

Legislative Council Panel on Transport

2018 Policy Address and Policy Agenda

**Transport-related Policy Initiatives of
the Transport and Housing Bureau**

Introduction

The 2018 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.

2018 Policy Agenda – New initiatives

(a) Improving Road Traffic

2. Hong Kong has limited road space. We could not merely rely on building roads continuously to tackle traffic congestion. We propose implementing traffic management measures in areas where the traffic is particularly congested, such as tunnels and business districts. Such measures include adopting the concept of “Congestion Charging” to study possible upward and downward adjustments of levels of tolls for different types of vehicles using government tolled tunnels and the Tsing Ma and Tsing Sha Control Areas, in order to enable efficient people carriers and vehicles that support economic activities to enjoy lower tolls while vehicle types with low carrying capacity would need to pay higher tolls, thereby making more efficient use of road space. With the impending commissioning of the Central-Wan Chai Bypass and Island Eastern Corridor Link, we will continue to press ahead with the Electronic Road Pricing Pilot Scheme in Central and its adjacent areas, and put forward specific proposals for the Pilot Scheme in the first half of 2019 for stakeholder consultation.

3. To effectively alleviate cross-harbour traffic congestion and minimise the impact on non-cross-harbour traffic, we propose that, with effect from

1 January 2020, the actual tolls payable by private cars, taxis and motorcycles for using the Western Harbour Crossing (“WHC”) be lowered, while the corresponding tolls of the Cross-Harbour Tunnel (“CHT”) and Eastern Harbour Crossing (“EHC”) be increased at the same time in order to achieve effective traffic re-distribution. The alleviation of traffic congestion will bring about economic and environmental benefits, thereby benefiting society as a whole. The Government and the WHC franchisee have agreed in principle on a toll compensation scheme.

4. The vehicle fleet size in Hong Kong has been growing rapidly over the past decade at an average rate of 3% per annum. With a modest average annual growth of only 0.9% in car parking provision, we need to provide more car parking spaces to respond to public aspirations, with priority accorded to meeting the parking needs of commercial vehicles in order to support economic and commercial activities. The Government will follow the principle of “single site, multiple use” to provide public car parking spaces in suitable G/IC facilities and public open space (“POS”) projects. For example, the Government plans to provide public car parking spaces beneath the POS at Sze Mei Street, San Po Kong and at the Joint-user Government Office Building in Area 67, Tseung Kwan O. If technically feasible, we expect that at least 1 500 public car parking spaces will be provided in suitable government facilities and POS over the next five years. Furthermore, when the Government constructs disciplined services quarters, we will increase the number of car parking spaces as far as technically feasible, taking into full account the unique operational requirements of the disciplined services.

(b) Enhancing Public Transport Services

Waiving the toll of tunnels and roads on franchised buses to relieve the fare increase pressure

5. The operating costs of franchised buses are on the rise. The franchised bus operators are facing various degrees of fare increase

pressure and have submitted fare increase applications to the Government¹. While we will continue to rationalise the bus service network with a view to enhancing operational efficiency, we suggest waiving the toll of Government tunnels and roads² charged on franchised buses. Each of the franchised bus operators should set up its own dedicated fund account, known as the “Franchised Bus Toll Waiver Fund”, for keeping such toll saving. The Fund is reserved for relieving fare increase pressure of the specific franchised bus operator. In other words, when the franchised bus operator applies for fare increase, the magnitude of fare increase to be shouldered by passengers as approved by the Government would be suitably reduced through the application of this Fund. Hence, the public can enjoy a more affordable yet efficient franchised bus service. We will also set a cap for the Fund. If the amount of the Fund reaches the cap and the franchised bus operator is still financially healthy without the need to apply for fare increase, the concerned franchised bus operator would need to use the toll saving exceeding the cap to provide passengers with fare concession.

6. The waiving of toll of Government tunnels and roads will involve amendments to subsidiary legislation. Our target is to submit the relevant subsidiary legislation amendments to the Legislative Council for the “negative vetting” procedures by the end of this year and implement the proposal early next year. Regarding the two tunnels that are still operating under the “Build-Operate-Transfer” (“BOT”) model (i.e. WHC and Tai Lam Tunnel), we propose that the Government should pay the toll on behalf of the franchised bus operators, and the franchised bus operators would then set aside such toll saving to their respective Franchised Bus Toll Waiver Funds to further relieve the fare increase pressure. As regards

¹ Citybus Limited (Franchise for the Hong Kong Island and Cross-Harbour Bus Network) and New World First Bus Services Limited applied for fare increases of 12% in August last year. Kowloon Motor Bus Company (1933) Limited and Long Win Bus Company Limited applied for fare increases of 8.5% in September this year. New Lantao Bus Company (1973) Limited also applied for fare increase of 9.8% in September this year. The Government is now processing the fare increase applications in accordance with established procedures.

² The revenue foregone by the Government for waiving the toll of Government tunnels and roads on franchised buses is about \$280 million per year.

WHC, the relevant arrangement is expected to take effect on 1 January 2020 together with the proposal on rationalisation of traffic distribution among the harbour-crossing tunnels mentioned in paragraph 3 above. Meanwhile, the Government is exploring with the BOT franchisee of Tai Lam Tunnel on the same arrangement for franchised buses using the tunnel (i.e. the Government pays the relevant toll).

7. Please refer to the separate document issued to the Panel by the Transport and Housing Bureau (“THB”) on 10 October 2018 on further information about the proposals set out in paragraph 3, 5 and 6 above.

Ferry and “Water Taxi”

8. In response to the community’s suggestion of exploring more in-harbour ferry routes and the suggestion of introducing “water taxi” in the Development Blueprint for Hong Kong’s Tourism Industry³, the Transport Department (“TD”) is working towards enhancing vibrancy of the Hung Hom harbourfront, through preparing for re-commissioning the “Central-Hung Hom” ferry route and launching a pilot “water taxi” service plying Kai Tak, Hung Hom, Tsim Sha Tsui East, West Kowloon and Central; and through injecting commercial elements into the Hung Hom (South) Pier. In this regard, TD invited submissions for indication of interest in operating the two licensed ferry services during 27 August – 27 September 2018. TD received two submissions during the specified period. TD is reviewing the submissions and will formulate ferry service proposals with further details for consulting relevant stakeholders. Subject to the consultation progress, TD plans to carry out a tender exercise for the two ferry services in early 2019, with a view to commencing the service of the “Central – Hung Hom” route and “water taxi”⁴ around Q2/2019 and Q1/2020 the earliest respectively.

³ The Commerce and Economic Development Bureau and the Tourism Commission suggest exploring the provision of “water taxi” serving locations with major tourist attractions within harbour, (e.g. Central, West Kowloon, Kai Tak and Tsim Sha Tsui) in the Development Blueprint for Hong Kong’s Tourism Industry.

⁴ The gearing up time (and hence the commencement timeframe) of the “water taxi” service might vary depending on the features of the new service.

Providing real-time arrival information for green minibus

9. To further facilitate the planning of trips by passengers, the Government proposes to fund and develop a data collection system and a mobile application, as well as install global positioning devices on around 3 300 green minibuses (“GMBs”) in the territory, so as to enable passengers to get access to the real-time arrival information of GMB routes through TD’s website and “e-Mobility” mobile application. The relevant data will also be released in machine-readable format via DATA.GOV.HK for public use. GMB operators can make use of the data for fleet management with a view to enhancing the operational efficiency, while the Government can apply the data for the purpose of traffic management or transport planning (e.g. making use of big data for analysing patronage behaviour and market demand, etc.) The Government will implement the proposal in the coming three financial years⁵, and it is expected that the real-time information system will be launched officially in early 2022⁶. The Government will also continue to actively encourage and facilitate the further opening up of real-time operating data in machine-readable format by public transport operators to enable broader application.

Further enhancing the operating safety of franchised buses

10. To further enhance the operating safety of franchised buses, the

⁵ The development of data collection system and mobile application (including procurement of hardware and software for the system, etc.) will involve around \$8 million, while the installation of the global positioning devices on around 3 300 GMBs in the territory will involve around \$23 million (the estimated cost of a set of global positioning system device is currently around \$7,000). The total cost is therefore around \$31 million. Furthermore, the estimated annual recurrent cost involved after the system is launched is about \$7.2 million. The recurrent cost is for maintaining the global positioning devices (including the monthly fee for the mobile network required for data transmission), as well as the managing and maintenance of the data collection system and mobile application, etc.

⁶ The works of development and technical set-up is expected to take about three years to complete. The Government will appoint a system contractor through tender, to perform duties including the development, technical set-up and testing of the data collection system and mobile application, as well as the installation of devices on GMBs.

Government proposes to set aside \$500 million⁷ to subsidise franchised bus operators for retrofitting three safety devices on appropriate existing buses, including the Electronic Stability Control (“ESC”) which can improve vehicle stability and reduce the risk of rollover, speed limiter with slow-down function (“speed limiting retarder”)⁸ and the installation of seat belts on all seats in the upper deck of buses deployed for long-haul routes which are operated via expressways with relatively fewer bus stops⁹. The Government proposes to subsidise the franchised bus operators 80% of the relevant costs. The remaining costs and maintenance in future will be borne by the franchised bus operators. The subsidy scheme is expected to be rolled out in the 2019-20 financial year.

11. Besides, all franchised bus operators have undertaken that all new double-deck buses procured from July 2018 will be equipped with ESC and speed limiting retarder. All passenger seats of these newly procured buses will also be installed with seat belts with a view to further enhancing the safety and reliability of franchised bus service in Hong Kong.

Relaxing the vehicle length restriction of light bus

12. The Government has been promoting the policy objectives of barrier-free transport and green transport. When taking forward the “low-floor wheelchair-accessible light bus trial scheme” (details of the scheme at paragraph 34 below), the Government notes that the vehicle length of the light bus models with more environmental benefits and/or barrier-free facilities available on the market often exceeds the current

⁷ Based on the prevailing cost of installing the three safety devices, each double-deck bus will receive a subsidy of around \$20,000 for installing ESC, around \$16,000 for installing the speed limiting retarder and \$192,000 for installing seat belts on all seats in the upper deck.

⁸ Of the total of around 6 000 existing franchised buses, about 3 300 double-deck buses are suitable for installing ESC and speed limiting retarder. The total subsidy amount for the installation is about \$118.8 million.

⁹ According to the information provided by the franchised bus operators, about 2 000 buses are deployed for these routes. The total subsidy amount for installing seat belts on seats in the upper deck of these 2 000 buses is about \$384 million.

statutory restriction¹⁰. Having reviewed the current statutory restriction and the light bus models available in the market, the Government proposes to relax the vehicle length restriction of light bus to 7.5 metres, so as to facilitate the introduction of light buses with more environmental benefits and barrier-free facilities by the trade. The proposal will involve legislative amendments, and our target is to submit the relevant legislative amendments to the Legislative Council in the 2019-20 legislative year. Before the passage of the legislative amendments by the Legislative Council, the Commissioner for Transport will continue to consider individual applications for vehicle type approval of specific light bus models, and exercise her discretion to grant requisite exemption to those light bus models with better environmental benefits (e.g. achieving the prevailing best emission standard or above) and/or barrier-free facilities (e.g. low-floor wheelchair-accessible light bus)¹¹.

(c) Improving Pedestrian Environment

13. To facilitate access to walkways by the public, the Government is proactively implementing retrofitting barrier-free access (“BFA”) facilities under the Universal Accessibility (“UA”) Programme. Apart from those items being taken forward, the Highways Department (“HyD”) is carrying out the relevant preparatory work with a view to commencing a feasibility study in the first half of 2019 on lift retrofitting proposals for the remaining some 120 eligible walkways across districts under the current ambit of the Programme and subsequently taking forward those feasible items expeditiously, so as to benefit the elderly and citizens in need (referred to as the “Third Phase” of the UA Programme). The Government will also

¹⁰ At present, the statutory vehicle length restriction of light bus is 7 metres. By virtue of the power empowered by regulation 4 of the Road Traffic (Construction and Maintenance of Vehicles) Regulations (Cap. 374A), the Commissioner for Transport may, depending on individual circumstances, exercise her discretion to grant exemption on the vehicle length restriction on a light bus model. When introducing the low-floor light buses, the Commissioner for Transport has already exercised her discretion in this regard.

¹¹ After the passage of the legislative amendments, if any individual model exceeds 7.5 metres but fulfilling specific policy needs, the Commissioner for Transport will continue to consider individual application pursuant to her statutory power.

conduct a review in 2019 to explore whether there is scope for further expanding the ambit of the UA Programme.

14. For the funding requirements of the respective proposals as mentioned above, we will seek funding approval from the Legislative Council in accordance with the established procedures.

2018 Policy Agenda – On-going initiatives

(d) Taking Forward Transport Infrastructure Projects

15. We are planning to take forward the “Strategic Studies on Railways and Major Roads beyond 2030” (“RMR2030+ Studies”) on the basis of the conceptual spatial requirements to be firmed up under the “Hong Kong 2030+: Towards a Planning Vision and Strategy Transcending 2030” (Hong Kong 2030+ Study), which is being conducted by the Development Bureau and the Planning Department. Based on the latest planning information available (up to 2041), the RMR2030+ Studies will examine the demand and supply of the transport infrastructure (including railways and major roads) in Hong Kong between 2031 and 2041, which will cover the loading of the heavy rails in the Northwest New Territories. The RMR2030+ Studies will also focus on the transport infrastructure for supporting the Strategic Growth Areas recommended for long term implementation in the Hong Kong 2030+ Study. The RMR2030+ Studies will look into the layout of the proposed railway and major road infrastructure to ensure that the planning of large scale transport infrastructure can meet the needs of long term overall land use developments. The RMR2030+ Studies will also examine the impact of the proposed transport infrastructure on the existing transport network and formulate relevant transport strategies accordingly. This Panel has expressed support for the Study in June 2017. Since the Hong Kong 2030+ Study has not yet been finalized, we will strive to seek funding approval for the RMR2030+ Studies thereafter, with a view to commencing the strategic studies on railways and major roads in a timely manner.

Developing Railways

16. The Hong Kong Section of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen Hong Kong Express Rail Link was commissioned on 22 September 2018 and formally commenced operation on the following day (23 September 2018), connecting Hong Kong with the currently more than 25 000 km-long and ever-expanding national high-speed rail network. At present, high-speed trains travel between the Hong Kong West Kowloon Station and 44 Mainland destinations. These cover six short-haul destinations, namely Futian, Shenzhen North, Guangmingcheng, Humen, Qingsheng and Guangzhou South, as well as 38 long-haul destinations, including Beijing, Shanghai, Kunming, Guilin, Guiyang, Shijiazhuang, Zhengzhou, Wuhan, Changsha, Hangzhou, Nanchang, Fuzhou, Xiamen and Shantou etc., offering speedy, convenient and comfortable railway service to passengers. The project fosters commercial and cultural exchanges between Hong Kong and major Mainland cities, enhances Hong Kong's status as a regional transport hub, and also enables Hong Kong to tap into the synergy and opportunities brought about by the development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area.

17. Under the principle of “centred on public transport with railway as the backbone”, we will enhance the accessibility to and the transport connectivity among different areas in Hong Kong, including the implementation of the seven new railway projects under the Railway Development Strategy 2014 in an orderly manner. Having regard to the potential housing supply that may be brought about by railway development, the Government is reviewing the proposals for the Tuen Mun South Extension and Northern Link (and Kwu Tung Station) and will strive to undertake public consultation on these proposals as soon as possible. At the same time, we will carry on with the detailed planning for the East Kowloon Line, Tung Chung West Extension (and Tung Chung East Station) and North Island Line, and will embark on detailed planning for Hung Shui Kiu Station and the South Island Line (West).

18. As regards the Shatin to Central Link (“SCL”), the 11-month delay caused by the archaeological findings at the To Kwa Wan Station and other

engineering factors has delayed the commissioning of the project for one year, i.e. the “Tai Wai to Hung Hom Section” is extended to end-2019 and the "Hung Hom to Admiralty Section" is extended to 2021. With the efforts of the engineering team, the delay recovery measures implemented in the "Tai Wai to Hung Hom Section" have achieved results. Therefore, it was originally expected to be completed in advance to around mid-2019. However, in view of the issue of reinforcement connection in the diaphragm wall and platform slab construction of the Hung Hom Station Extension and the related investigation works being carried out, the Government must ensure that the SCL is commissioned only if it is fully compliant with the construction specifications and safety. Hence, the target commissioning date of the "Tai Wai to Hung Hom Section" will need to be further reviewed, whilst the target commissioning date of the "Hung Hom to Admiralty Section" still remains to be 2021. We will continue to coordinate and supervise the construction works of the SCL and follow up on the recommendations of the Expert Adviser Team¹² and the investigation results of the Commission of Inquiry¹³, with a view to commissioning the project as soon as possible.

Route 11

19. In view of the long-term developments in NWNT, including the

¹² The Transport and Housing Bureau established on 15 August 2018 an Expert Adviser Team for the SCL project. The Team comprises three senior retired government officers, i.e. Dr Lau Ching-kwong (former Director of Civil Engineering), Mr Hui Siu-wai (former Director of Buildings) and Mr Wong Hok-ning (former Head of Geotechnical Engineering Office).

¹³ A Commission of Inquiry was appointed by the Chief Executive in Council on 10 July 2018, in accordance with the Commissions of Inquiry Ordinance (Chapter 86), with Mr Michael John Hartmann, former Non-Permanent Judge of the Court of Final Appeal, as Chairman, to inquire into the facts and circumstances of steel reinforcement fixing works in respect of the diaphragm wall and platform slab construction works at the Hung Hom Station Extension under the SCL project implemented by the MTR Corporation Limited. The Commission of Inquiry will also review the MTR Corporation Limited's project management system, supervision system, etc., and the Government's monitoring and control mechanisms; and to make recommendations on suitable measures with a view to promoting public safety and assurance on quality of works. The Commission conducted a preliminary hearing on 24 September, and will commence the substantive hearings on 22 October.

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, it will generally go through the investigation, detailed design and construction stages from preliminary planning to commissioning, and will take more than 10 years to complete. This Panel had expressed support for the feasibility study for Route 11 in March 2017, and we obtained funding approval by LegCo on the same in April 2018. HyD commenced the feasibility study thereafter, which is expected to complete in 2020.

Central-Wan Chai Bypass and Island Eastern Corridor Link

20. 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, affecting the works progress. With the concerted efforts of various parties, CWB is expected to be fully commissioned in end 2018 or in the first quarter of 2019 to serve as a strategic east-west road along the north shore of Hong Kong Island. Upon commissioning, it will only take around 5 minutes to drive to the Island Eastern Corridor at North Point from Central. The east-west traffic on Hong Kong Island will become more direct and smoother.

Route 6 and Cross Bay Link, Tseung Kwan O

21. We are pressing ahead with the Route 6 project: the main tunnel of Tseung Kwan O-Lam Tin Tunnel forming the eastern section of Route 6 commenced construction in the third quarter of 2016 for completion in 2021; the Central Kowloon Route forming the western section of Route 6 also commenced construction in late 2017 for completion in around 2025.

If we could obtain funding approval within this legislative year for the Trunk Road T2 and Cha Kwo Ling Tunnel which form the middle section of Route 6 for commencement of construction in the latter half of 2019, the entire Route 6 is expected to be commissioned in around 2025. By then, the journey time in peak hours between Tseung Kwan O (“TKO”) Town Centre and Yau Ma Tei Interchange along the Route 6 will be substantially reduced from about 65 minutes now to about 12 minutes. Besides, the Cross Bay Link, TKO connecting the east of the Route 6 is expected to be completed in 2022. When the entire Route 6 is commissioned, it will provide the public with a more convenient express access between TKO New Town and Kowloon West.

Road Widening Works

22. With funding approval obtained from the Legislative Council Finance Committee in May 2018, the widening works at Tai Po Road (Sha Tin Section) between Fo Tan Road, Sha Tin and Sha Tin Rural Committee Road have commenced. We are pressing ahead with this project with a view to completing it in the latter half of 2023 to relieve the traffic congestion at the concerned road section. Moreover, we plan to seek funding approval from the Legislative Council within this legislative year for the widening of a section of Lin Ma Hang Road between Ping Yuen River and Ping Che Road, with a view to enhancing the capacity of the concerned section for meeting the increased traffic demand arising from the opening up of certain regions of the Frontier Closed Area.

(e) Enhancing External Transport Links

Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge

23. Spanning over Lingdingyang, the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge (“HZMB”), an unprecedented mega transport infrastructure project jointly 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 of Guangdong in the west. The entire HZMB project consists of two parts: (i) the HZMB Main Bridge (i.e. a

22.9 km-long bridge and a 6.7 km-long subsea tunnel) situated in Mainland waters which is implemented by the HZMB Authority; and (ii) the link roads and boundary crossing facilities under the respective responsibility of the three governments.

24. With the efforts in the past years, the HZMB has been completed and will be commissioned soon. It will be a key infrastructure in the Greater Bay Area, providing a good platform to foster the harmonious and prosperous development amongst the three places. As regards the commissioning date of the HZMB, the governments of the three places are striving to improve the clearance conditions of the ports and the commissioning date of the HZMB will be announced once confirmed by the Central Authorities. Construction works for the Hong Kong Section have been completed and we are now focusing on the pre-commissioning preparatory work so as to dovetail with the commissioning of the Main Bridge situated in Mainland waters.

25. To tie in with the commissioning of the HZMB, the governments of Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao strive to formulate a set of cross-boundary transport arrangements which can meet the needs of local residents, travellers and the trades of the three places, with an aim to facilitating traffic and promoting the flow of people and goods within the Greater Bay Area. The three governments have already implemented various types of major cross-boundary transport for the HZMB (including cross-boundary shuttle buses, cross-boundary coaches, cross-boundary hire cars, cross-boundary goods vehicles and cross-boundary private cars) and simplified the requirements for the application for licences.

Tuen Mun-Chek Lap Kok Link

26. The total length of Tuen Mun-Chek Lap Kok Link (“TM-CLKL”) is about 9 km. Upon completion, it will provide a strategic link connecting the Northwest New Territories with the HZMB Hong Kong Port, North Lantau and the Hong Kong International Airport. In view of the technical difficulties of the project, the construction programme is very tight. For example, modification of the design and construction scheme for a tunnel

section of the Northern Connection is required; the contractor of the Southern Connection has to ensure the safe and proper operation of the concerned navigation channel, railway and highway during construction and the construction works have to be executed in compliance with the airport height restrictions. As the Government announced in May 2018, HyD has been striving for the completion of the Mainline of the TM-CLKL Southern Connection (i.e. the section connecting Hong Kong Port to the urban areas through North Lantau Highway) within 2018, whereas the section of the Southern Connection connecting the Hong Kong Port to Tung Chung through North Lantau Highway is anticipated to be completed in the first half of 2019. Regarding the TM-CLKL Northern Connection, it is anticipated to be completed in 2020 at the earliest. HyD will continue to closely monitor the construction works for the early commissioning of the TM-CLKL.

(f) Innovation and Technology

27. We will continue to implement “Smart Mobility” initiatives, develop intelligent transport system and enhance traffic management through the application of technology. TD commenced a design and application study on the installation of in-vehicle units to work out the detailed arrangements of promoting the installation of such devices in Hong Kong in July 2018. The relevant study is expected to complete in the second half of 2019. Subject to the findings of the study and discussions with relevant stakeholders, we will explore the feasibility of installing in-vehicle units by owners of different types of vehicles on a voluntary basis to more effectively manage tunnel toll payment arrangements and allow motorists to receive timely traffic information, etc. To tie in with the electronic toll collection at, and the commissioning of, the Tseung Kwan O- Lam Tin Tunnel, it is expected that the Government will issue in-vehicle units to vehicle owners starting from mid-2020.

28. TD will continue to facilitate trials of autonomous vehicles at appropriate locations and adopt a “regulatory sandbox” approach, that is, allowing the industry to conduct trials of innovative technology under an environment where risks are manageable and maintain close liaison with the

regulator so as to put forward joint solutions to address the issues related to regulatory aspects identified during the trials. Apart from facilitating various trials on roads through issuing movement permits, TD will continue to render appropriate facilitation to organisations intending to set up testing facilities for autonomous vehicles.

29. The Government will commence installation of a new generation of on-street parking meters that could provide real-time information on vacant parking spaces and support remote payment of parking meter fees through mobile applications starting from 2019-20. We will strive to table a Bill to the Legislative Council within the current legislative session on the legislative amendments arising from the proposed operational arrangement and new functions of the new generation of parking meter system, as well as adjustment to the maximum fee for metered parking spaces, in order to tie in with the implementation timeframe of the first batch of new generation of parking meters.

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

Public Transport Strategy Study

30. THB and TD will organise a multi-stakeholder exchange session by end-2018 for different stakeholders in the public transport sector to discuss on how best to rationalise their respective roles to improve Hong Kong's public transport ecosystem.

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

31. TD consulted the relevant District Councils ("DCs") on the trial details of the new franchised bus services (i.e. (i) new long-haul bus services providing more spacious seating and all-seater service with more comprehensive passenger amenities in the bus compartment and fewer stops; and (ii) mid-sized single-deck buses that provide short-haul shuttle services for individual districts in the New Territories which currently have

relatively lower population density but with growth potential) in the first half of this year. TD is now discussing the details of the proposals with the relevant franchised bus operator. The trial services are expected to be rolled out progressively in the first half of 2019 when the newly procured buses arrive Hong Kong and complete the relevant inspections.

Introducing “Franchised Taxis”

32. THB will continue to actively prepare for the bill for the introduction of franchised taxis and target to introduce the bill into the Legislative Council in 2018-19 to meet the new demand in the community for personalised and point-to-point public transport services.

(h) Ancillary Facilities for Public Transport

Other ongoing initiatives for enhancing public transport services

33. 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, 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. The Government will continue to implement various measures to enhance the quality and operating environment of taxi services through the Committee on Taxi Service Quality. 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.

34. In addition, to further promote “Transport for All”, the Government continues to actively take forward the “low-floor wheelchair-accessible light bus trial scheme”. The trial scheme has been implemented on two hospital routes (including routes operating via Queen Mary Hospital and Princes of Wales Hospital respectively) by phases since the first quarter of 2018, while the other low-floor light bus is expected to be put into service on the route operating via St. Teresa’s Hospital in the fourth quarter of 2018. TD will review the effectiveness of the trial scheme in tandem with its regular survey on the market occupancy rate of light buses, which will be launched in the fourth quarter of 2018. If the trial scheme is proven feasible and desirable, we will discuss with the trade the feasibility of further promoting low-floor light buses.

35. 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.

(i) Public Transport Fare Subsidy Scheme

36. The Government is actively taking forward the preparatory work of the non-means tested Public Transport Fare Subsidy Scheme (“the Scheme”) for implementing the Scheme on 1 January 2019 to relieve the fare burden of commuters. Commuters do not have to apply for the Scheme. Under the Scheme, commuters with monthly public transport expenses exceeding \$400 are eligible for subsidy. The Government will provide subsidy amounting to 25% of the actual public transport expenses in excess of \$400, subject to a maximum of \$300 per month. The Scheme covers the MTR, franchised buses, GMBs, ferries, trams, as well as designated routes of red minibuses, Kaitos, non-franchised buses providing residents’ services and employees’ services approved by TD. Fares paid by Octopus cards and designated transport tickets of the abovementioned

public transport services purchased by any payment means will be taken into account in the calculation of monthly public transport expenses.

37. Commuters can collect the public transport fare subsidy of January 2019 starting from 16 February 2019. The method for collection of subsidy is simple. Commuters can collect the subsidy through the Octopus App, at around 50 Octopus Service Points, or by tapping their Octopus cards at the dedicated Subsidy Collection Points set up at 94 MTR stations, five Light Rail Customer Service Centres and designated ferry piers, or the Octopus readers of any outlets of convenient stores including 7-Eleven and Circle-K, as well as Wellcome supermarkets. The subsidy will then be credited to the Octopus cards. Commuters can collect the subsidy of the previous month from the 16th of each month through the same channels from then onwards. To allow sufficient time for commuters to collect subsidy, the subsidy is valid for collection within three months.

(j) Improving Pedestrian Environment

Take Forward “Walk in HK”

38. We will continue to take forward “Walk in HK” by creating a pedestrian-friendly environment and encouraging citizens to walk more for first and last mile connection between public transport interchanges and residences/offices, so as to reduce the use of mechanised transport for short-distance commuting. Specific measures include relaxing existing standards stipulated in the Transport Planning and Design Manual for adding covers to walkways, and providing covers on certain walkways connecting to public transport facilities progressively; studying and testing out innovative measures in two pilot areas, namely Central and Sham Shui Po, for a comfortable walking environment; continuing to enhance pedestrian wayfinding system having regard to the experience gained from the pilot system launched in Tsim Sha Tsui; extending the coverage of the walking route search function under TD’s integrated mobile application “HKeMobility” to Yau Ma Tei and Mong Kok; and continuing the study on enhancing pedestrian connectivity between Wan Chai and Sheung Wan.

Hillside Escalator Links and Elevator Systems

39. The Government established in 2009 a set of scoring criteria for assessing proposals for hillside escalator links and elevator systems (HEL) to determine the priority for conducting preliminary technical feasibility studies for the 20 proposals received at that time. Upon completion of the assessment, the assessment results were reported to the Legislative Council Panel on Transport in February 2010. Two proposals were screened out initially, and 18 others were ranked. The Government indicated at the time that preliminary technical feasibility studies for the proposals ranked top ten in the assessment would be conducted first by batches, and that the remaining proposals would be followed up after the smooth implementation of the top 10 proposals.

40. Among the 18 ranked proposals, the Pedestrian Link at Tsz Wan Shan, the Yuet Wah Street Pedestrian Linkage and the Lift and Pedestrian Walkway System between Lai King Hill Road and Princess Margaret Hospital (ranked 1st, 13th and 14th respectively) have been opened for public use. There are four items under construction: the Lift and Pedestrian Walkway System at Cheung Hang Estate, Tsing Yi, the Lift and Pedestrian Walkway System between Kwai Shing Circuit and Hing Shing Road, the Lift and Pedestrian Walkway System at Waterloo Hill and the Lift and Pedestrian Walkway System between Tai Wo Hau Road and Wo Tong Tsui Street (ranked 3rd, 5th, 9th and 11th respectively). These items are targeted for completion progressively from mid-2019 to 2021. In addition, we obtained funding approval from the Legislative Council in June 2018 for the Lift and Pedestrian Walkway System between Castle Peak Road and Kung Yip Street, Kwai Chung (ranked 6th) and plan to commence its construction in the first quarter of 2019 for target completion in the second quarter of 2023.

41. At the same time, HyD has completed the preliminary technical feasibility studies for the Escalator Link between Hong Sing Garden and Po Hong Road, the Lift and Pedestrian Walkway System between Saddle Ridge Garden and Sai Sha Road and the Lift and Pedestrian Walkway System between Hing Shing Road and Tai Wo Hau Road (ranked 14th, 16th

and 17th respectively). The studies showed that the above proposals are technically feasible upon preliminary assessment, and HyD will progressively conduct ground investigation, carry out preliminary design and consult DCs as well as relevant stakeholders.

42. Overall, three out of the 18 proposals have been completed and opened for public use; four are under construction; one proposal has just obtained funding approval for construction; five are in various phases of planning, investigation and design; three with their preliminary technical feasibility studies just completed; one is at the preliminary technical feasibility study stage; and another is having its scope determined to facilitate the subsequent preliminary technical feasibility study. The current progress of the 18 proposals is set out at **Annex**.

43. On the other hand, TD commenced a consultancy study in December 2017 to review the assessment mechanism for HEL proposals. TD will, on the basis of the revised mechanism, carry out screening, shortlisting and prioritisation of the over 110 proposals received in the past years. The consultancy study will take about 30 months to complete. Upon completion of the study, we will seek resources for implementing the selected proposals progressively.

Walkway Improvement Works

44. To enhance pedestrian link facilities for the local community, we propose to take forward the retrofitting of escalators for the footbridge across Castle Peak Road - Kwai Chung near MTR Tai Wo Hau Station Exit B, so as to provide a comfortable and convenient pedestrian link for commuters travelling between the MTR Tai Wo Hau Station and the Tai Wo Hau Estate and Kwai Chung Estate. Upon completion of the relevant statutory procedures, we target to seek funding approval from the Legislative Council in the second quarter of 2019.

45. We also propose replacing the existing Wang Tong River Bridge with a new twin-bridge to widen the river crossing and segregate pedestrians from cyclists for the enhancement of road safety. Upon completion of

relevant statutory procedures, we plan to seek funding approval for the project from the Legislative Council in the second quarter of 2019.

Pedestrian Environment Improvement Scheme

46. To further alleviate the pedestrian congestion in Yuen Long Town, HyD completed 10 improvement measures under the Pedestrian Environment Improvement Scheme in Yuen Long Town in 2015 including widening of footpaths and pedestrian crossings at road junctions and a rather large-scale improvement measure of streetscape enhancement along both sides of Fung Yau Street North. For the Elevated Pedestrian Corridor in Yuen Long Town connecting with Long Ping Station which is also a large-scale improvement measure, the Public Works Subcommittee discussed the item at its meetings on 23 and 26 May 2018 and endorsed the proposal. In the light of Members' concerns and comments from the community, we are formulating the detailed arrangement for the implementation of the project. As the work is in progress, we will submit the item to the Finance Committee for deliberation at an opportune time in future.

47. In addition, HyD consulted local groups and relevant stakeholders on the preliminary scheme of the footbridge system in Mong Kok in 2017 and is reviewing and improving the scheme in the light of public opinions collected. HyD will consult the District Council and relevant stakeholders on the enhanced scheme in due course. In view of the latest developments in Causeway Bay, HyD has also commenced a consultancy study to review the proposals under the Pedestrian Environment Improvement Scheme of the district for taking forward the project.

“Universal Accessibility” Programme

48. As briefly mentioned in paragraph 13 above, the Government has been retrofitting BFA facilities at public walkways (i.e. public footbridges, elevated walkways and subways maintained by HyD), where technically feasible, on the recommendation of the Equal Opportunities Commission. We launched the UA Programme in August 2012 to continue enhancing the

BFA facilities at existing public walkways, and announced in the 2016 Policy Address to expand the ambit of the UA Programme whereby BFA facilities could be retrofitted not only at public walkways but also at other walkways not maintained by HyD provided that certain criteria¹⁴ are met. We are now taking forward 250 BFA-retrofitting items (among which 105 items were selected by the 18 DCs, upon the Government's invitation, from the public proposals) to facilitate the commuting of the public, especially the elderly. As at end-September 2018, 93 items were completed, 98 items were under construction while the remaining 59 items were under investigation/design.

(k) Bicycle-friendly Environment

49. We will continue to foster a “bicycle-friendly” environment in new towns and new development areas and improve the supporting facilities. In accordance with the completed “Traffic and Transport Consultancy Study on Cycling Networks and Parking Facilities in Existing New Towns in Hong Kong”, TD identified and proposed improvement to around 900 locations. The improvement measures include providing more public bicycle parking spaces and providing additional safety facilities in order to ensure the safety of cyclists. The first batch of improvement works involving around 100 locations was completed in June 2018, providing about 980 additional bicycle parking spaces. The second batch of improvement works involving about 540 locations will provide about 3 500 additional bicycle parking spaces. The actual number of additional bicycle parking spaces to be provided will be adjusted in light of the outcome of the consultation with DCs. In this regard, TD has started consulting the relevant DCs since May 2018 on the improvement works,

¹⁴ The walkways need to meet the following criteria and the retrofitting works should not involve land resumption -

- (i) the walkways span across public roads maintained by the HyD;
- (ii) they are open for public access from public roads at all times;
- (iii) the walkways are not privately owned; and
- (iv) the parties responsible for the management and maintenance of these walkways agree to such lift retrofitting proposals and are willing to cooperate with the Government during the implementation of the said lift retrofitting works as well as the subsequent management and maintenance works of the lifts.

and has arranged to commence the works in 2019.

Transport and Housing Bureau
October 2018

**Current progress of the proposals of
the Hillside Escalator Links and Elevator Systems**

Rank	Proposal	Progress of Project
1	Pedestrian Link at Tsz Wan Shan	<p>The pedestrian link is implemented under the Shatin to Central Link project and involves 15 facilities. The construction works commenced in July 2012. The pedestrian link has been opened for public use since October 2017.</p>
2	Braemar Hill Pedestrian Link	<p>HyD consulted and obtained the support from the Planning, Works and Housing Committee (PWHC) of the Eastern District Council (EDC) on the design scheme in September 2016. Prior to gazettal of the works, HyD further consulted the residents on the design scheme and attended residents' meetings in November and December 2017. In view of the comments raised by various parties, HyD reviewed the scheme with a view to obtaining a majority consensus for the project scheme.</p> <p>HyD attended the PWHC meeting in February 2018, arranged site visits with EDC members, Legislative Council members and residents in March 2018, held a public meeting in April 2018 and conducted focus group meetings with schools and residents in May and June 2018 to introduce the revised design scheme and discuss with various stakeholders.</p> <p>In view of the comments from various stakeholders, HyD consulted PWHC again on 19 June 2018. HyD presented various design revisions and the recommended</p>

Rank	Proposal	Progress of Project
		revised design scheme, and obtained the support of the majority of PWHC members. HyD is now carrying out the detailed design and preparing for the gazettal of the project scheme.
3	Lift and Pedestrian Walkway System at Cheung Hang Estate, Tsing Yi	The Government obtained funding approval from the Legislative Council in May 2016. The construction works commenced in February 2017 for anticipated completion in mid-2019.
4	Escalator Link and Pedestrian Walkway System at Pound Lane	HyD consulted the Central and Western District Council (C&WDC) and held a public forum on the refined proposal in 2015. In view of the diverse views received and the many issues involved, HyD plans to consult the C&WDC further on the project.
5	Lift and Pedestrian Walkway System between Kwai Shing Circuit and Hing Shing Road	The Government obtained funding approval from the Legislative Council in May 2016. The construction works commenced in June 2017 for anticipated completion in 2020.
6	Lift and Pedestrian Walkway System between Castle Peak Road and Kung Yip Street	The Government obtained funding approval from the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council on 30 June 2018. The construction works are scheduled to commence in the first quarter of 2019 for anticipated completion in the second quarter of 2023.
7	Lift and Pedestrian Walkway System between Lai Cho Road and Wah Yiu Road	The preliminary technical feasibility study has been completed. HyD has engaged consultants to carry out the investigation and preliminary design.
8	Pedestrian Link near Chuk	HyD consulted and obtained the general support from the Traffic and Transport

Rank	Proposal	Progress of Project
	Yuen North Estate	Committee (T&TC) of the Wong Tai Sin District Council (WTSDC) on the preliminary design in July 2016 and March 2017. However, some schools and some of the residents in the district subsequently raised objections. After consideration of their objections, HyD revised the design and consulted the T&TC again in January 2018; the support from the T&TC was obtained. TD and HyD are now collating and analysing the relevant views and actively reviewing the details of the proposal. Relevant stakeholders and the T&TC will then be consulted on the latest developments. The preliminary technical feasibility study has been completed.
9	Lift and Pedestrian Walkway System at Waterloo Hill	The Government obtained funding approval from the Legislative Council in May 2016. The construction works commenced in December 2016 for anticipated completion in mid-2019.
10	Lift and Pedestrian Walkway System between Lai King Hill Road and Lai Cho Road	It was revealed in the preliminary technical feasibility study that the project involved two dangerous private slopes. The owners of the slopes completed the repair works for the slopes in February 2018. HyD has resumed the preliminary technical feasibility study for the project.
11	Lift and Pedestrian Walkway System between Tai Wo Hau Road and Wo Tong Tsui Street	The Government obtained funding approval from the Legislative Council in December 2017. The advance works for diversion of utilities commenced in January 2018. The main works are anticipated to commence in the fourth quarter of 2018 for completion in the fourth quarter of 2021.

Rank	Proposal	Progress of Project
12	Lift and Pedestrian Walkway System at Luen On Street	HyD consulted and obtained support from the Traffic and Transport Committee of the Kwun Tong District Council (KTDC) on the preliminary design scheme in February 2018. As the proposal needs to span across private lots and is in close proximity to existing buildings, HyD will consult the relevant residents and stakeholders as suggested by the KTDC.
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 opened for public use since October 2015.
14 (same ranking)	Escalator Link System between Hong Sing Garden and Po Hong Road	The preliminary technical feasibility study has been completed and the project is considered technically feasible. HyD is now preparing to commence the next phase of the pre-construction stage.
14 (same ranking)	Lift and Pedestrian Walkway System between Lai King Hill Road and Princess Margaret Hospital	The Hospital Authority commenced the project 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	The preliminary technical feasibility study has been completed and the project is considered technically feasible. HyD is now preparing to commence the next phase of the pre-construction stage.
17	Lift and Pedestrian Walkway System between Hing Shing Road and Tai	The preliminary technical feasibility study has been completed and the project is considered technically feasible. HyD is now preparing to commence the next phase

Rank	Proposal	Progress of Project
	Wo Hau Road	of the pre-construction stage.
18	Escalator Link System between Sha Tin Sui Wo Court and MTR Fo Tan Station	The proposed item involves works of relatively large scale and is rather complex as a substantial part of the proposed alignment runs through lots held by the Hong Kong Housing Authority and private owners. TD is actively following up on the proposal with a view to determining its scope as soon as possible, so as to allow the relevant department to commence the preliminary technical feasibility study.