

**立法會**  
**Legislative Council**

LC Paper No. CB(4)437/14-15  
(These minutes have been seen  
by the Administration)

Ref : CB4/PL/TP/1

**Panel on Transport**

**Minutes of meeting held on  
Tuesday, 25 November 2014, at 10:45 am  
in Conference Room 1 of the Legislative Council Complex**

- Members present** : Hon Michael TIEN Puk-sun, BBS, JP (Chairman)  
Hon TANG Ka-piu, JP (Deputy Chairman)  
Hon LEE Cheuk-yan  
Hon James TO Kun-sun  
Hon CHAN Kam-lam, SBS, JP  
Hon WONG Kwok-hing, BBS, MH  
Hon CHAN Hak-kan, JP  
Hon LEUNG Kwok-hung  
Hon Frankie YICK Chi-ming  
Hon WU Chi-wai, MH  
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
- Members absent** : Hon Jeffrey LAM Kin-fung, GBS, JP  
Hon Ronny TONG Ka-wah, SC  
Hon Mrs Regina IP LAU Suk-ye, GBS, JP  
Hon Paul TSE Wai-chun, JP  
Hon Albert CHAN Wai-yip  
Hon Claudia MO  
Hon Gary FAN Kwok-wai

Hon CHAN Han-pan, JP  
Hon Tony TSE Wai-chuen, BBS

**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 Jimmy CHAN Pai-ming  
Project Manager/Major Works  
Highways Department

Mr Raymond KONG Tai-wing  
Chief Engineer 1/Major Works  
Highways Department

**Agenda item V**

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

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

Mr José YAM Ho-san  
Principal Assistant Secretary for Transport and  
Housing (Transport)4

Ms Macella LEE Shui-chun  
Assistant Commissioner/Bus & Railway  
Transport Department

Mr Reginald CHAN Ying-kit  
Principal Transport Officer/Bus and Railway  
Transport Department

**Agenda item VI**

Professor Anthony CHEUNG Bing-leung, GBS, JP  
Secretary for Transport and Housing

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

Mr Andy CHAN Shui-fu  
Deputy Secretary for Transport and Housing  
(Transport)<sup>2</sup>

Miss Carrie CHANG  
Principal Assistant Secretary for Transport and  
Housing (Transport) 1

Mrs Ingrid YEUNG, JP  
Commissioner for Transport

Ms Macella LEE Shui-chun  
Assistant Commissioner/Bus and Railways  
Transport Department

**Attendance by invitation : Agenda item V**

Ms Jeny YEUNG Mei-chun  
Commercial Director  
MTR Corporation Limited

Mr Eddie SO Chung-tat  
General Manager - Marketing & Planning  
MTR Corporation Limited

Mr Francis LI Shing-kee  
Head of Operating - East Region  
MTR Corporation Limited

Ms May WONG May-kay  
General Manager - Corporate Relations  
MTR Corporation Limited

**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

Miss Ariel SHUM  
Clerical Assistant (1)2

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Action

**I. Confirmation of minutes of meeting**

(LC Paper No. CB(1)69/14-15 - Minutes of meeting on  
9 October 2014)

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 October 2014 were confirmed.

**II. Information papers issued since the last regular meeting on  
18 July 2014**

(LC Paper No. CB(1)1869/13-14(01) - Administration's letter dated  
23 July 2014 on financial  
information of the Western  
Harbour Crossing

LC Papers Nos. CB(1)1910/13-14(01) - Letter from Hon Frankie  
and CB(1)1963/13-14(01) YICK on the impact of  
taxi-call service mobile  
applications to taxi trade  
business and the  
Administration's response

LC Paper No. CB(1)1911/13-14(01) - Referral of a complaint case  
from the Public Complaints  
Office of the Legislative  
Council Secretariat on  
introduction of electric

- bicycles
- LC Paper No. CB(1)1927/13-14(01) - Memorandum referring to the Panel the views and concerns raised by Yuen Long District Council members on bus services
- LC Paper No. CB(1)1926/13-14(01) - Memorandum referring to the Panel the views and concerns raised by Tsuen Wan District Council members regarding the review, re-organization and adjustment of public transport
- LC Paper No. CB(1)2029/13-14(01) - Letter from Hon KWOK Wai-keung on the display of taxi driver identity plates
- LC Paper No. CB(1)2031/13-14(01) - Memorandum referring to the Panel the views and concerns raised by Kowloon City District Council members regarding the proposal to relocate the To Kwa Wan Vehicle Examination Centre and measures to improve the traffic congestion problem of Kowloon City Ferry Pier area
- LC Paper No. CB(1)17/14-15(01) - Letter from Hon LEE Cheuk-yan on the occupational safety of bus drivers
- LC Paper No. CB(1)159/14-15(01) - Net revenue statement for 2013-2014 submitted by the Western Harbour Tunnel Company Limited
- LC Paper No. CB(1)159/14-15(02) - Net revenue statement for 2013-2014 submitted by the Route 3 (Country Park Section) Company Limited
- LC Paper No. CB(1)170/14-15(01) - Administration's response to the submission from the

- Taxi & PLB Concern Group on the illegal carriage of passengers for hire or reward by light goods vehicles
- LC Paper No. CB(1)210/14-15(02) - Letter from Hon TANG Ka-piu requesting to conduct a site visit to the construction site of the Hong Kong boundary crossing facilities
- LC Paper No. CB(1)227/14-15(01) - Memorandum referring to the Panel the views and concerns raised by Shatin District Council members regarding the expansion of bus interchange at Shing Mun Tunnel
- LC Paper No. CB(1)228/14-15(01) - Referral of a case from the Public Complaints Office of the Legislative Council Secretariat relating to the policy of providing car parking spaces)

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

**III. Items for discussion at the next meeting on 19 December 2014**

- (LC Paper No. CB(1)238/14-15(01) - List of outstanding items for discussion
- LC Paper No. CB(1)238/14-15(02) - List of follow-up actions)

3. The Chairman referred to the list of outstanding items for discussion of the Panel on Transport ("the Panel") and drew members' attention that the list had incorporated the items which were proposed by the Administration for discussion in the 2014-2015 session with target dates for discussion. He added that some items on the list were proposed to be deleted by the Administration because they would either be dealt with by other Panels or covered under other discussion items. Members agreed.

4. Members agreed to discuss the following items at the next regular meeting to be held on 19 December 2014 –

- (a) Proposed creation of one permanent post in the Vehicle Safety and Standards Division and upgrading of the post of Departmental Secretary in the Transport Department;
- (b) Proposed extension of one supernumerary post in the Railway Development Office of the Highways Department; and
- (c) Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge Hong Kong Boundary Crossing Facilities ("HZMB HKBCF") – reclamation and superstructures.

*(Post-meeting note: Discussion of the above items was subsequently deferred to the meeting on 16 January 2015.)*

5. The Deputy Chairman referred to his letter dated 6 November 2014 (LC Paper No. CB(1)210/14-15(02)) and expressed his request to conduct a site visit to the construction site of HZMB HKBCF. Members noted that the request had been forwarded to the Administration for consideration.

#### **IV. "Universal Accessibility" Programme**

(LC Paper No. CB(1)238/14-15(03) - Administration's paper on "Universal Accessibility" Programme

LC Paper No. CB(1)238/14-15(04) - Paper on "Universal Accessibility" Programme prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat (updated background brief))

6. At the invitation of the Chairman, Under Secretary for Transport and Housing ("USTH") briefed members on the Administration's proposal to seek approval from the Finance Committee ("FC") for an allocation of \$803.98 million in 2015-2016 for the block allocation Subhead 6101TX – "Universal Accessibility ("UA") Programme" under Capital Works Reserve Fund Head 706 – "Highways".

7. Chief Engineer 1/Major Works of the Highways Department ("HyD") then briefed members with the aid of powerpoint on the latest progress of the UA Programme (LC Paper No. CB(1)306/14-15(01)).

### General views

8. Mr CHAN Kam-lam was dissatisfied that some District Councils ("DCs") were not informed of the delay of some projects under the UA Programme the implementation schedule of which had been agreed by DCs. He urged the Administration to strengthen the communication with DCs in this regard.

9. Project Manager/Major Works of HyD ("PM/MW") explained that some site constraints had been encountered during the implementation of some retrofitting works, such as the need to divert some underground public utilities, thus affecting the works schedule. Representatives of HyD regularly updated DC members on the works progress of the projects under the UA Programme.

10. Mr CHAN Kam-lam said that he would provide information to the Administration after the meeting for its follow-up in respect of the specific project where a DC was not informed of the change of works schedule.

11. Mr POON Siu-ping indicated support for the UA Programme. However, he was concerned about whether there was sufficient manpower to implement the proposals and to carry out the maintenance works in the future.

12. PM/MW advised that based on HyD's assessment, contractors should have sufficient manpower for retrofitting lifts at public walkways according to the target completion dates. In respect of the maintenance works, he said that the number of lifts to be installed under the UA Programme would be about 200 to 300, which was a small number in comparison with the current number of about 60 000 lifts in the territory. He believed that this should be manageable to the trade as far as manpower was concerned.

### Proposals which fell outside the ambit of the UA Programme

13. Mr POON Siu-ping noted that the Administration had referred some proposals which were outside the ambit of the UA Programme to the relevant organizations for consideration and follow-up. He asked if the Administration had monitored the status of those proposals or not.

14. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan said that being the majority shareholder of MTR Corporation Limited ("MTRCL") and the executive arm of the Hong Kong Housing Authority ("HKHA"), the Government should have the right to make decisions on whether to retrofit barrier-free access ("BFA") facilities under the purview of these two organizations.



15. USTH stressed that it was the Administration's principle to encourage different organizations to provide BFA facilities under their purview. He said that the Administration had been following up the status of the proposals which had been referred to the relevant organizations for consideration. He added that MTRCL and HKHA had their respective programmes for lift addition, taking note of the proposals referred by the Administration.

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16. At the request of Mr LEE Cheuk-yan, the Administration agreed to provide, as appropriate, a table listing out the proposals which were referred to MTRCL and HKHA for consideration, as well as information on whether they would implement those proposals.

17. Stressing the need to meet the genuine needs of some residents, Mr WONG Kwok-hing asked whether the Administration would consider launching a separate programme to deal with those proposals which fell outside the ambit of the UA Programme.

18. USTH said that the implementation of those proposals which were not within the ambit of the UA Programme would require the consent of the owners concerned. In the meantime, the Administration was of the view that it should first proceed with those proposals within the ambit of the UA Programme.

19. The Deputy Chairman raised that there was a strong demand for retrofitting the lift facility at a footbridge connecting Sheung Shui MTR station and the North District Hospital. However, he noted that there were difficulties in implementing the proposal due to the need to seek consent from various parties. He asked about the Administration's measures in this regard. USTH responded that the Administration had noted the matter and was exploring measures to overcome the difficulties.

20. The Chairman asked about the number of footbridges which were apparently owned by the Government but the management party could not be identified, and the Administration's solution to the problem.

21. USTH said that only public walkways bearing serial numbers assigned by HyD fell within the ambit of the UA Programme. The Administration was still considering how best to deal with proposals which fell outside the ambit of the UA Programme. However, he pointed out that the process might take considerable time.

22. The Panel supported the Administration's submission of the funding proposal to Public Works Subcommittee ("PWSC") and FC. Mr LEE

Cheuk-yan requested that priority should be accorded by PWSC and FC to process the funding proposals of the UA Programme.

**V. Fares of MTR West Island Line**

(LC Paper No. CB(1)203/14-15(01) - Administration's paper on fares of MTR West Island Line

LC Paper No. CB(1)238/14-15(05) - Paper on fares of MTR West Island Line prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat (background brief)

Relevant paper

LC Paper No. CB(1)204/14-15(01) - Administration's paper on progress update and commissioning arrangement of the West Island Line)

23. At the invitation of the Chairman, USTH made an opening remark on the fares of MTR West Island Line ("WIL"). Commercial Director/MTR Corporation Limited ("CD/MTRCL") then briefed members with the aid of powerpoint on the details of the fares as well as the fare promotions to be offered by MTRCL (LC Paper No. CB(1)306/14-15(02)).

WIL fares

24. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan noted that the fares of cross-harbour journeys were considerably high, in particular the journeys between WIL stations and Tuen Mun, Tung Chung and Sheung Shui Stations. In addition, there were significant fare differences between MTR and bus services for the same journey. He urged that MTR fares of cross-harbour journeys should be reviewed. He remarked that the expensive fares had not taken into account public's affordability and were not conducive to encouraging more people living in remote areas to take up employment.

25. Mr POON Siu-ping had similar views. He suggested that MTR fares should merely be determined according to the distance travelled.

26. General Manager-Marketing & Planning of MTRCL said that while the fare structure was mainly based on the distance of journeys, the market situation would also be taken into account. He added that determining the fares merely based on journey distance would make the fare table very

complicated. As such, the fares were set based on different groups of journeys with similar distances.

27. CD/MTRCL added that the three stations mentioned by Mr LEE Cheuk-yan were indeed covered by the Monthly Pass Extras, the holders of which would enjoy a 20% to 30% fare discount for journeys on designated railway lines. She believed that this would help relieve burden of transport expenses of long-distance and frequent MTR passengers to a certain extent.

28. USTH considered the existing distance-based fare structure, which was widely adopted in overseas countries, appropriate. He added that the Administration had been providing various kinds of transport subsidies to different groups of people in need.

### Fare promotions

#### *"Intermodal Discounts"*

29. Some members urged MTRCL to consider extending and expanding the six-month "Intermodal Discounts" scheme ("the scheme") to be launched in collaboration with Green Minibuses and franchised bus operators upon the commencement of WIL, as follows -

- (a) The Deputy Chairman suggested that the scheme should also cover Student Octopus users;
- (b) Mr CHAN Kam-lam and Mr POON Siu-ping requested that the duration of the scheme be extended to more than six months. Mr CHAN considered that in the long term, the Administration should take the lead to negotiate with different public transport operators on the introduction of a comprehensive concessionary scheme which covered all public transport interchanges in the territory; and
- (c) Mr WONG Kwok-hing considered that the number of designated franchised bus routes for interchanging with WIL should be increased to benefit residents of the Southern District as well.

30. In response, USTH said that the Administration had been encouraging public transport operators to provide interchange concessions across different transport modes. However, their financial viability had to be taken into account. He agreed that MTRCL should review from time to time how the

"Intermodal Discounts" scheme could be further enhanced to benefit more passengers.

31. CD/MTRCL undertook that MTRCL would continue to discuss with the Administration and other public transport operators feasible ways to expand the coverage of the scheme. She added that MTRCL would also review the fare promotion schemes from time to time to evaluate their effectiveness and take appropriate follow-up actions.

*"Sai Ying Pun Station Pre-opening Special Discount Promotion"*

32. Mr WONG Kwok-hing considered the fare discounts to be offered under the "Sai Ying Pun Station Pre-opening Special Discount Promotion" scheme too little. He suggested increasing the amount of fare discounts of Adult Octopus users and other Octopus users (i.e. discount of \$2 and \$1) to \$3 and \$2 respectively to make the scheme more attractive.

33. CD/MTRCL noted Mr WONG Kwok-hing's suggestion. She explained that when setting the amount of fare discounts to be offered under the scheme, MTRCL had made reference to the lowest fares of journeys on the Island Line. MTRCL might launch other kinds of fare promotions upon the commissioning of the Sai Ying Pun Station.

34. Ir Dr LO Wai-kwok considered that free feeder services could be provided between the locations of the self-serviced special discount machines and a nearby WIL station to provide convenience to passengers. Alternatively, fare discounts could simply be offered to all passengers entering any WIL stations, without the need to install the self-serviced special discount machines at a cost.

35. CD/MTRCL noted the views of Ir Dr LO Wai-kwok. She said that MTRCL had studied the proposal of providing shuttle bus services but the option was not pursued due to geographical constraints.

Other views

36. The Deputy Chairman raised concern that the commissioning of WIL would affect the financial viability of the tram operator and income level of its employees.

37. Deputy Secretary for Transport and Housing (Transport)<sup>2</sup> said that the financial situation of tram operator was healthy in general in recent years. The Transport Department would closely monitor the changes in travel pattern

brought by the opening of WIL, and would adjust the implementation of the public transport re-organization plan according to actual situations.

## **VI Public Transport Strategy Study – Workplan**

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|----------------------------------|--|
| (LC Paper No. CB(1)238/14-15(06) | - Administration's paper on Public Transport Strategy Study – Workplan   |
| LC Paper No. CB(1)238/14-15(07)  | - Paper on public transport strategy in Hong Kong prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat (background brief) |
| LC Paper No. CB(1)210/14-15(01)  | - Letter from Hon TANG Ka-piu requesting to collect information on public transport strategy in overseas countries   |
| LC Paper No. CB(1)278/14-15(01)  | - Submission from Clean Air Network  |
| LC Paper No. CB(1)306/14-15(03)  | - Submission from Civic Exchange)  |

38. At the invitation of the Chairman, Secretary for Transport and Housing ("STH") briefed members on the work plan for the Public Transport Strategy Study ("PTSS") and the Administration's proposal to create a supernumerary post of an Administrative Office Staff Grade C (D2) ("AOSGC") to oversee the implementation of PTSS.

### The staffing proposal

39. Mr WONG Kwok-hing indicated support for the Administration's staffing proposal. However, he was concerned about the impact of the filibuster of some members at FC meetings on the creation of post and hence the conduct of PTSS. He enquired whether the Administration had any contingency plan if the funding application could not be approved on schedule. The Chairman further asked why the Administration had proposed to set the duration of the AOSGC post for two and a half year.

40. STH said that the Administration targeted to complete PTSS within the Fifth Legislative Council. He said that PTSS would comprise two parts, namely the Role and Positioning Review ("RPR") and Topical Study. RPR

would examine the roles and positioning of public transport services other than heavy rail and a consultancy study would be commissioned. The Topical Study would focus on eight topical issues that were of greater concern to the public transport trades or had been given priority as they were time-sensitive. It would be carried out by the Transport and Housing Bureau ("THB") and Transport Department ("TD") with existing resources. STH asked for the support of Members on the staffing proposal and hoped that the staffing proposal could be approved by FC within the first quarter of 2015. Otherwise, the work of RPR would definitely be adversely affected.

41. Mr POON Siu-ping indicated support for the Administration's staffing proposal. He noted that apart from the proposed creation of the AOSGC post, the Administration also proposed to create a total of five non-directorate posts in the Transport Branch of THB and TD to provide support for conducting PTSS. He asked whether the five non-directorate posts were permanent posts or not as he was concerned that the work of PTSS would be complex and involve heavy workload.

42. Permanent Secretary for Transport and Housing (Transport) said that all the above posts would be time-limited for two and a half years to tie in with the timetable of PTSS.

#### Coverage of PTSS

43. Mr Frankie YICK said that while he welcomed the Administration's plan to conduct PTSS, he considered the scope of PTSS was rather limited as it would not address issues like the cross-boundary transportation needs, provision of parking spaces to cope with the considerable growth in vehicle numbers, progress of promoting environmentally-friendly transport policy, use of bicycle as a transportation means, operating right of feeder bus services to MTR stations, insufficient transport services on the Airport Island and relaxation of restricted zones for taxis, etc. As such, he urged the Administration to expeditiously launch the Fourth Comprehensive Transport Study ("CTS") to comprehensively review the transport policies in Hong Kong.

44. STH said that the broad directions as well as the roles and positioning laid down by the CTS-3 remained valid today. Other recommendations of the CTS-3 had continued to be followed up under established mechanisms. That said, given that 90% of the total passenger trips were made through the public transport system in Hong Kong and in tandem with the further expansion of the heavy rail network, there was a need to examine the roles and positioning of various public transport services to enhance their

complementarity. The Administration considered it appropriate to conduct PTSS instead of a CTS.

45. STH added that the Administration had invited the Transport Advisory Committee ("TAC") to conduct the Traffic Congestion Study. TAC would recommend measures at territorial level to alleviate road traffic congestion. The Administration would study the TAC's report to be submitted in late December 2014 and consult the Panel where appropriate.

46. In response to Mr Frankie YICK's concern about the loss of experienced government officials due to retire and transfer of experience in conducting CTS in the future, STH assured members that there would be experienced government officials with sufficient knowledge to carry out the task if CTS-4 was to be carried out in the future.

47. Sharing with Mr Frankie YICK, Mr POON Siu-ping also expressed concern on the inadequate transport services on the Airport Island. He asked whether PTSS would review the matter taking into account the proposed expansion of the Hong Kong International Airport into a Three-Runway System.

48. STH advised that the Airport Authority had been liaising with other operators on the Airport Island to enhance the transport services provided to their employees. Regarding the future development of the Lantau Island (including the Three-Runway System), the Administration would study the provision of public transport facilities and services outside PTSS.

49. Mr WONG Kwok-hing suggested the Administration to study the roles and positioning of ferries and electric vehicles, such as trolley buses. He said that the former would affect the Administration's plan to develop the eastern waters off Lantau Island and neighbouring areas and the latter were environmentally friendly means of transport. He also expressed concern about the Administration's policy on the tolls of tunnels as the ownership of certain Build-Operate-Transfer tunnels would be returned to the Government in the future.

50. STH confirmed that PTSS would examine the role and long-term financial viability of ferries and explore whether it was feasible and desirable to introduce a modern tram system, vis-à-vis other public transport services, in new development areas. He added that the matter on rationalisation of traffic distribution among road harbour crossings by adjusting the tunnel toll level would be handled under the existing mechanism. The Administration would take into account the transfer of Eastern Harbour Crossing's ownership

to the Government in 2016 while devising a toll adjustment scheme for the tunnels.

51. Mr CHAN Kam-lam supported the conduct of another CTS again to comprehensively review the transport strategies in Hong Kong. However, given the considerable time required to carry out the review, he considered that the Administration should implement immediate measures to solve the current transport problems like the rationalization of traffic of the cross harbour tunnels. In his view, the Administration should include thorough road network planning in land development. In addition, the Administration should review the transport policy in a more comprehensive manner so as to enhance the complementarity of different transport modes. The Deputy Chairman added that the Administration should take prompt measures to relieve the operational difficulties of public transport operators before completion of PTSS.

52. STH reiterated that as the broad directions as well as the roles and positioning laid down by the CTS-3 remained valid, the Administration considered it more appropriate to conduct PTSS instead of a CTS. He further said that the Administration had been developing transport infrastructure in tandem with land planning and development. In fact, the Railway Development Strategy 2014 ("RDS 2014"), which provided a framework for planning the further expansion of Hong Kong's railway network up to 2031, had taken into account new development in the vicinity. He added that PTSS sought to enhance the strategic arrangements of the various public transport services so as to ensure that the public could enjoy efficient services with reasonable modal choices on one hand, and the public transport operators could enjoy sustainability within their respective niche area and functions on the other.

53. The Chairman noted that the Administration would carry out an in-depth review on the long-term development of the Light Rail under PTSS. He asked about the scope of the review and urged the Administration to consider transforming the current Light Rail system to an elevated automated people mover system to release road space and reduce traffic accidents. He further pointed out that the West Rail Line had already reached its saturation at present and expressed concern on the measures to cope with the additional patronage to be brought by new railway developments. On road traffic, he considered that the Administration should set targets under PTSS on increasing the traffic speed of public transport to recover the decrease in traffic flow in the past five years. In addition, he opined that while formulating transport policy, priority should always be given to mass public transport.



54. STH advised that the Administration was very concerned about the traffic in the Northwest of the New Territories ("NWNT") and had been closely monitoring the traffic needs in the area. Indeed, the MTR Corporation Limited had planned programmes to increase the capacity of the West Rail train service. STH further said that with the implementation of all the railway projects recommended under RDS 2014, the rail share would rise to between 45% and 50% by 2031. However, road-based transport would continue to play an important role. Moreover, the Administration had been making efforts to enhance traffic efficiency. In recent years, bus route rationalisation had been actively pursued to enhance network efficiency and alleviate traffic congestion. The TAC's Traffic Congestion Study would also provide some recommendations in alleviating the traffic congestion to enhance road efficiency. In response to the Chairman's proposal in setting targets to increase the traffic speed of public transport services, STH said that it would be difficult to set quantitative targets given the practical circumstances.

55. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan agreed that the public transport system should be comprehensively reviewed. He said that the Labour Party had been stressing the need to encourage the use of mass transit carriers and to reduce the number of private cars to solve the traffic congestion problem. To this end, he suggested establishing more bus lanes with connectivity to attract more passengers for the franchised bus services. Pointing out that Light Rail service was inefficient as it occupied a considerable portion of road surface, he asked the Administration to consider scraping Light Rail service and replacing it with underground railway services.

56. STH agreed that the Administration should devise measures to maximise the benefits brought by the mass carriers. Apart from encouraging the use of railways, the Government had also recently adopted the "Area Approach" in taking forward the bus route rationalisation. He added that when devising measures to optimise the use of road space, the Administration had to balance the interests of different stakeholders, including passengers and operators of commercial vehicles. On Light Rail service, STH said that the decision to decommission Light Rail would not be taken lightly. It had a daily patronage of about 460 000 and served a very important transportation function in NTNW. The Administration would examine its future development through PTSS.

57. Dr KWOK Ka-ki expressed support for the conduct of PTSS. He asked whether PTSS would review the current policy of using railways as the backbone of the public transport system as he noted that the benefits of constructing a new railway line were comparatively small in view of the huge

construction costs involved. In his view, the Administration should consider adopting more modern and low-emission public transport modes like electric buses and minibuses, which could be more cost-effective than using railways. Besides, electric escalators for pedestrians could also be considered.

58. STH said that PTSS would mainly review the roles and positioning of various public transport services to enhance their complementarity. He pointed out that given that Hong Kong was a small and densely-populated city with limited road space, and the public were concerned about the impact of road traffic on air quality, it was appropriate to continue using railways as the backbone of the public transport system. In considering the construction of a new railway line, the Administration would take into account its social and economic benefits in terms of savings in time cost, social development, enhanced population mobility and cleaner air, etc. He added that the Administration had encouraged public transport operators to use more environmentally-friendly vehicles. Whether electric vehicles could be used more widely to provide public transport services in Hong Kong would depend on, amongst other things, the outcome of the trials on their suitability under Hong Kong's demanding operating environment and the availability of suitable mature models in the market. In this connection, it was noted that there was no double-deck electric bus model in the market. The Administration would continue to keep in view the situation .

59. Mr WU Chi-wai considered the scope of PTSS limited. Given the rapid growth of private cars in recent years and that the Administration was promoting low carbon living, he queried why PTSS did not study the policies on private cars and cycling. He also indicated that he had reservation on the Administration's staffing proposal.

60. STH said that promotion of green transport and a bicycle-friendly environment had been on-going initiatives. TAC was carrying out the Traffic Congestion Study which would address the issue on rapid growth of private cars in recent years. Together with RDS 2014 and PTSS, most major transport issues could be by and large covered. As such, the Administration considered it appropriate to conduct PTSS.

(At 12:39 pm, the Chairman extended the meeting by 15 minutes to allow sufficient time for discussion.)

Proposal to set up a subcommittee under the Panel and the conduct of public hearings

61. The Deputy Chairman recalled that at the last meeting of the Panel in the 2013-2014 legislative session, members had agreed to the proposal made by him and Hon WONG Kwok-hing of setting up a subcommittee to discuss the future comprehensive transport studies in Hong Kong. He said that since the Administration had actively responded to the matter, he had decided to withhold the proposal on condition that the Panel would provide a forum for the public transport trades to express views on their roles and positioning in the public transport system. The Chairman consulted members on his proposal to conduct four special meetings in the first half of 2015 to collect the views of the trades of franchised buses, non-franchised buses, minibuses and taxis, as well as District Council members and the public on the roles and positioning of different public transport means. Members agreed.

62. STH advised that the consultant of RPR would invite the public transport trades and the public to express their views during the course of the study. On the Topical Study, TD would collect opinions from the trades on individual topical issues through the established channels. The Administration would also send representatives to attend the special meetings arranged by the Panel to listen to the views of the trades and the public.

63. The Panel supported the Administration's staffing proposal which would be submitted to the Establishment Subcommittee for further consideration.

**VII. Any other business**

64. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 1:00 pm.