Highways Department ("HyD") would be requested to follow up the matter of defective road surface in Hong Kong.

25. Mr POON Siu-ping pointed out that under the existing transport policy, passengers relied heavily on railway service. As a result, the train cars were very congested during rush hours, and railway incidents had serious impact on the public. He asked whether the Administration would

consider adjusting the policy and strengthen the services of supplementary modes of transport.

26. STH said that the Public Transport Strategy Study would examine how different public transport modes would be better coordinated to ensure their financial viability. He understood that a large number of passengers would be affected by railway incidents, and the Administration would therefore review together with MTR Corporation Limited ("MTRCL") the contingency plans for railway incidents.

27. Mr Albert CHAN commented that the Administration had failed to formulate a comprehensive transport plan before taking forward certain transport infrastructural projects in recent years. He was also dissatisfied with the different level of resources allocated to develop transport facilities in the urban areas and in the New Territories, and he called for more transport facilities in the New Territories West.

28. STH responded that the general transport plan implemented was still following the long-term transport strategies recommended by the Third CTS. The conduct of the Review and Update of the RDS2000 and the future Public Transport Strategy Study would cater for the anticipated transport needs of new developments. He said that the Government would continue to closely monitor the development of new towns and introduce initiatives in response to the overall transport demand of the Northwest New Territories.

29. Ir Dr LO Wai-kwok expressed support for the Government's policy of using railways as the backbone of Hong Kong's transport system complemented by bus services. He, however, expressed concern about the Administration's capacity to solve the traffic congestion problem of existing roads connecting the New Territories to the urban areas, in particular the section between Shatin Racecourse and Tai Wai.

30. Director of Highways ("DHy") advised that the Administration was implementing a project to widen the Tolo Highway and Fanling Highway. He reported that the Stage 1 of the project was about to be completed and Stage 2 had just commenced. The project, after completion, would improve the traffic congestion of the Tolo Highway and Fanling Highway.

31. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung was dissatisfied that the Administration had been subsidizing MTRCL by expanding the railway network and granting it the property development right at the expense of the public. He considered that the Administration should consider operating the franchised bus

services by itself with a view to enhancing bus services to supplement railway services.

32. STH said that it was the goal of the Administration to enhance local traffic mobility through management of traffic demand and supply. He said that the matter on "nationalizing" franchised bus services was a big issue and would require policy justification and detailed study.

Traffic distribution among the road harbour crossings

33. Mr Christopher CHUNG expressed concern that the implementation of the Administration's proposal to reduce the tolls at Eastern Harbour Crossing ("EHC") and increase the tolls at Cross Harbour Tunnel ("CHT") as a measure to rationalize the traffic distribution among road harbour crossings ("RHCs") might overload EHC, which was already very congested during busy hours. He proposed that the Administration should prepare a simulated model by computer to study the traffic impact of its proposal. Where appropriate, the Administration could consider implementing the proposal after commissioning of the Central-Wan Chai Bypass and Island Eastern Corridor Link ("CWB").

34. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung considered that the Administration should buy back the ownership of Western Harbour Crossing ("WHC") and EHC so that it could take over the control of the toll levels of the three RHCs. If so, the Administration could improve the traffic distribution among the three RHCs by toll adjustment.

35. In the view of Mr LEE Cheuk-yan, apart from adjusting the toll level of CHT and EHC, the Administration should also include WHC's toll level in its proposal. He raised concern about the Administration's schedule of implementing the rationalization measures.

36. STH advised that the Government had proposed to reduce the tolls at EHC and increase the tolls at CHT so as to divert traffic from CHT to EHC, such that cross-harbour traffic queues would no longer interfere with non-cross-harbour traffic. It had put forward three specific options for public consultation in February 2013. He added that the proposal of toll adjustment at WHC to rationalize traffic distribution among RHCs would be studied after CWB came into operation in end 2017. It was because although WHC itself had spare capacity, its connecting roads, in particular those in Central, were already congested.

37. Regarding the schedule of implementing the rationalization measures, STH said that the Government was studying the views received during the public consultation and noted that there were concern over the possible traffic impact on the traffic flow of EHC and its neighbouring areas. The Government would carefully consider a host of factors, including the latest traffic situation, in formulating the way forward. He undertook to report this to the Panel later in 2014.

Promotion on the use of electric vehicles

38. Mr Frankie YICK expressed support for the Government's plan to launch a trial scheme that enabled suppliers of electric taxis to install quick chargers at carparks administered by TD to encourage the industry to expand the electric vehicles ("EVs") fleet. He asked for the names of those carparks.

39. Commissioner for Transport ("C for T") replied that the EV Trial Scheme involved installation of quick chargers at six out of ten carparks administered by TD where electricity chargers were in place. Those six carparks were the City Hall, Rumsey Street, Shau Kei Wan, Sheung Fung Street, Tin Hau and Tsuen Wan carparks. The Government did not plan to install quick chargers at the remaining four carparks because there were development plans for them within the next three years. She added that the use of those quick chargers was not limited to electric taxis but also other types of EVs. At the request of Mr Frankie YICK, C for T agreed to provide the names of the six carparks in writing to facilitate Mr YICK's consultation with the trade.

Admin

(Post-meeting note: The supplementary information provided by the Administration was issued vide LC Paper No. CB(1)809/13-14(01) on 13 February 2014.)

40. To effectively promote the wider use of EVs in Hong Kong, Mr Tony TSE opined that electricity chargers should also be provided at privately-owned carparks. Mr CHAN Hak-kan considered that the Administration should provide incentives such as subsidies and lower licence fees for using EVs.

41. STH said that the Government agreed that a good public charging network was instrumental to promoting the use of EVs. He said the performance of EVs under different road conditions was still being tested,

and that the EV Trial Scheme was a measure to promote wider use of EVs in Hong Kong.

42. Ir Dr LO Wai-kwok suggested that apart from promoting the use of EVs, the Administration should also promote the use of environmentally-friendly biodiesel for vehicles. STH said that while the matter fell under the purview of the Environment Bureau ("ENB"), THB would continue to collaborate with ENB on promotion of green transport, including the use of biodiesel for vehicles.

43. Referring to paragraph 152 of the Policy Address which mentioned that the Chief Executive and the Principal Officials would take the lead in using EVs on a trial basis, Mr WONG Kwok-hing asked whether STH and C for T were using EVs or not.

44. STH confirmed that he would use it if he would be allocated one. C for T said that TD was already using one EV and would be happy to use more EVs, subject to arrangement of the Government Logistics Department.

Bus services

45. Mr WONG Kwok-hing considered that the section fares of those cross-harbour routes running on Hong Kong Island should be decreased after they crossed the harbour to enhance their patronage. He considered that the Administration should conduct a trial scheme to test the effectiveness of his proposal.

46. C for T said that under the current fare structure, the fares of cross-harbour buses after they crossed the harbour were kept at a level higher than that of buses running parallel sections on Hong Kong Island. She explained that cross-harbour bus routes were relatively long-haul and required return trips. To ensure the precise headways of cross-harbour buses, passengers were encouraged to use non-cross-harbour bus routes instead on Hong Kong Island. Such an approach was agreed between TD and the bus companies concerned. At the request of Mr WONG Kwok-hing, she agreed to explore with bus companies the feasibility of conducting a trial scheme as suggested by Mr WONG.

47. Mr Albert CHAN said that although bus route rationalization had been discussed for years, the Administration had failed to pursue effective bus-bus interchange service and urged that more fare concessions should be provided to passengers for interchange.

48. STH said that when taking forward the bus route rationalization by adoption of an "Area Approach", the Administration would consider a package of proposals including the interchange service and interchange concessions. The Administration was willing to discuss further with bus companies for offer of more interchange concessions for individual routes.

Adequacy of parking spaces

49. Several members raised that there was a shortage of parking spaces for different kinds of vehicles and urged the Administration to address the problem. Mr Tony TSE said that parking spaces for coaches were insufficient particularly at tourism spots. Dr Elizabeth QUAT pointed out that there was a shortage of parking space and safe pick-up/drop-off areas for Rehabuses and school buses/nanny vans. Mr Frankie YICK suggested the Administration to provide a multi-storey carpark in Kwai Ching district for articulated vehicles.

50. STH said that the Government would review the demand and supply of parking spaces for different types of vehicles in Hong Kong in future transport studies. He said that the Administration had to balance the needs of various parties, including the safety of passengers and pedestrians, as well as the need to maximize the use of road space to maintain smooth traffic flow.

51. As regards the suggestion of providing a multi-storey car park for commercial vehicles in Kwai Ching, STH said that the matter had to be carefully considered having regard to various factors such as the loading capacity of carparks for larger and heavier vehicles.

Promotion of a "bicycle friendly" environment

52. Mr WU Chi-wai considered that the Administration should consider the provision of more measures and facilities like parking spaces and crossing facilities for bicycles to enhance cycling safety, and to promote bicycle as a smokeless transport mode.

53. Dr Elizabeth QUAT also considered that the Administration should not regard cycling as a recreational activity and that cycle tracks should be designed to facilitate commuting of the public. She was dissatisfied with the lack of connectivity for and poor design of cycle tracks, as well as the shortage of parking space for bicycles. She asked about the Administration's stance in developing "bicycle" as an environmentally friendly transport mode which could provide feeder service and whether the

Administration would introduce a self-help public bicycle rental service in Hong Kong.

54. Miss CHAN Yuen-han considered that the Administration should be open-minded and more creative in providing a "bicycle friendly" environment. Among others, the problems of road safety and insufficient parking space for bicycles had to be solved. She opined that the Administration should consider constructing a cycle track along the north shore of Hong Kong Island from Chai Wan to Central to relieve the traffic burden.

55. STH said that the Government was conducting a consultancy study on cycling in Hong Kong. The study would cover improvement measures of existing cycle tracks and related safety issues. He advised that the study had commenced and the Government would set a clearer direction within 2014. He added that while recognizing bicycles as a commuting mode in new towns and new development areas, the Government did not encourage the use of bicycle for commuting in urban areas where traffic was busy.

56. Mr Ronny TONG recalled that the Administration had proposed to link up the various cycle track networks from Sai Kung to Tsuen Wan and asked whether the project was still being pursued.

57. STH confirmed that the project of constructing a trunk cycle track network in the New Territories was being pursued by the Civil Engineering and Development Department under the Development Bureau in phases. At the request of Mr Ronny TONG, STH agreed to provide supplementary information on the progress of the project. The Chairman also said that where appropriate, the Administration could be invited to explain to members the progress of the project at a Transport Panel meeting.

Admin

(Post-meeting note: The supplementary information provided by the Administration was issued vide LC Paper No. CB(1)809/13-14(01) on 13 February 2014.)

External land transport connections

58. Mr Frankie YICK was concerned about the transport arrangements at the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge ("HZMB") Hong Kong Boundary Crossing Facilities ("HKBCF") after its commissioning. He requested the Administration to consult the transport trade before finalizing the arrangements with the governments of the Mainland and Macao.

59. STH and Deputy Secretary for Transport and Housing (Transport)³ said that to prepare for the commissioning of the HZMB in 2016, the three governments had set up the Co-ordination Group on Cross-boundary Matters to press ahead with the relevant policy studies and discuss the relevant cross boundary transport arrangements, including the cross boundary passenger service and enforcement coordination. The Administration would gauge the view of the transport trade once an approach had been formulated.

60. In response to the Chairman's enquiry on whether the consultation with the trade and the discussion among the three governments could be carried out in parallel, STH explained that it would be difficult to do so without first reaching a consensus among the three governments on the acceptable cross boundary transport arrangements. In view of the concern of Mr YICK, he undertook to see how to gauge the view of the transport trade while discussing the relevant cross boundary arrangements with the other two governments.

61. Mr Jeffrey LAM noted that the Government would develop "bridgehead economy" with the commissioning of HZMB HKBCF and that the eastern waters off Lantau Island and neighbouring areas would be further developed. He asked if the Administration had any plan on the provision of related transport ancillary facilities in Lantau. He stressed that any development should not affect the smooth transportation to and from the Airport in Chek Lap Kok.

62. STH said that the Administration would carefully consider the transportation needs while developing the Lantau Island. He said that the Chief Executive had announced in his Policy Address that a Lantau Development Advisory Committee would be established to formulate the economic and social development strategy for Lantau Island. THB would also be involved in the work of the aforesaid Committee.

63. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung was dissatisfied that the Administration had spent too much resources on infrastructural projects to connect Hong Kong and the Mainland. He requested and STH agreed to provide supplementary information on a comparison of public fund spent on transport infrastructural projects aiming to connect Hong Kong with Mainland China and that spent on projects within the territory of Hong Kong to relief traffic burden.

(Post-meeting note: The supplementary information provided by the Administration was issued vide LC Paper No. CB(1)906/13-14(01) on 14 February 2014.)

Improvement of pedestrian environment

64. Mr CHAN Han-pan expressed concern over the over-crowding pedestrian environment in Yuen Long due to the rapid growth of population. He asked about the Administration's stance to put the Light Rail underground and develop underground streets to relieve space for widening the pavements.

65. STH said that the suggestion of putting the Light Rail underground would be considered in the Public Transport Strategy Study alongside with other possibilities. DHy advised that the HyD had already commenced in September 2011 a feasibility study to improve pedestrian environment in Yuen Long and conducted a series of public consultation in this regard. After discussion with Yuen Long District Council, a number of small, medium and large scale projects had been planned. They included beautifying the footpaths along Fung Yau Street North and major footpaths in Yuen Long Town to connect with the West Rail Yuen Long Station; improvements to pedestrian crossings at Kuk Ting Street and Castle Peak Road (Yuen Long Section) junction; and construction of a pedestrian footbridge along Yuen Long Nullah.

66. In response to Mr LEE Cheuk-yan's concern over the schedule of implementing the above projects, DHy reported that the small scale works had commenced and would be completed by phases. He said that the Administration, after discussion with the District Council concerned, would modify the traffic management measures at Kuk Ting Street to speed up the traffic and pedestrian flow. The detailed design of medium scale improvement works was in progress and would be completed in 2017-2018. As for the large scale project of constructing a major footbridge along Yuen Long Nullah, the relevant preliminary design works was in progress. DHy highlighted that there were many constraints in conducting improvement works along the Castle Peak Road (Yuen Long Section) as the road concerned was old with many buildings on both sides. He said that the Administration would continue to take forward the improvement projects in consultation with Yuen Long District Council.

Other views and concerns

67. Miss CHAN Yuen-han noted that the Government was conducting the second stage public consultation on the provision of an Elevated Rail-based Environmentally Friendly Linkage System in Kowloon East. She was concerned about the high cost involved and indicated that Members of Kwun Tong and Wong Tai Sin District Councils who belonged to The Hong Kong Federation of Trade Unions were studying whether it would be more cost-effective to adopt Modern Tramway. She also commented that many roads in Hong Kong were not barrier free and urged the Administration to take the opportunity of developing Anderson Road Quarry into a public housing hub to solve the traffic congestion problem near Anderson Road and the neighbouring areas.

68. Ir Dr LO Wai-kwok was aware that the Government had a number of short to long term transport-related initiatives to be carried out and was concerned if there were sufficient manpower (in particular the professional grade staff) at the THB and the relevant works departments to implement the various initiatives.

69. STH replied that the Administration had strived to deploy staff resources effectively to implement various transport-related initiatives. THB had been regularly reviewing the internal works procedures. Where necessary, it would submit bids for additional manpower according to the standing procedures.

70. Mr Jeffrey LAM noted that the Government aimed to provide an average of about 20 000 public rental housing units and about 8 000 Home Ownership Scheme units per year to satisfy the housing demand in the next ten years. He asked about the Administration's transport plan to cope with the additional traffic demand generated by housing developments. STH assured members that the Administration would seek to provide sufficient public transport support facilities while taking forward the housing development projects.

71. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan was concerned about whether the Administration would review the fare levels of public transport to alleviate the burden of transport expenses on the public. He elaborated that although a penalty mechanism for train service disruptions was in place, the penalty would only be given back to part of passengers through the "10% Same Day Second Trip Discount" scheme. In his view, the fare levels should be lowered to benefit all passengers.

72. STH responded that when assessing franchised bus fare adjustment applications, the Administration would take into account a basket of factors which included changes in operating costs and revenue since the last fare adjustment and public affordability. The MTR fare was governed by the Fare Adjustment Mechanism ("FAM") of MTRCL. It adopted a direct-drive formula which was transparent and objective. He added that the penalty mechanism under the FAM did not aim to increase the revenue of MTRCL. At present, the penalty would be given back to passengers through the "10% Same Day Second Trip Discount" scheme.

73. Mr POON Siu-ping noted that the Administration would consider and implement measures to enhance traffic management with a view to reducing congestion along major transport corridors. He asked about the measures to be taken by the Administration and its stance on the suggestion of implementing electronic road pricing system.

74. In reply, STH said that the Government was exploring the possibility of application of electronic road pricing in Hong Kong. It would report the outcome of the review to the Panel in due course.

75. C for T supplemented that TD would regularly review and put in place appropriate traffic management measures, including monitoring of vehicle speeds on major trunk roads to monitor the traffic congestion situation, setting up of prohibition and pedestrian zones, and assessing the impact of new transport routes. TD also adopted new technologies such as electronic display of real time traffic information on some roads. In 2013, TD had installed a number of speed map panels along some strategic routes in the New Territories to facilitate drivers to select their routes. She said that TD would continue to enhance the effectiveness of traffic management.

76. Noting that some government roads/tunnels were toll-free while some were not, Mr TANG Ka-piu asked about the Administration's policy in this regard. STH said that in deciding whether the roads/tunnels should be tolled, the Administration would take into account a host of factors, including traffic management angle, prevailing economic situation and the need to uphold the "user pays" principle. It would be difficult to make a general statement on the circumstances under which a certain road/tunnel would be tolled.

Motion

77. After discussion, Mr CHAN Han-pan moved the following motion, which was seconded by Mr CHAN Hak-kan –

"本會促請政府盡快落實興建北環線，並於粉嶺北新發展區設立車站。"

(Translation)

"That this Panel urges the Government to expeditiously implement the construction of the Northern Link as well as provide a station in the Fanling North New Development Area."

78. The Chairman put the motion to vote. Seven members voted for and no member voted against it. The Chairman declared that the motion was carried.

VI Any other business

79. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 12:40 pm.

Council Business Division 1
Legislative Council Secretariat
9 April 2014