

Legislative Council Panel on Transport

2017 Policy Address and Policy Agenda

Transport-related Policy Initiatives of the Transport and Housing Bureau

Introduction

The 2017 Policy Address and Policy Agenda set out the Government's initiatives in the coming year. This paper elaborates on those initiatives that are relevant to the land transport portfolio.

2017 Policy Agenda – New initiatives

(a) Introducing Public Transport Fare Subsidy Scheme

2. Public transport services are closely related to the daily life of the public. Every day, over 12 million passenger trips are made through public transport services. Public transport fare is an integral part of the daily living expenses of the general public, which could be a heavier burden to some of the commuters. After studying actively for three months, the Government proposes to introduce a non-means tested Public Transport Fare Subsidy Scheme to relieve the fare burden of the commuters. Under the Scheme, the Government will provide fare subsidy, to an extent, for commuters if their monthly public transport expenses exceed a specified level. Our proposal is to set the specified level of monthly public transport expenses at \$400. The Government will provide a subsidy amounting to 25% of the actual public transport expenses in excess of this level, subject to a maximum of \$300 per month. It is anticipated that over 2 million commuters can benefit from the Scheme and the annual subsidy amount will be around 2 billion.

3. The Scheme will be simple and convenient. Commuters do not have to apply for the Scheme. The Government's initial proposal is to cover MTR, franchised buses, green minibuses, ferries and trams. Fares of the public transport services mentioned above paid by Octopus cards, and the expenses on monthly/day passes of these public transport services

purchased by any payment method will be taken into account in the calculation of the monthly public transport expenses. During the specific period in each month, commuters can collect the public transport fare subsidy of the previous month through the Octopus App or dedicated Octopus readers at designated locations (including MTR stations and Octopus Service Points). The subsidy will be automatically credited to the Octopus cards after tapping the Octopus cards on the dedicated Octopus readers. We are now studying the implementation details, including the feasibility of setting up more locations for collecting subsidy to provide more convenience for the commuters.

4. The Government's current proposal does not include red minibuses ("RMBs") and residents' services ("RS"). The reasons are that we consider that the fares of the public transport services covered under the Scheme have to be predictable to a certain extent, and that the Government should be involved in the fare adjustment process. Given so, the fare of all those public transport modes currently proposed to be covered under the Scheme is regulated by the Government. Moreover, RMBs do not operate on fixed routes or timetable while RS normally provide services for specific groups of passengers. Hence, both of them have not been included in the current proposal. We note that some sectors of the public are of the view that RMBs and RS should be included in the Scheme so that commuters who travel frequently by these two modes could benefit. In this connection, we will continue to listen to public views and consider and study further carefully. The Government aims at seeking funding approval for the finalized Scheme from the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council ("LegCo FC") in the next three months. We plan to roll out the Scheme within a year upon obtaining funding approval of the LegCo FC with a view to benefitting the general public as early as possible.

(b) Developing Railways

5. We will continue to enhance accessibility within Hong Kong according to the "centred on public transport with railway as the backbone" principle, by, inter alia, implementing the seven new railway projects under the Railway Development Strategy 2014 in an orderly manner. In particular, we strive to undertake public consultation on the Tuen Mun South Extension and the Northern Link (and Kwu Tung Station) in 2018,

and will take forward detailed planning for the East Kowloon Line, the Tung Chung West Extension (and Tung Chung East Station) and the North Island Line. The taking forward of new railway projects will be subject to the outcome of detailed engineering, environmental and financial studies relating to each project, as well as updated demand assessment and the availability of resources.

6. Regarding the Hong Kong Section of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link (“XRL”), the Government announced the proposal for implementing the co-location arrangement at the West Kowloon Station on 25 July 2017 for initiating public discussion, and served a notice to the Legislative Council (“LegCo”) on 3 October on moving a motion on taking forward the follow-up tasks of the co-location arrangement at the LegCo sitting on 25 October in order to conclude public discussion and garner support of the LegCo in taking forward the “Three-step Process” proposal, including reaching a Co-operation Arrangement with the Mainland, seeking the approval and endorsement of the Co-operation Arrangement by the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress through a decision to be made by the Standing Committee, as well as commencing the local legislative process thereafter, so as to meet the target of implementing the co-location arrangement at the West Kowloon Station upon the commissioning of the Hong Kong Section of the XRL in the third quarter of 2018, with a view to fully unleashing the transport, social and economic benefits of the Hong Kong Section of the XRL and maximising convenience to passengers.

(c) Taking Forward Transport Infrastructure Projects

7. In view of the social and economic development of Hong Kong, as well as changes in transport demand, we will take forward transport infrastructure projects to enhance local transport network in a timely manner. Roads under planning and requiring prompt implementation include Cross Bay Link, Tseung Kwan O and the widening of Tai Po Road (Sha Tin Section).

Cross Bay Link, Tseung Kwan O

8. The proposed Cross Bay Link (“CBL”), Tseung Kwan O is a dual

two-lane carriageway with cycle track and footpath. It will span across the Junk Bay mainly on viaduct, and will connect the Tseung Kwan O – Lam Tin Tunnel (“TKO-LTT”) (currently under construction) in the west and Wan Po Road near Area 86 of Tseung Kwan O (“TKO”) in the east. Upon the successive completion of TKO-LTT and CBL, part of the traffic can commute to and from Kowloon via TKO-LTT and CBL, without travelling through the TKO town centre and Tseung Kwan O Road in Kwun Tong district, and hence greatly relieve the traffic pressure on these roads during peak hours. In addition, CBL can also meet the sustainable development of the southeast area of TKO including Area 85, LOHAS Park and TKO Industrial Estate, etc., providing a more reliable road network to that area. We will strive to obtain funding approval for the construction of the CBL in this legislative session with a view to commencing the construction works as soon as possible.

Widening of Tai Po Road (Sha Tin Section)

9. Tai Po Road (Sha Tin Section) is an important primary distributor road linking the Northeast New Territories with West Kowloon (through Tsing Sha Highway) and Tsuen Wan (through Shing Mun Tunnel). At present, traffic congestion frequently occurs at Tai Po Road (Sha Tin Section) between Sha Tin Rural Committee Road and Fo Tan Road during peak hours. To alleviate the traffic congestion mentioned above, we plan to widen a section of Tai Po Road (Sha Tin Section) of about 1.1 kilometers between Sha Tin Plaza near Sha Tin Rural Committee Road and Man Wo House of Wo Che Estate from dual two-lane to dual three-lane carriageway. Therefore, we will strive to obtain funding approval for the widening of Tai Po Road (Sha Tin Section) in this legislative session with a view to commencing the road widening works as soon as possible to meet traffic demand.

(d) Innovation and Technology

10. Autonomous vehicle technology is developing rapidly in recent years and will improve people’s lives in many different aspects, such as enhancing road safety, alleviating road traffic congestion, increasing the mobility of citizens, increasing productivity and reducing emission etc. Testing of autonomous vehicles on roads is taking place all over the world.

To support the development of such technology in Hong Kong, the Transport Department (“TD”) has since mid-2017 approved test driving of autonomous vehicles under specific and safe conditions¹. With the continuing development of technology, we anticipate an increasing number of applications for test drives of autonomous vehicles in different locations and on different domains. The Government will facilitate trials of autonomous vehicles at appropriate locations.

11. The TD has commenced a feasibility study on the installation of in-vehicle units² for better traffic management, as well as to allow motorists to receive timely traffic information and pay tunnel tolls without stopping the vehicles, etc. The study will review relevant overseas experience and technological development, explore the types of in-vehicle units that are suitable for adoption in Hong Kong and its promotion strategy, etc. The study is expected to be completed by mid-2018. Subject to the findings of the study and discussions with relevant stakeholders, we will explore as soon as practicable the feasibility of installing in-vehicle units by owners of different types of vehicles on a voluntary basis.

12. On-street parking spaces are provided to cater for short-term parking needs. These parking spaces are normally metered to discourage prolonged parking so as to enhance their availability to more motorists. At present, about 9 800 electronic parking meters which only accept Octopus for payment of parking fees are installed at about 18 000 on-street parking spaces across the territory.

13. Making reference to the findings of the New Parking Meter Trial Scheme which started in 2015 and the outcome of the latest market research, the new generation of parking meters will accept payment of parking fees through multiple means, including remote payment through

¹ The testing of three types of autonomous vehicles separately took place in three locations, viz. Zero Carbon Building, West Kowloon Cultural District and Science Park in 2017.

² An in-vehicle unit is an additional device which may be installed in a vehicle for receiving and displaying road traffic information provided by the Government; and for connection to road and tunnel toll payment systems for automatic payment of such tolls, etc. Subject to technology development, such a device may also transmit road condition data from the vehicle on an aggregated basis to the relevant authorities for traffic management.

mobile applications³, and be equipped with vehicle sensors to detect whether on-street parking spaces have been occupied in order to provide real-time parking space vacancy information to motorists. We will strive to seek funding approval for procurement of the new generation of parking meters in this legislative session with a view to commencing the installation of the new parking meters from 2019/20 onwards to gradually replace the existing ones.

14. The TD plans to integrate the three existing traffic mobile applications into an “all-in-one” integrated traffic mobile application and enhance users’ interface to facilitate one-stop search for walking, driving, public transport and real-time traffic information by the public. The TD expects that the integration could be completed by mid-2018 and will progressively enrich the search content.

(e) Implementing Recommended Measures under the Public Transport Strategy Study

Public Transport Strategy Study

15. The Government has completed the Public Transport Strategy Study (“PTSS”), which lasted for two and a half years, in June this year. The PTSS examined the roles and positioning of public transport services other than the heavy rail. Over 60 measures have been recommended to enhance the arrangement of public transport system. We are implementing these recommended measures so that the public can enjoy highly-efficient, convenient and diversified public transport services. Details are set out in paragraphs 16, 17, 35, 36 and 37 below. Meanwhile, we will organise a multi-stakeholder exchange session in 2018 for different stakeholders in the public transport sector, including operators of franchised buses, mini-buses and taxis, to engage in meaningful discussions to rationalise their roles and to improve Hong Kong’s public transport ecosystem.

³ New generation of parking meters will enable remote payment of parking meter fee. Motorist, after paying for parking meter fee at the parking meter, could make remote payment through mobile application for more parking time within the longest parking time allowed. The Transport Department will set the longest parking time allowed for different districts having regard to their specific parking demand and traffic situation.

Pilot trials of new long-haul bus services and mid-sized single-deck bus services

16. It is stated in the Report of the PTSS published in June this year that the Government will encourage franchised bus companies to explore the provision of more diversified services to meet various needs of the community. These include introducing new long-haul bus services and mid-sized single-deck bus services on a trial basis. Positioned to provide passengers with more diversified choices, the new long-haul bus services will offer more spacious seating and all-seater service with fewer stops and more comprehensive passenger amenities in the bus compartment. Mid-sized single-deck buses will primarily provide short-haul shuttle services to/from transport nodes for individual districts in the New Territories with growth potential which currently have relatively lower population density. Such routes will be operated with single-deck buses which will still come with barrier-free facilities but have shorter vehicle length and smaller carrying capacity. Our target is to roll out one or two routes for each type of new service on a trial basis. The Transport Department and relevant operators have started the preparatory work. The implementation details will be finalised after listening to the views of the relevant District Councils on the specific routing proposals. We expect to introduce these trial services progressively from late 2018/early 2019.

Introducing “Franchised Taxis”

17. In view of the result of the consultation with the LegCo Panel on Transport as well as the general support from the community, the Government will introduce franchised taxis to meet the new demand in the community for personalised and point-to-point public transport services of higher quality and fare as well as with “online hailing” features. The Government is preparing the legislative work. We will decide whether to explore other new services (such as regulated online hailing services) depending on the outcome of the scrutiny of the proposal on franchised taxis by the LegCo. In addition, TD will continue to strive to enhance the quality of the existing taxi services and the operating environment, including reviewing the current penalty level for various taxi malpractices, proactively considering subsidizing taxi drivers to enroll in training courses, relaxing permanently the no-stopping restrictions for taxi from peak hours

and “7 a.m. to 7 or 8 p.m.” on roads with speed limit less than 70 kilometres per hour, extending the validity period of driver identity plates, and amending the requirement for applicants for driving licence for taxis etc. to hold a valid driving licence for private car or light goods vehicle for at least 3 years to at least one year, as well as requiring applicants for full driving licence for taxi and non-franchised public bus to complete and pass a pre-service course designated and approved by the Commissioner for Transport.

(f) Monitoring of the MTR Corporation Limited

18. As at 2016, there are 11 heavy rail lines (including an Airport Express) in Hong Kong. They carry over 5 million passenger trips per day and account for more than 40% of the local public transport patronage. The Government notes the congestion at the MTR network during peak periods and the MTR Corporation Limited (“MTRCL”) has been adopting various measures to relieve passenger flow during peak hours, including increasing the frequency of train services and strengthening the management of passenger flow. To further relieve such situation, the Government has requested the MTRCL to continue to implement the signalling system replacement works to increase the carrying capacity of the railway, monitor passenger flow at stations and on platforms during peak hours and disseminate timely information to alert the public and explore other possible measures to divert passenger flow during peak hours.

19. The Government will continue to proactively carry out its duty as the Corporation’s majority shareholder by monitoring the services of MTRCL and requesting the MTRCL to provide safe and reliable railway services and keep on renewing its railway assets while continuing to suitably respond to public views on matters related to fares.

2017 Policy Agenda – On-going initiatives

(g) Taking Forward Transport Infrastructure Projects

20. We will take forward the “Strategic Studies on Railways and Major Roads Beyond 2030”. According to the latest forecast of the Planning Department, there would be a significant growth in population in the

Northwest New Territories (“NWNT”) beyond 2030. We will focus on the loading of the heavy rails in the NWNT beyond 2030 according to the planning data up to 2041. Based on the forecast demand, we will carry out studies to ascertain whether it is necessary to construct a new heavy rail to connect NWNT to urban areas. Furthermore, subject to the final recommendations of the study on “Hong Kong 2030+ : Towards a Planning Vision and Strategy Transcending 2030” in 2018, in particular the development scale of the two new Strategic Growth Areas (i.e. East Lantau Metropolis and New Territories North), necessary adjustments will be made in the Study for formulating the transport infrastructure framework, such that it will form the basis of future follow-up studies. We will also examine the traffic conditions of the existing transport corridors. This Panel has expressed support for the Study in mid-June this year. Subject to approval of funding by the Legislative Council, we will take forward the Study according to the planning directions for Hong Kong beyond 2030, so that the planning of major transport infrastructure can complement the needs arising from the overall long-term land development of Hong Kong.

Developing Railways

21. Regarding the Shatin to Central Link (“SCL”), in view of the delay of 11 months arising from the archaeological discoveries and other factors encountered during construction, which could result in about a year’s delay in commissioning the project, i.e. the “Tai Wai to Hung Hom Section” deferred to end 2019 and the “Hung Hom to Admiralty Section” deferred to 2021. Nevertheless, with the efforts of the construction team, the delay recovery measures implemented at the “Tai Wai to Hung Hom Section” is becoming effective progressively. Hence, the target commissioning date of this section is advanced to about mid-2019, while that of the “Hung Hom to Admiralty Section” remains at 2021. We will continue to coordinate and oversee the construction of the Shatin to Central Link, with a view to commissioning the project in accordance with the above revised targets.

Central Kowloon Route

22. In view of the social and economic development and the changes in transport demand, we need to take forward infrastructure projects timely to enhance the transport network of Hong Kong. We plan to take forward the

construction of the Central Kowloon Route (“CKR”) to connect the reclamation development in West Kowloon with Kowloon Bay and the Kai Tak Development in East Kowloon. The CKR can enhance the capacity of major east-west road corridors in Kowloon. Upon its commissioning, the journey time between West Kowloon and Kowloon Bay via CKR will be around five minutes during rush hours, about 25 minutes less compared with the journey time without CKR. Moreover, CKR together with the Tseung Kwan O-Lam Tin Tunnel and the Trunk Road T2 (under planning) will form Route 6, further linking up West Kowloon and Tseung Kwan O. We will strive to obtain funding approval for the construction of the CKR in the 2017-18 financial year and commence the construction works immediately thereafter, with a view to commissioning the CKR in around 2025.

Route 11

23. In view of the long-term developments in NWNT, including the proposed Hung Shui Kiu New Development Area and Yuen Long South development, we need a new strategic route (“Route 11”) to connect NWNT and the urban areas to cope with the increase in transport demand. At the same time, we need to improve the “external connectivity” of Lantau and the airport island. The Route 11 will provide a third strategic access to Lantau on top of Tsing Ma Bridge and Tuen Mun-Chek Lap Kok Link, thus enhancing the robustness of the road network connecting to the airport. Route 11 is a complex and large-scale project. Based on past experience in the implementation of large-scale infrastructure projects, from preliminary planning to commissioning, it will generally go through the investigation, detailed design and construction stages, and will take more than 10 years. Therefore, we expect to kick start the work early. This Panel has expressed support for the Feasibility Study in March this year. Subject to approval of funding by the Legislative Council, we will conduct a feasibility study on Route 11 immediately thereafter.

Central-Wan Chai Bypass and Island Eastern Corridor Link

24. The Central-Wan Chai Bypass and Island Eastern Corridor Link (“CWB”) project, which is a large-scale and complex road infrastructure project, has encountered various unforeseeable difficulties and risks since

the commencement of construction in end 2009. The works progress had been affected. Although the tunnel structures of CWB were substantially completed in the third quarter of 2017, there remain very complicated and challenging tasks in the construction works, including installation, testing and integration of various electrical and mechanical systems in the CWB tunnel. These works still face different potential risks which may affect the works progress and thus the commissioning of the project. The Highways Department (“HyD”) together with the consulting engineer are closely monitoring the works progress, assessing the implications of the potential risks, and urging the contractors to adjust the schedule of works and take measures correspondingly, with the target of achieving full commissioning of the CWB in end 2018 or in the first quarter of 2019. Upon commissioning of the CWB, it will only take about five minutes to drive from Central to Island Eastern Corridor at North Point. The east-west traffic on Hong Kong Island will become more direct and smoother.

Tseung Kwan O-Lam Tin Tunnel

25. The main construction activities of the Tseung Kwan O-Lam Tin Tunnel (“TKO-LTT”) commenced in 2016 for anticipated completion in 2021. Upon commissioning, TKO-LTT will become an additional major road link between Tseung Kwan O and East Kowloon and relieve the traffic load of Tseung Kwan O and Tseung Kwan O Tunnel. Besides, some of the existing traffic between TKO and the Eastern Harbour Crossing can make use of the new tunnel without routing through roads such as Tseung Kwan O Road and Lei Yue Mun Road of Kwun Tong district, thereby significantly relieving the heavy traffic load at these roads during peak hours. TKO-LTT, together with the Trunk Road T2 under planning and the CKR which we are seeking funding approval, will form Route 6 linking West Kowloon with Tseung Kwan O.

(h) Enhancing External Transport Links

Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge

26. Spanning over Lingdingyang, the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge (“HZMB”), an unprecedented mega transport infrastructure project co-built

by Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao, will connect the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region in the east and the Macao Special Administrative Region and Zhuhai City of Guangdong province in the west. The entire HZMB project consists of two parts: (1) the HZMB Main Bridge (i.e. a 22.9 km-long bridge and 6.7 km-long subsea tunnel) situated in Mainland waters which is being taken forward by the HZMB Authority; and (ii) the link roads and boundary crossing facilities under the respective responsibility of the three governments. Regardless of whether it is the HZMB Main Bridge or the related projects of the three sides, challenges in the construction and in meeting the programme schedule have been encountered.

27. Regarding the major works of the HZMB Hong Kong section, the HyD will continue to press full steam ahead with the construction to dovetail with the commissioning of the HZMB. We will announce the commissioning date of the entire HZMB as soon as possible subject to factors such as the implementation of cross-boundary traffic measures, the results of the discussion among the governments of Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao and the subsequent reporting to the HZMB Central Task Force.

28. According to the Feasibility Study report of the HZMB completed in 2008, the traffic forecast of the bridge at its initial commissioning stage is 9,200 to 14,000 vehicles per day. However, according to the recent data on cross-boundary trips, the growth rate of cross-boundary passengers in Hong Kong has decreased. Therefore, we anticipate that the traffic flow upon the commissioning of the HZMB will be lower than the forecast of the Feasibility Study report completed in 2008. Having said that, we expect that the traffic flow will gradually increase subsequent to the commissioning of the port. At present, it is not too meaningful to conduct traffic forecast for the initial stage of the commissioning of the HZMB. The three sides now focus on the mid- to long-term traffic forecast of the HZMB, and will report to the public in good time.

29. The Ministry of Transport approved the project estimate of the HZMB Main Bridge project in March 2010. As we reported to this Panel in February this year, since the commencement of the HZMB Main Bridge project, there had been escalation in the construction costs arising from the

increase in labour and material costs as well as the refinement of the design and construction schemes. As a result, the contractors of the HZMB Main Bridge submitted applications to the HZMB Authority for adjustment to the project estimate. The contractors also pointed out that it had been a recent phenomenon that the approved project estimates of mega-scale transport infrastructure projects in the Mainland were exceeded.

30. The HZMB Authority has reviewed the applications submitted by the contractors and prepared a report on the adjustment of the project estimate. According to our understanding, the relevant Mainland Authorities have submitted the report on the adjustment of the project estimate to the State Council. When the revised estimate is clear, we will report to the Legislative Council timely and will give an account for the financial arrangement.

31. To prepare for the commissioning of the HZMB, the Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao governments have reached a consensus about the major arrangements for different types of cross-boundary transport, including shuttle bus and cross-boundary coach, etc. The three governments have been implementing the relevant arrangements in a progressive manner, e.g. distributing quotas. Besides, the three governments have been actively discussing and coordinating the detailed arrangements of other cross-boundary issues, including toll level, traffic management, operation and maintenance, rescue and emergency plan, law enforcement coordination, etc. We will endeavour to put in place suitable arrangements which will complement the local road and transport system and maximise HZMB's economic and transport benefits.

Tuen Mun-Chek Lap Kok Link

32. The total length of Tuen Mun-Chek Lap Kok Link (“TM-CLKL”) is about 9km. Upon completion, it will provide a strategic link connecting the North West New Territories with the HZMB Hong Kong Boundary Crossing Facilities (“HKBCF”), North Lantau and the Hong Kong International Airport. The construction programme is highly compressed due to the technical difficulties encountered. For example, amendment to the design and construction of a tunnel section of the Northern Connection is required. Also, the contractor of the Southern Connection will have to

ensure safe and proper operation of the major navigation channel, railway and highway during construction, and to comply with the airport height restrictions near the works site. The HyD announced in March 2017 that the Southern Connection was expected to be completed in the first half of 2019 at the earliest, whereas the Northern Connection is expected to be completed in 2020 at the earliest. The HyD will continue to monitor the construction of the TM-CLKL for its early commissioning. Upon the commissioning of the HZMB, traffic between the HKBCF and Lantau Island can be routed through the existing roads on the airport island. Therefore, although the Southern Connection of the TM-CLKL cannot be completed as scheduled when the project commenced construction in 2013, the commissioning of the HZMB will not be affected.

Hong Kong Section of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link

33. The Hong Kong Section of the XRL, of 26 km in length, will connect Hong Kong with the ever-expanding national high-speed rail network, thereby greatly shortening travelling time by rail between Hong Kong and major cities in the Mainland. Currently, the works of the Hong Kong Section of the XRL is over 95% complete. We will continue to co-ordinate and oversee the construction of the Hong Kong Section of the XRL and take forward various pre-commissioning preparation works with a view to accomplishing the targeted commissioning of service in the third quarter of 2018.

(i) Ancillary Facilities for Public Transport

Alleviation of Road Traffic Congestion

34. The Government will continue the effort to alleviate road traffic congestion by implementing measures such as taking forward the study on the rationalisation of the traffic distribution among the three road harbour crossings and the three land tunnels between Kowloon and Sha Tin, commencing a consultancy study on parking for commercial vehicles, implementing a series of short and medium to long terms measures to increase the provision of parking spaces having regard to the situation in various districts, and conducting a feasibility study for the Electronic Road

Pricing Pilot Scheme in Central and its adjacent areas, with a view to making early preparation for implementation the pilot scheme in certain parts of Hong Kong to improve traffic flow with the aid of technology.

Other Initiatives for Enhancing Public Transport Services

35. The Government has been pursuing a public transport-oriented policy. At present, about 90% of passengers use public transport services with some 12 million passenger trips daily. We will continue to strive to enhance the level of public transport services and provide more comprehensive ancillary facilities that keep with the time to create a more convenient and comfortable passenger waiting environment. On raising the quality of services, the TD will continue to make use of established mechanisms to pursue rationalisation of bus routes and adjust their services having regard to the changes in passenger demand, thereby reducing unnecessary bus trips, alleviating traffic congestion on busy trunk roads and reducing roadside air pollution. Franchised bus companies may redeploy the resources so saved to introduce routes or increase frequencies which can meet passengers' demands with a view to enhancing the efficiency of our franchised bus network. As regards enhancing ancillary facilities, the Government will continue to provide subsidies to franchised bus companies for their installation of display panels for real-time bus arrival information and seats at suitable bus stops, take forward pilot renovation projects to enhance the design and facilities of covered public transport interchanges and ferry piers, and subsidise the Tramways to replace tram tracks at key locations with new technology.

36. In addition, to further promote "Transport for All", the Government continues to actively take forward the "low-floor wheelchair-accessible light bus trial scheme", and is discussing with the relevant light bus operators on the implementation details. It is expected that the trial scheme will be implemented on three hospital routes (including routes operating via Queen Mary Hospital, Princes of Wales Hospital and St. Teresa's Hospital) by phases starting from the fourth quarter of 2017. Upon commencement of the trial scheme, we will review the operational effectiveness of the vehicles with the operators. If the trial scheme is considered feasible and desirable after the review, we will discuss with the trade on the feasibility of further promoting low-floor public light buses.

37. The TD will continue to proactively work with various public transport service operators in the implementation of the aforesaid initiatives, with a view to enabling passengers to enjoy better public transport services.

(j) Improving Pedestrian Environment

Take Forward “Walk in HK”

38. We will continue to take forward “Walk in HK” and encourage citizens to walk more by launching a series of measures under four themes. Major initiatives include:

- (i) “Make it smart” – launching a new HKeTransport function in end 2017 to enable citizens to search walking routes in major shopping areas of Causeway Bay as a pilot site; conducting public engagement exercise in 2018 on the design of pedestrian wayfinding map board;
- (ii) “Make it connected” – we commenced a study in September 2017 on enhancing connectivity between Wan Chai and Sheung Wan and will consult the public later in respect of various preliminary proposals; continuing to progressively take forward the construction works of hillside escalator links and elevator system (“HEL”) projects and elevated walkway projects in different districts; and commencing a study in end 2017 to review and improve the assessment mechanism for proposed HEL projects;
- (iii) “Make it enjoyable” – commencing a study in end 2017 on enhancing walkability in Hong Kong, selecting two pilot areas to test out measures for a comfortable walking environment and consulting the public; providing covers on certain walkways connecting to public transport facilities and exploring the relaxation of existing requirements for adding covers to such walkways as stipulated in the Transport Planning and Design Manual; and
- (iv) “Make it safe” – reviewing and updating existing planning criteria and designs relating to pedestrian environment and facilities, and examining the application of information technology to extend the pedestrian green time when the elderly and people with mobility difficulties cross signalised road junctions.

Hillside Escalator Links and Elevator Systems

39. The Government established in 2009 a set of scoring criteria for assessing proposals for HEL to determine the priority for conducting preliminary technical feasibility studies for the 20 project proposals received at that time. The Government consulted the Panel on this in May 2009, and upon completion of the assessment, reported the results to the Panel in February 2010. Two proposals were screened out initially, and 18 others were ranked. The Government indicated at that time that preliminary technical feasibility studies for the proposals ranked top ten would be conducted by batches, and that the remaining proposals would be followed up after the smooth implementation of the top ten proposals. Later on, after reviewing the human resources of the department, the Government conducted preliminary technical feasibility studies for the proposals ranked 11th and 12th.

40. Among the 18 ranked proposals, most sections of the proposal ranked first “Pedestrian Link at Tsz Wan Shan” have been opened for public use. The remaining section is scheduled for completion in the fourth quarter of 2017. The proposal ranked 13th “Yuet Wah Street Pedestrian Linkage” has been opened for public use since October 2015. The proposal ranked 14th “Lift and Pedestrian Walkway System between Lai King Hill Road and Princess Margaret Hospital” (one of the two proposals ranked 14th) has been opened for public use since January 2017.

41. We obtained funding approval from LegCo in May 2016 and commenced construction in end 2016 in phases for the construction of three HEL projects at Tsing Yi, Kwai Chung and Kowloon City for completion from 2019 onwards progressively. For the “Lift and Pedestrian Walkway System between Tai Wo Hau Road and Wo Tong Tsui Street” (ranked 11th), we consulted the Panel in April this year and obtained Members’ support. We are now waiting for the Public Works Subcommittee to discuss the funding application for the project. Subject to funding approval of the Finance Committee in the fourth quarter of 2017, the works are expected to complete in the fourth quarter of 2021. We also plan to seek funding approval in this legislative session to implement projects which are at a relatively advanced stage subject to the condition that no objection is received after the gazettal of the projects, including the “Braemar Hill

Pedestrian Link” (ranked 2nd) and the “Lift and Pedestrian Walkway System between Castle Peak Road and Kung Yip Street” (ranked 6th), to facilitate the public (particularly the elderly and the disabled) to access hilly areas. Please see **Enclosure** for the progress of the ranked proposals.

42. In addition, the TD is planning to commence a study at the end of 2017 to review and improve the assessment mechanism for HEL proposals established in 2009, and carry out initial screening and assessment for more than 110 new HEL proposals received in the past years on the basis of the new assessment mechanism with a view to selecting feasible and justifiable proposals in priority as well as drawing up a timetable for implementing the proposals in future. The study period will last for about 30 months. Upon completion of the study, we will seek resources for implementing the proposals gradually.

Elevated Walkways and Footbridges

43. To enhance local pedestrian network, we will continue to implement the elevated walkway between Tong Ming Street and Tong Tak Street, Tseung Kwan O and the footbridge connecting Tsuen Wan Plaza, Skyline Plaza and adjacent landscaping area, to facilitate the public especially the elderly to get around town centres and major public transport facilities. Construction of the projects commenced in the fourth quarter of 2016 for anticipated completion in 2019.

Pedestrian Environment Improvement Scheme

44. In Yuen Long Town, HyD completed the Phase 1 Public Engagement of the Pedestrian Environment Improvement Scheme in Yuen Long Town in mid-2010 and developed a series of improvement measures based on the public views collected. All nine small to medium-scale improvement measures, comprising mainly widening of footpaths and pedestrian crossings at road junctions, small-scale improvement works at junctions, etc., have been completed. For some relatively large-scale improvement measures, HyD conducted the Phase 2 Public Engagement and consulted the Traffic and Transport Committee of the Yuen Long District Council in 2013, and completed the feasibility study of these improvement measures in 2014. Of which, the improvement measure of streetscape enhancement

along both sides of Fung Yau Street North have been completed. For the Elevated Pedestrian Corridor in Yuen Long Town connecting with Long Ping Station which is a relatively larger-in-scale improvement measure, we will strive to seek funding approval for the construction of the project in this legislative session with a view to commencing the construction works in 2018 for completion in about 5 years.

“Universal Accessibility” Programme

45. The Government has been installing barrier-free access facilities at public walkways (i.e. public footbridges, elevated walkways and subways maintained by the HyD), where technically feasible, for years on the recommendation of the Equal Opportunities Commission (the “Original Programme”). Apart from continuing to implement the projects under the “Original Programme”, we have been continuing to enhance the barrier-free access facilities at existing public walkways through the “Expanded Programme” of the “Universal Accessibility” Programme implemented in August 2012. As at end September 2017, the Government has completed 65 items under the “Universal Accessibility” Programme and will continue to implement some remaining 140 items across the 18 districts to facilitate the public especially the elderly to travel.

46. Furthermore, the Government had been inviting the 18 District Councils (“DCs”) again, starting from December 2016, to further nominate not more than three existing walkways in each district for implementation in the next phase of the “Universal Accessibility” Programme. The walkways eligible for consideration by the DCs are no longer confined to public walkways maintained by the HyD. The DC consultation exercise was substantially completed in September 2017. The DCs supported the next phase of the Programme in general, and selected 45 walkways in total for implementation in the next phase. The HyD has already engaged consultants in September 2017 for carrying out the site investigation and design for the items selected for implementation in the next phase. We anticipate that the construction work for items under the next phase will commence progressively starting from 2019.

(k) Bicycle-friendly Environment

47. We will continue to provide bicycle-friendly environment in new towns and new development areas and enhance ancillary facilities. Transport Department's "Traffic and Transport Consultancy Study on Cycling Networks and Parking Facilities in Existing New Towns in Hong Kong" has been substantially completed. The consultancy study identified and proposed improvement to around 900 locations, including the provision of more public bicycle parking spaces and providing additional safety facilities to enhance cycling safety. The first round of improvement works involving around 100 locations have commenced and will be completed in phase by end of 2018. As for the remaining some 800 locations requiring improvements, given they involve relatively more complicated construction procedures, we are reviewing the resources and implementation strategy given the relatively more complicated construction procedures involved. The above consultancy study proposed 7 000 additional bicycle parking spaces, among which about 1 000 parking spaces are expected to be completed by 2018.

Transport and Housing Bureau
October 2017

Enclosure

Progress of the proposals of the hillside escalator links and elevator systems

Rank	Proposal	Progress of Project
1	Pedestrian Link at Tsz Wan Shan	The pedestrian link is implemented under the Shatin to Central Link project. The construction works commenced in July 2012. As at August 2017, 14 out of the 15 facilities under this pedestrian link have already been completed and opened for public use. Regarding the one remaining facility, the target completion date is the fourth quarter of 2017.
2	Braemar Hill Pedestrian Link	The preliminary technical feasibility study has been completed. The HyD has engaged consultants to carry out the investigation and preliminary design. The HyD consulted and obtained the support from the Planning, Works and Housing Committee of the Eastern District Council on the design scheme in September 2016 and in October 2017. The HyD is currently making preparation for the gazetting of the works.
3	Lift and Pedestrian Walkway System at Cheung Hang Estate, Tsing Yi	The Government obtained funding approval from the LegCo in May 2016. The construction works commenced in February 2017 and are expected to be completed in mid-2019.
4	Escalator Link and Pedestrian Walkway System at Pound Lane	The preliminary technical feasibility study has been completed. The HyD has engaged consultants to carry out the investigation and preliminary design. The HyD consulted the Central and Western District Council (C&WDC) and held a public forum on the refined proposal in 2015. After collating and analysing the comments received, the HyD plans to brief the C&WDC on the project progress later.
5	Lift and Pedestrian Walkway System between Kwai Shing Circuit and Hing Shing Road	The Government obtained funding approval from the LegCo in May 2016. The construction works commenced in June 2017 and are expected to be completed in 2020.
6	Lift and Pedestrian Walkway System between Castle Peak Road and Kung Yip Street	The preliminary technical feasibility study has been completed. The HyD has engaged consultants to carry out the investigation and preliminary design. The HyD consulted and obtained the support from the Traffic and Transport Committee of the Kwai Tsing District Council on the design scheme in April 2016. The Government gazetted the works under the Roads (Works, Use and Compensation) Ordinance (Cap. 370) in August 2017.

Rank	Proposal	Progress of Project
7	Lift and Pedestrian Walkway System between Lai Cho Road and Wah Yiu Road	The preliminary technical feasibility study has been completed. The HyD has engaged consultants to carry out the investigation and preliminary design.
8	Pedestrian Link near Chuk Yuen North Estate	<p>The preliminary technical feasibility study has been completed. The HyD has engaged consultants to carry out the investigation and preliminary design.</p> <p>The HyD consulted and obtained the support from the Traffic and Transport Committee of the Wong Tai Sin District Council on the preliminary design in July 2016. The HyD is currently following up on the suggestions and views regarding the design of the project raised by relevant stakeholders and is making preparation for the gazetting of the works.</p>
9	Lift and Pedestrian Walkway System at Waterloo Hill	The Government obtained funding approval from the LegCo in May 2016. The construction works commenced in December 2016 and are expected to be completed in mid-2019.
10	Lift and Pedestrian Walkway System between Lai King Hill Road and Lai Cho Road	It is revealed in the preliminary technical feasibility study that the project involves two dangerous private slopes. The HyD will revisit this proposal after the parties concerned have completed repairing the dangerous slopes.
11	Lift and Pedestrian Walkway System between Tai Wo Hau Road and Wo Tong Tsui Street	<p>The preliminary technical feasibility study has been completed. The HyD has engaged consultants to carry out the investigation and preliminary design, and such works have been completed.</p> <p>The HyD consulted and obtained the support from the Traffic and Transport Committee of the Kwai Tsing District Council on the preliminary design in September 2016.</p> <p>The Government published the notice of authorization to propose to execute the works under the Roads (Works, Use and Compensation) Ordinance (Cap. 370) in February 2017.</p> <p>The HyD engaged a consultant to carry out the detailed design in June 2017 and the relevant works are in progress.</p> <p>The Government consulted and obtained support from the LegCo Panel on Transport on the proposal on 21 April 2017. Since the funding approval could not be obtained in the 2016/17 legislative year, the Government will strive to seek funding approval from LegCo in the 2017/18 legislative year to take forward the construction works.</p>

Rank	Proposal	Progress of Project
12	Lift and Pedestrian Walkway System at Luen On Street	The preliminary technical feasibility study has been completed. The HyD has engaged consultants to carry out the investigation and preliminary design. The consultants are studying the alignment and preliminary design scheme for reducing land acquisition and minimising environmental impacts.
13	Yuet Wah Street Pedestrian Linkage	To complement the Kwun Tong Town Centre Redevelopment, the Civil Engineering and Development Department commenced construction for this project in April 2013. The Linkage has been completed and opened for public use since October 2015.
14 (same ranking)	Escalator Link System between Hong Sing Garden and Po Hong Road	This proposal will be followed up after the smooth implementation of the higher-ranking proposals.
14 (same ranking)	Lift and Pedestrian Walkway System between Lai King Hill Road and Princess Margaret Hospital	The Hospital Authority commenced works in November 2015. The works have been completed and the facility has been opened for public use since January 2017.
16	Lift and Pedestrian Walkway System between Saddle Ridge Garden and Sai Sha Road	This proposal will be followed up after the smooth implementation of the higher-ranking proposals.
17	Lift and Pedestrian Walkway System between Hing Shing Road and Tai Wo Hau Road	This proposal will be followed up after the smooth implementation of the higher-ranking proposals.
18	Escalator Link System between Sha Tin Sui Wo Court and MTR Fo Tan Station	This proposal will be followed up after the smooth implementation of the higher-ranking proposals.

- End -