

立法會 *Legislative Council*

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Report of the Panel on Transport for submission to the Legislative Council

Purpose

This report gives an account of the work of the Panel on Transport (“the Panel”) during the 2024 legislative session and will be tabled at the Council meeting of 18 December 2024 in accordance with Rule 77(14) of the Rules of Procedure of the Legislative Council (“LegCo”).

The Panel

2. The Panel was formed by a resolution passed by the LegCo on 8 July 1998 and as amended on 20 December 2000, 9 October 2002, 11 July 2007 and 2 July 2008 for the purpose of monitoring and examining government policies and issues of public concern relating to transport matters. The terms of reference of the Panel are at [Appendix 1](#).

3. For the 2024 session, the Panel comprises 20 members, with Dr Hon CHAN Han-pan and Hon Dominic LEE Tsz-king elected as the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Panel respectively. The membership list of the Panel is at [Appendix 2](#).

Major Work

Tunnel traffic management and tolls

Evaluation on the effectiveness of time-varying tolls at the three road harbour crossings

4. The Panel was briefed on the effectiveness of time-varying tolls implemented at the three road harbour crossings (“RHCs”), namely the

Western Harbour Crossing (“WHC”), the Cross- Harbour Tunnel (“CHT”) and the Eastern Harbour Crossing (“EHC”) since 17 December 2023, and the progress of the related complementary measures. Members generally considered that the three RHCs had achieved the desirable effect of traffic diversion following the implementation of time-varying tolls. In this regard, members commended the efforts of the Transport and Logistics Bureau and the Transport Department (“TD”).

5. Members expressed concern about the increased traffic flow at WHC following the implementation of time-varying tolls and were worried that this situation would worsen with the development of the North West regions. Noting that TD was planning to construct an additional vehicle lane at the Hong Kong Island portal of WHC in the direction of Central and Sheung Wan, with the project expected to be completed in 2027, members urged the Administration to compress the project timeline. The Administration advised that the implementation of time-varying tolls was a new transport policy in Hong Kong and that ordinary motorists would need time to adapt to this change. Consequently, it would need some time to observe the traffic conditions at WHC. The Administration explained that with traffic demand for RHCs at 126% of their capacity, there would be queues of vehicles at peak times even with the implementation of time-varying tolls. As regards the improvement works at the Hong Kong Island portal of WHC, the Administration indicated that it would explore the possibility of adjusting the works timetable.

6. Regarding a uniform toll of \$50 for commercial vehicles, members suggested that the Administration should consider lowering the toll for minibuses and light vans so as to ease the operational pressure on these transport trades and enhance the overall competitiveness of Hong Kong. The Administration advised that when reviewing tunnel tolls, it must take into account traffic management needs in addition to financial considerations. The Administration said that it would collect data to assess whether there was room for adjusting tolls while still achieving the traffic management objective.

Takeover arrangements and tolling scenarios for Tai Lam Tunnel upon the Government's takeover

7. Given that the franchise of the Tai Lam Tunnel (“TLT”) and Yuen Long Approach Road (“YLAR”) would expire on 30 May 2025, the Panel's views were sought on the takeover arrangements for TLT and YLAR by the Government, and the analysis of the proposed tolling scenarios for TLT. The

proposed tolling scenarios put forward by the Administration included two fixed toll proposals and one time-varying toll proposal.

8. While welcoming the Administration's proposal to lower tolls (e.g. under the proposed tolling scenario 3 (i.e. the time-varying toll scenario), it was proposed to charge \$45 for private cars during the peak period, \$35 during the normal period and \$20 during the off-peak period, with an overall reduction rate of 22% to 66%; and a uniform toll of \$30 for taxis and \$45 for commercial vehicles, with respective reduction rates of 48% and 30% to 79%), members generally considered that there was still room for downward adjustment of tolls during the off-peak period. Some members considered that the tolls under the three tolling scenarios to be on the high side. They requested the Administration to further assess whether the off-peak tolls for commercial vehicles and private cars could be further adjusted downward. There was also a view that the TLT toll reduction proposal should draw on the experience of traffic distribution among the three RHCs and use tolls as a means of traffic regulation to achieve the policy objective of making optimal use of the spare capacity of TLT.

9. Regarding the toll plan put forward by the Administration, after discussion at a meeting, the Panel passed a motion calling on the Government to drastically reduce tolls or even consider waiving the toll during off-peak hours upon the Government's takeover of TLT, in order to achieve the maximum traffic diversion effect, alleviate pressure on Tuen Mun Road, and reduce both the commuting costs and time for residents of Yuen Long and Tuen Mun. The Administration advised that it would listen to and carefully consider the views of the Panel and relevant stakeholders before finalizing the toll plan for TLT, with a view to introducing the Amendment Bill into LegCo in the fourth quarter of 2024.

Transport infrastructure

Northern Metropolis Highway – Investigation

10. The Panel was consulted on a funding application for upgrading part of the "Northern Metropolis Highway" ("NMH") project to Category A. The NMH – Investigation" ("the Investigation") as proposed to be upgraded to Category A includes the study of the preliminary alignment options, environmental and traffic assessments, preliminary design and associated site investigations for NMH. The Investigation is expected to be completed in about 38 months at an estimated cost of \$1,134.2 million in money-of-the day price.

11. While members were generally supportive of the Administration's efforts to expedite the construction of NMH to align with the development of the Northern Metropolis, they expressed concern that the Investigation would take 38 months to complete. The Administration was asked to review how the procedures for major infrastructure projects could be streamlined to enhance efficiency and competitiveness. There was a view that the project cost of over \$1.1 billion was too high. It was suggested that the Administration should consider engaging the same contractor to carry out the study, design and construction of the relevant works to save consultancy fee. In addition, given the various major infrastructure projects to be initiated in the Northern Metropolis, members opined that the Administration should coordinate effectively with other project stakeholders so that the results and data obtained from the investigation works could be shared to optimize the use of resources and avoid duplication of work.

12. According to the Administration, NMH is a mega and complex project. In drawing up the project timetable, consideration was given to the need to concurrently conduct tasks such as the traffic impact assessment, preliminary design and site investigation. These tasks would also entail relevant statutory procedures, including environmental impact assessment and the gazettal of the project. The Administration advised that it would strive to shorten the time required for the Investigation.

13. As for the cost of the Investigation, the Administration explained that it consisted mainly of consultancy fee and the related fee for the site investigation works, which were estimated based on objective factors, such as the characteristics and scale of the project and with reference to the prices of similar projects in the past. Regarding the consultancy fee, the Government expected to update the project estimates in its submission to the Public Works Subcommittee to reflect market prices. In addition, due to the envisaged need to carry out a significant amount of site investigation works for NMH, the Administration undertook to carry out the necessary site investigation works in a pragmatic manner according to different alignment options during the Investigation, so as to minimize the associated expenditure.

14. Members expressed concern that the commissioning of NMH (Tin Shui Wai Section, Kwu Tung Section and New Territories North New Town Section) scheduled beyond 2039 might not tie in with the implementation programme of the New Development Areas ("NDAs"), particularly as the Kwu Tung NDA project was expected to be completed more quickly. Therefore, they suggested that the target commissioning time of NMH (Kwu Tung Section) should be brought forward to align with that of NMH (San Tin

Section), which was scheduled for completion between 2034 and 2038, so as to dovetail with the timing of population intake in the area. On alignments, members suggested extending NMH eastwards to Sha Tau Kok and westwards to Hung Shui Kiu and Hong Kong – Shenzhen Western Corridor, so that NMH could cover the central locations in both the east and west of the Northern Metropolis. It was also suggested that NMH be connected to the MTR Northern Link and that park-and-ride facilities be constructed there to facilitate easy access by members of the public to urban areas by MTR.

15. The Administration advised that flexibility had been incorporated into the alignment to allow for connections to areas such as Hung Shui Kiu, thereby accommodating larger-scale developments where necessary. In conducting traffic assessment, the Administration would also take into account the implementation timetables of various NDAs as well as the local transport and logistics demands.

Public transport fares

Taxi fare increase applications

16. The Panel was consulted on taxi fare increase applications. Members were generally of the view that the rates of fare increase under the fare increase proposals put forward by the trade (i.e. the average rates of the proposed fare increase were 16.95% for urban taxis, 15.37% for New Territories taxis and 11.68% for Lantau taxis) were excessively high and beyond public acceptability. The Administration advised that it would take into account various factors, in particular public acceptability, when processing fare increase applications from the trade, as well as changes in drivers' income and operating costs. In addition, taking into account that taxis provide a personalized point-to-point transport service, the Administration would also consider whether a reasonable differential between taxi fares and the fares of other public transport services could be maintained when reviewing fare increase applications.

17. Members expressed concern that the average income of taxi drivers still lagged behind the median income in the transport sector, and that the operating expenses of taxi owners, in particular insurance premiums, had increased significantly. In this regard, members suggested that the Administration explore measures to encourage the insurance sector to lower insurance premiums. The Administration advised that it would continue to explore risk differentiation measures with the insurance sector. For example, if taxi fleets could elaborate in specific terms how they would manage their drivers or install monitoring equipment related to traffic safety, the insurance

sector might consider whether there was room for lowering insurance premiums.

18. Some members pointed out that the quality of taxi service had not improved much since the last taxi fare increase, which came into effect in July 2022. Therefore, they considered that the fare increase would not contribute to enhancing the quality of taxi service. Some members also opined that the Administration should step up its efforts in combating non-compliant drivers. The Administration responded that enhancing the quality of taxi service and maintaining a healthy financial position of the trade were inter-related. It was necessary for the trade to have sound financial conditions before it could make corresponding investments and improve their service. Looking ahead, to improve the quality of taxi service and promote the development of the taxi trade, the Administration would introduce a taxi fleet regime and started accepting applications for Taxi Fleet Licences on 12 April 2024. To step up efforts to combat the malpractices of some taxi drivers, the Administration had increased penalties by introducing a two-tier penalty system and a Taxi-Driver Offence Points (“TDOP”) System, while the Police would also enhance their enforcement efforts¹.

MTR fare adjustment for 2024

19. The Administration and the MTR Corporation Limited (“MTRCL”) briefed members on the MTR fare adjustment for 2024. The fare adjustment rate for 2024, calculated under the formula of the Fare Adjustment Mechanism (“FAM”), was +3.2%. However, under the “Affordability Cap” arrangement, the overall fare adjustment rate for 2024 was capped at +3.09%. The remaining +0.11% adjustment rate of 2024 would be deferred to 2025 and 2026 for processing in accordance with the mechanism. The deferred adjustment rate of +1.85% from the previous year would also be carried forward to 2025 for processing.

20. Members expressed concern that the deferred adjustment rate from 2023 had already accumulated to 1.85%. If the future fare adjustment rate calculated under FAM failed to activate the “Affordability Cap” arrangement, the accumulated fare increases would be added to that year’s fare adjustment all at once, which might not be acceptable to the public. In this regard, members suggested that the Administration should cancel the accumulated fare increases or, in future reviews of FAM, consider setting a time or percentage cap on the recoupment arrangements for deferred fare

¹ The two-tier penalty system took immediate effect upon gazettal of the relevant ordinance on 22 December 2023. TDOP also came into force on 22 September 2024.

increases. MTRCL responded that the fare adjustment rate would be capped at the “median household income” under FAM, and that any deferred fare increases could not be recouped if the “Affordability Cap” arrangement was triggered, regardless of how many years such fare increases had been deferred. However, if MTRCL were to cancel the previously accumulated fare increases, it would pose significant difficulties and challenges for MTRCL in achieving the objective of maintaining its high service standards.

21. Regarding FAM, members pointed out that although the Administration and MTRCL had linked the calculation of the Productivity Factor (“PF”) in the FAM formula to the Hong Kong Property Development (“HKPD”) profits of MTRCL following the 2023 FAM review, the fare adjustment rate calculated under both the old and new mechanisms remained the same at 3.09%. This outcome appeared to fall short of public expectations. As such, some members suggested that MTRCL should not increase fares when earning higher profits (e.g. over \$15 billion) and that, in the next FAM review, considerations should be given to incorporating a factor related to non-property development profits into the FAM formula. It was also suggested that MTRCL, as in previous years, should offer some fare concessions along with fare adjustments to offset the impact of fare increases on the public. In response to the members’ views, MTRCL indicated that it would consider offering one-off concessions and would continue to listen to and consider public views in the next review.

Fare increase applications from franchised bus operators

22. The Panel’s views were sought on the fare increase applications from three franchised bus operators (i.e. The Kowloon Motor Bus Company (1933) Limited (“KMB”), Citybus Limited (Franchise for the Urban and New Territories bus network) (“CTB(U&NT)”), and New Lantau Bus Company (1973) Limited (“NLB”). The rates of fare increase applied for by KMB, CTB(U&NT) and NLB were 6.5%, 9.5% and 6.5% respectively.

23. Members were generally dissatisfied that the fare increase rates applied for by the three franchised bus operators were significantly higher than the rates of inflation and the median monthly household income growth. They pointed out that KMB and NLB had applied for fare increase at a time when they were making profits, which they found unacceptable. Members were of the view that the bus operators had not made vigorous efforts to generate revenue and manage costs to reduce operational pressures (e.g. by actively generating more non-fare box revenue and hedging against volatile fuel costs). Consequently, they considered that the fare increase applications were a means of shifting the consequences of the operators’ poor

management onto the public. Members also criticized the lack of improvement in bus service performance (e.g. lost trip rates).

24. Representatives of the franchised bus operators explained that there had been a persistent decline in bus patronage in the face of the ever expanding railway network. In the case of KMB, the current patronage had only recovered to about 90% of the level prior to the epidemic. Moreover, although the bus companies had actively explored new sources of non-fare box revenue, the current market downturn yielded less than satisfactory returns, necessitating timely fare adjustments for the development of the bus companies and the allocation of more resources to improve services and staff employment terms and conditions.

25. There was a suggestion to establish a bus fare adjustment mechanism that would adjust bus fares annually based on inflation, with a cap set at the public's median wage to ensure that fare increases stay within an acceptable range. It was also suggested that the Administration should utilize the Franchised Bus Toll Exemption Fund ("TEF") to offset fare increases, thereby alleviating the financial burden on the public. The representatives of the franchised bus operators were open to the suggestion of establishing a bus fare adjustment mechanism. They considered however that the mechanism should also take into account fuel prices and wage increases to more fully reflect the operating costs of the bus companies. Regarding TEF, the Administration advised that if the Chief Executive-in-Council ("CE-in-C") approved an application for a fare increase, the magnitude of the increase might be reduced by using the TEF.

26. With regard to increasing the non-fare box revenue of franchised bus operators, members suggested that the Administration should provide more policy support, such as allowing the operators to set up small convenience stores or smart lockers, etc. at bus stops to increase bus companies' revenue. In addition, members were also very concerned about the service performance of franchised buses and stressed that enhancing service was key to attracting passengers, thereby increasing farebox revenue. Therefore, they urged the bus operators to improve their service, including ameliorating the problem of bus lost trips, enhancing passenger experience (e.g. building shelters and seats at bus stops and providing a pleasant travelling environment for passengers), providing more facilities for ease of use by visually impaired and wheelchair-bound passengers, and introducing section fares on long-haul bus routes to meet the needs of short-distance passengers.

27. Representatives of the franchised bus operators responded that they would allocate more resources to improve services, including the addition of

barrier-free facilities, enhancements to bus stop facilities and the environment inside bus compartments, as well as offering fare concessions and interchange discounts to various passenger groups. With regard to the issue of bus lost trips, the representatives explained that the shortage of bus captains had impacted the stability of their services. In response, the operators had actively improved the remuneration packages of their staff in recent years to retain and attract talent.

28. The Administration advised that it was considering the fare increase applications from the three franchised bus operators. Before submitting recommendations to CE-in-C, it would make reference to all relevant factors including the quality and quantity of bus services, public acceptability and affordability, and take into account the views of the Panel and the Transport Advisory Committee. The Administration advised that it would exercise due diligence in scrutinizing the applications for fare increase and effectively perform its gatekeeping role.

Enhancements and updates to traffic management systems

Vehicles and Drivers Licensing Integrated Data System Infrastructure and Application Enhancement of the Transport Department

29. The Panel's views were sought on TD's funding proposal to enhance the Vehicles and Drivers Licensing Integrated Data System V ("VALID System"). The Administration explained that the objective of the proposal was to enhance the VALID System's functionality, performance and capacity, as well as provide support to various e-licensing initiatives of TD. Members were generally supportive of the proposal and considered that the proposed enhancements to the VALID System could facilitate TD's future digital development so as to provide more efficient licensing services to the public.

30. Noting that the VALID System contained information of over two million driving licence holders and over 800 000 registered vehicle owners, members were concerned about whether the Administration had taken adequate measures to protect the security of personal data. The Administration advised that the proposed enhancements would introduce a new generation of security management measures and monitoring mechanism. TD would safeguard the security of the VALID System by replacing the outdated components, and adopt the new generation of IT Security Solution. TD would also establish the satellite site under the Government Cloud Infrastructure Services in accordance with the

Government Cloud Architecture Framework set out by the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer to enhance data security.

Retrofitting of traffic signal controllers under Kowloon and Tai Po and North Area Traffic Control Systems to enable wireless communication and replacement of the traffic signal controllers and ancillary equipment of Tuen Mun and Yuen Long Area Traffic Control System

31. The Panel was consulted on the funding proposals for retrofitting of traffic signal controllers under Kowloon and Tai Po and North Area Traffic Control Systems to enable wireless communication and replacement of the traffic signal controllers and ancillary equipment of Tuen Mun and Yuen Long Area Traffic Control System. Members were generally supportive of the proposals.

32. Members were concerned about the network security of traffic control systems and the stability of network service provision, and whether the Administration had ensured that the wireless transmission of the Hong Kong Area Traffic Control (“ATC”) System would not be subject to interference from jammers during its earlier renewal. The Administration advised that, in addition to installing firewalls and adopting an encrypted transmission design, it had also conducted internal tests using wireless equipment at certain selected locations in Hong Kong to examine what systems could be used to protect against external intrusion. The results of the tests would first be applied to the Hong Kong ATC system, and then to Kowloon and the New Territories. The Administration further advised that should there be any signal interference, the equipment located at traffic junctions would still be able to operate independently, ensuring that no inappropriate traffic signals would be given.

33. Members were concerned about the serviceable life of the updated traffic control systems and whether they could provide the technical foundation for the future implementation of the Real-time Adaptive Traffic Signal System. The Administration advised that the electronic equipment of the new systems would have a lifespan of approximately 7 to 10 years. In addition, it would keep abreast of technological developments and update the systems in a timely manner to ensure that they could effectively support the Real-time Adaptive Traffic Signal System.

Transport arrangements for connection to land-based ports

34. The Panel was briefed on the latest overview of various measures relating to the transport arrangements for connection to land-based ports.

Members noted that since the implementation of the “Northbound Travel for Hong Kong Vehicles” (“the Scheme”)² on 1 July last year and up to June this year, it had become a major drive for promoting the increase in the vehicular flow of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge (“HZMB”). At present, over 60 000 Hong Kong single-plate private cars had completed the application with valid permits and were eligible for travel via HZMB. The usage of HZMB had also recorded new highs, with its two-way vehicular flow of a total of about 360 000 vehicles in May 2024, a daily average of about 12 000 vehicles, representing an increase of about 120% as compared to the same period in 2023; among which vehicles under the Scheme accounted for about 36% of HZMB’s daily vehicular flow. The Administration also reported on various enhancement measures³ for the Scheme to provide travel convenience for the public. In addition, to increase the number of vehicles using HZMB, the governments of Hong Kong and Macao agreed to further increase the quotas for private cars from both regions and approved Hong Kong goods vehicles to transport goods between Hong Kong and Macao using HZMB.

35. With more frequent flow of people among Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao, members welcomed TD’s liaison with the relevant units in Hong Kong and the Mainland as well as Hong Kong public transport operators to formulate additional plans for the passenger and vehicular flow during peak periods, so as to address the travel demand of Hong Kong people and cross-boundary travellers during festive holidays. Members also supported the proposal to extend the validity period of a closed road permit (“CRP”) from one year to not more than five years, with a view to more effectively responding to citizens’ growing cross-boundary travel needs.

² “Northbound Travel for Hong Kong Vehicles” is a policy which allows eligible Hong Kong private cars to travel between Hong Kong and Guangdong via HZMB without the need to obtain regular quotas. The objective of the policy is to facilitate Hong Kong residents’ self-driving to Guangdong for business, visiting families or sightseeing on a short-term basis, further making good use of HZMB and promoting the development of the Greater Bay Area.

³ The enhancement measures include:

- increasing the number of applications accepted per working day ((including new applications and renewals) and refining the arrangements for renewal applications;
- on vehicle inspection, increasing the number of vehicle inspection centres in Hong Kong designated for the Scheme and extending the service hours; starting from March 2024, vehicle inspection is exempted if the applicant and the vehicle remain unchanged when resubmitting applications for the Scheme within two years of passing the vehicle inspection and within the validity of the applicant’s Mainland electronic vehicle licence; and
- shortening the periods of booking for departure.

36. Members noted that traffic congestion had frequently occurred at the Zhuhai Port of HZMB on weekends and holidays since the implementation of the Scheme. They expressed concern about the impact of the new measures on the vehicular flow of HZMB, and suggested extending the Scheme to other boundary control points other than HZMB to divert the traffic flow. The Administration advised that the HKSAR Government had discussed with the Mainland authorities and, after summarizing the experience gained, would extend the Scheme to another land boundary control point, with an announcement to be made in due course. Additionally, the Administration would discuss with the Mainland the dissemination of real-time traffic information of the Zhuhai Port.

37. Members expressed concern about whether the Scheme would be expanded to other provinces. The Administration advised that the policy was part of an agreement among the governments of Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao, and that further discussions with the Mainland would depend as needed.

Regulation of online hire car hailing (“online hailed car”) platforms

38. In announcing the preliminary findings on the study on the regulation of online hailed car services in July this year, the Administration indicated its intention to regulate online hailed car platforms and their hire cars through issuing licence. The Panel’s views were sought on the above findings and on how the existing legislation could be enhanced to more effectively combat illegal carriage of passengers for hire or reward.

39. The Administration advised that it was aware of the public’s concern about illegal carriage of passengers for hire or reward and the regulation of online hailed car platforms. To strengthen the deterrence effect and combat the use of vehicles by vehicle owners or drivers for illegal carriage of passengers for hire or reward, the Administration proposed to further enhance the existing legislation. The Administration pointed out that the existing legislation on hire cars mainly regulated vehicle owners and drivers, with no clear and relevant provisions for regulating the operation of online hailed car platforms. In this respect, the Administration had studied the practices in other places⁴.

40. According to the Administration, in conclusion, all of the places covered in the study have laws and regulations in force for regulation of

⁴ The places covered in the study include Shenzhen, Singapore, London, Canberra, Toronto and Japan.

online hailed car platform companies/drivers. Platform companies are required to submit applications to the respective governments for obtaining relevant operating licences or permits before they can run their business, and to operate in accordance with the conditions of approval, including ensuring that all vehicles and drivers engaged for providing services through their platforms are issued with appropriate licences/permits and covered by relevant insurance policies. Moreover, eligible drivers are only allowed to provide pre-arranged services through government-licensed platform companies, otherwise they will commit an offence.

41. Taking into account the regulatory experiences in other places and the situation in Hong Kong, the Administration proposed to consider regulating platforms that provide online hailing services in Hong Kong, and to factor in the overall supply and demand of personalized point-to-point transport services in the market in parallel with the study on regulating platforms. To this end, TD would commence a survey later this year on the relevant passenger demand and changes, etc., which was expected to be completed in a year. Subject to the findings of the above study, the Administration would assess the types and number of vehicles that might provide complying services through the platforms under the future regulatory proposal, as well as the relevant licensing requirements for the platforms and drivers, etc.

42. Members generally considered that the provision of online hailed car platform services was an inevitable trend, and expressed the hope that the Administration would take appropriate measures to facilitate the healthy development of the industry when imposing regulations. Concerns were raised as to whether regulating the platforms providing such services would lead to a significant reduction in the supply of online hailed cars, making it unable to meet the demand. Some members urged the Administration to loosen the existing licensing regime of hire car service and issue more hire car permits to allow more market entrants. These members were of the view that if the Administration ultimately only regulated the platforms without issuing new permits, taxis would become the sole providers of personalized point-to-point services. As a result, the public and tourists would be greatly affected by the lack of or insufficient competition.

43. In addition, some members expressed the hope that the Administration would shorten the timeframe for the above-mentioned study on the overall supply and demand of personalized point-to-point transport services, and submit the legislative proposal to the Panel in the first half of 2025, with a view to commencing the legislative process in the second half of the year. The Administration advised that it would formulate a legislative

proposal in 2025 after fully considering the study's findings and listening to the stakeholders' views.

Pedestrian facilities

The trial implementation of "diagonal crossings"

44. The Panel discussed the trial scheme of "diagonal crossings", including receiving a briefing from TD on the present situation of the trial of Hong Kong's first diagonal crossing at the junction of Sha Kok Street and Yat Tai Street in Sha Tin since 31 January 2024. In summary, about 50% of pedestrians crossed the road diagonally during peak hours at the location, saving an average of about 14 seconds as compared with that for the original staggered crossings, while the average waiting time for vehicles at the junction was generally comparable to that of the original crossings.

45. Members suggested that the Administration consider installing pedestrian traffic light countdown devices, such that pedestrians could clearly gauge the remaining green time and the time needed for the pedestrian crossing signal to turn green while waiting to cross the road. The Administration advised that a device which started counting down when the "green man" light began to flash had been tested in the past but its effectiveness was found to be uncertain. In October 2023, the Administration began trial testing of a new type of pedestrian traffic light countdown device ("the new pedestrian countdown device") at the pedestrian crossing of Tat Tung Road/Mei Tung Street in Tung Chung, which started counting down when the "green man" light was on. After summarizing the experiences gained from the trial, the Administration would explore how to further validate the effectiveness of the new pedestrian countdown device.

46. Members noted that TD was planning for the second trial location for diagonal crossings in Tsim Sha Tsui for observation for six to nine months, and would consider the way forward on the basis of the trial results. Members were of the view that the time required for the study and implementation was too long, and suggested that the Administration should consider running trials simultaneously at one to two trial locations in each district, as well as conducting trials at crossroads near Light Rail stations. The Administration advised that it would take on board the experience gained from the trial implementation in Sha Tin to refine the arrangements for the trial in Tsim Sha Tsui. Due to seasonal changes in pedestrian flow, the Administration would indeed need six to nine months for the review.

Road safety

Highways Department's emergency recovery works in response to road-related incidents under extreme weather

47. The Panel was briefed on the Highways Department (“HyD”)’s contingency measures and recovery works in road emergencies under extreme weather conditions. Members commended the Administration for the countermeasures taken during the onslaught of Super Typhoon Saola and the Black Rainstorm in September 2023 and the prompt clean-up efforts made afterwards, which had minimized the impact of extreme weather on the public.

48. Members expressed concern that some roads (e.g. Shek O Road, South Lantau Road, etc.) were the only access roads in and out of certain areas, and residents had no other means of escape in the event of road subsidence or other incidents during extreme weather. In this regard, members were concerned whether the Administration would step up maintenance and repair for such roads. The Administration advised that trunk roads, highways and the only access roads in and out of certain areas were regularly inspected and maintained to ensure smooth traffic flow.

49. On landslide prevention, members suggested that the Administration should set up a coordination working group to examine the blackspots across the territory where serious incidents might occur and to enhance preventive measures at such locations. The Administration advised that the Geotechnical Engineering Office had been leading other departments in strengthening slope upgrading works. Currently, the Administration needed to upgrade approximately 1 400 slopes, of which over 200 had already undergone related works. The Administration would ensure that priority is given to the more important and heavily-trafficked slopes.

50. On flood prevention, the Administration was requested to provide a list of roads with higher risk of flooding. There was a suggestion that road surfaces in the vicinity of low-lying areas with previous records of flooding should be cleared in advance to minimize blockage of drains during rainfall. The Administration advised that HyD would arrange for contractors to clear facilities such as gully covers and stormwater collection boxes before each typhoon season, and drain clearing teams would be deployed to clear drainage facilities after the issuance of a tropical cyclone warning signal by the Hong Kong Observatory. However, due to the frequent occurrence of sudden heavy rainfall within a short period of time in recent years, rainwater flowing downhill often carried debris, leaves and tree branches, resulting in

blockage of gullies. In this regard, the Administration had increased manpower such that staff could be immediately deployed to handle flooding situations as soon as they were reported.

Other issues

51. During this legislative session, the Panel received a briefing on the 2024 Policy Address. In addition, the Panel discussed the following items proposed by the Administration:

- (a) Re-grading of the directorate support for the Urban Regional Offices and Technical Services Branch in the Transport Department; and
- (b) 6101TX – Universal Accessibility Programme.

Meetings held and visits conducted

52. During the period between January and November 2024, the Panel held a total of 9 meetings. The Panel has scheduled another meeting for 13 December 2024 to discuss: (a) proposed installation of camera systems in all taxi compartments; and (b) Vessel Subsidy Scheme; and a joint meeting with the Panel on Environmental Affairs on 16 December 2024 to discuss the green transformation roadmap of public buses and taxis.

53. The Panel conducted a duty visit to the Yangtze River Delta Region from 10 to 13 September 2024 to understand how the region is implementing smart mobility, pursuing smart traffic development and management, developing intelligent connected vehicles, promoting new energy public traffic and transport systems, etc. The report of the duty visit was issued vide LC Paper No. CB(3)901/2024.

54. The Panel also conducted the following four local visits:

- (a) visit to in-town check-in service at the Airport Express;
- (b) visit to MTR's "Station Rail Voyage" Exhibition at Hung Hom Station;
- (c) visit to the demonstration of functions of eTraffic Ticket Platform; and

- (d) joint visit to MTR Kai Tak Station with Subcommittee on Policy Issues Relating to Strengthening and Promoting the Development of Kowloon East as the Second Central Business District.

Council Business Divisions
Legislative Council Secretariat
12 December 2024

Legislative Council

Panel on Transport

Terms of Reference

1. To monitor and examine Government policies and issues of public concern relating to transport.
2. To provide a forum for the exchange and dissemination of views on the above policy matters.
3. To receive briefings and to formulate views on any major legislative or financial proposals in respect of the above policy area prior to their formal introduction to the Council or Finance Committee.
4. To monitor and examine, to the extent it considers necessary, the above policy matters referred to it by a member of the Panel or by the House Committee.
5. To make reports to the Council or to the House Committee as required by the Rules of Procedure.

Panel on Transport

Membership list for the 2024 session

Chairman Dr Hon CHAN Han-pan, BBS, JP

Deputy Chairman Hon Dominic LEE Tsz-king

Members

Hon CHAN Hak-kan, SBS, JP
Hon Mrs Regina IP LAU Suk-yee, GBM, GBS, JP
Hon Michael TIEN Puk-sun, BBS, JP
Hon Frankie YICK Chi-ming, GBS, JP
Ir Dr Hon LO Wai-kwok, GBS, MH, JP
Hon LUK Chung-hung, JP
Hon Kenneth LAU Ip-keung, SBS, MH, JP
Hon Tony TSE Wai-chuen, BBS, JP
Hon Stanley LI Sai-wing, MH, JP
Hon CHAU Siu-chung
Hon LEUNG Man-kwong, MH
Hon CHAN Pui-leung
Ir Hon CHAN Siu-hung, JP
Hon JoePHY CHAN Wing-yan
Hon CHAN Hok-fung, MH, JP
Ir Hon Gary ZHANG Xinyu
Hon YANG Wing-kit
Hon YIM Kong, JP

(Total : 20 members)

Clerk Ms Joanne MAK

Legal Adviser Miss Dorothy YUNG