Progress Report of the Traffic and Transport Committee

The first meeting of the Traffic and Transport Committee (“T&TC”) in 2015 was held on 29 January 2015. The major issues discussed are summarised below:

**Project Item 265RS Cycle Tracks Connecting North West New Territories with North East New Territories - Extension - Nam Sang Wai Section**

1. Members generally supported that the project should proceed and agreed that it could help the development of eco-tourism in Yuen Long district and provide a safer cycling environment for cyclists.

2. The Civil Engineering and Development Department (“CEDD”) stated that the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (“EIA Report”) for the project had been submitted to the Environmental Protection Department (“EPD”) and the EIA Sub-committee of the Advisory Council on the Environment had been briefed in April 2013 on the EIA findings. At the EIA Sub-committee meeting, some Members were deeply concerned about the potential impact of the proposed Yuen Long to Nam Sang Wai cycle track section on the ecology of the Nam Sang Wai area, including the impact of future cyclist visitors on the environment. The CEDD had tried to re-amend the design of the cycle track taking into account the views of the EIA Sub-committee, but in spite of any mitigation measures, the number of visitors would inevitably increase and would adversely affect the conservation of ecologically sensitive habitats. Therefore, the CEDD had decided to cancel the project as no feasible mitigation measure had been devised.

3. The Chairman expressed regret in his conclusion that the project, which had been discussed by the CEDD and the District Council (“DC”) for several years, was finally proposed to be withdrawn due to the disapproval of the EIA Sub-committee. He would write to the EPD after the meeting with a view to better understanding the demands of the EIA Sub-committee.

**Contract No. HY/2011/13 - Improvement to Pok Oi Interchange Temporary Traffic Arrangement Related to New Flyover Construction (Nightworks)**

4. Members did not object to the temporary traffic diversion arrangements for the works. A Member was concerned about the noise problem which might be brought by the works and suggested that the department should provide proper noise insulation and sufficient signs to notify motorists of the traffic diversions.

5. The Highways Department (“HyD”) stated that the works permit must be granted by the EPD before the commencement of works. The works would be carried out in strict compliance with the requirements of the EPD and proper noise insulation would be provided. They would also maintain close liaison with the Hong Kong Police Force (“HKPF”) to ensure road safety.
2015-2016 Yuen Long District Bus Route Planning Programme

6. The Chairman said that he would leave this issue to the Working Group on Bus Service for detailed discussion at its first meeting on 5 February 2015.

Mr MAK Ip-sing Requested Provision of Handrails by the Sides of the Staircase at Fung Cheung Road Footbridge

7. Members welcomed the response of the Transport Department (“TD”) and hoped that a lift would be retrofitted at the footbridge in the near future for the convenience of wheelchair users and persons pushing baby prams.

8. The TD responded that the works request had been issued for the handrail installation works. The detailed commencement dates had yet to be determined with the HyD. The proposal for the retrofitting of a lift would be forwarded to the HyD with a view to including it in the “Universal Accessibility” Programme.

Ms CHIU Sau-han, Ms WONG Wai-ling and Mr CHUI Kwan-siu Requested Operation of a Bus Route Plying Between Tin Shui Wai and Pok Oi Hospital in Yuen Long

Ms LAU Kwai-yung, Mr YIU Kwok-wai and Mr TANG Cheuk-him Proposed to Discuss the Transport Service for Pok Oi Hospital in the District After the Rationalisation of Bus Routes

9. Members expressed their strong discontent that the residents in Tin Shui Wai were required to interchange bus routes or take maxicabs which ran at a lower frequency to go to Pok Oi Hospital after the rationalisation of bus routes. They considered that taking care of patients and providing convenient transport for the public to go to the hospital could brook no delay, and urged the TD to face up to the problem and provide solutions as soon as possible.

10. The TD responded that there had not been a drastic increase in the maxicab patronage to Pok Oi Hospital from the residents in Tin Shui Wai after the rationalisation of bus routes. The department would continue to closely monitor the maxicab service. Replacing operators would be one of the solutions if the service was found unsatisfactory.

11. The Kowloon Motor Bus Company (1933) Limited (“KMB”) responded that according to survey data, about 10 passengers were currently using the KMB bus interchange service going to and from Pok Oi Hospital every day. It reflected that the demand for such transport service was not high.

12. The Chairman concluded that as Pok Oi Hospital was the only public hospital in Yuen Long district, and more beds had been added and service enhanced in 2014, the overall number of patients had increased. Therefore, comprehensive transport facilities must be provided for patients and their families to go to the hospital for follow-up consultations and visits. He would write to the TD to report such problem after the meeting.
Mr KWOK Keung, MH, Mr LUI Kin, Mr SIU Long-ming, Ms WONG Wai-ling, Mr CHUI Kwan-siu, Mr KO Chun-kit, Mr YU Chung-leung, Mr LEUNG Yip-pang and Ms MA Shuk-yin Requested Re-adjusting the Time of Traffic Lights at the Junction of Tin Fuk Road and Tin Shing Road and That of Tin Fuk Road and Tin Tsz Road to Alleviate Traffic Congestion at Tin Fuk Road

13. Members noted the response of the TD and hoped the department would conduct a site inspection with DC Members of the district as soon as possible to resolve the issue.

Mr KWOK Keung, MH, Mr LUI Kin, Ms WONG Wai-ling, Mr CHUI Kwan-siu, Mr KO Chun-kit, Mr YU Chung-leung, Mr LEUNG Yip-pang and Ms MA Shuk-yin Requested Extending the Double White Lines at Long Tin Road Leading to the Expressway

14. Some Members suggested extending the double white lines at Long Tin Road to ease traffic congestion, but it was opposed by some other Members as they thought that it would affect drivers going to Yuen Long Highway from Ma Wang Road. Members suggested the re-planning of that road section to provide a long-term solution to traffic problems caused by lane-cutting.

15. The TD responded that extending the double white lines at the above road was feasible, and would follow up the matter with DC Members of the district. The TD also noted Members’ suggestions on traffic planning. They would be taken into account in the Planning and Engineering Study for Housing Sites in Yuen Long South.

Mr LUI Kin, Mr KWOK Keung, MH, Mr SIU Long-ming, Ms WONG Wai-ling, Mr CHUI Kwan-siu, Mr KO Chun-kit, Mr YU Chung-leung, Mr LEUNG Yip-pang and Ms MA Shuk-yin Requested Extending the Service Hours of MTR Bus Route Nos. K66, K68 and K73 to Synchronise with the Last West Rail Line Train
Ms CHAN Mei-lin Requested Improving the Service of Bus Route Nos. K73 and K74

16. Members suggested that the MTR Corporation Limited (“MTRCL”) should increase the frequency of route no. K73 during the morning and evening peak hours, readjust the departure time of route no. K73 and extend the service hours of MTR buses to synchronise with the last train of West Rail lines, as in the case of the extension of Light Rail service hours to synchronise with the last train of West Rail lines.

17. The MTRCL stated that a number of factors, including the demand of passengers and allocation of resources, were considered when formulating the frequency and service level of different bus routes. K73 and K74 were complementary bus routes. According to the observation at various times of the day, the service level of the two routes was at present sufficient to meet the current needs of passengers. The frequency of route no. K73 was affected by road traffic condition during the morning peak hours, and the fact that no. K73 was a long circular route also affected the management of bus arrival time. The MTRCL would continue to
pay close attention to the service level so as to meet the service demand. For the synchronisation between the buses and the last train of West Rail lines, as the current demand for the last bus of the three bus routes was not high, and there were very few passengers on the last train exiting Long Ping Station, the MTRCL had no plan to extend the service hours of the three bus routes at the moment. For the service hours of Light Rail, the MTRCL explained that as the operation and establishment of railways and buses were different, they had to give weight to various factors when considering the extension of service hours.

18. The Chairman concluded that MTR bus route nos. K73 and K74 were important mode of transport connecting Yuen Long and Tin Shui Wai districts, and hoped that the MTRCL would listen to Members’ views on the extension of service hours of MTR buses.

Mr SHUM Ho-kit, Ms YUEN Man-pee and Mr CHEUNG Muk-lam Requested the Special Bus Route for Tai Tong Red Leaves to Remain in Operation on Saturdays, Sundays and Public Holidays

19. Members thanked such departments and organisations as the TD, the MTRCL, the HKPF, the HyD and the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department for coordinating the special departure services to Tai Tong during the red leaves season. For the convenience of picnickers, Members proposed that the MTRCL should continue to operate the special bus route during weekends and public holidays after the red leaves season.

20. The MTRCL responded that during the last red leaves season, the number of people going to Tai Tong had increased. As the government expected that the demand for transport services would increase during the season, special departures were operated with the coordination of various departments and organisations subject to road traffic and safety. Members’ views on the special bus route would be forwarded to the Operations Department of the MTRCL for future study.

Mr TANG Ka-leung Requested Repairing and Regular Maintenance of the Surface of Ha Tsuen Road

21. Members were disappointed that no government department took responsibility for the management of the road. They proposed to convene an inter-departmental meeting to determine the management rights of the road.

22. The District Lands Office (“DLO”) said that no works department was currently providing any regular maintenance to the road. They would discuss and coordinate with the relevant works department whenever maintenance requests were received.

23. In conclusion, the Chairman hoped that the District Office (“DO”) would recognise the problem and convene an inter-departmental meeting to resolve the issue of management rights.
Mr YIU Kwok-wai, Ms LAU Kwai-yung and Mr TANG Cheuk-him Requested Converting the Government Site at Tin Yip Road, Tin Shui Wai for a Temporary Car Park

24. Members alleged that the problem of illegal parking at Tin Yip Road was very serious and proposed to use the adjacent vacant site as a temporary car park. They opined that there was a need to construct a multi-storey car park to address the shortage of parking spaces in the long term.

25. The DLO reported that two sites near Tin Yip Road had been reserved for permanent allocation to the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (“LCSD”) for the construction of a Central Repository in Area 109, Tin Shui Wai. The construction works would commence in late 2017. Those two sites had been allocated to government departments for short-term uses through temporary government land allocation. One of the sites had been returned to the DLO in September 2014. Upon consultation with the LCSD and the TD, both departments did not object to the use of that site as a temporary car park until late 2017. The TD also took the view that the site was suitable for parking of motorcycles, private cars and goods vehicles not exceeding 11 metres in length. The DLO was drafting the tender documents to consult relevant government departments.

26. The Chairman concluded that there was a general shortage of parking spaces in Yuen Long district, and urged the departments concerned to identify a suitable site for the provision of a multi-storey car park to address the problem in the long term.

Mr CHAM Ka-hung Daniel, BBS, MH, JP Requested the Government to Examine Improving the External Transport Services in New Territories West at the Policy Level

27. Members noted the written reply of the Transport and Housing Bureau.

Progress Report from the Transport Department

28. Members enquired about the current patronage of route no. 68E and the works progress of Kiu Hing Road. The TD undertook to provide the relevant information after the meeting.

Statistics on Cycling Accidents and Related Enforcement Actions

29. Members revealed that the problem of cycles and pedestrians competing for road space at Tin Shui Road during the morning peak hours was serious, and urged the HKPF to step up inspection and enforcement actions so as to ensure the safety of pedestrians and cyclists.

Yuen Long District Council Secretariat
February 2015