

**立法會**  
**Legislative Council**

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**Panel on Transport**

**Minutes of policy briefing-cum-meeting  
held on Tuesday, 19 October 2021, at 11:00 am  
in Conference Room 2 of the Legislative Council Complex**

- Members present** : Hon Frankie YICK Chi-ming, SBS, JP (Chairman)  
Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, GBS, JP  
Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, GBS, JP  
Hon CHAN Hak-kan, SBS, JP  
Hon WONG Kwok-kin, GBS, JP  
Hon Mrs Regina IP LAU Suk-ye, GBM, GBS, JP  
Hon Paul TSE Wai-chun, JP  
Hon Michael TIEN Puk-sun, BBS, JP  
Hon YIU Si-wing, SBS  
Hon LEUNG Che-cheung, SBS, MH, JP  
Hon POON Siu-ping, BBS, MH  
Ir Dr Hon LO Wai-ki, GBS, MH, JP  
Dr Hon Junius HO Kwan-yiu, JP  
Hon Holden CHOW Ho-ding  
Hon SHIU Ka-fai, JP  
Hon Wilson OR Chong-shing, MH  
Hon LUK Chung-hung, JP  
Hon LAU Kwok-fan, MH, JP  
Hon Kenneth LAU Ip-keung, BBS, MH, JP  
Hon Tony TSE Wai-chuen, BBS, JP
- Member absent** : Hon CHAN Han-pan, BBS, JP (Deputy Chairman)  
Dr Hon Priscilla LEUNG Mei-fun, SBS, JP

**Public officers  
attending** : **Agenda item II**

Mr Frank CHAN Fan, JP  
Secretary for Transport and Housing

Ms Mable CHAN, JP  
Permanent Secretary for Transport and Housing  
(Transport)

Dr Raymond SO Wai-man, BBS, JP  
Under Secretary for Transport and Housing

Mrs Sharon YIP LEE Hang-ye, JP  
Deputy Secretary for Transport and Housing  
(Transport)<sup>1</sup>

Ms Amy WONG Pui-man, JP  
Deputy Secretary for Transport and Housing  
(Transport)<sup>2</sup>

Mr Edward MAK Chun-yu  
Deputy Secretary for Transport and Housing  
(Transport)<sup>3</sup>

Mr Jimmy CHAN Pai-ming, JP  
Director of Highways

Miss Rosanna LAW Shuk-pui, JP  
Commissioner for Transport

**Agenda item III**

Dr Raymond SO, BBS, JP  
Under Secretary for Transport and Housing

Miss Joyce KOK  
Principal Assistant Secretary for  
Transport and Housing (Transport)<sup>12</sup>

Mr Percy LEUNG  
Principal Assistant Secretary for  
Transport and Housing (Transport) 6

Mr Tony YAU, JP  
Deputy Commissioner/Planning and Technical  
Services  
Transport Department

Mr LEUNG Sai-ho  
Assistant Commissioner/Planning  
Transport Department

Mr Honson YUEN  
Assistant Commissioner/Bus and Railway  
Transport Department

Mr SHEA Tin-cheung  
Chief Engineer/Strategic Studies  
Transport Department

**Clerk in attendance:** Ms Sophie LAU  
Chief Council Secretary (4)2

**Staff in attendance :** Ms Angela CHU  
Senior Council Secretary (4)2

Miss Mandy LAM  
Legislative Assistant (4)2

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**I. Information paper(s) issued since the last meeting**

- LC Paper No. CB(4)1436/20-21(01) - Letter from Hon Tony TSE Wai-chuen regarding the Administration's responses on various transport matters (Chinese version only)

- LC Paper No. CB(4)1481/20-21(01) - Letter from Hon Elizabeth QUAT on enhancing the safety of taxis (Chinese version only)
- LC Paper No. CB(4)1525/20-21(01) - Information paper on MTR Bus Service Connecting Tsang Tsui Columbarium in Tuen Mun
- LC Paper No. CB(4)1593/20-21(01) - Administration's response to the letter from Hon Tony TSE Wai-chuen on various transport matters
- LC Paper No. CB(4)1641/20-21(01) - Administration's response to the letter from Hon Elizabeth QUAT on enhancing the safety of taxis

Members noted the above papers issued since the last meeting.

## **II. Briefing by the Secretary for Transport and Housing on the Chief Executive's 2021 Policy Address**

- LC Paper No. CB(4)1639/20-21(01) - Paper provided by the Administration

*Other relevant documents*

The Chief Executive's 2021 Policy Address

The Chief Executive's 2021 Policy Address Supplement

### Briefing by the Administration

2. At the invitation of the Chairman, Secretary for Transport and Housing ("STH") briefed members on transport-related policy initiatives featured in the Chief Executive's 2021 Policy Address, which covered various matters including cross-boundary transport to promote connectivity between Hong

Kong and the other cities of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area ("GBA"), road and railway projects under planning and construction, smart mobility initiatives and the adoption of technology to enhance traffic enforcement efficiency, improving public transport services and promoting green public transport. Details of the briefing were set out in the Administration's paper.

*(Post-meeting note: speaking note of STH (Chinese version only) was issued to members on 26 October 2021 vide LC Paper No.CB(4)1689/20-21(01)).*

## Discussion

### *The Northern Metropolis and Transport Infrastructure-led Development*

3. As mentioned in the Chief Executive's 2021 Policy Address, the development of the Northern Metropolis would be driven by a transportation system with railway as the backbone. Five railway projects were proposed under the Northern Metropolis Development Strategy, including (i) the Hong Kong-Shenzhen Western Rail Link ("HSWRL") linking up Hung Shui Kiu ("HSK")/Ha Tsuen and Qianhai of Shenzhen; (ii) extension of the Northern Link ("NOL") northward to connect to the new Huanggang Port in Shenzhen via the Hong Kong-Shenzhen Innovation Technology Park in the Lok Ma Chau Loop; (iii) exploring the extension of the MTR East Rail Line ("ERL") to Luohu of Shenzhen and the construction of a new railway station between existing MTR Lo Wu Station and Sheung Shui Station; (iv) extension of the NOL eastward from Kwu Tung Station to connect with the areas of Lo Wu, Man Kam To and Heung Yuen Wai, and further southward to Fanling via Ta Kwu Ling and Queen's Hill; and (v) examining the feasibility of constructing an automated people mover system from Tsim Bei Tsui to Pak Nai. The Northern Metropolis was targeted to accommodate a population of about 2.5 million upon full development.

4. Ir Dr LO Wai-kwok, Mr LEUNG Che-cheung and Mr Tommy CHEUNG questioned whether the implementation of transport infrastructure such as NOL, HSK station and Route 11 could fulfill the objectives of the "transport infrastructure-led development" strategy. As new development areas ("NDAs") including Kwu Tung North/Fanling North, Hung Shui Kiu/Ha Tsuen and so forth were already under various planning and development stages, they worried that the construction of transport facilities could not catch up with the demand arising from residential developments and subsequent population intake. Given the occurrence of frequent delays and quality issues associated with railway projects in the past, Mr Tony TSE also

expressed worry that possible delay in railway construction development would affect the progress of these NDAs. Mr TSE also enquired about ways to expedite the development of more roads to provide impetus to developing the vast area of land outlined under the Northern Metropolis Development Strategy.

5. Sharing similar concern, Mr LAU Kwok-fan and Mr Holden CHOW pointed out that the completion timeframe for HSK station, the NOL, Tuen Mun South Extension Line and Route 11 would be beyond 2030. They urged the Administration to explore ways to suppress the consultation and construction processes to better support the development of the Northern Metropolis. Mr Holden CHOW and Dr Junius HO expressed support to the Administration's plan to amend the Town Planning Ordinance (Cap. 131) and other related legislation to streamline and expedite rezoning, planning and other development-related decisions to speed up land supply.

6. In addressing members' concerns, STH advised that in taking forward the development of NDAs and the Northern Metropolis, the Administration advocated the infrastructure-led and capacity creating planning approach with a view to unleashing the development potentials of the largely under-utilized sites along the alignment of major transport infrastructure. The Transport and Housing Bureau ("THB") would work in full speed with the Development Bureau ("DEVB") and other Bureaux in taking forward NDA projects to ensure that adequate transport infrastructure, including railways and major roads would be provided for in accommodating transport demand arising from population intake, employment and economic activities in the region.

7. As regards transport infrastructure of the Northern Metropolis, STH advised that as the projects were still in the conceptual stage, THB would work closely with DEVB when mapping out the way forward. In planning major road and railway infrastructure of the Northern Metropolis, due considerations would be given to the relevant studies and projection on population growth, job creation, and inter-alia, transport demand within as well as across districts. The Administration would continue to proceed with relevant consultation and studies on "Strategic Studies on Railways and Major Roads beyond 2030" to ensure that the planning of large-scale transport infrastructure would complement and reserve capacity to meet the overall long-term development needs of Hong Kong.

8. On possible ways to speed up the implementation progress of NDAs and the Northern Metropolis, Mr Tommy CHEUNG suggested the Administration to look into the possibility of importing labour so that adequate manpower could be available for taking forward the implementation of various

infrastructural projects in full speed. Ir Dr LO Wai-kwok also suggested the Administration to prudently look into the transport demand taking into account job opportunities that could be offered in the Northern Metropolis so that adequate transport services could be provided to meet residents' need. Mr CHEUNG and Mr LEUNG Che-cheung reminded the Administration to ensure that there should be adequate and diversified job opportunities like those for the catering and retail industry within the metropolis to achieve "home-job balance". The Chairman also suggested that apart from innovation and technology industry, jobs relevant to the logistics industry should also be sufficiently provided within the metropolis for residents coming from different strata of the population.

*Introducing competition in the planning and construction of railway projects in Hong Kong*

9. Dr Junius HO, Mrs Regina IP, Mr LAU Kwok-fan and Mr Tommy CHEUNG enquired whether the Administration would consider inviting non-local railway operators and contractors including those from the Mainland to bid for the construction of the new railway projects through open tender. They opined that more competition in the planning and construction of railway projects in Hong Kong would help reduce cost and improve efficiency. Mrs Regina IP pointed out that MTR Corporation Limited ("MTRCL") had been heavily engaged in the planning and implementation of several major railway projects concurrently at present. Allowing competition would also bring in expertise and resources and ensure quality delivery of the railway projects on time.

10. STH advised that the Administration maintained an open mind on members' suggestion. For the proposed HSWRL connecting Hung Shui Kiu/Ha Tsuen with Qianhai of Shenzhen the operation of which would be independent from existing railway network in Hong Kong, there would be room to consider inviting interested bidders to bid for the design, construction and operation of the railway project through open tender. Besides, joint venture of different parties could also be considered.

11. Mr Michael TIEN, on the other hand, expressed reservation about the suggestion of inviting a separate railway developer to build and operate HSWRL, which had close linkage with other railway lines such as the Tuen Ma Line ("TML") and NOL under the management of MTRCL. If the new HSWRL and NOL would be operated by different companies under the suggestion, there would be difficulties in ensuring that the fare for stations along HSWRL and NOL in close proximity be on a par. He expected that there would be problems in setting interchange fare concessions between the

railway lines. He also enquired whether the Administration would consider separating the construction and operation of HSWRL into two tenders. However, he anticipated that separating the construction and operating rights of HSWRL to two different contractors might pose other problems in delineation of responsibilities and management.

12. STH advised that the Administration had all along been adopting the “ownership” approach to ensure cost efficiency as well as management effectiveness in the construction and operation of railway lines. As HSWRL would be an independent railway system, there could be room to allow non-local railway developers or contractors to participate in the construction and operation of the railway. Various options, such as joint venture by different parties, could be explored. The Administration would keep in view various issues raised by Mr TIEN, including fare setting, interchange concession and connectivity between HSWRL and other railway lines and explore ways to resolve these issues when the railway projects were progressively taken forward.

*Alignment of the proposed railway projects*

13. Regarding the alignment of the proposed NOL eastern extension and the seamless pedestrian system between On Lok Tsuen and Fanling MTR Station, Mr Michael TIEN opined that if the NOL was to connect to the ERL, it would further aggravate the overcrowding problem of ERL during peak hours, coupled with the reduction in train capacity resultant from the adoption of 9-car train for ERL. Also, the distance between On Lok Tsuen and Fanling MTR Station was too long for people to walk for transiting from NOL to ERL and vice versa. In this regard, he proposed the construction of a separate railway line connecting NOL to Tai Wai MTR Station so that people living in the Northern New Territories could have an alternative fast track connecting to urban districts in the Kowloon.

14. STH responded that THB would explore the design and alignment of different railway stations as well as the provision of other public transport services in the Northern Metropolis in a holistic manner. As regards transport connection between Northern New Territories and other urban districts, the Administration would explore possible solutions under the "Strategic Studies on Railways and Major Roads beyond 2030".

15. Noting that MTRCL had already commenced detailed planning and design for HSK station, Mr LAU Kwok-fan enquired whether relevant planning work for HSWRL had commenced. He opined that as the alignments of NOL Spur Line and the eastward extension of NOL fell mostly



on government land, these projects could commence construction prior to the NOL Main Line.

16. STH replied that although HSWRL would link up HSK with Qianhai of Shenzhen, it would be a railway system operating independently from the TML. A piece of land had already been reserved near the HSK MTR station for the construction of HSWRL. The Administration would explore issues including interface of HSWRL and TML in due course.

17. As the Chief Executive's 2021 Policy Address also mentioned the conservation of wetlands for building an eco-environment, Mr LEUNG Che-cheung enquired whether it would affect the alignment of relevant railway lines nearby. STH replied that when planning the alignment of the proposed railway lines, the Administration would take into account the land use planning information with a view to avoiding conflict.

#### *Cross-boundary land transport*

18. Having noted that the Government of Hong Kong SAR and Shenzhen Municipal People's Government had established the "Task Force for Hong Kong-Shenzhen Co-operation on Cross-Boundary Railway Infrastructure" ("the Task Force") to jointly develop the "GBA on the Rail", Mr POON Siu-ping asked about the objective, membership and work progress of the Task Force.

19. STH said that the Task Force, which was established with a view to promoting further the connectivity of infrastructure in the GBA, was co-chaired by the Vice Mayor of Shenzhen Municipal People's Government and STH himself. A meeting was convened in August 2021 and a Technical Group had been established under the Task Force for in-depth discussion on technical matters. The Technical Group had commenced the first stage study on HSWRL.

20. On Mrs Regina IP's enquiry regarding the "quota-free scheme for Hong Kong private cars travelling to Guangdong via the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge ("HZMB")" ("the Scheme"), STH said that governments of Guangdong and Hong Kong SAR were working closely on the Scheme which would allow eligible Hong Kong private cars to travel between Hong Kong and Guangdong via HZMB without the need to obtain a regular quota in advance, after the removal of quarantine requirements for cross-boundary travel had been gradually implemented when the epidemic situation was brought under control. By drawing on the experience in implementing the Scheme, both

governments agreed to extend the quota-free scheme to cover another land boundary control point in due course.

21. Referring to paragraph 13 of the Administration's paper which mentioned that automated carpark on the Hong Kong Port Island of HZMB would be built by the Airport Authority ("AA") to provide around 6 000 parking spaces for use by air transfer passengers or visitors via HZMB, Mr YIU Si-wing pointed out that there was no mentioning of the provision of parking spaces for use by local commercial vehicles such as tourist coaches and Hong Kong local private cars. He sought clarification in this regard.

22. STH replied that as road network of Hong Kong was limited and highly congested, self-driving visitors from the Mainland and Macao travelling southbound to Hong Kong via HZMB could park their cars at the automated carparks on the Hong Kong Port Island of HZMB and then use public transport to further their journey in Hong Kong. Travelers were required to reserve parking spaces via a booking system in advance to ensure effective allocation and management of the parking spaces. The automated carparks were not intended for local commercial and private vehicles, for which other parking facilities were available on the airport island.

*Congestion problem of ERL and railway projects under planning or construction*

23. Mr CHAN Hak-kan expressed concern about the congestion problem of ERL. Despite that the construction of the new Science Park/Pak Shek Kok Station along ERL would greatly improve the connectivity of the Hong Kong Science Park, it would also bring in additional passenger load which would further aggravate the congestion problem of ERL. Mr CHAN and Ir Dr LO Wai-kwok asked whether the Administration would consider constructing a new railway line to alleviate the traffic congestion problem of New Territories East. They also enquired about measures to be taken to solve in particular the congestion problem of Tolo Highway and areas in the vicinity of Shatin New Town Plaza during peak hours.

24. STH replied that the commissioning of the Tuen Ma Line helped to effectively divert passengers of ERL and alleviate the overcrowding problem. MTRCL would allocate additional trains at more frequent intervals to meet passenger demand during peak hours. Taking into account traffic conditions in the New Territories East, the Administration had been implementing a series of road improvement works, including the widening of the road sections of the Tolo Highway. In addition, relevant government departments were actively pursuing the construction of Trunk Road T4 to provide connectivity between

Ma On Shan and Tsuen Wan bypassing local roads within Shatin district thereby improving traffic flow in the area. As said, the Administration was taking forward the "Strategic Studies on Railways and Major Roads beyond 2030" to examine the demand and supply of traffic infrastructure including major roads and railways to tie-in with the overall long-term development need of Hong Kong. Suggestions on new railway and major roads would be duly considered in the study.

25. On Mr CHAN Hak-kan's enquiry about the implementation timetable of the proposed Pak Shek Kok station, STH said that DEVB was the leading bureau for the whole project. It was proposed that the current site of the Hong Kong Education University Sports Centre would be reprovisioned to free up the land for the construction of the station. THB would work closely with DEVB on relevant matters in due course.

26. Mr LUK Chung-hung said that the Administration had announced the implementation of seven new railway projects in the Railway Development Strategy 2014, including the construction of EKL. Yet until now, the Administration was still undertaking relevant studies with no definite implementation timetable. He urged the Administration to speed up the progress and enquired whether they would consider appointing another consultant to speed up relevant study.

27. STH replied that MTRCL had submitted a technical proposal on EKL, and relevant government departments had in turn offered comments on the proposal. Given that the railway line would be built in hilly terrains and constrained by steep gradient, MTRCL was currently working on improving the design of EKL with a view to resolving the envisaged technical issues and also studying potential feasible options. The Government would consult the public in line with established procedures in due course. On the question of whether the Administration would consider inviting tenders for the project to introduce competition in designing and building EKL, STH advised that the Administration maintained an open mind on the option for new railway projects to be operated independently from existing railway line.

28. On Mr POON Sui-ping's enquiry about the implementation progress of the Shatin to Central Link ("SCL"), STH advised that MTRCL was endeavouring to implement progress recovery measures for the "Hung Hom to Admiralty Section", and had commenced the testing and upgrading of the signaling system. Also, the new 9-car trains were delivered to Hong Kong in batches and put into service progressively. MTRCL would announce the anticipated commissioning date for the remaining section of SCL in due course.

*Safety of taxi drivers and related insurance matter*

29. The Chairman referred to a recent incident of a taxi driver being killed by a passenger and expressed concern about safety of taxi drivers. He called on the installation of protective plastic partition on all taxis to provide better protection to taxi drivers. Noting that the Administration had provided subsidy to franchised buses on the installation of in-vehicle safety devices, he enquired whether similar subsidy could be provided, say through the Smart Traffic Fund, for taxis to install protective plastic partition and other safety devices. He also relayed the difficulties faced by the taxi trade in procuring insurance and asked the Administration to explore ways to address the problem.

30. STH clarified that the \$1 billion Smart Traffic Fund was set up to provide funding support to enterprises and organizations for conducting research and application of vehicle-related innovation and technology to enhance transport efficiency and driving safety. That said, the Administration reckoned the importance of the safety of taxi drivers, and TD had maintained close liaison with the taxi trade and insurance company over the matters. As he understood, the installation of protective plastic partition inside taxi compartment was not in contravention with the existing legislation.

31. Mr POON Siu-ping sought details of the Smart Traffic Fund, including the number of applications received and the amount of Fund disbursed. STH replied that 18 applications in total had been received thus far and relevant parties were reviewing these applications. Relevant details of the applications would be announced in due course.

32. On the Chairman's comment that the operation of wheelchair-accessible taxi model available in the market at present was inconvenient as much time was needed during the loading/unloading of the wheelchair, thereby affecting the operation of taxi in terms of time cost, STH advised that TD had been exploring different vehicle models that were suitable for use as wheelchair-accessible taxis in Hong Kong. TD would keep in view suitable models to be introduced to facilitate both taxi drivers and wheelchair users.

### **III. Traffic and Transport Strategy Study**

LC Paper No. CB(4)1639/20-21(02) - Paper provided by the Administration

LC Paper No. CB(4)1639/20-21(03)

Paper prepared by the  
Legislative Council  
Secretariat (Updated  
background brief)

### Briefing by the Administration

33. At the invitation of the Chairman, Under Secretary for Transport and Housing ("USTH") and Assistant Commissioner/Planning, Transport Department briefed members on the framework of the Traffic and Transport Strategy Study ("TTSS") with the assistance of powerpoint presentation. Details of the briefing were set out in the Administration's paper.

34. Panel members noted that the TTSS, which was announced in the Chief Executive's Policy Address 2020, would map out a forward-looking transport strategy with a planning horizon up to 2050. It would also complement the Government's other long-term initiatives, e.g. the Hong Kong Roadmap on Popularisation of Electric Vehicles, the Clean Air Plan for Hong Kong and the Hong Kong's Climate Action Plan 2050. Members were briefed on the four key directions of the TTSS – (i) to optimize the use of limited road space; (ii) to provide people-centric and efficient public transport services; (iii) to advocate green and active transport as healthy lifestyles; and (iv) to embrace opportunities to enhance transport connectivity with other cities in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area.

35. The Administration advised the Panel that it had commenced the consultant selection and appointment exercise with a view to awarding the consultancy in end-2021. In parallel, a territory-wide Travel Characteristics Survey would be conducted in 2022 and the data collected would be taken into account in the TTSS which was expected to be completed in 2025. The Administration would accord priority to conducting topical studies on certain traffic and transport issues that were relatively new or of public concern, in order to explore and propose relevant policies and measures as early as possible. Members generally supported the Administration's proposal to take forward the TTSS.

### Discussion

#### *The TTSS and other long-term development strategies*

36. Mr LAU Kwok-fan expressed that the residents in the North East New Territories at present relied heavily on the Tolo Highway which had reached its maximum capacity during peak hours. He asked if the Administration had

formulated any plans to cope with the additional transport demand for major roads in the North East New Territories in view of the many upcoming development projects like the Northern Metropolis Development Strategy.

37. USTH and Deputy Commissioner/Planning and Technical Services, Transport Department ("DC/PTS, TD") replied that the Strategic Studies on Railways and Major Roads beyond 2030 were being conducted with a view to recommending corresponding railway and major road projects or other improvement measures to cope with the additional transport demand based on the latest planning data and development strategies, e.g. Hong Kong 2030+ and the Northern Metropolis Development Strategy. The Administration had been proactively taking forward transport infrastructure projects in the Northeast New Territories. Ongoing projects included the widening of Tai Po Road (Sha Tin Section) to be completed in 2023, the construction of the Fanling Bypass (Eastern Section) connecting the Fanling North New Development Area to Fanling Highway to be completed in 2025, and Sha Tin Trunk Road T4 to be completed in 2028. The current situation of the traffic in the North East New Territories including the Tolo Highway were also under review in the Strategic Study on Major Roads beyond 2030.

38. Referring to the Government's target to achieve carbon neutrality before 2050 according to the Chief Executive's Policy Address 2020, Mr YIU Si-wing asked about the collaboration of the Transport and Housing Bureau ("THB") and the Environment Bureau ("ENB") in respect of the initiatives and measures to reduce carbon emissions. DC/PTS, TD replied that one of the purposes of the TTSS was to draw up a Transport Strategy Blueprint to complement ENB's carbon reduction related initiatives. Such included the Hong Kong Roadmap on Popularisation of Electric Vehicles, the Clean Air Plan for Hong Kong and the Hong Kong's Climate Action Plan 2050 to combat air pollution and to cope with climate changes.

39. Ir Dr LO Wai-kwok, the Chairman and Mr Abraham SHEK requested that the Administration should expeditiously launch the TTSS as transportation-related problems bothered Hong Kong citizens every day. The situation might also hinder future development projects, e.g. Northern Metropolis Development Strategy. Mr SHEK asked the Administration to adopt a new mind-set in dealing with transportation-related problems.

40. USTH replied that the Administration had been working to award the consultancy in end-2021 and conduct a territory-wide Travel Characteristics Survey in 2022, so as to draw up a Transport Strategy Blueprint 1.0 on future traffic and transport policies in around 2023. DC/PTS, TD added that the TTSS was taken forward to coordinate, complement and consolidate the

findings and recommendations of various transport-related studies completed and in progress in a holistic manner. Although the TTSS would take four years to complete, the Administration would accord priority to conducting topical studies on certain traffic and transport issues such as enhancing taxi service quality which was expected to be accomplished earlier.

*Government's policy about railways*

41. In the light that the review of the MTR Fare Adjustment Mechanism ("FAM") would be completed in 2023, Mr Michael TIEN suggested that MTR FAM should include factors like fare increase be capped at half of the inflation rate and be linked to the profit level of the MTR Corporation Limited ("MTRCL"). If the profit exceeded a certain value, no fare increase would be allowed. A similar mechanism for bus fares should also be applied. He also proposed the establishment of a committee/board overseeing the fare adjustment mechanisms of all public transportation means. And the dividends received by the Government annually from the shares of MTRCL should be used to support the operation of other types of public transportation facing financial difficulties.

42. The Chairman shared the same view with Mr Michael TIEN regarding using dividends from MTRCL to sustain the operation of other public transport means. He also concurred with the Administration's proposal to use revenue from road management and vehicle growth control measures to improve public transport services and to stabilize fares.

43. Mr Abraham SHEK and Mr Wilson OR both cast doubt on the Government's transport policy of designating railway as the backbone of the public transport system, which had led to the monopoly of MTRCL in public transport. Mr SHEK also doubted the effectiveness of the "Railway-plus-Property development" model in taking forward new railway projects. Moreover, he opined that using the railway as the backbone left the commuting public with very little choice of alternative transport means, and that the survival of other public transport services was at risk. The Administration was asked to consider buying back MTRCL, as well as franchised bus companies, and cover this issue in the TTSS so that the Government could make better overall planning in the provision of affordable public transport services. Mr OR suggested that the Government could introduce competition by inviting other railway operators to carry out railway projects.

44. DC/PTS, TD replied that under the TTSS, the roles played by various public transport modes would be reviewed and coordinated in order to maintain an effective public transport system. As illustrated in the

Administration's paper, the use of revenue generated from road management to improve public transport services and stabilize fares would also be explored in the TTSS.

45. Mr Wilson OR recalled that there had not been any update about the East Kowloon Line ("EKL") project since it was announced in the Railway Development Strategy 2014, and that the Environmentally Friendly Linkage System for Kowloon East had been shelved after the feasibility study. He was worried that the Administration would not take forward the recommendations to be made in the TTSS. He requested the Administration to advise members in detail the post-study action plan after the completion of the TTSS and whether the TTSS would address the congestion problem in East Kowloon.

46. USTH replied that the Administration had offered comments to the proposal submitted by MTRCL and asked MTRCL to further improve the design of the EKL project. He pointed out that the relevant study was still underway. The Government remained open in selecting operators for new railway projects, especially if the railway itself would stand alone from the existing railway network. The Administration had been taking forward various major transport infrastructure projects in East Kowloon, such as Tseung Kwan O-Lam Tin Tunnel and Cross Bay Link, Tseung Kwan O, with a view to improving the congestion problem in East Kowloon.

47. Mr Wilson OR was dissatisfied with the time taken by the Administration and MTRCL in the planning work of EKL and requested the Administration to confirm the implementation timetable of the EKL project as soon as possible.

#### *Parking spaces*

48. In response to Mr YIU Si-wing's suggestion that the TTSS should also cover the problem of insufficient parking spaces in Hong Kong, DC/PTS, TD replied that to address this issue, the parking standards stipulated in the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines to increase the type and number of ancillary parking spaces for private cars and commercial vehicles in future residential developments were already revised and effective from August 2021. The TTSS will explore a new generation of Transport Interchange Hub with a wide range of facilities, e.g. car parks and other public facilities, under the "single site, multiple use" principle to improve overall transport connectivity. The Chairman shared the same view with Mr YIU and doubted if the abovementioned initiatives would be sufficient to cope with the increasing demand for parking spaces in the coming decades.



*Electronic Road Pricing*

49. Mr Michael TIEN enquired about the implementation progress of the Electronic Road Pricing ("ERP"). USTH and DC/PTS, TD explained that an International Expert Panel was set up in 2020 to advise the Administration in taking forward the ERP Pilot Scheme in Central. The Administration finished the field testing of the detection system of ERP in late August 2021 and the data from the field tests were being analyzed.

50. DC/PTS, TD supplemented that the Administration would take over the operation and management of the Western Harbour Crossing upon the expiry of the current build-operate-transfer franchise in 2023. By then, congestion charging among all three cross-harbour tunnels, i.e. charging different tolls at different times with regard to the degree of traffic congestion, could be considered for full execution as a traffic management tool. The Administration would monitor the effectiveness of congestion charging, which might have an effect on the congestion in Central, to decide on the way forward of ERP in the district in the future.

**IV. Any other business**

51. The Chairman said that this would be the last Panel meeting in the current legislative session. He expressed his appreciation and thanks to members for their active participation and contribution to the work of the Panel.

52. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 1:08 pm.