

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(4)1465/16-17
(These minutes have been seen
by the Administration)

Ref : CB4/PL/TP/1

Panel on Transport

**Minutes of meeting held on
Friday, 20 January 2017, at 10:00 am
in Conference Room 3 of the Legislative Council Complex**

Members present : Hon CHAN Han-pan, JP (Chairman)
Dr Hon KWOK Ka-ki (Deputy Chairman)
Hon James TO Kun-sun
Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, GBS, JP
Hon Jeffrey LAM Kin-fung, GBS, JP
Hon Starry LEE Wai-king, SBS, JP
Hon CHAN Hak-kan, BBS, JP
Dr Hon Priscilla LEUNG Mei-fun, SBS, JP
Hon Paul TSE Wai-chun, JP
Hon LEUNG Kwok-hung
Hon Claudia MO
Hon Michael TIEN Puk-sun, BBS, JP
Hon Frankie YICK Chi-ming, JP
Hon WU Chi-wai, MH
Hon YIU Si-wing, BBS
Hon Charles Peter MOK, JP
Hon CHAN Chi-chuen
Hon LEUNG Che-cheung, BBS, MH, JP
Hon Christopher CHEUNG Wah-fung, SBS, JP
Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG Chiu-hung
Dr Hon Helena WONG Pik-wan
Dr Hon Elizabeth QUAT, JP
Hon POON Siu-ping, BBS, MH

Ir Dr Hon LO Wai-kwok, SBS, MH, JP
Hon Alvin YEUNG
Hon Andrew WAN Siu-kin
Hon CHU Hoi-dick
Hon HO Kai-ming
Hon LAM Cheuk-ting
Hon Holden CHOW Ho-ding
Hon Wilson OR Chong-shing, MH
Hon YUNG Hoi-yan
Hon CHAN Chun-ying
Hon Tanya CHAN
Hon CHEUNG Kwok-kwan, JP
Hon HUI Chi-fung
Hon LUK Chung-hung
Hon LAU Kwok-fan, MH
Hon Kenneth LAU Ip-keung, MH, JP
Dr Hon CHENG Chung-tai
Hon Jeremy TAM Man-ho
Hon Nathan LAW Kwun-chung
Dr Hon YIU Chung-yim

Members absent : Hon WONG Kwok-kin, SBS, JP
Hon Mrs Regina IP LAU Suk-ye, GBS, JP
Hon CHUNG Kwok-pan
Dr Hon Junius HO Kwan-yiu, JP
Hon KWONG Chun-yu

[According to the Judgment of the Court of First Instance of the High Court on 14 July 2017, LEUNG Kwok-hung, Nathan LAW Kwun-chung, YIU Chung-yim and LAU Siu-lai have been disqualified from assuming the office of a member of the Legislative Council, and have vacated the same since 12 October 2016, and are not entitled to act as a member of the Legislative Council.]

Public Officers : **Agenda item III**
attending

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

Mr Daniel CHUNG Kum-wah, JP
Director of Highways
Highways Department

Mr LEE Wai-ping
Chief Highway Engineer/Bridges & Structures
Highways Department

Mr Christopher CHIU Hak-pui
Principal Transport Officer/Management
Transport Department

Mr WONG Yee-kui
Chief Transport Officer/Tunnels & Tsing Ma 1
(Acting)
Transport Department

Agenda item IV

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

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

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

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

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

Mrs Ingrid YEUNG HO Poi-yan, JP
Commissioner for Transport

Mr Daniel CHUNG Kum-wah, JP
Director of Highways

Agenda item V

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

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

Miss Crystal YIP
Principal Assistant Secretary for Transport and
Housing (Transport)1

Mrs Ingrid YEUNG, JP
Commissioner for Transport

Miss Rachel KWAN
Assistant Commissioner/Bus and Railway
Transport Department

Clerk in attendance : Ms Sophie LAU
Chief Council Secretary (4)6

Staff in attendance : Ms Macy NG
Senior Council Secretary (4)6

Ms Emily LIU
Legislative Assistant (4)6

Action

I. Information papers issued since the last meeting

(LC Paper No. CB(4)338/16-17(01) - Letter dated 19 December
2016 from Hon LEUNG
Yiu-chung on withdrawal
of membership

LC Paper No. CB(4)355/16-17(01) - Information paper provided
by the Administration on
Western Harbour Crossing
Tolls

- LC Paper No. CB(4)355/16-17(02) - Company's background brief from Western Harbour Tunnel Company Limited
- LC Paper No. CB(4)355/16-17(03) - Press release by Western Harbour Tunnel Company Limited
- LC Paper No. CB(4)355/16-17(04) - Information paper provided by the Administration on Tai Lam Tunnel and Yuen Long Approach Road Tolls
- LC Paper No. CB(4)355/16-17(05) - Letter from Route 3 (CPS) Company Limited
- LC Paper No. CB(4)368/16-17(01) - Administration's response to the letter from Hon CHU Hoi-dick on fares of MTR West Rail Line and East Rail Line, and introduction of feeder bus service for Tung Chung Line
- LC Paper No. CB(4)391/16-17(01) - Letter dated 4 January 2017 from Hon Dennis KWOK Wing-hang on withdrawal of membership
- LC Paper No. CB(4)433/16-17(01) - Letter dated 16 January 2017 from Hon Steven HO Chun-yin on withdrawal of membership
- LC Paper No. CB(4)442/16-17(01) - Letter dated 18 January 2017 from Hon Martin LIAO Cheung-kong on withdrawal of membership)

Members noted the above papers issued since the last meeting.

II. Items for discussion at the next meeting

(LC Paper No. CB(4)413/16-17(01) - List of outstanding items for discussion

LC Paper No. CB(4)413/16-17(02) - List of follow-up actions)

2. Members agreed to discuss the following items at the next regular meeting to be held on 24 February 2017 –

- (a) Proposals on technical legislative amendments on traffic arrangements for the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge ("HZMB");
- (b) Star Ferry's fare increase application; and
- (c) 6870TH–Feasibility Study on Route 11 (between North Lantau and Yuen Long).

III. Procurement of bridge inspection vehicles for Tsing Ma Control Area and Tsing Sha Control Area

(LC Paper No. CB(4)285/16-17(07) - Administration's paper on procurement of BIVs for Tsing Ma Control Area and Tsing Sha Control Area)

3. At the invitation of the Chairman, Chief Highway Engineer/Bridges & Structures of Highways Department ("HyD") briefed members with the aid of powerpoint (LC Paper No. CB(4)459/16-17(01)) on the Administration's proposal to procure one bridge inspection vehicle ("BIV") for Tsing Ma Control Area ("TMCA") and another one for Tsing Sha Control Area ("TSCA") at an estimated total cost of \$27.56 million, which would be reflected in the Estimates of the relevant years.

General views

4. Mr Jeremy TAM asked whether the model of the new BIVs to be procured would be the same as that of the existing one to facilitate operation by engineering staff and to possibly reduce the vehicle maintenance cost and design fee. He also enquired whether the proposed procurement was due to the Administration's failure to assess accurately the equipment required for bridge inspection works from the outset.

5. Director of Highways ("DHy") explained that BIVs should be tailor-made to fulfil the requirements specified in the tender document. The design of the new BIVs might not necessarily be the same as that of the existing one as long as they fulfilled the requirements specified in the tender document. He added that the proposed procurement was an improvement measure to strengthen the bridge inspection works.
6. Mr CHAN Chun-ying indicated support for procuring additional BIVs to meet the genuine needs. Expressing concern about traffic accidents involving works vehicles, he asked whether shadow vehicles equipped with flashing arrow signs would be provided while carrying out road works every time and whether the Administration would consider procuring more shadow vehicles as well to enhance works safety.
7. DHy confirmed that road works contractors were required to provide shadow vehicles equipped with truck-mounted attenuators and flashing arrow signs in front of the road works area within TMCA and TSCA. He added that there were sufficient shadow vehicles in TMCA and TSCA.
8. Mr POON Siu-ping enquired about the utilization rate of the existing two BIVs in TMCA and TSCA. DHy advised that they had a total of about 130 vehicle trips in 2016.
9. Mr WU Chi-wai considered that the above utilization rate was not high and the existing provision could generally meet the normal demand except during emergencies. He asked whether the Administration would consider procuring one BIV instead of two to ensure prudent use of public funds.
10. DHy said that the daily maintenance of TMCA and TSCA were outsourced to two different management companies and the relevant works were carried out separately. He explained that in the event of a major accident, bridges in TMCA or TSCA might be closed for inspection, leading to serious traffic congestion in the vicinity of the two Control Areas. Under this situation, it would be difficult for the engineering staff to mobilize a BIV expeditiously from one Control Area to the other to provide support. Therefore, two BIVs must be provided in each Control Area to ensure adequate equipment for emergency inspection and repair, if necessary.
11. Mr CHAN Chi-chuen asked about the reasons for the Government, instead of the management companies of the Control Areas, to procure BIVs and the current practice of tunnel maintenance.

12. DHy advised that since BIVs were special equipment, it would be more appropriate for the Government to procure them. Principal Transport Officer/Management of Transport Department ("TD") supplemented that vehicles for tunnel maintenance were special vehicles and tailor-made. They were also provided by the Government. The current arrangement would ensure smooth and flexible changeover of the vehicles from one operator to another upon expiry or termination of a contract.

Manpower and training

13. Mr Jeremy TAM, Mr POON Siu-ping and Ms Tanya CHAN asked whether the management companies of the Control Areas would deploy sufficient engineering staff to operate all BIVs concurrently. Mr POON and Ms CHAN expressed concern that the Administration's proposal might increase the workload of existing engineering staff.

14. DHy advised that HyD would discuss with the current bridge maintenance companies on how sufficient manpower could be deployed to operate the additional BIVs under the existing contract terms. It would also include in the new contracts the relevant terms to ensure that contractors would arrange sufficient manpower to operate all BIVs. He added that contractors were also required under the current contract to provide training to their employees on the operation of BIVs and to provide proof to HyD on the employees who had been trained.

15. Mr CHAN Chun-ying and Mr CHAN Chi-chuen enquired how the Administration would ensure the proper use of new BIVs by the management companies of the Control Areas. DHy said that the existing management companies were familiar with using BIVs in their daily operation and adequate training would be provided for them on the use of new BIVs.

16. After consultation with members, the Chairman concluded that the Panel supported the Administration's financial proposal.

IV. Briefing by the Secretary for Transport and Housing on the Chief Executive's 2017 Policy Address

(LC Paper No. CB(4)413/16-17(03) - Administration's paper on transport-related policy initiatives of the Transport and Housing Bureau under the 2017 Policy Address and Policy Agenda)

Other relevant documents

Address by the Chief Executive at the Legislative Council meeting on 18 January 2017

The 2017 Policy Agenda booklet

17. At the invitation of the Chairman, Secretary for Transport and Housing ("STH") briefed members on the transport-related policy initiatives of the Transport and Housing Bureau ("THB") featured in the 2017 Policy Address, details of which were set out in the Administration's paper (LC Paper No. CB(4)413/16-17(03)).

(Post-meeting note: The speaking note of STH was issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(4)460/16-17(01) on 23 January 2017.)

Railway development

Construction of the Shatin to Central Link

18. Ms Claudia MO expressed concern about the cost overrun of the Shatin to Central Link ("SCL") project and was disappointed that the Administration could not provide details on the exact amount of additional costs involved. While noting the Administration's proposal for demolishing the Wan Chai Sports Ground for comprehensive development that would comprise convention and exhibition venues, Ms Tanya CHAN enquired about the construction progress of the Exhibition Station of SCL above which the development of convention facilities had also been planned.

19. STH indicated that the Administration had regularly reported on the progress of implementation and financial position of SCL to the Subcommittee on Matters Relating to Railways on a quarterly basis. DHy advised that the construction of the Exhibition Station was being implemented to match the target of commissioning of the Hung Hom to Admiralty Section of SCL in 2021.

Co-location and operation arrangements of the Hong Kong section of the Guangzhou—Shenzhen—Hong Kong Express Rail Link

20. Ms Claudia MO and Mr CHAN Chi-chuen asked about when the co-location of customs, immigration and quarantine facilities ("co-location arrangements") of Hong Kong and the Mainland for the Hong Kong section of the Guangzhou—Shenzhen—Hong Kong Express Rail Link ("XRL")

would be finalized. STH indicated that the discussion between the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and the Mainland authorities on the co-location arrangements was still in progress. On the Chairman's enquiry, STH advised that the Administration had commenced discussion with the MTR Corporation Limited ("MTRCL") regarding the operating right of XRL, though there were a number of details to be sorted out.

Future railway development

21. Mr POON Siu-ping asked about the implementation schedule of the proposed Northern Link (and Kwu Tung Station), Tuen Mun South Extension, East Kowloon Line and Tung Chung West Extension (and Tung Chung East Station) ("the four new projects") under the Railway Development Strategy 2014 ("RDS-2014"). He was concerned about how these projects would dovetail with the works projects due for completion in the coming few years so as to timely absorb the manpower resources in the construction industry released by then. He also requested the Administration to report to the Panel on Transport ("the Panel") later on the impact on road traffic associated with the opening of the Kwun Tong Line Extension and the South Island Line (East).

22. STH advised that the Administration had invited MTRCL to submit proposals for the four new projects pursuant to the indicative implementation window as recommended in RDS-2014. MTRCL had submitted the proposal for the Tuen Mun South Extension for the Administration's evaluation. Subject to the evaluation outcome, the Administration would consult the public on the details of implementation. MTRCL was expected to submit the proposals of another two projects in the first half of 2017.

23. Pointing out that the East Rail Line ("ERL") was near saturation and there had been acute traffic congestion problem in North District, Mr LAM Cheuk-ting was worried that planning for the Northern Link alone might not fully cope with the transport demand arising from the developments in the Northeast New Territories ("NT") and NT East, including the expanding population in Tai Po and Tseung Kwan O. Expressing similar concerns, Mr LAU Kwok-fan also pointed out the serious traffic congestion along the road connections from North District to Hong Kong Island. Apart from the Northern Link, he suggested planning for a parallel railway line to the existing ERL and expanding the road network to deal with the problem. Mr CHU Hoi-dick suggested conducting a comprehensive transport assessment of Tai Po taking into account the housing developments in the district.

24. STH advised that the Northern Link (and Kwu Tung Station), along with various transport infrastructural projects, was expected to address the anticipated transport demand arising from the planned developments in NT. Per established practices, traffic impact assessments would be conducted for housing developments. Commissioner for Transport ("C for T") supplemented that traffic congestion in Northeast NT and NT East was due to the increase in cross-boundary traffic and works vehicles, as well as the rapid growth of private cars in the districts. She said that various measures would be adopted to solve the traffic congestion problem, and controlling the number of private cars would be a major measure. To relieve the burden on ERL, "T" bus routes running in parallel to ERL had been introduced during peak hours.

25. Mr Michael TIEN expressed concern that the existing railway service could not adequately support the development of Tung Chung North. He pointed out that the Tung Chung Line ("TCL") and Airport Express Line shared the same track across the Tsing Ma Bridge, hence limiting the train service to an 8-minute headway at most. To increase the carrying capacity of trains to meet the passenger demand in Tung Chung North, there had been a suggestion for a shuttle train service serving only the section along the future Tung Chung East Station, Airport Station and AsiaWorld-Expo Station. He said that this suggestion had been discussed by the Airport Authority, MTRCL and the Lantau Development Advisory Committee, and they initially considered the suggestion technically feasible. He urged the Administration to take into account this suggestion when planning for the Tung Chung East Station. Mr Holden CHOW also proposed the planning for a light rail system connecting Tung Chung Town Centre with the Airport Island. On this, the Chairman further asked which government department/bureau would be responsible for taking forward relevant feasibility study.

26. Separately, the Chairman expressed concern that the proposed Route 11 and the existing West Rail Line ("WRL") could not cope with the traffic demand in NT West and NT North in the future, given the substantial population growth in the areas. He asked whether the Administration would reconsider constructing a railway line linking Tuen Mun, Tsuen Wan, Kwai Chung and Shatin to relieve the burden of WRL.

27. On members' above suggestions, STH stated the Administration's policy was to integrate land use and transport development. When considering proposals for new railway lines, the Administration would consider various factors, including transport demand, land use planning, local development needs, economic and financial returns, as well as engineering feasibility of the railway projects, etc. He added that the Administration

would seek funding from the Legislative Council ("LegCo") to take forward the strategic studies on railways and major roads beyond 2030 ("Strategic Studies") based on the results of the "Hong Kong 2030+: Towards a Planning Vision and Strategy Transcending 2030" study ("Hong Kong 2030+") and its public engagement exercise. The Strategic Studies would cover the transport infrastructure required for the developments at Lantau, Northwest NT and NT North. The Administration was open-minded on suggestions including that on a light rail system connecting Tung Chung Town Centre with the Airport Island subject to concrete proposals, technical feasibility and traffic demand. As for the proposal of the Coastal Railway between Tuen Mun and Tsuen Wan, STH advised that the proposal would not be pursued as the consultancy study for formulating RDS-2014 had concluded that the cost-effectiveness of the proposal could hardly be established.

28. The Deputy Chairman enquired if the Administration would consider pursuing the alternative option of using electric buses instead of developing the Environmentally Friendly Linkage System in the Kai Tak Development Area in Kowloon East. STH responded that the Administration had all along been promoting the use of electric vehicles. However, it might not be feasible to solely rely on road-based green transport in the area concerned due to constraints of the road environment.

Road transport infrastructure

Implementation of the Central Kowloon Route

29. Mr Wilson OR and Mr HO Kai-ming expressed support for the construction of the Central Kowloon Route ("CKR") to relieve the traffic congestion problem in East Kowloon and urged the Administration to expeditiously implement the project. On Mr OR's enquiry about the implementation timetable and estimated construction cost for CKR, DHy advised that the Administration strived to seek funding approval in the 2016-2017 legislative session with a view to commencing the construction works in the latter half of 2017 for completion in 2025.

30. Dr Helena WONG supported the construction of CKR as soon as possible to ease the acute traffic congestion in West Kowloon. However, she noted the objection of the residents in Prosperous Garden ("PG") due to concern over the noise from CKR. She asked if the Administration would accede to the requests of the residents to replace the semi-enclosure along the Gascoigne Road Flyover ("GRF") fronting PG with a full enclosure, and extend the full enclosure along GRF beyond the Yaumati Catholic Primary School. STH advised that the Administration would soon consult the Panel

on the funding proposal of CKR and would provide its response to the above requests at the same time.

31. On Mr Jeremy TAM's enquiry, DHy illustrated that assuming an average speed of 60 km per hour, it would take less than five minutes for vehicles to travel through CKR of a total length of about 4.7 km.

Implementation of Route 11

32. Mr CHAN Chi-chuen was aware that the proposed Route 11 (between North Lantau and Yuen Long) was similar to ex-Route 10 (North Lantau to Yuen Long Highway) which was discussed years ago. Pointing out that the funding proposal for the Northern Section of ex-Route 10 (i.e. section between So Kwun Wat and Yuen Long Highway) was rejected by the Finance Committee in 2002, he asked whether the Administration had reviewed the objection views and would refine the proposal of Route 11. He was also concerned about the timetable of implementing the project.

33. STH indicated that the proposal of Route 11 was established based on the concept of ex-Route 10, while the two were not exactly the same. When planning for the preliminary alignment of Route 11, views received in the past had been taken into account. STH indicated that the Route 11 project would be a complex and large-scale one and it would take more than 10 years for implementation. To commence the project as soon as possible, the Administration would seek support from the Panel in the first quarter of 2017 on the funding proposal for conducting a feasibility study on Route 11, and would provide further details to the Panel in due course.

Transport arrangements for the Hong Kong—Zhuhai—Macao Bridge

34. Mr YIU Si-wing declared that the company in which he worked operated cross-boundary coach services. He asked about when the commissioning date of the Hong Kong—Zhuhai—Macao Bridge ("HZMB") could be fixed, so that the transport trade could accordingly plan for relevant investments. He also asked about the finalized licence arrangements for cross-boundary coach services at HZMB, and whether the Administration had taken into account the trade's views to revise the original proposal of granting additional quotas for operating cross-boundary coaches at HZMB.

35. Mr Frankie YICK was of the view that there was no need to grant new quotas for HZMB cross-boundary coaches, as the demand for cross-boundary coaches and the number of mainland inbound tour groups had been dropping.

Instead, he suggested allowing existing coach operators to apply for switching the cross-boundary coach quotas from other boundary control points.

36. STH advised that the governments of the three sides strived to complete the entire HZMB project by end 2017 for early simultaneous commissioning. He added that the Hong Kong projects were targeted to achieve readiness for commissioning by end 2017. The inter-ministry Task Force of HZMB would determine the commissioning date of HZMB, subject to actual works progress and factors such as the implementation of cross-boundary transport arrangements.

37. Deputy Secretary for Transport and Housing (Transport)³ indicated further that the three governments had been discussing the cross-boundary transport arrangements for HZMB and the discussion was in good progress. As regards the quota arrangements for HZMB cross-boundary coaches, she said that the Administration had maintained liaison with the trade and was actively studying the trade's proposal for increasing the number of quotas to be switched from other boundary control points. It had planned to grant the quotas for HZMB cross-boundary coaches around the second quarter of 2017.

Cost overruns for transport infrastructural projects

38. Dr YIU Chung-yim asked whether the Administration would engage independent quantity surveyors to monitor the expenditure of works projects to minimize cost overruns. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung was of the view that if not for covering the cost overruns in cross-boundary transport infrastructural projects, the large amount of public money incurred could have been used for improving local transport facilities. Noting members' concerns, STH explained that cost overruns were caused by different factors. He indicated that the Administration would require its contractors to engage professional quantity surveyors for all infrastructural projects for better cost control.

Measures to alleviate road traffic congestion

Measures to control vehicle growth

39. Mr Jeremy TAM enquired about the timetable and any target set for measures to control vehicle growth. Mr LAU Kwok-fan asked if the Administration had studied the reasons for the rapid growth in the number of private cars.

40. STH stated that it had been the Government's policy to contain vehicle growth. He advised that the annual growth rate of the private vehicle fleet

reached about 4.5% in recent years. The growth of the private vehicle fleet had caused excessive burden on public roads and aggravated the problem of traffic congestion. To tackle road traffic congestion, the Administration had been adopting a multi-pronged approach and taking forward progressively the measures recommended by the Transport Advisory Committee ("TAC") since 2015. Of these measures, the Administration considered it most important to control vehicle growth. For example, the Administration would explore the introduction of financial disincentives to limit the number of private cars.

41. Dr CHENG Chung-tai expressed concern that the increasing number of cross-boundary vehicles, and the implementation of the second phase of the Ad Hoc Quota Trial Scheme for Cross-boundary Private Cars ("Trial Scheme") to allow Guangdong private cars to enter Hong Kong would aggravate the traffic problems in Hong Kong. He also asked if the Administration would improve the design of Tuen Mun Road to alleviate its traffic congestion.

42. In response, STH clarified that at present, there was no concrete implementation timetable of the second phase of the Trial Scheme. C for T supplemented that the majority of vehicles holding vehicle licences of both Hong Kong and the Mainland were not originated from the Mainland, but were vehicles first registered in Hong Kong and having obtained vehicle licences from the Mainland afterwards.

Proposal to raise the fixed penalty charges for congestion-related traffic offences and the parking policy review

43. Mr Frankie YICK and Dr Helena WONG indicated objection to the Administration's plan to raise the fixed penalty charges for congestion-related traffic offences before conducting the parking policy review to address the shortage of parking spaces in Hong Kong. They opined that the illegal parking problem was mainly due to insufficient parking spaces. Demolition of several public carpark buildings had worsened the problem. Dr WONG urged the Administration to conduct the parking policy review as soon as possible and cover parking spaces for both private cars and commercial vehicles in the review. Dr Elizabeth QUAT suggested providing more car parking spaces near railway stations to encourage park-and-ride. Mr LAU Kwok-fan hoped that more car parks could be provided.

44. STH reiterated that illegal parking was an offence. Alongside the proposal of increasing the fixed penalty charges for congestion-related traffic offences, the Administration would commence the car parking review within 2017 with priority accorded to addressing the parking demand and supply of

commercial vehicles. It would report the outcome and recommendations to the Panel in due course. The Administration would maintain an appropriate supply of parking spaces for private cars under the current planning standard. It would also be mindful that the provision of additional parking spaces should not indirectly encourage the public to buy private cars.

Electronic Road Pricing Pilot Scheme

45. Mr CHAN Chun-ying noted that the Administration would carry out an in-depth feasibility study for the Electronic Road Pricing ("ERP") Pilot Scheme in Central and its adjacent areas. Pointing out that previous ERP studies had concluded that there was no immediate justification for implementing ERP, he queried why the Administration now considered ERP an effective means to alleviate road traffic congestion.

46. STH advised that further to the outcome of previous ERP studies, the Administration had then decided to explore the possibility of ERP application in the Central District after the commissioning of the Central—Wan Chai Bypass. In this connection, the Administration had concluded that an ERP Pilot Scheme for the Central District and its adjacent areas would be necessary and feasible based on the recommendations of the previous ERP studies, and conducted a public engagement exercise, the result of which had just been released. With the views collected, the Administration would proceed with an in-depth feasibility study to develop feasible options for the ERP Pilot Scheme and engage the public further with finer details, including the charging level, the exact boundary of the charging area and the operation of the ERP Pilot Scheme. The Administration intended to take forward the ERP Pilot Scheme's feasibility study within the current term of the Government.

Rationalization of traffic distribution among the three road harbour crossings and three land tunnels

47. Mr CHAN Chun-ying pointed out that of the three road harbour crossings and three land tunnels between Kowloon and Sha Tin, some were not owned by the Government and hence it did not have control over their toll levels. On the Administration's initiative to rationalize traffic distribution among these crossings/tunnels, he expressed concern that if it was to increase the toll levels of government-owned crossings/tunnels for diverting traffic to those privately-owned crossings/tunnels, this would amount to a transfer of benefits to the franchisees of privately-owned crossings/tunnels and would not be accepted by the public.

48. STH noted Mr CHAN's concern. He pointed out that if otherwise the franchisees of privately-owned crossings/tunnels were to reduce tolls to rationalize traffic distribution, the Government would need to reimburse them for the differences between the existing and reduced tolls based on the actual traffic flow. On this initiative, the Administration would provide a comprehensive analysis on different options for members' consideration upon completion of the study in due course.

Other views and concerns over road traffic condition

49. Mr LEUNG Che-cheung expressed concern about the unmet traffic demand in Yuen Long arising from the significant population growth due to extensive residential developments in the district. He doubted the effectiveness of bus route rationalization in easing the serious traffic congestion problem in Yuen Long Town Centre. He also pointed out that West Rail trains were overcrowded and during rush hours passengers needed to wait for a few trains before they could get on board. He asked about any measures to address the demand before implementation of Route 11 and Northern Link, which would take lengthy time for implementation. Mr WU Chi-wai asked if the Administration would take forward enhanced measures to promote bus-bus interchange to relieve road traffic congestion.

50. The Deputy Chairman considered that residents' service would to some extent serve to relieve the crowdedness of railway services during peak hours, and ease road traffic congestion as residents' service, which provided relatively direct transport service, was an alternative option to private cars. He asked whether the Administration would study the role of residents' service in the transport system.

51. C for T advised that the Administration would continue to take forward bus route rationalization through cancellation or amalgamation of routes with persistently low patronage, and pursue bus-bus interchange to alleviate road traffic congestion. Yet, she indicated that given the geographical limitation in Hong Kong, it was not easy finding suitable sites large enough to enable bus-bus interchange.

52. C for T further advised that TD had issued licences for operating residents' service to meet the transport demand during peak hours. For example, some private residential estates in Yuen Long had applied to operate their own residents' service routes, but some of the proposed routes were overlapping with existing bus routes. She stressed that in considering these applications, the TD had to balance the interests of different stakeholders and would consult the District Councils ("DCs") concerned if the provision of

existing public transport service in the same catchment would be affected by the proposed residents' service. STH added that the role of non-franchised buses would be covered under the Public Transport Strategy Study. Non-franchised bus operators could obtain service endorsements to provide various types of public bus services.

Fostering a pedestrian and bicycle friendly environment

Provision of hillside escalator links and elevator systems

53. The Chairman and Mr Wilson OR expressed grave concern over the lengthy time required to implement the projects of hillside escalator links and elevator systems ("HEL"). To expedite the implementation process of HEL projects, the Chairman and Mr HO Kai-ming asked whether the Administration would consider setting up a dedicated "Hillside Elevator and Escalator Fund", and consider outsourcing the relevant works.

54. STH advised that the time required to implement HEL projects would be lengthy as, apart from construction, time was required to consult stakeholders in the community and handle their different views. He added that among the existing 18 proposals ranked with priority for conducting feasibility studies, some were already completed and open for public use. Besides implementing the remaining proposals in phases, the Administration would commence a study at the end of 2017 to review and improve the assessment mechanism for HEL and to consider other proposals received in the past years. DHy advised that the design work of most HEL projects were undertaken by consultancy firms engaged by the Administration, and the construction works were outsourced to contractors.

Promotion of walkability and design of covers to public walkways

55. Mr WU Chi-wai welcomed the Administration's initiative of "Make it enjoyable" by making walking a pleasant experience. While noting that the Administration would explore relaxing the requirements for adding covers to public walkways as stipulated in the Transport Planning and Design Manual and select two areas for pilot study to test out innovative measures for the a comfortable walking environment, he was of the view that the design of these covers should be standardized. STH took note of his views. He further advised that the Administration would adequately consider the initiative of promoting walkability in road planning.

Bicycle friendly environment

56. Mr Nathan LAW asked about the Administration's measures to foster a bicycle friendly environment on the Hong Kong Island, for example, whether the Administration would consider building a cycle track along the harbourfront of the Hong Kong Island. He noted that Shatin DC had conducted a consultancy study in respect of self-financing community bicycle rental services. The study recommended provision of such bicycle rental services at MTR stations, school zones and shopping areas. While expressing support for the Administration's plan to study how to assist organizations in operating self-financing community bicycle rental services on a non-profit making basis, he considered that the Administration should also take the lead to provide such services.

57. STH advised that the Administration's policy on bicycle had shifted focus from serving recreational purposes to facilitating cycling as first and last mile short-distance connections between public transport stations and residential places or offices. Along this line, THB had been collaborating with the Civil Engineering and Development Department ("CEDD") in fostering a bicycle friendly environment. The Administration noted Shatin DC's study on self-financing community bicycle rental services and agreed with pursuing such services. Yet, it should be noted that it might take longer time if such services were to be provided by the Administration. At the request of Mr Nathan LAW, STH agreed to advise the outcome of the consultancy study on improving the cycle track network and facilities in the nine new towns.

Admin

58. Dr CHENG Chung-tai expressed concern over the deficiencies in the current designs of cycle tracks in Hong Kong and asked about the Administration's plan to review their designs. C for T said that on the basis of the recommendations of the consultancy study on improving cycle track network and facilities in the nine new towns, TD had drawn up a list of about 900 potential improvement sites. The first batch of improvement works for about 100 sites had commenced in 2016, with a target completion in about two years.

59. Dr YIU Chung-yim asked about the Administration's policy of promoting a bicycle friendly environment in urban areas, including whether priority lanes for bicycles would be set up, and whether bicycle rental services and more bicycle parking spaces would be provided in urban areas. He also enquired about the progress of the feasibility study on the provision of cycle tracks underneath the Island Eastern Corridor. Mr WU Chi-wai asked

whether the Administration would regard bicycle as a commuting mode in urban areas and facilitate cycling on newly designed roads.

60. C for T supplemented that due to the old, narrow and busy roads in urban areas, riding bicycles on roads was not encouraged. It was also not feasible to set up priority lanes for bicycles in urban areas. To ensure road safety, cyclists had to follow the relevant road transport regulations when they were riding on roads and other drivers had to respect them. STH advised that the provision of cycle tracks underneath the Island Eastern Corridor was being pursued by the Development Bureau.

MTR fares

61. Dr Fernando CHEUNG pointed out that while the Government was the majority shareholder of MTRCL on one hand, it also represented public interests on the other hand. Given the conflicting roles of the Government and to increase transparency, he hoped that the public and LegCo would be engaged in the review of the Fare Adjustment Mechanism ("FAM") of MTRCL. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung expressed disappointment that the Government did not have control in setting MTR fares, owing to the privatization of MTRCL.

62. STH said that the Administration had conducted a three-month public consultation on the FAM review from 20 May to 19 August 2016. Taking into account the views collected, the Administration had started the FAM review with MTRCL. He stressed that the Government negotiated with MTRCL as the regulator of public transport services, instead of the majority shareholder of MTRCL. He further said that when the Board of MTRCL discussed the Administration's requests relating to the review of FAM, the Government representatives in the Board had to withdraw from the relevant meetings. Besides, as MTRCL was a listed company, the Government as the majority shareholder of MTRCL could not override the interests of the minority shareholders according to the Listing Rules.

63. Mr HO Kai-ming asked whether a fare stabilization fund would be established to moderate the rate of MTR fare increases. STH responded that the main direction of the FAM review was to study how the operation of FAM could better respond to public concern about the relationship between fare adjustment and MTRCL's profitability, as well as affordability of passengers, whilst still respecting the financial prudence required of MTRCL as a listed company. At present, the Administration had no intention to set up a fare stabilization fund.

64. The Deputy Chairman considered the current distance-based MTR fare structure unfair to those grassroots living in remote areas. Mr CHU Hoi-dick pointed out that the fare levels of TCL and WRL were higher than that of ERL. He urged MTRCL to rationalize the fare differences among these three railway lines.

65. STH explained that the current fare levels of railway lines operated by MTRCL were basically distance-based; while before the rail merger, the fare structure of ERL operated by the Kowloon-Canton Railway Corporation was different from railway lines operated by the former MTR Corporation, hence the slightly lower fare level of ERL. If the distance-based fare structure was to be strictly adopted also for ERL, the fares of ERL might have to be increased. The Administration would discuss with MTRCL on improving the FAM under the existing limitations and taking into account the need to balance the benefits of various stakeholders. He further said that the Administration had requested MTRCL to offer more fare concessions to long-distance MTR passengers to meet their need and affordability.

Bus services and fares

66. Ms Claudia MO raised concern over the regulation of the content of and noise nuisance caused by the broadcasting of audio-visual ("AV") programmes of the RoadShow Holdings Limited on franchised buses. C for T advised that the volume level and proportion of advertising contents of AV programmes broadcasted on franchised buses were subject to regulation by TD. Citybus Limited and New World First Bus Services Limited were putting on trial the use of wi-fi transmission for audio output to reduce noise nuisance to passengers on 60 buses. She further said that the revenue generated from broadcasting AV programmes on buses contributed part of the non-fare box revenue of bus companies and such revenue could cross subsidize the operation of franchised buses.

67. Dr Helena WONG suggested that apart from wheelchair users, the policy of "Transport for all" should also take into account the needs of stroller users to facilitate their access to franchised buses. Mr Nathan LAW declared that he was a part-time student. He and Mr WU Chi-wai opined that franchised bus companies should be requested to offer concessionary half fare for students. The Administration noted the above views.

Renovation projects for enhancing public transport interchanges and ferry piers, and Special Helping Measures provided to ferry operators

Admin

68. Mr Frankie YICK welcomed the Administration's plan to carry out renovation projects for enhancing existing covered public transport interchanges ("PTIs") and ferry piers to provide a better waiting environment for the public. He requested the Administration to provide toilet facilities at new PTIs and improve the ventilation of the Langham Place Public Light Bus Terminus. He also pointed out that the toilet facilities at the Sam Ka Tsuen Pier at Lei Yue Mun had been dilapidated, and some piers were in lack of basic facilities. Mr YICK and Mr Holden CHOW enquired about the list and locations of the 10 public piers in NT and the Islands District to be covered under the Pier Improvement Programme ("PIP"), and details of the improvement works to be carried out. STH advised that PIP would be implemented by CEDD. The requested information would be sought from CEDD for provision to members.

69. In response to Mr Holden CHOW's further enquiry, STH said that the Administration would in the first half of 2019, examine in the midterm review of the next three-year licence period (2017-2020) of the six major outlying island ferry routes whether Special Helping Measures were the most desirable long-term operation model to maintain the financial viability of ferry services. The review would cover a study of the pros and cons of possible options such as letting the Government own the ferry fleet and outsource its operation.

Smart transport system

70. Dr Elizabeth QUAT enquired about the Administration's plan to introduce a smart transport system, including whether the Administration would formulate policy to gather information on vacant parking spaces and provide the relevant information to the public through mobile applications, and subsidize non-government agencies to develop transport system using big data. She pointed out that the Singapore government had collected transport data through various means including installing sensors on roads to enhance provision of transport information to the public, and to improve road safety and alleviate road traffic congestion. She opined that besides the Innovation and Technology Bureau ("ITB"), THB should also formulate policies for developing a smart transport system.

71. Mr Charles MOK was disappointed that no new measures had been proposed in the 2017 Policy Address to open up transport data and apply information technology in transport service to dovetail with the policy of developing Hong Kong into a smart city. He said that the transport data of

public transport services in major overseas cities were open to the public. He also asked if the Administration would conduct a study on the use of driverless vehicles which in his view would become a trend in the coming decade.

72. In reply, STH said that it was among the objectives of the current term of the Government to develop Hong Kong into a smart city and better utilize big data. The Administration had earmarked funds for installing sensors on roads. He added that the smart city policy was spearheaded by ITB, while other bureaux would also participate in pursuing the relevant initiatives.

73. STH further advised that unlike some overseas cities where public transport was operated by the public authorities or fully owned/subsidized by the Government, franchised bus service was provided by private operators in Hong Kong in accordance with commercial principles. Bus operators had, on their own accord, made substantial investment in developing and maintaining the systems for compiling real-time bus arrival data and disseminating such information to passengers with a view to providing better service. The data so collected were private property of the bus companies and pertained to their commercial operations. As such, the disclosure of such data for use by third parties would require the consent of the bus companies concerned. That said, the Administration had been liaising with franchised bus companies to explore ways to facilitate the obtaining of real-time bus arrival information by passengers.

Transport studies

74. Ms Tanya CHAN noted that the public engagement exercise of Hong Kong 2030+ would complete in end April 2017, she queried whether the Administration had sufficient time to study the views collected before seeking funding support from the Panel in the second quarter of 2017 to take forward the Strategic Studies. Mr Charles MOK asked if the Administration would make use of big data analytics and information technology, as well as collaborating with other parties to conduct the various transport studies.

75. STH advised that the Administration would study the views collected during the public engagement exercise of Hong Kong 2030+ and take forward the Strategic Studies in parallel to save time, such that the Administration could plan early the transport infrastructure for the developments at Lantau, Northwest NT and NT North.

V. New franchise for the bus network of The Kowloon Motor Bus Company (1933) Limited

(LC Paper No. CB(4)413/16-17(04) - Administration's paper on new franchise for the bus network of The Kowloon Motor Bus Company (1933) Limited

LC Paper No. CB(4)413/16-17(05) - Paper on the franchise for the bus network of The Kowloon Motor Bus Company (1933) Limited prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat (updated background brief)

LC Paper No. CB(4)451/16-17(01) - Submission from Public Transport Research Team)

(At 12:26 pm, the Chairman proposed and members raised no objection to extending the meeting for 45 minutes to 1:30 pm. At 1:22 pm, the Chairman proposed and members raised no objection to further extending the meeting for 5 to 10 minutes to allow all members who had indicated their intention to speak to put their questions.)

76. At the invitation of the Chairman, STH briefed members on the outcome of discussion with The Kowloon Motor Bus Company (1933) Limited ("KMB") on the granting of a new 10-year franchise for the bus network of KMB. STH advised that subject to members' support and subsequent approval by the Executive Council, the granting of a new 10-year franchise to KMB might take place in the coming few months and the new franchise would commence immediately upon expiry of the current one on 1 July 2017.

Fare concessions

Long-haul route fare concession scheme for full-time students

77. Members including Mr Alvin YEUNG, Mr LAM Cheuk-ting, Dr Elizabeth QUAT, Dr Fernando CHEUNG, Mr LAU Kwok-fun, Mr LEUNG Che-cheung, Dr YIU Chung-yim, Dr CHENG Chung-tai, Mr WU Chi-wai and Mr LUK Chung-hung considered that the long-haul route fare concession scheme for full-time students ("student fare concession

scheme") was too restrictive in that it would only be introduced on long-haul routes with adult fare of \$12 or above, and students could only enjoy concessionary half fare on their return trips on daytime routes solely operated by KMB. They urged the Administration to further liaise with KMB to expand the scope of the scheme, such as by offering fare concessions to all full-time students on every single trip on all routes operated by KMB. They also enquired about the estimated number of students to be benefited from this concession scheme, as well as the estimated concession amount to be involved.

78. C for T advised that the introduction of the student fare concession scheme for long-haul routes aimed at reducing the travelling expenses of those students living in the remote areas. It was estimated by KMB that about 2 000 students would benefit from the concession scheme which would involve a concession amount of about \$5 million per year. She supplemented that apart from the said concession scheme, students aged 11 or below using child Octopus cards were currently enjoying half-fare for all KMB's bus routes. While taking heed of members' views, she stressed that as KMB was a private operator which operated in accordance with commercial principles generally without government subsidies, it should be mindful whether expansion of the scope of fare concessions would exert fare pressure which might eventually affect the basic fare level. That said, as an established policy to encourage public transport operators to offer more fare concessions, the TD would continue to explore with KMB and other bus operators the feasibility of introducing more fare concession initiatives, as well as enhancing the existing ones where practicable. KMB would also review the scheme after six months of implementation.

Monthly passes

79. Members including Mr Michael TIEN, Mr POON Siu-ping, Mr HO Kai-ming, Mr LAU Kwok-fan, Mr LEUNG Che-cheung, Dr CHENG Chung-tai, Mr WU Chi-wai and Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung considered that KMB should introduce monthly passes for its passengers. They considered that introduction of monthly passes, similar to what the MTR Corporation Limited was currently offering, could help reduce the travelling expenses of daily commuters in particular those living in remote areas. While appreciating the efforts of the Administration in negotiating with KMB to take forward most fare concession and service improvement proposals, Mr Michael TIEN noted with disappointment that the fare concession proposals made by KMB in respect of monthly passes for long-haul routes and fare savers were put on hold. He demanded TD to expeditiously

examine the said proposals made by KMB, and discuss with KMB the feasibility of introducing monthly passes also for full-time students.

80. STH and C for T indicated that the Administration was in principle supportive towards the introduction of monthly passes by franchised bus operators so as to benefit passengers. The Government considered that the coverage of monthly passes should not be too restrictive such that passenger demand could be met in an appropriate manner. The pricing of the monthly passes should not be too high so that the fare concession could be meaningful. Meanwhile, bus companies should be capable of introducing such monthly passes without passing the costs to non-monthly pass users, to avoid generating pressure for fare increase in future. While the Government and KMB had explored proposals on monthly passes in the course of discussion on the new franchise, the preliminary concepts and information provided by KMB were unable to ensure that the monthly passes could achieve the above outcome. Further studies and discussion were thus required. Bus operators could introduce new fare concessions anytime and the Government would continue to follow up with KMB on the issue.

81. Mr Frankie YICK agreed that while encouraging KMB to introduce more fare concession initiatives, due consideration should be given regarding whether the provision of the initiatives would be financially feasible lest the costs involved would be transferred to other passengers. He also considered it understandable for bus operators to seek a reasonable level of profits given the considerable amount of investment the bus operators had made.

Bus-bus interchange concessions

82. Mr POON Siu-ping and Mr LUK Chung-hung suggested extending the bus-bus interchange ("BBI") concession scheme for passengers interchanging between the Airbus routes (i.e. "A" routes) operated by Long Win Bus Company Limited ("LW") and KMB's routes to cover also northern Lantau external routes (i.e. "E" routes) by LW.

83. C for T explained that the provision of the above BBI concession scheme jointly by LW and KMB meant for facilitating interchanging by passengers travelling to/from the Airport whose places of residence were outside the catchment of "A" routes. Further, given that the current fare level of "E" routes was already very competitive relative to "A" routes, extension of BBI concession scheme to "E" routes would only be considered on condition that this would not cause any fare pressure at least in the short term.

Alignment of fares for short-haul trips on cross-district and shuttle bus routes

84. Members including Mr HO Kai-ming, LAU Kwok-fan and Mr Mr WU Chi-wai noted KMB's initiative to align the fares for a number of short-haul trips on cross-district routes and shuttle bus routes. However, they pointed out that the section fares of cross-harbour routes after crossing the harbour were still generally higher than the fares of parallel local routes. As such, they urged the Administration and KMB to narrow the fare differential between cross-harbour routes after the crossing the harbour and non-cross harbour routes. Mr HO Kai-ming was of the view that narrowing the fare differential would facilitate utilization of the spare capacity of the cross-harbour routes after crossing the harbour. Mr LAU Kwok-fan suggested setting the section fares based on the journey distance.

85. C for T explained that narrowing the fare differential between cross-harbour routes after crossing the harbour and non-cross harbour routes might induce considerable patronage of the short-haul trips along the routeings of the cross-harbour routes. The cross-harbour buses would thus need to pick up and set down passengers at bus stops more frequently after crossing the harbour, resulting in longer total journey time and thus affecting the service reliability of these routes. Further, if more buses were pulling in at bus stops and spending more time there, the traffic congestion problem particularly along busy road sections in commercial districts would be aggravated. In view of the above considerations, TD would launch a trial scheme by phases on selected cross-harbour routes for lowering their section fares after passing through busy road sections.

86. Mr CHU Hoi-dick enquired about why the fares of comparable bus routes by different franchised bus operators were not completely on par with each other. For example, he pointed out that the fares of bus route number 968 operated by KMB were higher than that of 969 operated by another franchised bus operator. He further expressed concern that comparing to other bus operators, fare increases by KMB were relatively more frequent. He therefore urged the Administration to take forward measures to regulate frequent fare increases of KMB.

87. STH stressed that the Fare Adjustment Arrangement for franchised buses applied equally to fare increase applications from all franchised bus operators. As regards the variations among the fares of comparable routes under different franchises, as well as further details on the above-mentioned initiatives of BBI interchange concessions and fares alignments for short-haul trips on cross-district routes and shuttle bus routes, he agreed to provide supplementary information after the meeting.

(Post-meeting note: The Administration's supplementary information paper was issued to members on 6 February 2017 vide LC Paper No. CB(4)499/16-17(01).)

Fare concessions to escorts of persons with disabilities

88. Mr Alvin YEUNG and Dr Fernando CHEUNG suggested that KMB should consider providing fare concessions to escorts of persons with disabilities ("PwDs"). C for T undertook to follow up the proposal with all franchised bus operators, including KMB. She said that one of the issues to consider was how escorts of PwDs could be identified.

Service enhancement

Opening up access to data on bus service information

89. Mr Charles MOK, Dr Elizabeth QUAT and Mr HO Kai-ming urged the Administration to make reference to overseas experience and encourage public transport operators, including franchised bus operators, to open up access to transport data in full instead of just releasing bus service information of KMB's bus routes via TD's "Hong Kong eTransport" smartphone application and website. They pointed out that open data would allow interested developers to develop more user-friendly mobile applications ("Apps"), and bring greater convenience to the public in planning their journeys.

90. STH indicated that unlike many overseas cities, public transport operators in Hong Kong were private companies basically receiving no direct subsidies from the Government. The real-time arrival transport data was the property of these private operators. He remarked that it might be more suitable to consider any initiatives to promote the opening up of transport data for free to facilitate development by third parties in the context of promoting big data which was under the purview of the Innovation and Technology Bureau.

Hospital routes

91. Mr Alvin YEUNG welcomed the introduction of two hospital routes (i.e. "H" routes) to enhance the transport service for PwDs. He asked whether KMB would consider introducing hospital routes serving Prince of Wales Hospital and North District Hospital, in addition to the two proposed routes serving a hospital in the New Territories West and another hospital in the East Kowloon.

92. C for T advised that in addition to the introduction of the proposed two "H" routes, KMB planned to launch a pilot trial to reconfigure the bus compartments of its existing super-low-floor buses so that the lower deck could accommodate two wheelchair passengers at the same time. Subject to passengers' feedback, KMB would consider increasing the number of buses with dual wheelchair spaces.

Audio-visual broadcasting in bus compartments

93. Mr Jeremy TAM opined that the planned expansion of the "quiet zone" to cover the entire lower deck in bus compartments could not fully solve the problem of noise nuisance caused by AV broadcasting inside bus compartments, as passengers on the upper deck were still offered no choice but to listen to the broadcasting. He relayed the views of some passengers that the sound volume of AV broadcasting systems in some bus compartments was not in compliance with the present requirement of no more than 2 decibels higher than the ambient level. He thus queried if TD would conduct regular inspections on board the buses.

94. Ms Claudia MO further said that apart from noise nuisance, the content of the programmes broadcasted by the RoadShow Holdings Limited ("RoadShow programmes") was biased. She urged the Administration to consider liaising with KMB to cease the broadcasting of RoadShow programmes and substitute with other sources of non-fare box revenue. Otherwise, she considered it necessary to put the RoadShow programmes under the regulation of the Broadcasting Ordinance (Cap. 562) ("BO"), as with other domestic television programme services. Dr YIU Chung-yim was of the view that passengers should be allowed to choose whether to listen to the programmes or not. He suggested exploring the feasibility of installing a sound on/off switch at each passenger seat.

95. C for T advised that the sound volume of AV broadcasting systems in bus compartments was subject to the regulatory arrangements of TD. TD would arrange spot checks on the sound volume of the AV broadcasting systems from time to time. It had also been exploring improvement measures with all bus operators through established channels. Apart from the expansion of "quiet zone" to cover the entire lower deck starting from mid-2017, TD and bus operators were also exploring other measures including the use of wi-fi transmission to enable more customized experience. The effectiveness of this measure was yet to be ascertained through trial.

96. As regards the content and quality of the AV programmes broadcasted on board buses, C for T advised that in accordance with BO, "domestic free

television programme service" was defined as any television programme service which was intended or available for reception by an audience of more than 5 000 specified premises free of charge in Hong Kong. Since bus compartments were not among the specified premises, AV programmes broadcasted in bus compartments were not regulated under BO. She further indicated that AV programmes broadcasted on public transport had been a source of non-fare box revenue for public transport operators including KMB. Such non-fare box revenue could help relieve the pressure for fare increase.

Enhancing ancillary facilities at bus stops and on board buses

97. Dr Fernando CHEUNG suggested making audible announcements on bus service information, including bus route number and bus stop relocation, at bus stops to help visually impaired persons. He said that provision of bus service information to visually impaired persons via KMB's smartphone App was useful but not sufficient, as smartphones were not widely used by visually impaired persons. He also said that the information provided via KMB's smartphone App was sometimes not updated.

98. C for T responded that audible announcements at bus stops might not always be clearly heard due to the ambient noise on street. To better cater for the needs of visually impaired persons, TD was exploring with franchised bus operators other viable technologies, such as including a text-to-speech function on their smartphone Apps to give audible messages about the estimated bus arrival time and relocation of bus stops.

99. Mr LEUNG Che-cheung pointed out that the access to Tai Lam Tunnel Bus Interchange ("the Interchange") was not barrier-free but with long staircases. He demanded the Administration to make improvement. C for T explained that the Interchange was meant for interchanging between bus routes. Noting that some residents living in the vicinity might walk up to the Interchange to take buses, she undertook to study measures for facilitating their access to the Interchange.

100. Mr Jeremy TAM requested KMB to consider providing seats at all existing stops with shelters, in addition to providing new shelters. The Administration noted his suggestion.

101. In response to Mr LUK Chung-hung's enquiry on the provision of charging facilities in bus compartments for use by passengers, C for T advised that while LW had been providing such facilities on board some buses of its airport routes, there were operational concerns over the provision of similar

facilities on KMB buses given that many KMB routes always carried lots of passengers with frequent boarding/alighting activities.

Environmental initiatives

102. To improve roadside air quality, Mr Jeremy TAM considered that low emission buses (i.e. buses of emission standards of Euro IV or above) should be used not only in the designated low emission zones, but also in all districts in Hong Kong. The Administration noted his view.

Health conditions of bus captains

103. Dr CHENG Chung-tai and Mr LUK Chung-hung expressed concern about the health problems and fatigue of bus captains that had led to some traffic accidents. They requested the Administration to review the working time and rest time arrangements of both full-time and part-time bus captains. Dr CHENG also requested the Administration to urge all franchised bus operators to review the health check requirements for bus captains. The Administration noted their views.

Other views

104. Mr CHU Hoi-dick asked whether the Administration would invite new tenders for the operation of some KMB's bus routes that served remote areas. He opined that KMB appeared to have no incentive to improve the bus service on these loss-making routes. In response, STH and C for T advised that the franchise was granted to KMB for operating a bus network consisting of both profitable routes and loss-making but socially desirable routes. STH added that if only loss-making routes were to be tendered out, there might not be operators interested in operating those routes.

105. Mr Alvin YEUNG asked if the Administration would invite tenders for new bus routes instead of directly granting those new routes to existing bus operators. In response, C for T advised that in accordance with the established practice, TD invited tenders for new bus routes in a relatively large and newly-developed service area to promote competition. For individual new routes introduced within an existing bus network, the incumbent franchised bus operator serving that bus network would normally be invited to operate the new routes.

106. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung expressed his views that public transport services should be run by the Government to allow flexibility in resource

management. He considered that profits earned by the MTR Corporation Limited should be used to cross-subsidize franchised bus services.

Motions

107. The Chairman decided that, in view of the insufficient meeting time, the motions raised by members in this meeting would be dealt with in the next regular meeting.

(Post-meeting note: The wording of the five motions raised by Mr Michael TIEN, Mr CHAN Han-pan, Mr HO Kai-ming, Dr Fernando CHEUNG and Ms Claudia MO [LC Paper Nos. CB(4)461/16-17(01) to (05)] were issued to members on 7 February 2017.)

VI. Any other business

108. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 1:37 pm.

Council Business Division 4
Legislative Council Secretariat
25 July 2017