

**Minutes of the Second Meeting of
Traffic and Transport Committee (2024-25)
Central and Western District Council**

Date : 18 April 2024 (Thursday)
Time : 10:00 am
Venue : Conference Room
14/F, Harbour Building
38 Pier Road, Central, Hong Kong

Present:

Chairman

Mr YOUNG Chit-on, Jeremy

Vice-chairman

Mr YEUNG Hoi-wing

Members

Dr WONG Sin-man, Mandy

Mr NG Yin

Mr LUI Hung-pan

Mr LEE Chi-hang, Sidney, MH

Mr QIU Song-qing, MH

Ms JIN Ling, MH

Mr SHIH Jan Noel

Mr WU Man-hin

Ms CHEUNG Ka-yan

Mr YEUNG Hok-ming, MH

Mr YIP Wing-shing, SBS, BBS, MH, JP

Mr IP Yik-nam, JP

Ms CHIU Wah-kuen, MH

Mr LAU Tin-ching

Mr LAW Kam-fai

Guests:

Item 3

Mr FU Ting-hong, Derek Senior Transport Officer/Central & Western, Transport Department
Ms Virgini FUNG Manager – External Affairs, MTR Corporation Limited

Item 4

Mr FU Ting-hong, Derek Senior Transport Officer/Central & Western, Transport Department
Ms Virgini FUNG Manager – External Affairs, MTR Corporation Limited

Item 5

Mr HO Hon-tung District Engineer/West, Highways Department
Mr LO Sai-nam, Anthony Engineer/Central & Western 1, Transport Department
Mr KO Kwok-kuen Officer-in-Charge of Central District Event Management Office, Hong Kong Police Force

Item 6

Mr CHAN Kin-fung, Keith Senior Engineer/Walkability 4, Transport Department
Ms CHAN Fung-ping, Inness Engineer 9/Walkability, Transport Department

Item 7

Mr WONG Fuk-ling Senior Engineer/Transport Services D, Electrical & Mechanical Services Department
Mr LEUNG Yat-kiu, Silas Senior Transport Officer/Transport Facilities Management 1, Transport Department

Item 8

Ms LAU Yan-yee, Edith Senior Transport Officer/Bus/HK 1, Transport Department
Miss LIU Hok-yi, Christy Transport Officer/Bus/HK 1, Transport Department
Mr Albert LEUNG Head of Service Delivery (HK Island), Citybus Limited
Mr Bryce WONG Operations Manager (HK Island), Citybus Limited
Mr Calvin WONG Manager (Planning), Citybus Limited
Ms Penny CHUNG Corporate Communications Manager, Citybus Limited
Mr Calvin TSANG Senior Corporate Communications Officer, Citybus Limited
Mr Peter WONG Planning Officer, Citybus Limited
Mr Brian YEUNG Assistant Manager, The Kowloon Motor Bus Co.(1933) Ltd.
Miss Peggy WONG Assistant Manager, Operations Support, The Kowloon Motor Bus Co.(1933) Ltd.

Item 9

Mr FU Ting-hong, Derek	Senior Transport Officer/Central & Western, Transport Department
Mr Albert LEUNG	Head of Service Delivery (HK Island), Citybus Limited
Mr Bryce WONG	Operations Manager (HK Island), Citybus Limited
Mr Calvin WONG	Manager (Planning), Citybus Limited
Ms Penny CHUNG	Corporate Communications Manager, Citybus Limited
Mr Calvin TSANG	Senior Corporate Communications Officer, Citybus Limited
Mr Peter WONG	Planning Officer, Citybus Limited

Item 10

Mr FU Ting-hong, Derek	Senior Transport Officer/Central & Western, Transport Department
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In Attendance:

Miss TSE Wing-ka, Angel	Assistant District Officer (Central and Western), Central and Western District Office
Ms CHEUNG Kwok-ying, Sherry	Senior Executive Officer (District Council), Central and Western District Office

Secretary:

Miss CHING Wei-see, Raina	Executive Officer (District Council)2, Central and Western District Office
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Opening Remarks

(10:00 am – 10:02 am)

The Chairman of the Traffic and Transport Committee (TTC) of the Central and Western District Council welcomed Members to the meeting. The Chairman reminded Members to pay attention to and make appropriate declaration of interest where necessary.

Item 1: Confirmation of the minutes of the 1st TTC meeting held on 1 February 2024

(10:02 am – 10:03 am)

2. As Members did not have any comments, the Chairman announced that the minutes of the meeting were confirmed.

Item 2: Chairman's Report

(10:03 am – 10:04 am)

3. The Chairman said that the list and timetable of major traffic improvement works (as at the end of March 2024) had already been circulated among Members for reference before the meeting, and that the Secretariat did not receive any comments from Members.

Discussion Items

Item 3: Request for additional entry gates in MTR Kennedy Town Station

(C&W TTC Paper No. 2/2024)

(10:04 am – 10:13 am)

4. Views by various Members on the relevant issue were consolidated as follows:
- (i) A Member said that the entry gates area inside Kennedy Town Station had always been crowded during morning peak hours. As it was anticipated that thousands of new residents would move into public housing estates upon future redevelopment, such as the Ka Wai Man Road project or Sai Wan Estate, and that reclamation works in Kau Yi Chau were expected to be connected to Kennedy Town Station, it was believed that future passenger flow would be increased significantly. Hence, it was hoped that MTR Corporation Limited (MTR) could plan ahead by installing additional exit/entry gates to cope with future demand.
 - (ii) A Member asked the MTR how the relevant data were collected and hoped that the MTR could provide statistics on passenger flow at Exit C during peak hours, such as the number of persons waiting per minute, for Members' reference.

- (iii) It was believed that payment methods at the entry gates would have a certain impact on diverting passenger flow. While it was noticed that various payments methods, such as Octopus card, credit card and QR code, were available at the new generation entry gates, not every entry gate offered the same payment methods for the time being. Therefore, some citizens had to look for specific entry gates, making the area more crowded during peak hours.

5. Representative of the MTR said that the MTR had all along kept a close watch on passenger demand, and that an evaluation on its station facilities and services would be carried out from time to time. As regards Members' recommendations on installing additional exit/entry gates at Exit C inside Kennedy Town Station, responses by the MTR were as follows:

- (i) To cater for passenger needs, the number and operational modes of exit/entry gates inside a station were set in accordance with station environment, travel patterns of passengers and changes in passenger flow. Currently, there were a total of eight exit/entry gates at Exit C in the concourse of Kennedy Town Station, four of which were entry gates and the other four were exit gates. In addition, various exit/entry gates were available for passengers at Exits A and B, as well as near the Customer Service Centre. As observed from inside the station, passenger needs were met under the existing arrangements, whereas station staff did not receive any complaints over the use of exit/entry gates in the past. Once again, the MTR would note Members' recommendations on installing additional entry gates, keep a close watch on passenger flow and have an evaluation on station facilities and services from time to time.
- (ii) The MTR was gradually putting in place a plan to replace the entry gates. The two entry gates next to the Customer Service Centre inside Kennedy Town Station were a new facility that offered multiple payment methods, such as credit card and QR code.
- (iii) As observed, station staff of the MTR would generally maintain order at the exit/entry gates area during peak hours and offer assistance to passengers in need.

Item 4: Request for improving the shortage of elevator service in MTR Sai Ying Pun and HKU Stations

(C&W TTC Paper No. 9/2024)

(10:13 am – 10:28 am)

6. Views by various Members on the relevant issue were consolidated as follows:
- (i) A Member said that frequent feedback had been received from residents who were of the view that many students would queue up to use the elevators inside Sai Ying Pun and HKU Stations during peak school hours as the stations were close to the university campus. Nevertheless, there were only a few elevators operating in slow

speed in the stations. Often would only one of the four elevators be in operation owing to energy-efficient technologies of the system. Therefore, the waiting time for residents to use the elevators was long, creating lengthy queues and causing much inconvenience. As HKU Station was one of the proposed divergence spots in the future Kau Yi Chau project, passenger flow there would only be on the rise in the future. It was recommended that the MTR should consider adjusting its system by enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of the elevators, with a view to diverting passenger flow at Exits A1 and B during peak hours and preparing to cope with future demand.

- (ii) A Member observed that Exit C inside Sai Ying Pun Station was particularly crowded. Originally, the exit was designed to allow passengers heading to the street level to queue up and enter the elevator on one side, whereas passengers heading to the entry gates could leave the elevator on the opposite side. While the original intention of the design was desirable, some residents would always leave the elevator from the opposite side conveniently, such that the situation was still chaotic. It was therefore recommended that the MTR could deploy additional staff and offer suitable guidance to passengers. In particular, they could regulate pedestrian flow at the exit in Bonham Road. To expedite the process, the MTR might even consider assigning its staff to control the elevators.
- (iii) Recently, some tourists would make specific visits to The University of Hong Kong (HKU) to “check-in” there, especially at its plaque near Exit C. To direct tourists to where the plaque was located, it was recommended that the MTR should set up additional road signs and reserve enough space for visitors to queue up, thereby diverting pedestrian flow.

7. Representative of the MTR said that the MTR had all along kept a close watch on passenger demand, and that an evaluation on its station facilities and services would be carried out from time to time. As regards Members’ recommendations on insufficient elevator services at Exit A2 inside HKU Station, responses by the MTR were as follows:

- (i) Currently, four elevators connecting the station concourse to the HKU were available at Exits A1 and A2 inside HKU Station respectively and the elevators at Exit A1 were also connected to the exit in Pok Fu Lam Road. In addition, four elevators connecting the station concourse to another exit inside HKU Station (i.e. the exit at the Centennial Campus) were available at Exit C. As observed from inside the station, additional staff had already been deployed to assist in maintaining order at Exits A1, A2 and C during peak hours or periods with greater passenger load. Signs directing passengers to line up were also posted in prominent places of the station, whereas announcements were made in the station concourse to remind passengers that they could travel between the concourse and the street level via Exit A1 or C instead. The MTR would continue to closely monitor passenger load of the station to ensure that the station was in normal and smooth operation as far as practicable. It would also maintain close liaison and collaboration with various stakeholders, such as the HKU, to keep in view the conditions and order of the station.

- (ii) As regards Sai Ying Pun Station, a total of four elevators connecting the station concourse to the street level were available at Exit C in Bonham Road. As observed from inside the station, the queuing time for passengers to use the elevators at Exit C during peak hours or periods with greater passenger load was around 3-4 minutes and the overall process was in order. Noting the views on elevator services, the MTR would also keep a close watch on passenger flow of the station and adopt necessary passenger flow management measures as far as practicable, such as deploying additional staff and directing passengers to queue up in an orderly manner, thereby making sure that the station was in smooth operation.

**Item 5: Concern over the obstruction to traffic by vans at Queen Victoria Street
(C&W TTC Paper No. 11/2024)**

(10:28 am – 10:41 am)

- 8. Views by various Members on the relevant issue were consolidated as follows:
 - (i) The issue with illegal parking in Central Market was serious. While there were double yellow lines, tens of large vehicles were still parked at the location for a long time for the loading/unloading of goods every day, whereas miscellaneous articles were even unloaded from the recycling trucks at the parking area and be placed there for a long time. Hence, it was difficult for drivers of double-decker buses to make turns, resulting in severe traffic disruption. It was recommended that the zebra crossing be widened to divert pedestrian flow and hoped that the government department could follow up on the matter.
 - (ii) A Member concurred with enhanced law enforcement actions by the Police. In addition to improving the road design fundamentally, in the short run, the department might also refer to the practice of the Police where robots were placed to issue Fixed Penalty Notices for illegal parking or where cameras were set up to record videos of illegal parking blackspots in Wan Chai and Sai Wan Ho. Meanwhile, it was recommended that more traffic wardens be deployed to station at major illegal parking blackspots on a regular basis. It was believed that stepping up law enforcement actions would deter drivers to a certain degree.
 - (iii) As most premises on the ground floor in Central Market were restaurants, many citizens and visitors would gather there. As a result, the exits of Central Market were crowded all the time, which was rather dangerous. It was recommended that the department should consider widening the pedestrian crossing place and adjusting the traffic signals to cope with the situation where a huge group of citizens would cross the road at the same time during peak hours, thereby enhancing efficiency and making the road less crowded.
- 9. Representative of the Police said that Central District Police had all along taken law

enforcement actions by video-recording devices to combat issues with illegal parking or traffic congestion. At present, these devices were primarily applied in the vicinity of Queen's Road Central. The Police was aware of Members' views and would consider taking law enforcement actions by video-recording devices in Queen Victoria Street during peak hours or periods with severe congestion, in the hope of achieving better deterrent results. To tackle illegal parking, the Police would take law enforcement actions, educate drivers to have an appropriate driving attitude and ask them to be considerate of others, with the hope that the issue could be improved through education.

10. Representative of the Transport Department (TD) concurred that the issue should be tackled through taking law enforcement actions and improving road design. In addition to maintaining close liaison with the Police in law enforcement, the TD would actively examine the recommendation on widening the pedestrian crossing place. Should a preliminary proposal be available, the department would consult the public and the relevant stakeholders through the Central and Western District Office.

Item 6: Request for expediting the construction of Hillside Escalator Links connecting MTR Kennedy Town Station to Pokfield Path

(C&W TTC Paper No. 3/2024)

(10:41 am – 11:14 am)

11. Views by various Members on the relevant issue were consolidated as follows:
- (i) Over many years, feedback had been received from residents who hoped that an additional escalator could be installed in Pokfield Path to facilitate their travel. At present, no escalators were available at the location, therefore residents had to take lengthy stairs or climb slopes in their daily travel, which was extremely inconvenient for them. In addition, feedback was received from residents who expressed that they had once injured themselves after slipping on the ground in the rain. It was hoped that the department could actively follow up on the situation and take forward the project.
 - (ii) In the light of rapid development in the Western District, such as the completion of a new campus at the HKU, the Ka Wai Man Road project and Sai Wan Estate, it was anticipated that there would be a significant increase in its population. Coupled with an ageing population, it was believed that there would only be an increase in the demand for barrier-free facilities.
 - (iii) It was recommended that the department should refer to its previous projects where escalators were built in collaboration with the MTR. In this way, the department could collaborate with the HKU where the latter would finance the construction and the government would be responsible for the subsequent repair and maintenance works.

- (iv) A Member believed that the department should not focus merely on costs. Instead, future and long-term economic benefits generated by an escalator should be considered. When the government offered facilities that would benefit residents, it should not simply evaluate their cost-effectiveness. It was hoped that the department could formulate a more far-sighted and comprehensive plan, and that priority be given to make sure that residents could travel conveniently.
- (v) A Member hoped that the department could provide the following information on the relevant project in detail for reference and information:
 - a. Specific statistics on the cost-effectiveness of one-way and two-way escalators, such as the required amount of investment;
 - b. In addition to cost-effectiveness, whether other factors would have an impact on the project;
 - c. The vetting criteria that would affect the priority of the project;
 - d. The drop in priority of the project should a two-way escalator be installed instead, as well as the reason for the lower priority;
 - e. The exact timetable for works associated with the escalator, the construction period should a one-way system be adopted and to what degree the construction period would be extended should a two-way system be adopted;
 - f. The current ranking of the escalator project amongst the 114 projects; and
 - g. The persons responsible for operating the escalator in the future and ways to ensure that the mechanical parts were maintained properly from various aspects.

12. Responses by representative of the TD were as follows:

- (i) Under the revised vetting mechanism, the proposals on building a hillside escalator system had to pass an initial screening, during which proposals that were obviously infeasible or unjustifiable would be eliminated. After that, the proposals would be scored independently based on two aspects, namely their “social benefits” and “cost-effectiveness”. As regards “social benefits”, the department would mainly consider factors like the number of beneficiaries, the target group, as well as the possibility of implementing the proposals expeditiously and conveniently. For “cost-effectiveness”, the department would compare the expected project cost per user (i.e. the expected project cost divided by the anticipated number of users) based on the recommendations on a hillside escalator system. In the process of calculating the anticipated number of users, the department would also consider the pedestrian flow arising from new development projects nearby. After vetting the proposals received in the past, priority was given to take forward 11 proposals on building a hillside

escalator system with clearer efficiency, which included the proposal on building a hillside elevator system between Pokfield Road and Smithfield via Pokfield Path.

- (ii) To make an objective comparison based on a uniform standard, the projects would be vetted based on the most elementary system configuration (generally a one-way escalator or an elevator).
- (iii) Should the Pokfield Path project be revised to a two-way escalator system to Kennedy Town Station, more works on slope stabilisation would be involved and more massive structures would be built to support the escalator. This would lead to a significant increase in construction costs, resulting in a drop in cost-effectiveness, such that the project would no longer fall within the list of the 11 prioritised projects. As a result, the department recommended that a one-way escalator to Kennedy Town Station be built via Pokfield Path. Covered structures would also be erected, such that residents could travel more comfortably.
- (iv) In response to the enquiry by Members concerned about the number of feedback received from residents on the installation of a hillside escalator system in Pokfield Path over the past three years, the department received five relevant enquiries.
- (v) As geotechnical issues of a more complicated nature existed in Pokfield Path, the department would continue to liaise and collaborate with the Highways Department to put in place a preliminary feasibility study on the project. Currently, the government was taking forward the prioritised projects selected under the revised vetting mechanism for the proposals on building a hillside escalator system in an orderly manner. It would also continue to examine ways to use public resources more effectively and enhance the cost-effectiveness of the project. Besides, the government would keep in view the priorities of the proposed project in the light of the latest developments, such as the government's policy initiatives and financial position, thereby adjusting the progress of the project in an appropriate manner.

Item 7: Concern over the frequent service suspension of the Central to Mid-levels Escalator and Walkway System
(C&W TTC Paper No. 6/2024)

(11:14 am – 11:37 am)

13. Views by various Members on the relevant issue were consolidated as follows:
- (i) A Member said that the department had failed to address the enquiry in its written reply and hoped that it could supplement more details on service suspension of the escalator link system or draw a table to set out details on the date and time of a faulty service, the repair conditions and the reasons behind, such that Members could have more information for analysis, thereby facilitating clearer discussions.

- (ii) It was mentioned by the TD and the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD) that in case of emergency, a notice would be posted on an escalator to notify the public. A Member however believed that the notification measures might not be adequate and recommended that the department could make real-time announcements online or on a social media platform. A Member also recommended that a display panel be installed beside an escalator to inform the public of its operating status, such that the public would have more information to plan their routes ahead of time.
- (iii) A Member believed that the initial part in the first section of the escalators was quite steep, posing certain hazards to the public, particularly senior citizens. It was recommended that the department could refer to overseas escalators by installing an intelligent sensor system, under which the escalator's speed could be adjusted in accordance with pedestrian and passenger flow. In the meantime, various statistics, such as the speed and steepness of the escalator, could be monitored and relayed to the department for repair purposes.
- (iv) A Member hoped that the department could give an account on the calculation method regarding the availability rate of 99.17% in its written reply.
- (v) It was recommended that the department should reschedule the cleansing and maintenance periods of the escalators as appropriate, such that they would not be repaired during peak hours. The department should also inform the public of the maintenance periods in advance, such that they could plan their trips ahead of time.
- (vi) It was hoped that the department could monitor the maintenance progress on a regular basis and consider incorporating a reward/penalty mechanism or some requirements on KPI into its future tendering exercises, such as the pledged hours of maintenance services, with a view to encouraging the contractors to repair the escalators in an active and timely manner, as well as enhancing the efficiency in maintenance.
- (vii) A member of the public once stepped on an escalator accidentally, resulting in a breakdown of the escalator for a short period of time. In addition to deploying a contractor to carry out maintenance works, the department was asked whether more measures could be implemented to prevent a breakdown of an escalator owing to a collision by pedestrians.

14. Representative of the EMSD said that the figure of 99.17% had been calculated based on a mathematical formula under the assumption that an escalator would operate for 18 hours every day. To calculate the availability rate, 18 would be used as the base denominator and the numerator could be derived by deducting the number of faulty hours from 18 hours. In the past, it usually took less than 30 minutes to fix an escalator after a suspension of service, hence a relatively higher availability rate of 99.17% was derived. Other statistics would be supplemented after the meeting. Besides, the existing circulars of the department mainly served to inform the public of the planned maintenance works. To respond to unforeseen

circumstances, a management team would usually arrive at the scene within 30 minutes to station there and observe the situation, such that the escalator would resume operation within a short period of time.

[Post-meeting note: On 20 May 2024, the Secretariat received a written reply from the EMSD, which was subsequently relayed to Members on 23 May 2024 by email.]

Item 8: Bus Route Planning Programme 2024 - 2025 for Central and Western District (C&W TTC Paper No. 5/2024)

(11:37 am – 12:27 pm)

15. Views by various Members on the relevant issue were consolidated as follows:

- (i) Some Members had a joint operation to monitor the service frequencies and services of bus routes that covered the area between Kennedy Town and Mid-levels, Central within the Central and Western District. Their findings were as follows:
 - a. Often did departures for bus route nos. 1, 5, 10, 12, 13, 101 and 104 arrive at a bus stop at the same time. In an unfortunate event where members of the public failed to catch a bus, they would have to wait again for more than 20 minutes. It was recommended that the department and the bus company should consider re-planning and re-organising the arrival times of the departures to optimise bus services.
 - b. It was obvious that some trips of route no. 971 were lost, and that some departures for route no. 10 were non-existent “ghost trips” as data suggested that the departure at 9:10 that day had disappeared out of no reason. It was recommended that the department and the bus company should proactively follow up on the situation.
 - c. The headways of route nos. 12M, 40 and 40M during rush hours were only around 30 minutes, which were rather sparse. It was recommended that their service frequencies be enhanced.
 - d. It was revealed that the actual arrival times of route nos. 12, 12M, 13, 23 and 40 differed quite significantly from the estimated arrival times shown on the mobile application. As a result, it was recommended that the bus company should upgrade its mobile application, through which passengers would receive real-time information on the departures with greater accuracy.
 - e. While the service frequency of route no. 101 was relatively higher, its fare was more expensive. Instead of taking route no. 101, the public would rather wait and take route no. 10 as its fare was cheaper. It was recommended that the bus company should consider offering section fares to passengers after the bus

crossed the harbour. In this regard, citizens travelling to Kennedy Town would be encouraged to take route no. 101.

- (ii) In the latest Bus Route Planning Programme, it was proposed that route no. 1 be replaced by route no. 5B. Nevertheless, it was recommended that the department should reduce the headway of route no. 5B to 15-20 minutes, thereby compensating for the shortcomings after shortening the routing of route no. 1. If passengers could only reach Happy Valley by boarding a second bus in Hong Kong-Macau Ferry Terminal, there would in turn be greater incentives for them to travel by MTR, which was more convenient.
- (iii) It was recommended that the first departures for route nos. 12 and 12M be operated earlier, and that their departures during peak hours be extended to operate until 10:00 am.
- (iv) As a substantial number of residents in the Central and Western District would still travel to Central at weekends, it was recommended that the service frequency of route no. 40M at weekends be increased to meet the demand. As the final section of the routings of route nos. 40 and 40M would overlap, it was recommended that the departures for route no. 40M be re-organised to operate via Hennessy Road in lieu of Arsenal Street, which was believed to facilitate residents in the Central and Western District, Wan Chai North and Wan Chai South.
- (v) After re-organisation, the routings of route no. A12 would be shortened. While the departures for route no. A12 would no longer be operated via the Western District, numerous feedback had recently been received from residents who said that the route should be retained. In fact, it only took around five minutes for the departures for route no. A12 to operate via the Western District, which would not have a significant impact on the overall journey. If the parties concerned insisted on shortening the routing, residents would inevitably have a greater incentive to travel by MTR. A Member therefore recommended that services of route no. A12 in the Western District should be retained. If the routing of route no. A12 was shortened eventually owing to operational efficiency, it was hoped that the bus company could increase the service frequency of route no. A10 as an alternative, thereby minimising the impact on residents.
- (vi) It was hoped that the departures for route no. 1 be operated via Kennedy Town Station before returning to Happy Valley.
- (vii) It was recommended that the routings of special departures for route nos. 23B, 40P, 93A and 93C be extended to Admiralty Station during peak hours, thereby facilitating commuters travelling to the urban area.
- (viii) It was recommended that the bus company should re-plan the service frequencies of buses that would stop at a bus interchange, such that the public could board a second bus there without any delay as far as possible.

- (ix) It was recommended that notifications or publicity on bus information should be optimised, such that residents could learn about the latest arrangements of the department and the bus company as soon as possible.
- (x) As visitors from Hong Kong, the mainland and overseas would be attracted to take part in the spectacular event in Happy Valley on a racing day, it was recommended that the route from Kennedy Town to Happy Valley be retained.
- (xi) While the first departure for cross-harbour route no. 373 would be operated at 5:30 pm, it was recommended that it should depart slightly later to tie in with the travel pattern of most citizens. A Member also believed that the reduction of occupancy rate was also related to the total journey time of the route. As Cross Harbour Tunnel was often congested, the journey time would inevitably be increased. As a result, it was recommended that the routing of route no. 373 be altered to operate via Western Harbour Crossing to make it more attractive to the public.

16. Representative of the TD said that the department had all along kept a close watch on the service frequencies and services of the bus companies, and that the bus companies would make adequate arrangements on the departure times as far as practicable. Nevertheless, the arrival times of buses would be subject to various factors, such as location of the terminals, traffic conditions of the journeys and the situation on boarding/alighting, such that headways of buses to arrive at the mid-way stops might sometimes be uneven. The TD would continue to monitor the service frequencies and services of the bus companies through various channels. As mentioned in the Bus Route Planning Programme this year, resources of the bus companies would be merged, whereas the routings of some routes would be adjusted. In this way, functions of different bus routes would be complementary as residents might choose to take different routes to reach their destination, through which resources would be used more effectively. In addition, various Members were concerned about proposal on altering the routing of route no. A12. The department and the bus company had all along paid close attention to the situation where the occupancy rates of airport buses had been on the rise. Meanwhile, the number of departures had also increased gradually upon resumption of normalcy following the pandemic. According to a recent survey by the department, current departures for route no. A10 still had sufficient spare capacity to cope with future passenger demand. Besides, the department would continue to keep in view the occupancy rate of route no. A10 and ask the bus company to enhance its service frequency as appropriate, thereby catering for the needs of residents.

17. As regards Members' recommendations on the Bus Route Planning Programme, responses by Representative of Citybus Limited (Citybus) were as follows:

- (i) Following the commissioning of South Island Line in 2014 and the Cross-harbour Section of East Rail Line in 2022, occupancy rates of bus routes in the Central and Western District had dropped significantly. The percentage decline in occupancy rates of individual routes was as high as 70%. While the service frequencies of

some routes had been adjusted, the average occupancy rates of routes plying between the Central and Western District and the vicinity of Wan Chai and Causeway Bay via the northern coast were only around 10-20% and 30-40% in the Western District during normal and peak hours respectively, which were not satisfactory at all. As a result, the company would like to improve road conditions and operational efficiency of the bus routes through altering the routeings, hence the recommendation on altering the service boundaries of route nos. 1 and 5B was formulated. As the Citybus was concerned about the travel patterns of passengers, the service frequencies of route nos. 5B and 10 would be maintained at current levels upon route adjustment. Meanwhile, the Citybus would continue to monitor and review the situation in a timely manner.

- (ii) As regards services in Mount Davis, the present headway of route no. 1 during morning peak hours was 15-20 minutes, whereas that of route no. 5B was around 25 minutes. After peak hours, the headway of route no. 5B was 8-10 minutes during most of the day. Instead of taking route no. 1, residents in Mount Davis could take route no. 5B to reach Central and Admiralty in the future because the departures would be more frequent than those for route no. 1 during most of the day. In the meantime, residents in the Western District could still take route no. 5B or 10, followed by route no. 1, to reach Happy Valley upon route adjustment and the fares would remain unchanged. Noting Members' views, the Citybus would review its arrangements in a timely manner.
- (iii) As the existing occupancy rate of route no. A10 during the busiest period of a day was around 30-40%, it was expected that the route would still have sufficient capacity to cope with passenger demand between the airport and the Western District upon re-organisation of routes in the future. As mentioned in the paper, journey time of route no. A12 could be reduced by about five minutes upon re-routeing. However, it was suggested in the operational record that journey time of certain departures for route no. A10 in the Western District was longer than five minutes because these departures would in fact be operated via some relatively busier sections in the Western District, such as Des Voeux Road West and Water Street. In addition, it was previously recommended by Members that more airport bound journeys of route no. A12 be operated via the Western District during peak hours to facilitate commuters working at the airport. Having examined the recommendation, three special departures for route no. A12 would be operated via Cathay Pacific City in the mornings and afternoons respectively and under the latest arrangement, these departures would continue to operate via Sai Wan.
- (iv) Representative of the Citybus also expressed gratitude for the comprehensive study by Members on the bus services in various sections. Noting Members' views on setting up additional mid-way stops, revising the routeings and enhancing the coverage of route nos. 12, 12M, 13 and 40M, the Citybus would discuss with the TD in a timely manner for consideration.

18. Representative of Kowloon Motor Bus Company (1933) Limited (KMB)

supplemented that in addition to route no. 373, daily service of route no. 673 was also available for residents travelling between Central and Sheung Shui at present. Meanwhile, the KMB noted Members' views on route no. 373 and would review its service arrangements as appropriate.

Item 9: Insufficient frequency of bus and minibus services in the Central and Western District

(C&W TTC Paper No. 10/2024)

(12:27 pm – 12:43 pm)

19. Views by various Members on the relevant issue were consolidated as follows:
- (i) A Member noticed that the service frequencies of some green minibuses (GMB) were quite unstable, whereas feedback had been received from residents who stated that there was a difference of almost 30-40 minutes between the estimated and actual arrival times of minibus route nos. 10 and 31 even during peak hours, which was not satisfactory at all. In addition, the service frequency of minibus route no. 3 was sparse and unstable, so it was hoped that a timetable could be formulated to enhance its services. Besides, it was recommended that the department should monitor the operating hours of the minibus route.
 - (ii) As regards minibus route no. 13, there were insufficient departures and lost trips. While the TD had a site inspection before and stated that its service frequency was generally consistent with the scheduled timetable, it was still hoped that the department could keep in view the situation. In addition, it was recommended that the headway of route no. 13 be reduced to 20-30 minutes to cope with passenger demand.
 - (iii) A Member recommended that the application showing the service frequencies of the minibuses be upgraded. In this way, residents could refer to the system for real-time information on departures with greater accuracy, thereby minimising the existence of “ghost minibus trips”.
20. As regards Members' recommendations on the topic, responses by representative of the TD were as follows:
- (i) Information shown in the forecast system for minibuses mentioned by Members was released to the public or passengers through a centralised platform, HKeMobility. Should a vehicle be departed from its terminal, its arrival times at various mid-way stops would be displayed in the application through extracting real-time statistics from GPS. Nevertheless, as the departure time of a minibus from a terminal was related to the arrival time of its previous departure at the terminal, there might be possible delays in its departure time. The department would continue to discuss

with the contractor for enhancement proposals that were technically feasible and provide the public with more accurate arrival times as far as practicable.

- (ii) The department also noticed that the occupancy rate of minibus route no. 13 had been consistently low. After redevelopment of the Ka Wan Man Road project and Sai Wan Estate in the future, the department would increase the service frequency of the route based on new travel patterns and needs of residents in the area.
- (iii) As the operator of Hong Kong Island GMB route no. 3 also had difficulties in hiring drivers, an application under the Labour Importation Scheme for the Transport Sector had been submitted, with the hope that additional manpower could be replenished under the scheme. While the drivers had already been arranged to come to Hong Kong, their official commencement dates would be subject to them passing the driving tests, as well as the training quality. The department would continue to monitor and follow up on the operator's efforts in recruiting drivers.
- (iv) Regarding the issue with unstable service frequencies of route no. 22, the journey time of the minibuses would differ because before arriving at Caine Road, they departed from the Southern District with frequent boarding/alighting of passengers along the route. Noting these views, the department would monitor and review the current service levels with colleagues responsible for the Southern District.

21. Representative of the Citybus said that additional information on the relevant departures had already been offered to passengers in its official mobile application. For instance, a special notification would be displayed next to the arrival time of a departure should the roads be congested. Meanwhile, the distance between every departure and its next stop would also be shown. Representative of the Citybus also said that residents or Members were welcomed to express their views to the Citybus if they noticed any irregularities with the service frequencies, such that the company could follow up on and look into the matter.

Item 10: Request for an additional green minibus route carrying Mid-levels and Outlying Islands residents to the hospitals in the Central and Western District, via the Mid-levels, Central, Sheung Wan, hospitals in the Central and Western District, Central Ferry Piers, and MTR Admiralty Station

(C&W TTC Paper No. 7/2024)

(12:43 pm – 12:52 pm)

22. Views by various Members on the relevant issue were consolidated as follows:

- (i) A Member said that in the absence of direct public transport from Central Mid-levels to Tung Wah Hospital, residents had to take multiple means of transport to reach the hospital. In addition, the service frequencies of public transport at the location were

low, causing massive inconvenience to residents, particularly those with mobility issues. It was recommended that the department should examine the possibility of setting up a circular minibus route to operate via Tung Wah Hospital, Hollywood Road, Bonham Road and Caine Road, such that residents could travel to and from Mid-levels and avail themselves of the services of Tung Wah Hospital conveniently.

- (ii) It was mentioned in the TD's paper that tendering exercises on GMB services had been carried out in 2011, 2018, 2019 and 2020 respectively, yet no proposals were submitted by the operators. A Member asked the department for the specific reasons behind the unsuccessful bidding and recommended that the department should liaise with the minibus companies, put in place enhancement measures and encourage more operators to actively engage in the tendering exercises.
- (iii) A Member believed that in addition to viewing minibus services from a profit-making perspective, setting up minibus routes to serve the public was a social responsibility. It was hoped that the department would fight for more convenient minibus routes for the benefit of residents in need.

23. Representative of the TD said that four tendering exercises had been mentioned in the paper. Taking a route in the 2020 tendering exercise as an example, its departures would be operated via Hospital Road at Mid-levels, Central and Admiralty before returning to Tung Wah Hospital. The circular route covered a distance of around six kilometres and the maximum possible fare at that time was \$9.4, which would be \$10 at the moment. In the light of an initial estimation, an operator would need to deploy three minibuses if it was required in the tender that the route had to be completed within 15-30 minutes. If the routeing had to be extended whilst maintaining the service frequency, the operator would need to deploy more minibuses, resulting in an increase in operating costs. For example, the daily operating costs of a minibus were around \$2,500 in 2022/2023, whereas those of three and four minibuses were around \$7,500 and as high as \$10,000 respectively. It could be deduced by simple calculation that during its operating hours, each minibus had to carry 14 passengers every hour to break even, which was an obstacle facing both the department and the operators. Regardless of the above, the TD would continue to maintain close liaison with the parties concerned.

Item 11: Any Other Business

(12:52 pm – 12:53 pm)

24. The Chairman said that there were no other business.

Item 12: Date of the Next Meeting

(12:53 pm)

25. The Chairman announced that the next TTC meeting would be held on 13 June 2024.

The paper submission deadline would be 28 May 2024.

26. The meeting adjourned at 12:54 pm.

The minutes were confirmed on 13 June 2024

Chairman: Mr YOUNG Chit-on, Jeremy

Secretary: Miss CHING Wei-see, Raina

Central and Western District Council Secretariat
June 2024