

立法會
Legislative Council

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Panel on Transport

Meeting on 15 April 2016

**Background brief on accessible public transport services
for people with disabilities**

Purpose

This paper provides background information on accessible public transport services for people with disabilities ("PwDs"). It also summarizes the major views and concerns expressed by Members during previous discussions on this subject.

Background

2. The Administration¹ has been taking forward the concept of "barrier-free transport" through working with public transport operators to enhance public transport facilities where feasible. This is to build a barrier-free transport system to cater for the needs of various passenger groups, including the elderly and PwDs. Further, the Transport Department ("TD") has set up the "Working Group on Access to Public Transport by People with Disabilities"² and meets with representatives of PwDs regularly to understand their needs. A total of 20 PwD groups are members of the working group.

3. Different public transport modes have put in place suitable barrier-free facilities inside their compartments and at stations/platforms/piers based on the actual situation. Examples include

¹ Source: The Administration's press release on "LCQ5: Priority seats and barrier-free facilities provided by public transport modes" in July 2014

² Representatives of the relevant government bureaux/departments (including the Transport and Housing Bureau, Labour and Welfare Bureau, Highways Department, etc.) would also be present. Meetings are held once in about every three to four months.

MTR's wide gates and lifts connecting to the street level; and franchised buses' wheelchair parking space, closing door buzzer and indicator lights. Major barrier-free facilities provided by various public transport operators are attached in **Appendix I**.

4. Under the Public Transport Strategy Study, the Administration would review how PwDs' access to public transport services can be further enhanced, having regard to the actual operating situation and environment (including compartment size and loading capacity of vehicles), as well as long-term financial viability. The review would be conducted in 2015-2016.

Major concerns raised by Members

5. In the Fourth and Fifth Legislative Council, Members have expressed views and concerns on accessible public transport services for PwDs at the meetings of the Panel on Transport, Subcommittee on Matters Relating to Railways, Subcommittee on Improving Barrier Free Access and Facilities for Persons with Disabilities under Panel on Welfare, special Finance Committee, as well as Council meetings. Their major views and concerns are summarized in the ensuing paragraphs.

MTR

6. At the meetings of the Subcommittee on Matters Relating to Railways, Subcommittee on Improving Barrier Free Access and Facilities for Persons with Disabilities, as well as Council meetings, Members expressed concern about the accessibility of MTR stations, in particular the progress of retrofitting lifts in MTR stations connecting the concourse area and the street level. Also, they enquired whether the Administration had required the MTR Corporation Limited ("MTRCL") to provide specified barrier-free facilities at various stations and how the Corporation monitored the provision of barrier-free facilities at MTR stations. Some Members suggested deploying additional platform assistants to assist PwDs in boarding and alighting trains, including helping wheelchairs to cross the platform gap and calling on other passengers to make room or passage for PwDs, as well as providing platform assistants with relevant training and guidelines.

7. In response, the Administration explained that there was at least one barrier-free access in every MTR station to facilitate the mobility impaired to enter and exit. These accesses were equipped with passenger lifts, wheelchair aids, stair lifts or ramps. MTRCL strived to, as far as practically feasible, install at each station one lift connecting the concourse

and street-level. Further, MTRCL provided suitable training to station staff so that they could use portable ramps appropriately and safely to help wheelchair users board and alight train, and contact staff of the relevant interchange and destination stations according to the passengers' destinations to prepare for the arrival of passengers on wheelchair and provide them with appropriate assistance.

Franchised buses

8. Some Members at the special Finance Committee meetings and Council meetings expressed concern about the proportion and number of franchised buses without low-floor design, and whether the relevant franchised bus companies had any timetable and target for replacing their whole bus fleets with low-floor buses. They urged the Administration to request the franchised bus companies to expedite the bus replacement programmes.

9. According to the Administration³ in April 2015, TD has required all franchised bus companies to make low-floor and wheelchair-accessible design a standard specification when acquiring new buses as the operating situation permits. At present, among the 5 810 licensed franchised buses that are operating in the territory, about 4 620 or 80% of them are wheelchair-accessible with low floor. According to the current bus replacement programmes, it is expected that all franchised buses (except those operated by the New Lantao Bus Company (1973) Limited in South Lantau⁴) will be replaced by low floor wheelchair-accessible buses by 2017. TD will closely monitor the progress of replacement to ensure adherence to the programme.

Public light buses

10. At the meetings of the Panel on Transport, some members expressed concern about the lack of accessible facilities in public light buses ("PLBs") for PwDs and elderly passengers. They suggested installing such facilities on PLBs or switching to low-floor PLBs to facilitate wheelchair users.

11. The Administration responded that the availability of suitable

³ Source: Replies to initial written questions raised by the Finance Committee Members in examining the Estimates of Expenditure 2015-2016 (Session No.: 12) (Question Serial No. 3564)

⁴ This is because low-floor buses are not suitable for operation on some roads with steep gradient and sharp bends in South Lantau. The New Lantao Bus Company (1973) can therefore only procure wheelchair-accessible low-floor buses for use on bus routes not covering such roads.

low-floor PLB vehicles for wheelchair users would depend on market supply. The Administration would continue to keep in view the market situation and maintain close communication with the trade on the matter through the established channels.

Taxis

12. Members at the meetings of the Panel on Transport and a Council meeting expressed that there was a great demand for wheelchair accessible taxis to facilitate the use by PwDs. They were concerned that there were only a limited number of wheelchair accessible taxis in Hong Kong and their fare and booking fee were relatively expensive. They urged the Administration to formulate measures to assist the taxi trade in introducing more wheelchair accessible taxis such as by providing travel subsidies to PwDs, making reference to measures adopted in other places, such as Taipei.

13. The Administration responded that it was the trade's choice on the types of vehicles used. The relevant Government departments would provide assistance as necessary. The Administration stood ready to assist the trade to bring in more wheelchair accessible taxis as might be needed.

Motions passed at the Legislative Council meetings

14. A motion was passed on 20 October 2010 on "Facing up to the transport needs of people with disabilities". The Administration was urged, inter alia, to implement concrete measures to more comprehensively address the transport needs of PwDs so as to enable them to integrate into society more effectively. Another motion was passed on 27 November 2013 on "Facing up to the needs of persons with disabilities", urging the Administration to, amongst other things, to improve the existing barrier-free access and install electronic route display panels and next stop announcement systems on various means of public transport. The wording of the above motions is in **Appendix II**.

Recent developments

15. The Administration will brief members on the existing provision of accessible public transport services and facilities for PwDs and how such services and facilities can be enhanced at the Panel on Transport meeting to be held on 15 April 2016.

Relevant papers

16. A list of relevant papers is in **Appendix III**.

Council Business Division 4
Legislative Council Secretariat
11 April 2016

**Examples of major barrier-free facilities
provided by various public transport modes**

Public transport mode	Examples of major barrier-free facilities	
MTR	<i>Station/Platform</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barrier-free access • Wide gates • Lifts connecting the street level and station concourses • Tactile guide paths • LED display panels • Indicator lights 	<i>Train</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-purpose area/ wheelchair parking space • Closing door buzzer • Next stop announcement system and LED display panels • Flashing system maps • Handrails
Franchised buses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wheelchair parking space • Closing door buzzer and indicator lights • Bus stop announcement system and LED display panels • Handrails and easily reached bells • Non-slip floor 	
Public light buses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call bells • Handrails • Non-slip floor • Braille registration number plates 	
Ferries	<i>On board</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-purpose area/ wheelchair parking space • Non-slip gangplank 	<i>At pier</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tactile guide paths • Call bells at the entrance
Taxis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Braille and tactile vehicle registration number plates on the rear left side door • About 9 700 taxis (about 53% of all taxis in Hong Kong) have been installed with taxi meters which can announce the taxi registration number and taxi fare • Passengers may use "Diamond Cabs" which are directly accessible by wheelchairs 	

Source: The Administration's press release on "LCQ5: Priority seats and barrier-free facilities provided by public transport modes" in July 2014

(Translation)

**Motion on
“Facing up to the transport needs of people with disabilities”
moved by Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung
at the Legislative Council meeting
of Wednesday, 20 October 2010**

Motion as amended by Hon WONG Kwok-hing and Hon Paul CHAN Mo-po

That, as the Government advocates the cultivation of a people-oriented, loving and caring social culture, and in retrospect, this Council passed motions on a number of occasions over the past few years calling for improvement to transport facilities for all people with disabilities in Hong Kong and offer of concessionary transport fares to them, but the Administration, some statutory transport corporations and other public transport operators still fail to fully face up to and give effect to the motions, and even though some public transport operators have given effect to the motions, they only do so in an unfair and selective manner, and the crux of the problem is the Government's lack of a specific policy on fare concessions for people with disabilities and determination to take the lead to make improvements; this Council strongly demands the Administration to take the lead in implementing in those public transport operators with the Government as the major shareholder and set an example for pushing various public transport operators to immediately and fully respond as well as give effect to the relevant motions previously passed by this Council and the recommendations in the Report of the Council's Subcommittee to Study the Transport Needs of and Provision of Concessionary Public Transport Fares for Persons with Disabilities in the last term; in addition, the Government must implement the following concrete measures to more comprehensively address the transport needs of people with disabilities so as to enable them to integrate into society more effectively:

- (a) to formulate a policy on fare concessions on public transport which covers all people with disabilities in Hong Kong, including those with different degree of disability;
- (b) in order to effectively assist people with disabilities in integrating into society, to adopt legislative, administrative and financial measures to press various major public transport operators to offer concessionary fares to all people with disabilities in Hong Kong;
- (c) to put forth, in the near future, specific proposals and a timetable for introducing half-fare concession on public transport for all people with disabilities in Hong Kong, so as to help them integrate into society and improve their life;
- (d) to allocate additional resources to comprehensively improve the Rehabus service and, in particular, enhance such service for people with disabilities living in remote areas and new towns;

- (e) to set aside a certain percentage of the cash dividends received from the MTR Corporation Limited each year to subsidize the transport fares of people with disabilities;
- (f) to request the MTR Corporation Limited to expeditiously install facilities such as platform screen doors, platform gates and automatic mechanical gap fillers for all its rail lines in order to strengthen platform safety, and improve station facilities with a view to creating a barrier-free environment;
- (g) to request various public bus companies to expeditiously replace their buses with low floor type buses to cater for the transport needs of people with disabilities, and when a bus makes stops, inform passengers of the routing arrangement through its public address system for the convenience of the blind, and at the same time incorporate provisions in the new franchise agreements on public bus services to require bus companies to offer concessionary fares to people with disabilities;
- (h) to study subsidizing people with disabilities in need to purchase electrical wheelchairs so as to facilitate them to use public transport;
- (i) to request the Transport Department to explore waiving the licence fee for people with disabilities who purchase private cars with a cylinder capacity of over 1 500 c.c. so as to make it convenient for them to carry larger and heavier electrical wheelchair and supporting equipment, provide additional auto-fuel allowances for people with disabilities, subsidize drivers with disabilities for using private tunnels and provide parking spaces for them, so that people with disabilities do not have to pay high transportation fees; and
- (j) to step up consultation with people with disabilities to fully realize the concept of 'Transport for All', and strictly regulate public transport operators in providing barrier-free facilities, so as to enable more people with disabilities to use public transport and integrate into society.

(Translation)

**Motion on
“Facing up to the needs of persons with disabilities”
moved by Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung
at the Council meeting of 27 November 2013**

**Motion as amended by Hon IP Kin-yuen, Hon WONG Kwok-hing and
Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG**

That, as the resources and support currently provided by the Government to persons with disabilities are very insufficient, this Council urges the Government to implement the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities on various policy levels, and face up to the needs of persons with disabilities especially in areas such as healthcare, education, welfare, employment and transportation, etc., so as to create a truly inclusive society; the relevant measures should include:

Healthcare —

- (1) to review the definition of disabilities under the various policies on persons with disabilities, and reform the definition under the Disability Allowance by deleting the outdated provisions linked to ‘a 100% loss of earning capacity’ and replacing them by international disability standards and assessment methods;
- (2) to comprehensively review and raise the amounts of the Disability Allowance to enable persons with disabilities to adequately meet medical and healthcare expenses, etc.;

Education —

- (3) to comprehensively review the integrated education policy, including the subsidy systems, manpower establishment and training, assessment systems, continuous education arrangements, overall culture and public education, and consider legislating for protecting students with disabilities and those with special learning needs;
- (4) to allow the expeditious relocation, redevelopment, alteration or improvement of the premises of certain special schools which are excessively dilapidated, cramped and substandard;

- (5) to allocate additional resources for assisting primary and secondary schools as well as tertiary institutions which provide integrated education in upgrading their hardware facilities, including improving the designs of classrooms and public space, and procuring assistive devices such as font magnifiers, etc., so as to build up truly barrier-free campuses;
- (6) to allow schools which admit a relatively large number of students with disabilities and special learning needs to employ more permanent teachers as well as professional support and counselling personnel, so as to strengthen the support for such students;
- (7) to enhance the subsidies and support services for students with disabilities to purchase, repair and maintain assistive devices;
- (8) to step up the promotion of sign language, implement sign language programmes in primary and secondary schools and provide sign language interpretation in television news reports, so as to facilitate the deaf-mute to integrate into society;

Welfare –

- (9) to increase the places in residential care homes for persons with disabilities and provide carer subsidies to carers of persons with severe disabilities, so as to protect the livelihood of persons with disabilities in residential care homes or in the community;

Employment –

- (10) to establish a quota system for employing persons with disabilities and provide minimum wage subsidies; the Government and subvented organizations should take the lead in employing more persons with disabilities, with 2% as the target rate, and disclose by various departments and organizations their status on employment of persons with disabilities; other larger-scale public organizations such as the MTR Corporation Limited and the Airport Authority, etc. should also take the lead in employing more persons with disabilities;

Transportation –

- (11) to extend the scope of the Public Transport Fare Concession Scheme for the Elderly and Eligible Persons with Disabilities (i.e. ‘concessionary

fare of \$2 per trip') to cover persons with disabilities under the age of 12, and make it applicable to green minibuses across the territory; and

- (12) to improve the existing barrier-free access and install electronic route display panels and next stop announcement systems on various means of public transport; and

Healthcare —

- (13) to allow persons with loss of one limb to also receive Disability Allowance;
- (14) to introduce a special disability allowance at a rate higher than that of the existing higher disability allowance, so as to target persons with severe disabilities who require intensive care to help them meet the related expenditure;

Welfare —

- (15) to allow persons with disabilities to apply for Comprehensive Social Security Assistance on an individual basis; and

Transportation —

- (16) to expeditiously install MTR platform screen doors and screen door warning lights, so as to protect the safety of visually impaired persons, the deaf and persons with hearing impairment.

Panel on Transport

List of relevant papers on accessible public transport services
for people with disabilities

Date of meeting	Committee	Minutes/Paper	LC Paper No.
1.4.2009	Council meeting	Ir Dr Hon Raymond HO Chung-tai raised a question on lifts and escalators installed at the entrances/exits of MTR stations	http://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/200904/01/P200904010120.htm
26.5.2010	Council meeting	Hon Emily LAU Wai-hing raised a question on barrier-free access and facilities	http://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/201005/26/P201005260136.htm
24.11.2010	Council meeting	Hon WONG Sing-chi raised a question on facilities for disabled provided by public transport operators and wheelchair accessible taxis	http://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/201011/24/P201011240121.htm
19.1.2011	Council meeting	Hon WONG Sing-chi raised a question on MTR facilities and services	http://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/201101/19/P201101190133.htm
21.1.2011	Subcommittee on Matters Relating to Railways	The MTR Corporation Limited's paper on facilities and design of MTR train compartments	CB(1)1072/10-11(07) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr10-11/english/panels/tp/tp_rdp/papers/tp_rdp0121cb1-1072-7-e.pdf
		Minutes of meeting	CB(1)1916/10-11 http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr10-11/english/panels/tp/tp_rdp/minutes/rdp20110121.pdf

Date of meeting	Committee	Minutes/Paper	LC Paper No.
21.6.2011	Subcommittee on Improving Barrier Free Access and Facilities for Persons with Disabilities	Administration's paper on Equal Opportunities Commission's Formal Investigation Report on Accessibility in Publicly Accessible Premises	CB(2)488/10-11(03) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr10-11/english/panels/ws/papers/ws1213cb2-488-3-e.pdf
		Administration's paper on progress report on the Government's follow-up action on the Equal Opportunities Commission's Formal Investigation Report on Accessibility in Publicly Accessible Premises	CB(2)1618/10-11(01) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr10-11/english/panels/ws/papers/ws1213cb2-1618-1-e.pdf
		Minutes of meeting	CB(2)2549/10-11 http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr10-11/english/panels/ws/ws_bf/minutes/bf20110621.pdf
20.7.2011	Subcommittee on Improving Barrier Free Access and Facilities for Persons with Disabilities	The MTR Corporation Limited's paper on barrier free access and facilities in MTR	CB(2)2371/10-11(07) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr10-11/english/panels/ws/ws_bf/papers/ws_bf0720cb2-2371-7-e.pdf
		Minutes of meeting	CB(2)398/11-12 http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr10-11/english/panels/ws/ws_bf/minutes/bf20110720.pdf
13.1.2012	Subcommittee on Matters Relating to Railways	The MTR Corporation Limited's paper on design of next generation of railway stations and update on retrofitting platform screen doors	CB(1)785/11-12(03) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr11-12/english/panels/tp/tp_rdp/papers/tp_rdp0113cb1-785-3-e.pdf

Date of meeting	Committee	Minutes/Paper	LC Paper No.
		Minutes of meeting	CB(1)2461/11-12 http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr11-12/english/panels/tp/tp_rdp/minutes/rdp20120113.pdf
30.3.2012	Subcommittee on Improving Barrier Free Access and Facilities for Persons with Disabilities	The MTR Corporation Limited's response to members' concerns raised at the meeting on 20 July 2011	CB(2)1050/11-12(01) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr10-11/english/panels/ws/ws_bf/papers/ws_bf0720cb2-1050-1-e.pdf
		Minutes of meeting	CB(2)2490/11-12 http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr11-12/english/panels/ws/ws_bf/minutes/bf20120330.pdf
4.1.2013	Subcommittee on Matters Relating to Railways	The MTR Corporation Limited's paper on railway system for South Island Line (East)	CB(1)363/12-13(03) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr12-13/english/panels/tp/tp_rdp/papers/tp_rdp0104cb1-363-3-e.pdf
		Minutes of meeting	CB(1)522/12-13 http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr12-13/english/panels/tp/tp_rdp/minutes/rdp20130104.pdf
5.7.2013	Subcommittee on Matters Relating to Railways	The MTR Corporation Limited's paper on its service performance	CB(1)1421/12-13(01) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr12-13/english/panels/tp/tp_rdp/papers/tp_rdp0705cb1-1421-1-e.pdf
		Minutes of meeting	CB(1)534/13-14 http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr12-13/english/panels/tp/tp_rdp/minutes/rdp20130705.pdf
18.12.2013	Council meeting	Dr Hon CHIANG Lai-wan raised a question on franchised bus services	http://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/201312/18/P201312180270.htm

Date of meeting	Committee	Minutes/Paper	LC Paper No.
3.4.2014	Finance Committee (Special meeting)	Replies to initial written questions raised by Finance Committee Members in examining the Estimates of Expenditure 2014-2015 (Session No.: 15) (Question Serial No. 3272)	http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr13-14/english/fc/fc/w_q/thb-t-e.pdf
11.6.2014	Council meeting	Dr Hon CHIANG Lai-wan raised a question on MTR station facilities	http://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/201406/11/P201406110360.htm
2.7.2014	Council meeting	Hon TANG Ka-piu raised a question on facilities and services provided at MTR stations for persons with disabilities	http://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/201407/02/P201407021155.htm
9.7.2014	Council meeting	Hon Michael TIEN Puk-sun raised a question on priority seats and barrier-free facilities provided by public transport modes	http://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/201407/09/P201407090695.htm
1.4.2015	Finance Committee (Special meeting)	Replies to initial written questions raised by Finance Committee Members in examining the Estimates of Expenditure 2015-2016 (Session No.: 12) (Question Serial No. 3564)	http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr14-15/english/fc/fc/w_q/thb-t-e.pdf
5.5.2015 12.5.2015	Panel on Transport	Administration's paper on Public Transport Strategy Study – seating capacity of public light buses	CB(4)922/14-15(06) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr14-15/english/panels/tp/papers/tp20150512cb4-922-6-e.pdf
		Minutes of meeting	CB(4)209/15-16 http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr14-15/english/panels/tp/minutes/tp20150505.pdf

Date of meeting	Committee	Minutes/Paper	LC Paper No.
			CB(4)85/15-16 http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr14-15/english/panels/tp/minutes/tp20150512.pdf
16.6.2015 7.7.2015	Panel on Transport	Administration's paper on Public Transport Strategy Study – provision of taxi service	CB(4)1143/14-15(03) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr14-15/english/panels/tp/papers/tp20150616cb4-1143-3-e.pdf
		Minutes of meeting	CB(4)165/15-16 http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr14-15/english/panels/tp/minutes/tp20150616.pdf CB(4)210/15-16 http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr14-15/english/panels/tp/minutes/tp20150707.pdf
--	Panel on Transport	Administration's response to the letter from Hon Claudia MO on introducing low-floor public light buses	CB(4)1190/14-15(01) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr14-15/chinese/panels/tp/papers/tpcb4-1190-1-c.pdf
3.7.2015	Subcommittee on Matters Relating to Railways	The MTR Corporation Limited's paper on the progress update on enhancement of MTR station facilities	CB(4)1228/14-15(03) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr14-15/english/panels/tp/tp_rdp/papers/tp_rdp20150703cb4-1228-3-e.pdf