

**(Translation)**

**Islands District Council**  
**Minutes of Meeting of Traffic and Transport Committee**

Date : 18 September 2023 (Monday)  
Time : 2:00 p.m.  
Venue : Islands District Council Conference Room,  
14/F, Harbour Building, 38 Pier Road, Central, Hong Kong

**Present**

**Chairman**

Ms WONG Chau-ping

**Vice-Chairman**

Mr HO Siu-kei (Left at around 5:20 p.m.)

**Members**

Mr YU Hon-kwan, Randy, MH, JP (Left at around 4:45 p.m.)  
Mr WONG Man-hon, MH  
Mr CHOW Yuk-tong, SBS, MH  
Mr HO Chun-fai  
Mr NG Man-kit (Left at around 5:30 p.m.)  
Mr WAN Yeung-kin (Left at around 5:25 p.m.)  
Mr KWOK Ping, Eric  
Mr FONG Lung-fei  
Ms LAU Shun-ting (Arrived at around 2:20 p.m., left at around 6:05 p.m.)

**Attendance by Invitation**

Ms PO Pui-man, Karen	Chief Transport Officer/Planning/Ferry Review, Transport Department
Ms CHOI Siu-man, Sherman	Senior Transport Officer/Planning/Ferry 2, Transport Department
Mr CHENG Siu-kwan, Ken	Transport Officer/Planning/Ferry 4, Transport Department
Ms LO Fung-yin	District Engineer/General (4)A, Highways Department
Ms NG Yuk-ping, Fanny	Senior Estate Surveyor/Land Supply 7 (Land Supply Section), Lands Department
Mr LEUNG Cheuk-kwan, Felix	Estate Surveyor/Land Supply 7(1) (Land Supply Section), Lands Department
Mr Lemuel TSANG	Project Civil Engineer, Aurecon Hong Kong Limited
Mr Harry CHAN	Assistant Civil Engineer, Aurecon Hong Kong Limited
Mr Johnny SZE	Principal Engineer, Mannings (Asia) Consultants Limited

Ms Penny CHUNG  
Mr Calvin TSANG  
Mr Stephen WAN  
Mr Desmond TANG

Ms Rennis LIP

Mr Peter CHU

Corporate Communications Manager, Citybus Limited  
Senior Corporate Communications Officer, Citybus Limited  
Manager, Operations, Long Win Bus Company Limited  
Assistant Manager, Planning and Development,  
Long Win Bus Company Limited  
Assistant Manager (Public Affairs),  
Long Win Bus Company Limited  
Senior Manager (Operations and Administration),  
New Lantau Bus Company (1973) Limited

**In Attendance**

Mr LI Ho, Thomas  
Ms KANG Pu  
Ms YEUNG Yuk-shan, Doris  
Ms FUNG Sin-yee, Mini  
Mr WONG Yui-him, Tim  
Mr WEN Jinxing, Terry

Mr LUE Yat-fung

Mr HO Lee-yip

Ms LAM Wai-ling  
Mr Peter TSANG

Mr ZHANG Yu  
Ms Lily HUANG

Assistant District Officer (Islands)1, Islands District Office  
Engineer/Islands(2), Highways Department  
Senior Transport Officer/Islands 1, Transport Department  
Senior Transport Officer/Islands 2, Transport Department  
Engineer/Islands 1, Transport Department  
Engineer/22 (Lantau),  
Civil Engineering and Development Department  
District Operations Officer (Lantau District),  
Hong Kong Police Force  
Manager, District Relations,  
New Lantau Bus Company (1973) Limited  
General Manager, Hong Kong and Kowloon Ferry Limited  
Senior Manager - Transportation,  
Discovery Bay Transportation Services Limited  
Managing Director, Sun Ferry Services Company Limited  
Human Resources Manager,  
Sun Ferry Services Company Limited

**Secretary**

Ms CHEUNG Hoi-kam, Nicole

Executive Officer (District Council)3, Islands District Office

**Absent with Apology**

Mr WONG Hon-kuen, Ken

~~~~~

**Welcoming remarks**

The Chairman welcomed Members and representatives of the government departments and organisations to the meeting and introduced Mr ZHANG Yu, Managing Director of Sun Ferry Services Company Limited (Sun Ferry), who stood in for Ms Anthea CHAU.

2. Members noted that Mr Ken WONG was unable to attend the meeting due to other commitments.

I. Confirmation of the Minutes of Meeting held on 24 July 2023

3. The Chairman said that the above minutes had incorporated the amendments proposed by the government departments, guests and Members and had been distributed to Members for perusal before the meeting.

4. The captioned minutes were confirmed unanimously by a show of hands.

(Members who voted in favour included: the Chairman Ms WONG Chau-ping, the Vice-chairman Mr HO Siu-kei, Mr Randy YU, Mr WONG Man-hon, Mr CHOW Yuk-tong, Mr HO Chun-fai, Mr NG Man-kit, Mr WAN Yeung-kin, Mr Eric KWOK and Mr FONG Lung-fei.)

II. Mid-term Review For Outlying Island Ferry Services of Current Licence Period  
(Paper T&TC 32/2023)

5. The Chairman welcomed Ms PO Pui-man, Karen, Chief Transport Officer/Planning/Ferry Review, Ms CHOI Siu-man, Sherman, Senior Transport Officer/Planning/Ferry 2 and Mr CHENG Siu-kwan, Ken, Transport Officer/Planning/Ferry 4 of the Transport Department (TD) to the meeting to present the paper.

6. Ms Karen PO briefly presented the paper.

7. Mr Randy YU expressed his views as follows:

- (a) Sun Ferry and Hong Kong and Kowloon Ferry Limited (HKKF) had earlier applied for fare increases of 45% and 100% respectively, and eventually adjusted the rates to 3.9% and 8% respectively for multi-ride tickets. Most Members considered the above rates of increase acceptable.
- (b) On some outlying islands, there were no other means of transport for residents other than ferries. However, ferry services were commercially operated and not managed by the Government. As such, he had repeatedly suggested that the Government should build transport infrastructure for residents of the outlying islands to provide them with direct access to their homes or the nearby vicinity.
- (c) He asked the Secretariat to write to the Transport and Logistics Bureau (TLB) requesting it to conduct a comprehensive review and discussion on the long-term ferry policy in early 2024. Currently, ferry services were mainly tendered by two to three larger companies with their own fleets, making it difficult for smaller companies to compete. He had requested the Government to provide fleets and encourage smaller

companies to submit tenders, so as to increase competition and lower the fares.

- (d) Currently, the two power companies had set up fuel stabilisation funds. He hoped that the Government would set up similar fuel stabilisation funds for ferry companies to help stabilise the fares.

8. Mr Eric KWOK expressed his views as follows:

- (a) He agreed with Mr Randy YU's suggestion of setting up fuel stabilisation funds to help stabilise the fares.
- (b) Currently, the Government subsidised ferry companies to purchase hybrid vessels powered by fuel and electricity. He hoped that the TD would study the conversion of all ferries into electric ferries to meet the principle of sustainable development.
- (c) The Government often provided various subsidies to ferry companies. He hoped that the TD would properly monitor the ferry companies to ensure the proper use of public funds.
- (d) As for the fares, the adult single journey fares of the "Central – Yung Shue Wan", "Central – Sok Kwu Wan" and "Central – Peng Chau" routes increased by over 10%, which was much higher than the inflation rate. He expressed concern that it would create financial pressure on the residents concerned.
- (e) Members had repeatedly suggested developing properties above the piers and leasing the shops to retailers to operate restaurants, supermarkets, coffee shops, small shops with unique characteristics or 24-hour convenience stores in order to increase non-fare box revenue and hence stabilising the fares. In addition, given that the Government was actively promoting night markets, he believed if a night market was held at the Central Piers, which faced the stunning night view of the Victoria Harbour, it would attract many visitors.
- (f) Residents of Lamma Island reflected that the fans at the pier were dirty, and they requested the relaxation of the restrictions on the types and volumes of cargoes that could be carried on board. They hoped that the Department would follow up the above issues.
- (g) He suggested that ferry companies should provide charter services for corporate or individual passengers to increase revenue.

9. Mr WAN Yeung-kin hoped that the return period for the same-day return tickets could be extended to 72 hours. In addition, he said that there were occasional long queues at the pier for the purchase of ferry tickets, which might cause passengers

to miss the departures and delay their journeys.

10. Mr FONG Lung-fei said that the Government provided substantial subsidies to ferry companies for their losses, and he queried that the ferry companies failed to manage their staff costs properly as a result. He suggested that the Government should take back the franchises of the ferry services and engage management companies to take up the operation and management so as to monitor all aspects of the operating expenses, thereby controlling the ferry fares and reducing the amount of subsidies.

11. Ms LAU Shun-ting said that the rate of increase in adult single journey fares for the “Central – Yung Shue Wan”, “Central – Sok Kwu Wan” and “Central – Peng Chau” routes was about 19%, which was higher than that of other routes. She hoped the TD would adjust the above rate of increase. In addition, passengers who purchased same-day return tickets had to buy them at the pier. However, due to the large number of ticket buyers, passengers had to queue for a long time, especially during holidays. After purchasing the same-day return tickets, passengers had to scan the QR code on the tickets at the entry gates. However, since only two out of the five entry gates at the pier were equipped with QR code scanners, passengers often had to queue at the entry gates, and thus might miss the scheduled departures and result in delays to their journeys. She hoped the Department and the ferry companies would follow up on the above problem.

12. The Vice-chairman Mr HO Siu-kei agreed to develop properties above the piers to increase non-fare box revenue, thereby stabilising the fares. Moreover, he considered that if the current ferry policy remained unchanged, the Government would need to continue to subsidise the ferry companies, which might propose fare increases from time to time on grounds of inflation or increase in manpower expenditure. He opined that it was not easy for private companies to operate ferry services, not only because of the low profitability, but also the reliance on substantial government subsidies. He hoped the TD would review the long-term ferry policy to solve the problem once and for all.

13. Ms Karen PO gave a consolidated response as follows:

(a) The Government launched a Vessel Subsidy Scheme to procure new vessels for 10 outlying island ferry routes in two phases. The first batch of new vessels was expected to arrive in Hong Kong by the end of this year at the earliest and would be gradually put into service starting from the first quarter of 2024. Moreover, four hybrid vessels would arrive in Hong Kong in mid-2024 at the earliest. After the commissioning of the new vessels, the TD would examine their actual operating conditions (including the operating costs) and assess their impacts on the services and revenue of the ferry companies before reviewing and considering the relevant arrangements for the second phase of the Vessel Subsidy Scheme.

(b) Currently, the Department did not set up any fuel stabilisation fund for

ferry companies. Nevertheless, the Department had established a profit-sharing mechanism since the commencement of the current licence period for the outlying island ferry routes, which required the operators to share any windfall profit exceeding the profit margin of an average of 6% with passengers on a 50:50 basis through offering fare concessions, so as to alleviate the fare burden on passengers.

- (c) The Department had put in place a stringent regulatory mechanism on ferry services. Ferry companies were required to submit the audited accounts to the Department every year to ensure that the Department had a good grasp of the actual operating conditions of the ferry companies (including patronage, revenue, various expenses and returns, etc.). The Department would adjust the rate of fare increase having regard to factors such as the financial position and patronages of the ferry services.
- (d) Due to the constraints of the ticketing system, the return period of the same-day return tickets to be introduced by the HKKF for the “Central – Yung Shue Wan”, “Central – Sok Kwu Wan” and “Central – Peng Chau” routes could not be extended to 72 hours. The Department encouraged residents to use multi-ride tickets while reducing the number of trips they can take from twenty to ten and extending the validity period from thirty days to sixty days from the date of purchase. The Department believed that the multi-ride tickets would be able to meet the needs of most residents. As for the rate of fare increase, the increase for same-day return tickets was 8%, while the actual rate of fare increase for multi-ride tickets was only about 4.8% compared with that for the current single journey tickets.
- (e) The Department encouraged ferry companies to actively explore non-fare box revenue to cross-subsidise their daily operating expenses. In addition to carrying out upgrading works for piers (including Peng Chau Ferry Pier, Cheung Chau Ferry Pier and Central Ferry Piers), the Department would also provide additional shops under the reconstruction project of Cheung Chau Ferry Pier with a view to help the ferry companies to increase their non-fare box revenue. Moreover, the Department encouraged the ferry companies from time to time to co-operate with commercial organisations in offering charter services to increase non-fare box revenue.

14. Mr Randy YU expressed his views as follows:

- (a) He hoped that the Secretariat would write to the TLB requesting it to conduct a comprehensive review and discussion on the ferry policy after the next term of the District Council was established.
- (b) He enquired about the distribution of vessel types powered by renewable

energy, the amount of fuel cost savings brought about by the vessel types concerned, and the timetable for converting all vessels into those powered by renewable energy.

- (c) As for the fuel stabilisation funds, he hoped the Bureau would make reference to the practice of the Environment and Ecology Bureau in stabilising electricity tariffs over the years.
- (d) The Bureau, the Department and the ferry companies were not experts in exploring non-fare box revenue, and the current practice of the Bureau and the Department assisting the ferry companies in increasing non-fare box revenue was only a drop in the bucket. He hoped the Department would set up an advisory committee on non-fare box revenue and invite members of the sector to assist in the planning of proposals (including electricity supply, fire service equipment and venue accessibility, etc.). During the epidemic, the Department completed the renovation of the top floor of the Central Piers. However, the sector later reflected to him that some potential tenants gave up renting the venues concerned since the decorations were overly exquisite and they were concerned about the high reinstatement cost in case damages occurred during the tenancy period. He reiterated that he hoped the Department would set up a steering committee comprising professionals to assist the ferry companies in increasing their non-fare box revenue.

15. The Chairman said that since some residents of the outlying islands only travelled to and from the islands two to three times a month, the above multi-ride ticket concession was not suitable for them. Moreover, she hoped that the Department would update the system so that the return period of the same-day return tickets could be extended to 72 hours for the convenience of outlying island residents. She also asked whether the Department would set up a task force to review the long-term ferry policy.

16. Ms Karen PO said that the TD would continue to actively liaise with the relevant departments (including the Architectural Services Department and the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department) to improve the operating environment and facilities of the piers, thereby assisting the ferry companies in increasing their non-fare box revenue. In addition, as far as she knew, the HKKF had enhanced the entry gates at the pier. She invited Ms LAM Wai-ling, General Manager of the HKKF to explain the operation of the ticketing system.

17. Ms LAM Wai-ling said that there used to be only two entry gates that could scan the QR code on same-day return tickets at the pier concerned, but the HKKF had retrofitted the remaining entry gates with QR code scanners. As for the purchase of same-day return tickets, Yung Shue Wan Ferry Pier currently had one counter for the sale of same-day return tickets and three additional self-service ticketing machines that accepted Octopus card payments, while Peng Chau Ferry Pier had two additional self-service ticketing machines in addition to two counters for the sale of same-day return

tickets. Moreover, due to the constraints of the ticketing system, it was currently not possible to extend the return period of the same-day return tickets to 72 hours. Therefore, the TD and the HKKF offered a more flexible multi-ride ticket concession to passengers (i.e. 10 trips within 60 days). The HKKF would actively explore the updating of the system with the contractor to extend the return period of the same-day return tickets to 72 hours.

18. The Chairman hoped the TD would follow up on the updating of the HKKF's system.

19. Ms Karen PO said that the TD would request the HKKF to follow up on the cleaning of the fans at the pier. As for the relaxation of the restrictions on the types and volumes of cargoes allowed to be carried on board, she invited Mr Eric KWOK to provide detailed information after the meeting for follow-up. Regarding the setting up of a task force, the existing ferry team of the Department was responsible for monitoring the daily operation of ferries and studying the long-term ferry policy with the TLB. Members were welcomed to have in-depth discussion on the long-term ferry policy.

20. Mr Randy YU expressed his views as follows:

- (a) He was not asking for the setting up of a task force, but a comprehensive review and discussion on the ferry policy. In the discussion, he would request for the setting up of a committee to assist the ferry companies in increasing non-fare box revenue. Although the TD had indicated that it would seek assistance from the relevant departments, the departments concerned were only responsible for the provision of hardware, which in his view might not be suitable for commercial operation. For example, even if the piers had sufficient hardware such as electricity supply and fire service equipment, it did not mean that they would bring in pedestrian flow and profits. He suggested inviting members of the business sector to join the said committee.
- (b) He asked whether the Chairman and Members agreed to write to the Secretary for Transport and Logistics (STL) in the name of the Traffic and Transport Committee (TTC) requesting the Bureau to prepare for the said discussions as soon as possible and to conduct the above discussions after the establishment of the next term of the Islands District Council. The discussions would cover (1) the fuel stabilisation funds, (2) the setting up of an advisory committee on non-fare box revenue, (3) the provision of additional transport infrastructures for the outlying islands, as well as the scope and amount of subsidies (for example, if the total investment for the construction of three bridges connecting the relevant islands was \$200 billion, and if 1% of the above amount was used as the annual subsidy for the outlying island ferry routes, the annual subsidy amount would be \$2 billion); and (4) the timetable for converting all vessels into those powered by renewable



energy and the amount of fuel cost savings brought about by the vessel types concerned, etc. He hoped to assist in formulating the long-term ferry policy to prevent the ferry companies from proposing substantial fare increases again in the future.

21. Members voted by a show of hands and unanimously endorsed to write to the STL in the name of the TTC to request for a comprehensive review and discussion on the long-term ferry policy.

(Members who voted in favour included: the Chairman Ms WONG Chau-ping, the Vice-chairman Mr HO Siu-kei, Mr Randy YU, Mr WONG Man-hon, Mr CHOW Yuk-tong, Mr HO Chun-fai, Mr NG Man-kit, Mr WAN Yeung-kin, Mr Eric KWOK, Mr FONG Lung-fei and Ms LAU Shun-ting.)

(Post-meeting note: The Secretariat wrote to the TLB on 16 October 2023.)

22. Mr FONG Lung-fei said that he was not sure whether the ownership of the properties above the piers belonged to the Government. If the ownership belonged to the Government, he suggested that they should be managed by government departments, while the ferry companies should focus on the operation of the ferry business. The ferry companies on the one hand received substantial subsidies from the Government, but on the other hand applied for fare increases when recording losses, which would in turn increase the financial burden on passengers. He hoped the TD would perform the gate-keeping and monitoring work properly to ensure the effective use of public funds.

23. Ms Karen PO gave a consolidated response as follows:

- (a) The TD had reviewed the long-term operation model for outlying island ferry routes from 2018 to 2019. At that time, the TD also considered hiring a management company by the Government to manage the operation of the fleet, but the relevant administrative costs might not be lower than the current operating expenses incurred under the management of the experienced ferry companies.
- (b) At present, public transport services in Hong Kong were mainly run by private operators. The Government seldom provided direct subsidies to private operators, except for outlying island ferry routes. The Department would perform the gate-keeping work properly to minimise the rate of fare increase as far as possible.
- (c) The ferry companies would deploy additional manpower to the piers on 24 September this year (i.e. the day of the fare increase) to assist passengers in purchasing same-day return tickets and set up mobile Octopus readers, and would print sufficient same-day return tickets in advance to facilitate passengers to purchase tickets and board the ferries. The Department and the ferry companies would also deploy on-site staff

to the piers to closely monitor the ticketing and boarding of passengers.

III. Proposed Road Works at Hoi Sha Path, Cheung Sha, Lantau Island, New Territories  
(Paper T&TC 31/2023)

24. The Chairman welcomed Ms NG Yuk-ping, Fanny, Senior Estate Surveyor/Land Supply 7 (Land Supply Section) and Mr LEUNG Cheuk-kwan, Felix, Estate Surveyor/Land Supply 7(1) (Land Supply Section) of the Lands Department (LandsD); Ms LO Fung-yin, District Engineer/General (4)A of the Highways Department (HyD); Mr Lemuel TSANG, Project Civil Engineer and Mr Harry CHAN, Assistant Civil Engineer of Aurecon Hong Kong Limited; and Mr Johnny SZE, Principal Engineer of Mannings (Asia) Consultants Limited to the meeting to present the paper.

25. Mr Lemuel TSANG briefly presented the paper with the aid of PowerPoint presentation.

26. Mr Randy YU expressed his views as follows:

- (a) He enquired that under the overarching principle of “Development in the North; Conservation for the South” embraced in the Sustainable Lantau Blueprint promulgated in 2017, whether the continuous sale of land by the LandsD was in breach of the said principle. Since the housing supply in Hong Kong was limited, he did not object to the sale of land by the Department to supply more quality housing. He asked the Department about the estimated increase in the vehicular flow and the demand for public parking spaces in the district as a result of the relevant private residential developments. Since the current car parking spaces in Tai O were in short supply, he expressed concern that the increase in population in the district would aggravate the problem.
- (b) While the LandsD was very efficient in land sale, with the sites concerned would be completed and ready for occupation within three to five years after sale, however, it often took more than ten years to process residents’ applications for rebuilding village house and small house development. He hoped that the Department could shorten the processing time for such applications to three to five years to address the housing needs of the residents concerned.

27. Mr Eric KWOK expressed his views as follows:

- (a) He asked the LandsD whether the relevant road works required felling or removal of trees. If so, whether the Department had obtained approvals from the relevant departments (including the Tree Management Office). He asked the Department about the number of trees to be felled and whether protected trees (such as *aquilaria sinensis*)

were included.

- (b) Since the entrance/exit of Hoi Sha Path was connected to South Lantau Road, he asked whether the LandsD had considered if the road concerned could cope with the increase in the traffic flow arising from the population growth in the district. He also asked about the number of Lantau Closed Road Permits that would need to be issued to cater for the residential development project concerned. After a series of heavy rainstorms in early September this year, the road surfaces of Pak Kung Au and the nearby roads were damaged. Since the traffic flow of the relevant road sections was already very heavy, he expressed concern that the road might not be able to accommodate further increase in traffic flow. He hoped that the Department would take into account the relevant livelihood issues while developing land projects.

28. Mr HO Chun-fai said that the proposed road was a dead-end road. He suggested that the road should be connected to Hoi Sha Path, Golden Coast or roads of the nearby housing estates to divert the vehicular flow from South Lantau Road. Moreover, South Lantau Road and Tung Chung Road could not cope with the further increase in traffic flow. He requested that Tung Chung Road be widened to meet future needs and reminded the LandsD and the Planning Department to plan ahead as early as possible, otherwise the works could not be implemented upon completion of the relevant housing estates.

29. Mr WONG Man-hon expressed his views as follows:

- (a) He asked why the LandsD did not use the lot concerned for the construction of public housing estates and Home Ownership Scheme estates. He considered it unfair for the Government to build the road and then sell the adjacent lot for the construction of high-end private housing.
- (b) The works would widen Hoi Sha Path to a two-way two-lane carriageway of about 7.9 metres wide. He asked whether the Department would widen South Lantau Road to 7.9 metres. He queried the Department's practice of selling land in South Lantau every year for the construction of luxury housing instead of granting the relevant land for building public housing estates.
- (c) Members had requested the Department to build proper roads in South Lantau, but the Department had yet to implement the construction works. Instead, it continued to construct roads for the luxury housing sites in South Lantau, which was unfair to the residents in South Lantau.

30. Mr NG Man-kit asked why the LandsD constructed a private road for the private residential development site. The road concerned was a dead-end road that only facilitated the convenience of residents of the relevant housing estates. He

suggested that the road concerned should be connected to Hoi Sha Path and the roads of the nearby housing estates to achieve traffic diversion. Some of the roads in South Lantau and Chi Ma Wan Road were very narrow, but the Department had not addressed the above problem over the years. In addition, with the completion of new residential development projects and the increase in the number of residents, the problem of insufficient public parking spaces in Mui Wo had become more serious. He hoped that the relevant departments would solve the above problems.

31. The Vice-chairman Mr HO Siu-kei objected to the use of public funds by the relevant departments to construct private roads for private residential projects.

32. Ms Fanny NG gave a consolidated response as follows:

- (a) The land use and development parameters of the lot for sale were determined in accordance with those in the approved South Lantau Coast Outline Zoning Plan. In view of conservation considerations and the relevant development restrictions, the current maximum plot ratio permitted was 0.4 times.
- (b) Although the road works at Hoi Sha Path were gazetted by the Government, the developer was responsible for the construction of the road concerned.
- (c) As for the processing of applications for rebuilding village house and small house development, the LandsD noted Members' views and would refer them to the District Lands Office, Islands (DLO/Is) for follow-up.

33. Ms LO Fung-yin said that the HyD had commissioned a consultant to conduct a traffic impact assessment (TIA). According to the TIA report, the traffic flow of the roads concerned during peak hours was at an acceptable level. She asked the consultant to elaborate on the report.

34. Mr Johnny SZE said the consultant estimated that there would be eleven and four vehicle trips travelling to and from the residential development project concerned respectively during the morning peak hours, and about three to four vehicle trips entering and leaving the location during the afternoon period. In general, the traffic flow from South Lantau Road to Tung Chung Road and Shek Mun Kap Road would remain at an acceptable level.

35. Ms LO Fung-yin said that 18 trees would be affected by the proposed road works. The developer would study whether the trees should be retained in-situ or removed. If tree removal was required, the developer had to submit a tree compensation plan to the relevant government departments for approval in accordance with their requirements and guidelines.

36. Mr Randy YU understood that the number of additional vehicles projected by the consultant would not have a significant impact on traffic flow. However, he said

that there was currently an acute shortage of parking spaces in Mui Wo, and the problem would be further aggravated if a dozen more vehicles were to be parked in Mui Wo. He hoped that the relevant departments would make proper planning for public parking spaces. In addition, he hoped that Ms Fanny NG would reflect to the LandsD and the Development Bureau (DEVB) the problem of the long processing time for applications for rebuilding village house and small house development. He also hoped that the Department or the Bureau would study the provision of additional manpower and the streamlining of the relevant approval process.

37. Mr HO Chun-fai asked the LandsD that upon completion of the proposed road works at Hoi Sha Path, whether the said road would be managed by the developer or a government department. He reiterated that he hoped the Department would connect Hoi Sha Path, Golden Coast or roads of the nearby housing estates.

38. Mr Eric KWOK said the consultant had claimed that there would be four vehicle trips travelling to and from the relevant road according to the TIA. He asked whether there were only four units in the private housing estates at the Cheung Sha site. In addition, he queried whether there would be any conflict of interest for the Department to assign all the work to the consultant responsible for both construction and consultancy work.

39. Mr WONG Man-hon objected to the Government's commitment of resources for the road construction for the site of the private residential development project in Cheung Sha.

40. Ms Fanny NG said that she would relay the raised problem of the long processing time for applications for rebuilding village house and small house development to the DLO/Is. If necessary, she would relay the manpower and approval process issues to LandsD and the DEVB. She reiterated that the developer would be responsible for the proposed widening works of Hoi Sha Path and would bear the cost of works involved. The road concerned would be handed over to the Government for management upon completion of construction and would not become a private road. Since the proposed road works involved gazettement, the Department hoped to invite Members to note and express their views on the proposed road works through this meeting.

41. Ms LO Fung-yin gave a consolidated response as follows:

- (a) Regarding the shortage of parking spaces in Mui Wo, the HyD would refer it to the TD for follow-up.
- (b) Regarding the connection of South Lantau Road to Golden Coast, the Department would follow up with the TD.
- (c) The Department commissioned a consultant to conduct a technical study, and the report of which had to be submitted to the relevant government departments for approval. The feasibility study of this

project was conducted by Aurecon Hong Kong Limited and Mannings (Asia) Consultants Limited. The developer would need to engage other consultants to conduct detailed studies in the future, and the study reports would also have to be submitted to the relevant government departments for approval. Therefore, no conflict of interest was involved.

- (d) As for the trees, the Department suggested transplanting an affected *aquilaria sinensis*. As for other trees that might need to be felled due to the road works, the Government would require the sale site developer of the Cheung Sha residential site to conduct detailed tree surveys and submit tree preservation proposals before commencement of the road works. The proposals had to comply with the requirements of the departments concerned and include compensatory planting in accordance with the established guidelines.

42. Mr Johnny SZE said that the consultant conducted a trip generation estimation for the vehicular flow generated from the project based on the Transport Planning and Design Manual, as well as the number of units and the areas of the proposed development at the Cheung Sha residential site, thereby projecting the increase in the traffic flow at the relevant junctions. The consultant expected that upon occupation of the residential project in Cheung Sha, the traffic flow brought about by the additional vehicles on the relevant roads would be at an acceptable level.

43. Mr HO Chun-fai said that the traffic flow on South Lantau Road had been very heavy since about six years ago. Having regard to the future development of the Greater Bay Area, the recovery of the tourism industry, and the completion of several new housing estates in the district, he asked whether the relevant departments had taken into account the traffic flow brought about by the above factors to avoid traffic congestion on South Lantau Road in the future. In addition, he suggested that the proposed road should be connected to Tung Chung Road instead of South Lantau Road to avoid obstructing the access of Lantau residents.

44. The Chairman queried why the road concerned only facilitated the convenience of residents of the private housing estates, given that the road would be handed over to the Government for management upon completion of construction by the developer.

45. Ms Fanny NG said that there were Cheung Sha Government Holiday Bungalows, Wayfoong Holiday Houses, a completed private development project and other properties in the vicinity of the proposed road project. The residents concerned and the facility users could also use the said road. Therefore, the proposed road was not only for the convenience of residents of the private housing estates.

46. Ms LO Fung-yin said that the HyD and the consultant carried out the relevant traffic flow assessment in 2019 and conducted on-site traffic counts during the morning and evening peak hours on 3 December 2019 and 17 December 2020. The reports had

been submitted to the TD and the relevant departments for approval. Moreover, regarding the existing traffic problems on South Lantau Road, the Department would explore feasible improvement options with the TD.

47. The Chairman asked the TD about the width of general roads on Lantau Island.

48. Mr Tim WONG said that the current width of South Lantau Road and Keung Shan Road was about six to seven metres. As for the situation of parking spaces in Mui Wo, the TD had been closely monitoring the utilisation of parking spaces throughout South Lantau and understood residents' keen demand for parking. Whenever there were new developments or redevelopment projects in the district, the Department would request for the provision of additional parking spaces. In addition, currently, there were still spare parking spaces available at the fee-paying car park at Ngan Shu Street in Mui Wo.

49. The Chairman said that while the width of general roads on Lantau Island was only about six metres, the proposed road, which appeared to be mainly for private use, had a width of 7.9 metres. She asked the relevant departments about the future road planning arrangements for Lantau Island.

50. Mr Tim WONG said that roads in South Lantau had been built for a long time and might not be able to fully meet the current road design standards, but the Government had been carrying out various road improvement works in South Lantau over the years. The TD would continue to carry out various road improvement works on Keung Shan Road, South Lantau Road and Tai O Road, etc., so as to improve the traffic conditions.

51. Ms LO Fung-yin said that the proposed road width of 7.9 metres was in line with the TD's standard. Although the standard road width was 7.3 metres, the HyD and the consultant proposed to widen the location concerned to 7.9 metres due to the presence of many bends at Hoi Sha Path. She reiterated that the proposed road, upon completion, would be open for public use instead of exclusively for residents of the new residential project. Users and residents of Cheung Sha Government Holiday Bungalows, Wayfoong Holiday Houses and other private residential development projects in the vicinity of Hoi Sha Path could also use the said road.

52. Mr WONG Man-hon asked why the road used by only a few vehicles needed to be 7.9 metres wide while village roads were very narrow.

53. Mr HO Chun-fai asked whether the Department could grant approval for residents of villages on Lantau Island to build roads on their own to facilitate access by villagers, given that the developer could be responsible for the construction of the roads concerned.

54. The Chairman said that the roads on Lantau Island were in poor and dangerous conditions. She asked whether the Department would consider improving

the roads on Lantau Island and the bends on Keung Shan Road before constructing the proposed road.

55. Mr Tim WONG said that based on the number of traffic accidents on South Lantau Road, the overall road conditions there were safe. The TD would continue to carry out various road improvement works to further improve the traffic conditions. He said that the relevant works were not directly related to the proposed road works at Hoi Sha Path. Moreover, since village roads were not under the purview of the TD, he was unable to respond to the relevant issue.

56. Mr Randy YU suggested writing to the Chief Executive in the name of the TTC to ask whether it was possible for the village residents to apply for building rural roads on their own.

57. Members voted by a show of hands and unanimously agreed to write to the Chief Executive in the name of the TTC to ask the above question.

(Members who voted in favour included: the Chairman Ms WONG Chau-ping, the Vice-chairman Mr HO Siu-kei, Mr Randy YU, Mr WONG Man-hon, Mr CHOW Yuk-tong, Mr HO Chun-fai, Mr NG Man-kit, Mr WAN Yeung-kin, Mr Eric KWOK, Mr FONG Lung-fei and Ms LAU Shun-ting.)

(Post-meeting note: The Secretariat wrote to the Chief Executive's Office on 16 October 2023.)

#### IV. Question on the follow-up of the bend improvement works at Keung Shan Road, Tai O (Paper T&TC 33/2023)

58. The Chairman welcomed Mr WEN Jinxing, Terry, Engineer/22 (Lantau) of the Civil Engineering and Development Department (CEDD); and Mr WONG Yui-him, Tim, Engineer/Islands 1 of the TD to the meeting to respond to the question. The written reply of the CEDD had been distributed to Members for perusal before the meeting.

59. Mr Randy YU briefly presented the question.

60. Mr Terry WEN briefly presented the written reply.

61. Mr Tim WONG responded as follows:

- (a) To improve the traffic conditions of the roads in South Lantau, the TD and the HyD completed 23 road improvement works on South Lantau Road and Keung Shan Road between 2007 and 2022. To further enhance road safety in South Lantau, the Department and the HyD were preparing for a number of improvement works, including widening the road surfaces of South Lantau Road and Keung Shan Road, improving



carriageway bends, and provision of additional traffic signs and road markings.

- (b) As for the bend in the carriageway between lamp post numbers FA0481 and FA0483, the Department had drawn up a preliminary proposal on the widening of the road section concerned and had consulted the relevant departments. According to preliminary observations, there were many trees and underground pipelines along the roadside of the location, and it was adjacent to a slope. Therefore, the works were subject to more constraints and required more preliminary preparatory work. The Department and the HyD would continue to explore the feasibility of the improvement works with the relevant departments.

62. Mr Randy YU hoped that the TD would provide a plan for the preliminary proposal on the widening of the bend in the carriageway between lamp post numbers FA0481 and FA0483 for Members' reference. In addition, regarding the written reply from the CEDD, which set out that "the proposed options include, among others, constructing a new road tunnel in West Lantau to connect Shek Pik and Tai O; and/or providing a viaduct to improve a few sections of Keung Shan Road with steep and narrow bends", he hoped the Department would adopt both options to facilitate access by residents and tourists.

63. The Vice-chairman Mr HO Siu-kei said that Members had earlier conducted a site visit at Keung Shan Road with the relevant departments, but no substantial progress had been made since then. He hoped that the Department would complete the relevant works within one to three years to enhance traffic safety.

64. Mr FONG Lung-fei said that the bends in the above road were very dangerous, particularly at the road section about 50 metres after entering Keung Shan Road from Ngong Ping Road. He hoped that the Department would complete the road improvement works as soon as possible to ensure the safety of road users. He suggested that the Department should make reference to the road section on Hong Kong Island from Pok Fu Lam Road to Victoria Road and then to Mount Davis. The above road section was also very dangerous before the widening works were carried out, but the situation was greatly improved after the widening of the road surfaces.

65. Mr Tim WONG said that he would provide Members with preliminary plans for the works after the meeting. Moreover, the TD had been planning improvement works for various roads. He hoped Members would understand that individual projects would take a longer time due to limited resources and more constraints, but the Department would closely follow up on the progress.

66. The Vice-chairman Mr HO Siu-kei said that Members had earlier conducted a site visit to several road bends with the relevant departments. He requested the departments concerned to accord priority to a few of the most dangerous bends. In addition, he opined that road bend improvement works were not major projects and should be manageable with the current engineering technology. He hoped that the

Department would provide a reasonable explanation if it considered the relevant works infeasible.

V. Question on the progress of the addition of en-route stops for route B6 of New Lantau Bus Company (1973) Limited  
(Paper T&TC 35/2023)

67. The Chairman welcomed Ms YEUNG Yuk-shan, Senior Transport Officer/Islands 1 of the TD; and Mr Peter CHU, Senior Manager (Operations and Administration) and Mr HO Lee-yip, Manager, District Relations of New Lantau Bus Company (1973) Limited (NLB) to the meeting to respond to the question.

68. Mr Eric KWOK briefly presented the question.

69. Ms Doris YEUNG responded as follows:

- (a) Regarding the proposal of adding en-route stops for route B6, the TD had once again requested the NLB to actively examine the feasibility of the proposal before the meeting. The NLB preliminarily replied that the proposal would increase the journey time and require additional manpower. Since the NLB was currently understaffed, it had reservations about the proposal.
- (b) Currently, residents of Yat Tung Estate could take route 38 to Tung Chung Town Centre to interchange for route B6 to the Hong Kong Port of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge (HZMB), while enjoying a concessionary interchange fare of \$2.2. According to the operational data submitted by the NLB to the Department, in early September this year, about 29 passengers took route 38 and then interchanged for route B6 to the Hong Kong Port of the HZMB every day. The Department understood that members of the public hoped to have more direct bus services, and would continue to review the feasibility of the proposal with the NLB.

70. Mr Peter CHU said that since the drop-off point of route B6 at the MTR station was very close to the pick-up point of route 38, and the service of route 38 was maintained at four-minute intervals throughout most of the day, it was convenient for passengers to interchange with the two routes. In addition, the interchange scheme would help reduce the number of vehicles on roads, thereby alleviating traffic congestion.

71. Mr Eric KWOK said the NLB had pointed out at the TTC meeting held on 17 January this year that if route B6 routed via Chung Yan Road during peak hours, the journey time would increase by at least four to five minutes, which was not cost-effective. Therefore, he suggested arranging for one of the evening trips heading towards Mun Tung Estate to make a detour via Chung Yan Road (with the addition of

an en-route stop at the bus stop outside Mei Yat House) for the convenience of residents. He believed that if route B6 made a detour via Chung Yan Road during non-peak hours in the evening, the journey would not need to take four to five minutes longer.

72. Mr FONG Lung-fei said that although route B6 routed via Yat Tung Estate, passengers could not alight from the bus due to the absence of an en-route stop there. Residents of Yat Tung Estate had to pay an additional fare of over \$1 to interchange to other routes in order to alight at Yat Tung Estate. Such a route arrangement was very strange. Some residents of Yat Tung Estate chose to alight at Mun Tung Estate and walk to Yat Tung Estate. However, due to the presence of a number of construction sites in Mun Tung Estate and the dim lighting at night, there were safety concerns for residents passing through the area.

73. Ms Doris YEUNG said that the TD would actively encourage the NLB to offer more interchange concessions.

74. Mr Peter CHU said that the daytime schedule arrangement was tighter. Even if only adding en-route stops for single-direction trips, there was a high chance that at least one more bus captain and one more bus would need to be deployed. Having regard to the NLB's existing manpower shortage, cost-effectiveness and the fact that only about 25 passengers interchanged to the relevant routes throughout the day, the NLB had reservations about the suggestion. Moreover, the routing of route B6 would overlap with the frequent route 38 if an en-route stop was added at Chung Yan Road, so he considered the interchange scheme more appropriate. The NLB would actively consider increasing the interchange concessions to attract the public to interchange for the routes.

75. Mr FONG Lung-fei suggested that the NLB should offer passengers of route B6 free interchange for route 38.

76. Mr Eric KWOK strongly requested the NLB to launch a three-month trial scheme based on his proposal, and then review the data collected during the trial period to decide whether to implement the above proposal.

77. Mr Peter CHU said he had mentioned earlier that the journey time would increase by four to five minutes since it was indicated on the appendix of the paper that the trips in both directions would be routed via Chung Yan Road. If en-route stops were only added for single-direction trips, the journey time would only increase by two to three minutes. He reiterated that the NLB had been facing a severe manpower shortage problem since the beginning of this year. The overall journey time had also been lengthened due to the increase in the number of passengers and the boarding/alighting time. Moreover, the NLB would actively consider offering free interchange for route 38.

78. Ms Doris YEUNG said that the TD would arrange a site visit after the meeting to examine the journey time and frequency of the routes concerned, and then discuss with the NLB the feasibility of the proposal.

79. Mr Peter CHU said that the NLB would actively improve its operational situation and manpower shortage problem. In addition, he reiterated that the NLB had planned to offer passengers of route B6 free interchange for route 38, while passengers of route 38 would only have to pay the fare difference to interchange for route B6, and the full fare would be the same as that of route B6 (i.e. \$9.1).

80. Ms Doris YEUNG said that the TD would actively study the trial proposal with the NLB.

81. Mr Peter CHU said that the NLB would study the trial proposal.

VI. Question on the service quality of franchised buses  
(Paper T&TC 34/2023)

VII. Question on the severe problem of lost trips of bus services for Tung Chung  
(Paper T&TC 36/2023)

82. The Chairman said that given the content of Item VI and Item VII was related, it was decided that the two items should be discussed together. The Chairman welcomed Ms YEUNG Yuk-shan, Senior Transport Officer/Islands 1 of the TD; Mr Stephen WAN, Manager, Operations, Mr Desmond TANG, Assistant Manager, Planning and Development, and Ms Rennis LIP, Assistant Manager (Public Affairs) of Long Win Bus Company Limited (LWB); and Ms Penny CHUNG, Corporate Communications Manager and Mr Calvin TSANG, Senior Corporate Communications Officer of Citybus Limited (Citybus) to the meeting to respond to the questions.

83. Mr Eric KWOK and Mr FONG Lung-fei presented the questions respectively.

84. Ms Doris YEUNG responded as follows:

(a) The TD had been closely monitoring the operation of bus routes through field surveys and examination of operation records submitted by the bus companies. Currently, Citybus route E11S running from Mun Tung Estate in Tung Chung to Tin Hau operated at a headway of five to seven minutes during 6:20 a.m. to 7:50 a.m. from Monday to Friday (excluding public holidays). In order to meet the passenger demand, an additional departure at 7:50 a.m. would be provided on the route starting from 23 April this year. Based on the operation records submitted by Citybus and the field surveys conducted by the Department on Ying Hei Road outside Caribbean Coast in early September this year, the service level of the relevant route could still meet the passenger demand. In addition, the Department had not found any cases of passengers failing to board the bus during the surveys.

(b) The Department had conducted field surveys outside the Yu Nga

Shopping Centre bus stop and the Mun Tung Estate Bus Terminus from 6:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon on 4 August this year and from 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. on the 28th of the same month. The findings showed that the service frequencies of Citybus routes E21A and E21B during the above periods met the requirements, and the occupancy rates were about 7% to 16% and 21% to 42% respectively, indicating that the services could meet the passenger demand.

- (c) The LWB route E31 operated at a headway of approximately 12 to 25 minutes during peak hours. According to the latest field survey conducted by the Department at the Lantau Link Bus-Bus Interchange, the average occupancy rate of the Tsuen Wan-bound services of the route during morning peak hours was about 45%, while the average occupancy rate of the Tung Chung-bound services during afternoon peak hours was about 70%, which indicated that the services could meet the passenger demand. However, during the survey, the Department found that certain bus trips in the afternoon peak hours had higher occupancy rates and there was also the problem of deviation from service schedules. The Department had immediately followed up with the LWB and requested the LWB to provide services according to the scheduled frequencies, so as to maintain the required service level and reduce the impact on passengers. In addition, the Department also required the LWB to reserve sufficient buses and manpower where resources permitted, so that additional departures could be arranged to divert passengers when necessary.
- (d) With regard to the problem of lost trips on Citybus route E11B and LWB route E31 on 4 and 24 August this year respectively as reported by Mr FONG Lung-fei, investigation had been carried out by the Department. The bus companies responded that it was caused by the absence of bus captains. In this connection, the Department had instructed the bus companies to provide services according to the scheduled frequencies, so as to reduce the impact on passengers.
- (e) The Department attached great importance to the stability of franchised bus services and would closely monitor their services. If a franchised bus company failed to provide services in accordance with the requirements of the Department, the Department would follow up with the bus company concerned in writing. If the bus company failed to provide a reasonable explanation or make improvements, the Department would remind it again in writing and request the bus company to maintain satisfactory and efficient public bus services and take improvement measures within a specified timeframe. Regarding the problem of lost trips on individual routes or in general, the Department would consider issuing warning letters to the bus companies concerned and requiring the bus companies to make improvements within a specified timeframe depending on the persistence and severity

of the situation. All bus companies had been taking the letters issued by the TD seriously and had actively made improvements. According to the field surveys conducted by the Department, the problem of lost trips on the relevant routes had improved. The Department would continue to monitor the operation of the routes.

- (f) The Department was very concerned about the driving safety of bus captains and required franchised bus companies to provide comprehensive bus captain training, including courses, road practice and bus type training, to ensure that the driving skills, safety awareness, route familiarity and etc. of the bus captains met the requirements of the bus companies and the Department. In addition, to ensure that bus captains had enough rest time, the Department had also formulated the Guidelines on Bus Captain Working Hours, Rest Times and Meal Breaks for franchised bus companies, and required bus companies to arrange their manpower accordingly.
- (g) Regarding the quarrel between a bus captain and a passenger, the Department had urged the bus company to conduct investigation and to remind the bus captain concerned to pay attention to communication skills. Although staff recruitment (including remuneration packages) was an internal administration matter of the franchised bus companies, the Department had been encouraging franchised bus companies to attract more bus drivers to the industry by improving employee welfare and providing a favourable working environment.
- (h) Regarding the problem of lost trips and insufficient frequency on route 39M, given the very strong passenger demand for the services of route 39M, the NLB had provided an additional departure on Saturdays since late May this year and would arrange two to three additional departures during peak hours as appropriate. The Department hoped that the NLB would consider regularising the additional departures concerned if feasible.

85. Mr Stephen WAN said that factors such as traffic condition, passenger volume, number of bus captains and vehicle condition would affect the stability of bus services. In this regard, the LWB would review the adequacy of its bus services from time to time. At present, the occupancy rate of Tsuen Wan-bound trips of route E31 was 70% during the peak hours. The services were sufficient to meet the passenger demand. The LWB would continue to monitor the services of route E31. The LWB would pay attention to the problem of poor ventilation within the bus compartment and would maintain and repair the relevant equipment regularly. As for the drivers' driving skills, the LWB would provide induction and post-employment trainings to drivers regularly. In addition, the LWB places great effort to manpower recruitment. It would regularly review the remuneration packages of bus captains and provide competitive salaries and fringe benefits to them. Moreover, the LWB would continue to hold job fairs in order to attract more talents.

86. Ms Penny CHUNG said that on 4 August this year, the problem of lost trips occurred because of the unexpected absence of a bus captain. Citybus would endeavour to deploy bus captains in response to actual circumstances, so as to maintain stable service frequencies. In addition, based on the current occupancy statistics of the relevant routes, although there was in-take of residents at new residential projects in Tung Chung and the passenger volume had increased, Citybus believed that the relevant bus services could still meet the passenger demand. Citybus would continue to review the patronage of the relevant routes. It planned to increase the services of the relevant routes in order to meet the demand of the increasing population in Tung Chung. As for the bus captain manpower, Citybus had been actively recruiting bus captains and improving their remuneration packages to enhance its service quality.

87. Mr FONG Lung-fei expressed his views as follows:

- (a) Some residents of Tung Chung North reflected that the itineraries of the bus routes within Tung Chung were circuitous. He hoped the TD would review the problem.
- (b) He suggested that civilian staff of the bus companies should obtain a commercial vehicle driving licence, so that they could serve as bus captains when necessary, thereby improving the stability of bus services and meeting the passenger demand.
- (c) On 13 September this year, a bus of route E11S broke down when it arrived at the entrance of the Western Harbour Crossing. In response, the bus captain just asked the passengers to get off the bus and walk to bus stop at the Hong Kong-Macau Ferry Terminal for taking other buses without explaining the situation to them. The passengers had to walk past several street blocks to reach the bus stop at the Hong Kong-Macau Ferry Terminal while there was no pedestrian path in the vicinity. He opined that the bus captain's approach was unsatisfactory. He hoped that apart from training on driving skills, Citybus would also provide bus captains with training on emergency response.
- (d) As regards bus capacity, the Department stated that the average bus occupancy rate during peak hours was around 40% to 70%. However, according to his observation, there were from time to time buses that reached their full capacity with passengers on board standing beyond the yellow lines inside the compartment. He queried that the lower deck of a bus could not accommodate 49 standing passengers. As a result, the capacity provided by the Department was lower than the actual passenger numbers, thus failing to truly reflect the passenger demand. In addition, overloading would also affect traffic safety, especially for airport buses with luggage racks.

88. Mr Eric KWOK expressed his views as follows:

- (a) Residents often complained about the insufficient bus service frequencies during peak hours, but the TD and the bus companies always responded that the services were sufficient to meet the passenger demand. Although the Department said the latest field survey at the Lantau Link Bus-Bus Interchange indicated that the bus services could meet the passenger demand, some residents reflected that they had been unable to board a bus in Tsuen Wan between 6:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. because the bus was full. In addition, some residents reflected that they were unable to board a bus of route E31 at the Lantau Link Bus-Bus Interchange at 6:41 p.m. on 7 September this year because the bus was at full capacity.
- (b) Some residents complained that the services of route E11S were often delayed during the peak period from 7:30 a.m. to 7:50 a.m. At times, there were even delays of over 30 minutes. Therefore, residents requested Citybus to increase the service frequency during the said period. In addition, some residents reported that certain captains had poor driving skills. For example, they would make sudden braking and turning movements, causing discomfort to the passengers.
- (c) There were often lost trips on route 39M during the school peak hours. As a result, students could not board the buses from time to time because they were full, resulting in long queues at the bus stops concerned. He had once reported the problem to the NLB and was replied that the incidents were caused by the temporary absence of captains. He queried why the NLB did not immediately arrange other captains to serve the route. He hoped that the TD would monitor the lost trip problem of the NLB and increase the service frequency during 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 a.m.
- (d) He asked the NLB the following questions: (1) the schedule for updating the Estimated Bus Arrival Time System; (2) whether seat belts would be installed for the upper-deck seats on the new buses of route 3M; (3) when seats would be provided at bus stops; and (4) when display screens would be installed at sheltered bus stops and the location of the relevant bus stops.

89. Ms Doris YEUNG made a consolidated response as follows:

- (a) Since the TD's field surveys were conducted at bus stops with the highest patronage, they could not fully reflect the situations at the various stops at different time. If the Department received from Members or passengers reports about particular problems, it would actively follow up with the bus companies. In addition, the Department would monitor the service frequencies during peak hours and off-peak hours through field surveys. Field surveys on "E" routes



and “A” routes were generally carried out at the Lantau Link Bus-Bus Interchange or the Tuen Mun-Chek Lap Kok Tunnel Bus-Bus Interchange.

- (b) The Department would follow up with the NLB on the problem of lost trips on route 39M after the meeting.

90. Mr Desmond TANG gave a consolidated response as follows:

- (a) The LWB had split route E32A from route E31 for providing services to Tung Chung West and Tung Chung East residents respectively. The LWB would continue to monitor the services of other bus routes and would carry out bus route splitting when necessary.
- (b) As for the bus driver manpower issue, some of the LWB’s backend staff had obtained commercial vehicle driving licences and received relevant training. They would work as bus captains on the front line to maintain stable bus services when necessary. In addition, the captain training provided by the LWB covered driving skills, driving attitude and hospitality. In the event of a dispute between a passenger and a bus captain, the LWB would conduct a review with the bus captain concerned to improve the service quality.
- (c) In terms of manpower recruitment, the LWB was actively enhancing the remuneration packages for captains, providing flexible work arrangements and improving work environment to recruit more captains, so as to minimise the occurrence of lost trips.

91. Mr Calvin TSANG gave a consolidated response as follows:

- (a) Regarding the itineraries of the bus routes in Tung Chung District, with the completion of new development projects in Tung Chung West and Tung Chung North, Citybus would closely monitor the intake progress of the relevant residential projects and would explore with the TD feasible options to further enhance the bus services in Tung Chung District in response to the passenger demand in a timely manner. In addition, Citybus noted Members’ views on route splitting and would conduct further studies.
- (b) As for the bus captain manpower issue, at present, many backend staff of Citybus would also serve as bus captains in their daily work, so as to stabilise the bus service frequencies during peak hours and alleviate the problem of full-time bus captain shortage. In addition, Citybus announced shortly before this meeting that it would arrange a second salary increase within this year and the increase rate would be very competitive. Citybus hoped to recruit more bus captains to provide services to the public, thereby improving the stability of its bus services.

- (c) In the driving training course of Citybus, strict requirements were adopted for training captains' driving skills. Meanwhile, a tablet was installed at the captain's seat on each bus. If there occurred any sharp turn, sudden swerving or stopping, the tablet would promptly send a reminder to alert the captain, so as to avoid such situations and reduce the impact on passengers.
- (d) Regarding the incident of a bus of route E11S breaking down at the entrance of the Western Harbour Crossing, Citybus would follow up and maintain communications with Mr FONG.

92. Mr HO Lee-yip said that the NLB had added two additional departures for route 39M at 7:05 a.m. and 7:30 a.m. every day. The problem of lost trips on the route mentioned by Mr Eric KWOK was caused by the unexpected absence of bus captains.

93. Mr Eric KWOK said that there were often lost trips on routes E21B and E21A. In addition, some residents had requested additional services from Tung Chung to the urban area during morning peak hours and from the urban area to Tung Chung in the evening, including routes E11S, E21A, E21B and E31.

#### VIII. Any Other Business

##### Highways Department's Minor Traffic Improvement Projects and Works Schedules

94. The Chairman welcomed Ms KANG Pu, Engineer/Islands(2) of the HyD to the meeting to respond to the question. The HyD had submitted the Islands District Minor Traffic Improvement Projects and Works Schedules as at early September this year prior to the meeting. Enquiries and opinions from Members were welcomed.

95. Members noted the paper.

##### The tree problem at Ngau Au Yuen, Pui O on South Lantau Road

96. Mr HO Chun-fai said that when Super Typhoon Saola hit Hong Kong on 1 September this year, a tree at Ngau Au Yuen, Pui O on South Lantau Road tilted. Residents had called 1823 immediately to report the incident. Due to the severe tilting of the tree, double-decker buses had to cross into the opposite traffic lane in order to go through the road section successfully, which was very dangerous. He had requested the NLB to operate the relevant routes with single-decker buses when it resumed services, but the NLB did not adopt his suggestion and disregarded driving safety. The tree finally collapsed at 10:30 a.m. on 8 September this year. He wondered why the departments did not address the problem immediately after learning that the tree had tilted. In addition, he asked about the responsibility of the TD and the NLB if the tree hit a bus passing by and caused casualties. He opined that the TD had the responsibility to ensure traffic safety.

97. Ms Mini FUNG said that when the TD learned that the Hong Kong Observatory was about to issue a lower tropical cyclone warning signal shortly, it requested the NLB to send personnel to assess the feasibility of resuming the services of the various bus routes in South Lantau. After an on-site assessment, the NLB reported the affected road sections to the Department's Emergency Transport Co-ordination Centre, so that the HyD could arrange for the clearing of obstacles on road to resume public transport services as soon as possible. Based on the assessment conducted by the NLB then (i.e. 1 September this year), route 3M could resume service after certain road obstacles were removed. On the day of the tree collapse (i.e. 8 September this year), the NLB had also immediately reported to the Emergency Transport Co-ordination Centre that the bus services were disrupted due to a tree collapse on the relevant road section. The Emergency Transport Co-ordination Centre of the Department would, having regard to the actual circumstances, request the HyD to prioritise the clearing of road obstacles as appropriate, so that public transport services would be resumed as soon as possible.

98. Mr HO Lee-yip said that after the tree tilted, the NLB opined that it was difficult for double-decker buses to travel through the relevant road section and it operated the relevant bus routes with single-decker buses all day on 2 September this year. However, due to the increase in passenger volume on 3 September, which was the first school day, coupled with the shortage of manpower during morning rush hours, the NLB could only arrange for double-decker buses to operate a few trips in the morning of that day, but it had sent personnel to the scene to direct the traffic.

99. The Chairman asked which department was responsible for handling tree tilting and collapse problems.

100. Ms KANG Pu said that in general, the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) was responsible for the maintenance of trees on the road side. If there were collapsed trees obstructing the traffic, the HyD should be responsible for the clearing work.

101. The Chairman said the departments should take public safety as the prime consideration. Tree collapse would pose dangers to vehicles. Since the tree had already tilted at that time, it could collapse at any time. The departments should deal with the problem immediately. She hoped there would not be re-occurrence of similar situations in the future. She requested the Secretariat to write to relevant departments on the above-mentioned incident, seeking explanations and advice on how to prevent similar situations from happening again in the future.

(Post-meeting note: The Secretariat wrote to the TD, the HyD and the LCSD on 13 October 2023.)

#### IX. Date of next meeting

102. The date of the next meeting would be announced in due course.

-END-