

**立法會**  
**Legislative Council**

LC Paper No. CB(1)1574/13-14  
(These minutes have been seen  
by the Administration)

Ref : CB1/PL/TP/1

**Panel on Transport**

**Minutes of meeting held on  
Friday, 28 February 2014, at 8:30 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 Michael TIEN Puk-sun, BBS, 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  
Ir Dr Hon LO Wai-kwok, BBS, MH, JP  
Hon Christopher CHUNG Shu-kun, BBS, MH, JP  
Hon Tony TSE Wai-chuen

**Member absent** : Hon TANG Ka-piu

**Public Officers attending** : **Agenda item IV**

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

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

Ms Judy CHUNG Sui-kei  
Principal Assistant Secretary for Transport and  
Housing (Transport) 5

Mr Albert CHENG Ting-ning, JP  
Project Manager (New Territories East)  
Civil Engineering and Development Department

Mr Stephen LI Tin-sang  
Chief Engineer/New Territories East 1  
Civil Engineering and Development Department

**Agenda item V**

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

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

Mr LEUNG Tak-fai  
Assistant Commissioner for Transport /Technical  
Service  
Transport Department

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

Mr Patrick PANG Shu-hung  
Chief Superintendent of Police (Traffic)/Atg.  
Hong Kong Police Force

**Agenda item VI**

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

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

Mr TO Kam-biu, JP  
Deputy Commissioner for Transport/Planning &  
Technical Services  
Transport Department

Mr Anthony LOO, JP  
Assistant Commissioner for Transport/Planning  
Transport Department

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

**Staff in attendance :** Miss Katherine CHAN  
Council Secretary (1)2

Ms Emily LIU  
Legislative Assistant (1)2

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**Action**

- I Confirmation of minutes of meeting**  
(LC Paper No. CB(1)920/13-14 - Minutes of meeting on  
20 December 2013)

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 December 2013 were confirmed.

## II Information papers issued since the last meeting

- (LC Paper No. CB(1)807/13-14(01) - Letter from Hon Gary FAN Kwok-wai on Transport Department's monitoring of franchised bus companies in respect of bus trip frequency
- | LC Papers                       | Nos. |  |
|---------------------------------|------|--|
| CB(1)808/13-14(01)              | and  | - Submission from Hong Kong Scheduled (GMB) Licensee Association on requiring applicants for a public light bus driving licence to attend a pre-service course and the Administration's response |
| CB(1)947/13-14(01)              |      |  |
| LC Paper No. CB(1)854/13-14(01) |      | - Administration's response to the letter from Hon Michael TIEN Puk-sun on the Tuen Mun Western Bypass Project   |
| LC Paper No. CB(1)907/13-14(01) |      | - Letter from Hon CHAN Han-pan on Cheung Chau's ferry services provided by the First Ferry   |
| LC Paper No. CB(1)913/13-14(01) |      | - Letter from Dr Hon Elizabeth QUAT requesting to discuss the problem of the shortage of parking spaces for school buses and nanny vans  |
| LC Paper No. CB(1)969/13-14(01) |      | - Letter from Dr Hon KWOK Ka-ki requesting to discuss the recent railway incidents and Fare Adjustment Mechanism of the MTR Corporation Limited  |
| LC Paper No. CB(1)998/13-14(01) |      | - Referral memoranda to the Panel the views and concerns raised by Wong Tai Sin District Council members on the new policy of "Universal Accessibility"  |
| LC Paper No. CB(1)999/13-14(01) |      | - Referral memoranda to the Panel the views and concerns raised by Tuen  |

Mun District Council  
members on the Tuen Mun  
Western Bypass)

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

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

(LC Paper No. CB(1)912/13-14(01) - List of outstanding items  
for discussion

LC Paper No. CB(1)912/13-14(02) - List of follow-up actions)

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

(a) Public lighting in Hong Kong; and

(b) Private Driving Instructors' licences.

*(Post-meeting note: The meeting was subsequently rescheduled to  
25 March 2014 at 10:45 am.)*

**IV Cross Bay Link, Tseung Kwan O – detailed design and site investigation**

(LC Paper No. CB(1)912/13-14(03) - Administration's paper on  
822TH – Cross Bay Link,  
Tseung Kwan O

LC Paper No. CB(1)912/13-14(04) - Paper on Cross Bay Link,  
Tseung Kwan O prepared by  
the Legislative Council  
Secretariat (background  
brief))

4. At the invitation of the Chairman, Under Secretary for Transport and Housing ("USTH") briefed members on the Administration's proposal to carry out detailed design and associated site investigation works for the "Cross Bay Link, Tseung Kwan O" ("CBL") at an estimated cost of \$68.7 million in money-of-the day prices. Chief Engineer/New Territories East 1 of the Civil Engineering and Development Department ("CEDD") then made a powerpoint presentation on the CBL project (LC Paper No. CB(1)1041/13-14(01)).

5. Members noted that the Administration planned to seek the endorsement of the Public Works Subcommittee on its funding proposal in March 2014. Subject to funding approval of the Finance Committee in May 2014, it planned to start the proposed detailed design and associated site investigation works in August 2014 for completion in end 2016.

6. Mr WU Chi-wai expressed his support for the proposal. However, he would like to ask if the Administration would implement any measures so that risks factors could be controlled in site investigation stage because it was not uncommon for the Administration to request approval of further funds for similar projects. He also asked whether the various on-going infrastructural projects undertaken in Hong Kong would push up the tender price.

7. Project Manager (New Territories East) of CEDD ("PM(NTE)") said that at present, there were two large and similar infrastructural projects, i.e. Hong Kong Link Road and Tuen Mun-Chek Lap Kok Link, which also involved construction of viaducts in offshore areas as the CBL project. Since the two projects were expected to complete in 2016, the relevant machinery and resources could timely be allocated to the construction of CBL by the end of 2016, thus minimizing the risks factors in respect of cost of the project.

8. Noting that the commissioning of CBL would shorten the travelling time from Tseung Kwan O ("TKO") to other areas of Hong Kong, Mr Christopher CHUNG and Mr POON Siu-ping expressed concern that it would generate additional road traffic and aggravate the traffic congestion problem of the Eastern Harbour Crossing ("EHC"). Mr CHUNG asked whether the Administration would consider constructing a road harbour crossing ("RHC") to meet the traffic demand between TKO and Hong Kong East.

9. USTH said that the TKO-Lam Tin Tunnel ("TKO-LTT") together with CBL would provide an alternative external road to relieve the traffic burden of the existing TKO Tunnel connecting TKO with other areas, as well as to provide an alternative access to the southeast TKO. He said that the commissioning of TKO-LTT and CBL in 2020 had already taken into account the traffic demand of the future population in TKO, which was anticipated to grow from the current figure of 380 000 to 450 000 in 2021. As for the rationalization of the three RHCs, the Administration considered that the commissioning of the Central-Wan Chai Bypass ("CWB") in 2017 and the Central Kowloon Route thereafter would enable the Government to

formulate a more comprehensive strategy to rationalize the traffic distribution among RHCs.

10. Mr POON Siu-ping expressed support for the construction of TKO-LTT and CBL. He asked whether the roads concerned would be toll charging as he was concerned over whether the purpose of traffic diversion could well be achieved.

11. USTH advised that CBL would be toll free while TKO-LTT would be toll charging. He said that although there would not be a toll plaza at TKO-LTT, the Administration would explore other toll collection means during the detailed design stage. He added that while determining the toll level of TKO-LTT, the Administration would take into account the angle of traffic diversion.

12. Mr Tony TSE noted that the CBL project involved the construction of a cycle track and asked about the works details. PM(NTE) advised that the cycle track on CBL would connect the existing cycle track network in the southern TKO reclamation area, forming a cycle network of 5 km along the Junk Bay. This would be a recreational and entertainment facility not only for TKO residents but also cyclists from different districts.

13. In response to Mr Tony TSE's further enquiry on the funding arrangement of the project, USTH advised that the estimated cost of \$68.7 million covered the cost of carrying out the detailed design and associated site investigation works for the whole CBL project.

14. Dr Elizabeth QUAT indicated that the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong ("DAB") supported the construction of CBL. However, she was concerned about the traffic arrangement, including whether there would be any restriction on the use of CBL by different types of vehicles. She also enquired about whether any slip roads would be connected to CBL.

15. USTH said that the traffic arrangement of CBL had yet to be determined. The Administration would listen to the views of the district while drawing up the relevant arrangement. PM(NTE) supplemented that CBL would connect Wan Po Road in the southeastern part of TKO and TKO-LTT on the southwestern part of the Junk Bay, and there would not be any slip roads connecting CBL.

16. Mr Frankie YICK said that it was understood that the CBL and TKO-LTT should be completed at the same time. He suggested the

Administration to consider to complete the works of CBL and its connection to the existing Po Shun Road first so as to provide an alternative access to the southeastern part of TKO to relieve the traffic congestion of Wan Po Road before the commissioning of TKO-LTT. PM(NTE) advised that the Administration was carrying out the detailed design of TKO-LTT, which covered the road connection to Po Shun Road. He noted Mr YICK's suggestion and agreed to study further.

17. The Deputy Chairman urged the Administration to expedite the CBL project to meet the traffic demand of the expanding TKO population and minimize the chance of construction cost increase. Pointing out that the project had been delayed for some time, he was concerned about whether the project would be subject to further delay.

18. PM(NTE) advised that the Administration understood the needs of TKO residents and would strive to take forward the project as early as possible. The Administration was seeking funding approval to commence the detailed design and associated site investigation works in 2014. Objections received after gazettal of the project would be resolved as soon as possible.

19. After discussion, the Chairman concluded that the Panel supported the Administration's funding proposal.

**V Use of smart phones by taxi drivers while driving**

(LC Paper No. CB(1)912/13-14(07) - Administration's paper on use of smart phones by taxi drivers while driving

LC Paper No. CB(1)912/13-14(08) - Paper on use of smart phones by taxi drivers while driving prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat (background brief)

LC Papers Nos. - Letters from Hon WONG CB(1)736/13-14(01) and (02) Kwok-hing and Hon Frankie YICK Chi-ming on the use of smart phones by taxi drivers while driving)



20. USTH briefed members on the actions taken by the Administration to address members' concerns over the alleged simultaneous use of a number of smart phones while driving by some taxi drivers.

#### General views

21. Mr WONG Kwok-hing recognized that there was currently no legal provision regulating the operation of mobile phones with fingertips while driving and the number of mobile phones displayed on the dashboard. He also noted that the Administration would explore the practicability of further tightening up the control over the use of mobile phones while driving by studying the correlation between the use of mobile phones through "swiping" and the number of mobile phones placed inside vehicles against the occurrence of traffic accidents. He asked about the schedule of carrying out the study and when the Administration would report back the matter to the Panel.

22. USTH said that taking into account the practical needs of drivers, such as the need to make phone calls in an emergency or other necessary situations, the current legislation only prohibited the use of hand-held mobile phones or holding the phone between one's head and shoulder while driving. Notwithstanding the above, a driver might commit an offence under regulation 37 of the Road Traffic Ordinance (Cap. 374) on "dangerous driving" or regulation 38 on "careless driving" if his driving behaviour was adversely affected by his using of mobile phone while driving.

23. USTH further said that regulating the operation of mobile phones with fingertips while driving and the number of mobile phones placed inside vehicles might affect not only taxi drivers but also all commercial vehicles and other drivers. As such, the matter had to be carefully studied. Also, the Administration would need to consider the enforcement and related issues, and to collect and analyze relevant information before considering the relevant regulatory framework. USTH added that the Administration had commenced the relevant study and would report the matter to the Panel in due course. The Chairman suggested and Mr WONG Kwok-hing echoed that the Administration should report the matter to the Panel in six months.

24. Mr Frankie YICK said that the taxi trade understood that there was a genuine need for some drivers to use mobile phones while driving. Hence, the trade only requested to restrict the number of mobile phones placed inside vehicles to combat the discount gangs, who solicited business by making use

of taxi-hiring service mobile applications. He also considered that the Administration should not make reference to overseas practices when considering whether to enact the relevant legislation in Hong Kong due to different business environments. USTH noted Mr YICK's suggestion.

25. Dr Elizabeth QUAT considered that for the purpose of preventing traffic accidents, the Administration should enact legislation to regulate the act of taxi drivers operating smart phones while driving as soon as practicable, not until it was proven that there was a correlation between such act and traffic accidents. She agreed that the Administration should provide a written response to the Panel within six months on how to tackle the problem.

26. Mr Christopher CHUNG agreed to Dr QUAT's view that drivers were bound to be distracted to a certain extent by operating smart phones while driving and it was really a threat to the safety of passengers. He wondered if government officials would allow drivers of government's vehicles to mount a number of mobile phones on the dashboard.

27. USTH said that there was existing legislation governing taxi drivers' driving behaviour if they were adversely affected by their using of mobile phone while driving. Further tightening up the control over the use of mobile phones while driving should be taken forward with justifications and would require public consultation. The Administration had to strike a right balance among road safety, social needs and the use of telecommunication equipment.

28. In response to Dr Elizabeth QUAT's enquiry on the legal implications of using mobile phones by tram drivers and Light Rail captains while driving, USTH advised that the operation of both heavy and light rails were regulated by the Mass Transit Railway Ordinance (Cap. 556), which stipulated that employees of the MTR Corporation Limited would commit a criminal offence for their negligent act if the safety of a person being on the railway was or likely to be endangered. Furthermore, Light Rail and tram drivers were also regulated by the Road Traffic Ordinance (Cap. 374) if their driving behaviour was adversely affected by their using of mobile phones while driving. To his understanding, MTR train captains and tram drivers were also obliged to follow the relevant internal guidelines of their companies.

29. USTH suggested that if passengers considered that the driving behaviour of taxis or other public transport vehicles had threatened their safety, they could report the matter to the Police.

30. Mr POON Siu-ping opined that as the Administration would require some time to collect data regarding the number of mobile phones placed in vehicles which were involved in traffic accidents with personal injuries for further analysis, it should take short-term measures to rectify the problem, including enhancing public education for drivers. He asked about the Administration's efforts in this regard.

31. USTH advised that the Road Safety Council ("RSC") had been working in collaboration with the Police and the Transport Department ("TD") to appeal to drivers not to use hand-held mobile phones and to drive attentively. It would continue to work closely with RSC to enhance the education and publicity work, and would invite RSC to study the issue further.

32. Mr Albert CHAN pointed out that apart from taxi drivers, the problem of operating telecommunication equipment such as walkie-talkie by red minibus drivers while driving was also serious. He requested that the Administration should take measures to regulate such act by legislation or through administrative procedures, such as specifying certain conditions when issuing a driving licence. He stressed that operating a number of smart phones on the dashboard would threaten the safety of passengers and the Administration should not wait until there was a fatal accident.

33. USTH responded that efforts would be made to enhance the education of drivers whose driving attitude would be crucial to ensure safety of passengers. He added that if legislation was to be enacted, the Administration would need to first conduct a thorough study.

34. Mr WU Chi-wai opined that the Administration should regulate or limit the number of smart phones fixed on the dashboard to one or two which would meet the need of an ordinary person. He said that the Administration should adopt an approach which balanced the passenger safety and convenience of taxi-hiring service. He also suggested that the Administration should consider relaxing the restrictions on the number of public transport vehicle licences with a view to improving service through competition.

35. USTH agreed to study the views of Mr WU concerning the regulation of the number of smart phones fixed on the dashboard. As for the latter suggestion, he said that this would be subject to the road space available and whether it would lead to cut-throat competition. The issue concerned a broad transport management issue and would be taken into account in a large-scale transport study.

36. The Chairman said that the placing of several mobile phones on the dashboard by some taxi drivers would pose hazards to passengers and other road users. He pointed out that the purpose of the existing legislation forbidding a driver holding a mobile telephone in his hand or between his head and shoulder while driving was to avoid causing distraction to the driver. He considered that regulating the use of mobile phones in other forms should achieve the same legislative intent. He considered that the Administration should consult the trade as soon as possible and take prompt actions to address the problem.

Legislative prohibition against fare bargaining by taxi passengers

37. Mr WONG Kwok-hing noted that under the existing legislation, fare bargaining by taxi passengers was not prohibited. He asked about the Administration's stance in respect of the trade's suggestion of regulating the above-mentioned act.

38. Mr Frankie YICK pointed out that as taxi fare was regulated by legislation, he did not see any reason for not enacting legislation to forbid fare bargaining by taxi passengers.

39. Dr Elizabeth QUAT considered that the root of the problem of taxi drivers operating smart phones while driving was the absence of legislation governing fare bargaining by taxi passengers. As such, she considered that the Administration should address the problem in this respect.

40. The Chairman said that there was a direct correlation between discount gangs and fixing a number of smart phones on the dashboard. He said that discount gangs made use of different telephone numbers to solicit business from different kinds of customers. Therefore, forbidding fare bargaining by passengers might help solving the problem.

41. In response, USTH said that under the existing legislation, taxi passengers should pay the legal fares according to taxi meters. Moreover, taxi drivers would commit an offence if they reduced fares to solicit business. As the current mechanism was sufficient to safeguard both taxi drivers and passengers, the Administration considered that legislation prohibiting fare bargaining by passengers would not be necessary. He added that since the implementation of the taxi fare structure that increased short-haul fares and lowered long-haul fares with effect from late 2008, the situation whereby a taxi driver offered fare discounts on his/her own initiative had become less prevalent.

Motion

42. After discussion, Mr WONG Kwong-hing moved the following motion, which was seconded by Mr Frankie YICK and Dr Elizabeth QUAT –

"促請政府研究立法規管的士司機在駕駛時使用智能電話的危險情況和立法禁止的士乘客議價。"

(Translation)

"That this Panel urges the Government to study the enactment of legislation to regulate the dangerous practice of using smart phones by taxi drivers while driving, and enactment of legislation against fare bargaining by taxi passengers."

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

**VI Traffic distribution among road harbour crossings**

(LC Paper No. CB(1)912/13-14(05) - Administration's paper on traffic distribution among road harbour crossings

LC Paper No. CB(1)912/13-14(06) - Paper on traffic distribution among road harbour crossings prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat (background brief))

44. Upon invitation, Secretary for Transport and Housing ("STH") briefed members on the outcome of the public consultation on the three toll adjustment proposals which were put forward by the Government in 2013 to improve the traffic distribution among RHCs. STH also presented the Government's latest work plan for improving the traffic distribution among RHCs.

45. STH said that in 2013, the Government had put forward three options which involved different degrees of toll reduction at EHC and toll increases at the Cross Harbour Tunnel ("CHT") for public consultation. They aimed to divert traffic from CHT to EHC. The Government had also proposed

that the selected toll adjustment option should be implemented on a trial basis for 12 months to test its effectiveness ("the toll adjustment trial scheme"). STH said that having regard to the latest traffic situations at CHT and EHC, the diverse views of the public over the proposed toll adjustment options and concerns of the relevant districts over the possible traffic congestion caused by the diverted traffic, the Government decided to put in abeyance the implementation of the toll adjustment trial scheme. STH emphasized that the Government's decision to put in abeyance the toll adjustment trial scheme did not mean that it would no longer rationalize cross harbour traffic through toll adjustment. Instead, the Government would implement the relevant measures at an opportune time. Rationalizing traffic distribution among RHCs remained an important item on the Government's agenda.

Justification for shelving the toll adjustment trial scheme and short-term measures to ease traffic congestion at CHT

46. Members in general supported the Administration's decision to shelve the toll adjustment trial scheme. However, they expressed concern over the implementation of any short-term measures to ease the traffic burden of CHT.

47. STH said that according to the latest traffic flow, it was noted that the daily average traffic throughput of EHC increased to 72 000 vehicles in 2013 and that of CHT in 2013 showed a drop of more than 3 000 vehicles per day as compared to 2011. The Government would continue to closely monitor the traffic flow of RHCs. He advised that the targeted commissioning of CWB in 2017 would be an opportune time for formulating a more comprehensive strategy to rationalize the traffic distribution among RHCs. At present, even though the traffic throughput of the Western Harbour Crossing ("WHC") was under its design capacity, congestion at its connecting roads in Central rendered it impossible to divert RHC traffic there. The commissioning of CWB would help ease the congestion at the connecting roads of WHC, thus providing a basis for the Government to consider toll adjustment at WHC when drawing up the overall scheme to rationalize the traffic distribution among RHCs.

48. In response to Mr Paul TSE's query on whether the Administration had any measures to solve the traffic congestion problem of CHT before the commissioning of CWB in 2017, STH explained that the earlier proposed options of reducing the tolls of EHC and increasing the tolls of CHT was to shorten the traffic queue of CHT by about 30% to 40% during rush hours such that cross-harbour traffic queues would no longer interfere with non-cross-harbour traffic. He admitted that there would be traffic congestion

at CHT at the moment. Nonetheless, after public consultation of the proposed toll adjustment options, the Administration noted that views of the community were diverse. Some considered that toll adjustment should also be implemented at WHC. Some were concerned about whether EHC and its nearby roads had the capacity to absorb additional traffic. Having regard to the latest traffic situations and diverse views of the public and concern of the relevant districts, the Government decided to put in abeyance the implementation of the toll adjustment trial scheme.

49. Dr Elizabeth QUAT said that since there were still three years before 2017, the public would continue to suffer from traffic congestion at CHT and EHC. In this connection, DAB had suggested that the Administration should speed up the toll transaction time, expand the pick up/drop off areas at bus stops near the exit or entrance of RHCs to facilitate the traffic flow, and to review the transport network connecting RHCs. She asked about the Administration's view in this regard.

50. STH undertook to study the measures proposed by different political parties to alleviate the traffic congestion problem. He advised that the commissioning of a number of railway lines in the next few years would relieve the demand for road use. The Administration would also commission a study on the road traffic congestion in Hong Kong ("the Traffic Congestion Study") to look into measures to alleviate the traffic congestion problem. Details of the Administration's plan would be reported to members in due course. He emphasized that although the implementation of the toll adjustment trial scheme was put in abeyance, it did not mean that the Government would do nothing to ease the traffic congestion problem of RHCs. The Administration would continue to monitor the traffic conditions at RHCs.

51. Mr Tony TSE expressed concern that while providing instant traffic information might help ease the traffic congestion problem of RHCs, some traffic information announced by TD was delayed. He also called on the Administration to study the feasibility of constructing the fourth RHC to meet the increasing traffic demand due to increasing population and tourists, and new developments.

52. Deputy Commissioner for Transport/Planning & Technical Services of the Transport Department ("DC/PTS") said that TD attached great importance to the accuracy and efficiency of traffic information released to the public. He said that TD had collaborated with the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer on the release of emergency traffic information through the GovHK Notifications mobile application so that drivers would receive

such information quickly via their smart phones. TD noted that there was a 20 to 30 minutes delay of instant traffic information released to the public when the mobile application was first launched. However, the time gap was shortened to around 10 minutes after programme enhancement. TD would continue to explore ways to further shorten the time gap.

53. Pointing out that WHC would be returned to the Government in 2023, Dr KWOK Ka-ki urged the Administration to plan well ahead the works to strengthen the road facilities of its connecting roads, such as its Kowloon-bound to Yau Ma Tei and Mongkok; and Hong Kong-bound to Sheung Wan, which were currently very congested.

54. STH noted the views of Dr KWOK. He said that the ownership of EHC would be transferred to the Government in 2016 while that of WHC in 2023. The ownership of all the three RHCs would be returned to the Government eventually. He stressed that the traffic distribution among RHCs was mainly affected by the toll level, travelling time and other factors instead of whether RHCs were owned by the Government.

55. The Chairman considered that the Administration should continue its efforts to relieve traffic congestion at CHT by adopting measures to enhance traffic management. He said that DAB had suggested increasing the number of Autotoll lanes and accepting Octopus payment for tolls to facilitate traffic flow. He hoped that more concrete measures could be adopted after the commissioning of CWB in 2017.

#### Measures to alleviate traffic congestion at a territorial level in Hong Kong

56. Mr POON Siu-ping asked about the Administration's stance in respect of the suggestion of constructing the fourth RHC. Referring to paragraph 14 of the Administration's paper, he asked about the Administration's schedule of conducting the review on the long term public transport planning and development ("the Public Transport Study").

57. As for the construction of the fourth RHC, STH said that the suggestion involved finding land for the entrance/exit and environmental considerations for harbour reclamation. At present, the Administration had no plan to construct the fourth RHC.

58. STH further advised that the Public Transport Study, which covered all public transport modes, would be conducted after the completion of the Review and Update of the Railway Development Strategy 2000. The Administration targeted to brief members on its details later in 2014.



59. Ir Dr LO Wai-kwok stressed that while the Administration drew up the overall scheme to rationalize the traffic distribution among RHCs, it should also take measures to ease traffic congestion at connecting roads. He pointed out that the traffic congestion problem of roads connecting the New Territories to the urban areas was very serious, in particular the section between Shatin Racecourse and Tai Wai.

60. Mr WONG Kwok-hing asked about the Administration's measures to limit the growth of private cars, which in his opinion had aggravated the traffic congestion problem in Hong Kong.

61. STH indicated that the Traffic Congestion Study would likely cover possible measures relating to private cars, having regard to overseas practice in managing the growth of vehicles.

#### Electronic Road Pricing ("ERP")

62. Noting that the Administration planned to study the implementation of electronic road pricing in the Central District ("the ERP Study"), Mr Frankie YICK cast doubt on its genuine need as the commissioning of CWB in 2017 might have already relieved the traffic congestion in Central.

63. STH said that the Administration would consider carefully the impact of the commissioning of CWB on the traffic in the Central District. He said that the Government's consultants had advised that the implementation of ERP in the Central District would be more equitable and practicable with the commissioning of CWB which provided an alternative route for motorists to bypass the charging zone.

64. Mr CHAN Han-pan said that the aim of implementing ERP was to discourage the use of private cars and encourage the use of public transport. However, he expressed concern that the increase in patronage of railway would aggravate the congestion problem of train compartments. Citing Singapore as an example, he said that the implementation of ERP had caused grievance among Singaporeans as they considered that ERP had deprived them of the right to drive.

65. STH said that ERP, if implemented, would affect motorists to a certain extent. The impact of implementing ERP would be considered in the ERP Study. He added that some academics and associations had strongly requested for the ERP study as a possible means to address serious traffic congestion problem in certain districts.

66. In response to the Deputy Chairman's opinion that the Administration's plan to study the implementation of ERP was a tactic to delay the rationalization of the traffic distribution of RHCs, DC/PTS explained that the purpose of implementing ERP was to alleviate the traffic congestion problem of a particular district by decreasing the number of vehicles passing through the charging zone, thus improving the traffic flow, air quality and noise pollution of the district. It adopted user-pay principle by charging a fee to reduce traffic, in particular during busy hours. He said that the Administration had studied the implementation of ERP in the past. There was no consensus in the community due to the concern over privacy matters, the absence of an alternative road and poor economic environment, etc.

67. Dr KWOK Ka-ki suggested the Administration to make use of land which could not be used for housing developments, for example, land underneath flyovers, for provision of parking facilities to implement park-and-ride schemes to reduce traffic. He also expressed concern that public money would be wasted on the ERP Study because ERP might not be eventually adopted.

68. STH said that measures to discourage the use of private cars, including the suggestion of park-and-ride scheme, would be studied in the Traffic Congestion Study. He added that relevant government officials had also visited overseas cities, including Singapore, London and Stockholm to collect information of the implementation of congestion charging schemes in these jurisdictions for reference.

#### Other views

69. Mr Frankie YICK called on the Administration to seriously consider the option of buying back WHC as this would provide great flexibility for the Administration to implement traffic management measures. To divert traffic from CHT to the other two RHCs, Mr YICK considered that the tolls at WHC and EHC should be decreased while that of CHT should be increased.

70. Mr Albert CHAN considered that the Administration should include all the three RHCs in the plan to rationalize the traffic distribution among RHCs. He said that he had suggested for years that the Administration should establish a Tunnels and Bridges Authority to own and operate all tunnels and bridges so that the Administration would take charge of the toll levels to rationalize the traffic distribution among RHCs. Stressing that the economic loss due to traffic congestion was great, he also urged the Administration to buy back WHC.

71. Mr WONG Kwok-hing asked about the Administration's approach towards the proposal of buying back WHC.

72. In response, STH said that the Administration had not discussed with the franchisee of WHC on any buy-back option. The Administration considered that the matter under discussion was more concerned with toll adjustments, and the Government's ownership of the RHC concerned was not a pre-requisite for effecting toll adjustments because toll adjustment could be achieved through a reimbursement scheme. While agreeing that all the three RHCs, including WHC, should be considered when drawing up measures to rationalize the three RHCs, the Administration was of the view that measures should be implemented in an opportune time with appropriate toll levels to achieve the best traffic diversion effect.

73. Mr CHAN Han-pan pointed out that traffic congestion at RHCs occurred at different times of the day with different duration. The traffic congestion problem of WHC would be much relieved after 9 am but that of CHT would last for a long time. As such, he considered that some traffic should be diverted from CHT to WHC when WHC was not congested.

74. The Deputy Chairman pointed out that WHC should have spare capacity to absorb more traffic due to the traffic diversion effect of Lung Wo Road and West Kowloon Highway. He called on the Administration to buy back WHC, as this would enable the Administration to adjust the tolls of the three RHCs more effectively. He added that although the traffic throughput at CHT in 2013 had recorded a drop, the traffic congestion at CHT still existed. He considered that the Administration should put in place short term measures to alleviate the traffic congestion problem of CHT.

75. STH responded that the Administration was against the proposal to reduce tolls at WHC to divert traffic from CHT. It was because although WHC itself had spare capacity, its connecting roads, in particular those in Central, were already congested. These roads would not be able to cope with additional traffic during the morning and evening rush hours. As for the proposal of buying back WHC, STH said that it would entail huge capital outlay and require strong policy justifications and community consensus. In addition, it might not help to solve the problem.

76. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan relayed the Labour Party's opinion that the Administration should take a macro approach in formulating measures to rationalize traffic of the three RHCs. Apart from adjusting the toll levels of RHCs, it should also consider that of other tunnels, including Tai Lam Tunnel and Tate's Cairn Tunnel. For instance, considerations could be given to

charge a single toll covering the usage of both Tai Lam Tunnel and WHC. He also considered that the toll levels of all tunnels should be lowered. In addition, he considered that ERP should be implemented in busy areas like the Central District.

77. STH said that the Administration recognized the need to rationalize the traffic flow at the RHCs and to alleviate traffic congestion at a territorial level. As such, the Government was going to commission the Traffic Congestion Study, which would identify the causes of traffic congestion and look for short- and medium-term measures to ease the problem on a territory-wide basis.

## **VII Any other business**

### Consideration of an overseas duty visit

- (LC Paper No. CB(1)598/13-14(01) - Letter from Hon Gary FAN Kwok-wai on the proposal to conduct an overseas duty visit to Singapore to study the experience of providing public transport services
- LC Paper No. IN08/13-14 - Paper on public transport facilities and traffic control measures in Singapore prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat (information note))

78. Due to time constraint, the Chairman proposed and members agreed that the discussion on this item should be postponed to the next meeting.

79. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 10:41 am.