

Islands District Council

Paper IDC 66/2016

Transport Department

Traffic and Transport Working Plan 2016-17

Purpose

This Paper presents the Traffic and Transport Working Plan of the Transport Department for Islands District in 2016-17.

Work Objectives

2. We hope that the work programmes planned for implementation in 2016-17 can achieve the following objectives:

- (i) To monitor and improve the traffic and transport facilities to cope with the local development needs;
- (ii) To adjust existing public transport services to meet the demand of the public; and
- (iii) To coordinate different public transport modes in order to provide efficient public transport services to the public.

Brief Description of Work

A. Traffic Management

3. One of the major objectives of traffic management is to improve the traffic flow and to ensure the road safety. We will continue to closely monitor the overall traffic situation and to design and implement suitable traffic management scheme, if necessary, to improve the efficiency, performance and safety of the road network. The following traffic management programmes have been planned for implementation in 2016-17:

(a) Monitor the Traffic Network and Management Measures

4. We will continue to monitor the traffic network of Islands District to enhance the safety and improve its efficiency. The major items include:

- (i) To monitor and review the road traffic situation of Tung Chung Road and south Lantau, and to implement suitable traffic management measures, if necessary;
- (ii) To monitor and review the operation of major junctions in the district, including the operational efficiency of road and pavement junctions, and to enhance their safety; and
- (iii) To regularly meet the project contractors in the district for the assessment of temporary traffic arrangement.

(b) Road Network and Traffic Facilities Improvement Projects

5. We will continue to follow up the following projects (some projects are in progress) to improve the road network and traffic facilities:-

- (i) Minor improvement works to some bends at Keung Shan Road;
- (ii) Minor improvement works to bend at South Lantau Road near San Shek Wan;
- (iii) Extensions of bus-laybys at South Lantau Road near San Shek Wan, and Tai O Road near Lung Tin Estate; and
- (iv) Provision of additional cycle parking spaces behind Cheung Chau Municipal Services Building.

B. Public Transport Service

6. Railways are environmentally friendly and efficient mass carriers. It is the Government's transport policy to develop railways as the backbone of Hong Kong's public transport system. Therefore, we will promote maximum utilisation of railways supplemented by feeder public transport services. We will also continue to encourage other public transport operators to improve the quality of their services. On the premises of environmental protection and efficient use of resources, we will continue to enhance the public transportation network, review and coordinate various public transport services to avoid route duplication and vicious competition.

(a) Franchised Bus

7. Franchised bus services will continue to play an important role in public transport system. We will consider the following factors in planning bus route development:

- (i) the existing and planned public transport services in the district;
- (ii) the development of the district;
- (iii) the completion of transport infrastructure;
- (iv) the impact of the programme on traffic, environment, the public transport operators and passengers concerned;
- (v) the cost-effectiveness of the programme; and
- (vi) the comments and suggestions from the public.

8. To better understand the service demand and consider improvement measures, we will continue to conduct surveys regularly and collect opinions from the public through district councils and other channels. We will encourage franchised bus companies to provide more bus-bus interchange schemes at appropriate and feasible locations to facilitate passengers to travel to different destinations with concessionary fares. This will reduce the demand for long haul and direct “point-to-point” bus services. As a result, the road space and bus resources will be better utilised and the efficiency of the bus network will be enhanced. The congestion and environmental problems caused by the overlapping of bus services can also be relieved.

9. To meet the passenger demands, the bus companies have implemented a number of bus service improvement measures in 2015-16, of which 46 items involve increase in bus departures, frequency adjustment or deployment of additional buses while 19 items involve expansion of service coverage, introduction of special bus services and route rationalisation.

10. At the meeting on 21 March 2016, the Traffic and Transport Committee (“TTC”) under the Islands District Council (“IDC”) was briefed on the Bus Route Planning Programme for Islands District in 2016-17. There are 13 items of route adjustment and 17 items of deployment of additional buses and adjustment of frequency in the Programme.

(b) Ferry Services

11. The licences of the six major outlying island ferry trunk routes (namely “Central – Cheung Chau”, “Inter-islands”, “Central – Mui Wo”, “Central – Peng Chau”, “Central – Yung Shue Wan” and “Central – Sok Kwu Wan” routes) have respectively extended from April and July in 2014 for a period of three years. The Finance Committee (“FC”) of the Legislative Council (“LegCo”) has approved a commitment of about \$190 million to facilitate the Government to provide the six ferry routes with Special Helping Measures (“SHM”) during the three-year licence period.

12. The Government had completed the mid-term review on the provision of SHM in the current licence period and had reported the results in Islands District Council Meeting on 18 April. The result of the mid-term review indicated that SHM had achieved the intended purpose of ensuring the financial viability of the ferry service while lowering the fare increase rates. Passengers were also in-general satisfied with the operational performance of the six major outlying island ferry routes. In connection with the results of the mid-term review, operators of the six major outlying island ferry routes had announced details of the fare concession schemes to share the windfall profit with passengers for the first 18 operating months of the current licence period in May 2016.

13. The current licences for the six ferry routes will expire in mid-2017¹. The two incumbent ferry operators have indicated their intent for extension of their licences in writing. We will commence negotiation with the incumbent operators of the six major outlying island ferry routes on the extension of the next three-year licence period. The Government plans to report the detailed arrangement of the next licence period to the Legislative Council Panel on Transport and Islands District Council in Q4 2016, and to seek funding approval for SHM (if needed) from the FC.

14. To maintain outlying island ferry services and achieve fare stability for the long term, the Government would study whether SHM would become a permanent subsidy instead of using rental income to be generated by Central Pier Nos. 4-6 as subsidy in the context of the next mid-term review in 2019. We will also examine any necessary complementary policies. Among them, whether the current duration of each licence period of only three years is too short is critical. The Government would also

¹ The “Central-Mui Wo” ferry route licence will be expired on 31 March 2017. The rest of 5 ferry route licences will be expired on 30 June 2017.

study whether there is a need to expend SHM to the eight outlying island ferry routes² apart from the six major outlying island ferry routes.

15. To better cater for the needs of the passengers, we will continue to conduct regular surveys on ferry services to monitor the performance of ferry operators to ensure that the ferry services can meet passengers' needs and comply with the conditions of licences. The survey results also provide reference for study on service improvements.

16. We will continue to liaise closely with members of the District Council, listen to the opinions of the members of the public and actively consider the traffic and transport issues in the district.

Transport Department

June 2016

² *The eight other outlying island ferry routes include:*

(1) "Aberdeen – Cheung Chau";

(2) "Aberdeen – Yung Shue Wan via Pak Kok Tsuen";

(3) "Aberdeen – Sok Kwu Wan via Mo Tat";

(4) "Tuen Mun – Tung Chung – Sha Lo Wan – Tai O";

(5) "Discovery Bay – Central"

(6) "Discovery Bay – Mui Wo";

(7) "Ma Wan - Central"; and

(8) "Ma Wan – Tsuen Wan".