

(Translation)

Islands District Council
Minutes of Meeting of Traffic and Transport Committee

Date : 24 July 2023 (Monday)

Time : 3:00 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 4:35 p.m.)

Members

Mr YU Hon-kwan, Randy, MH, JP (Left at around 5:45 p.m.)

Mr WONG Man-hon, MH (Left at around 5:00 p.m.)

Mr WONG Hon-kuen, Ken

Mr HO Chun-fai

Mr NG Man-kit (Left at around 5:15 p.m.)

Mr WAN Yeung-kin

Mr KWOK Ping, Eric

Mr FONG Lung-fei

Ms LAU Shun-ting (Arrived at around 3:15 p.m.)

Attendance by Invitation

Mr CHEUNG Lai-shun, Benedict	Senior Engineer/Walkability 2, Transport Department
Mr TANG Chi-sum, Terence	Property Service Manager/Services (Hong Kong Island and Islands) 5, Housing Department
Mr Calvin TSANG	Senior Corporate Communications Officer, Citybus Limited
Mr Dennis YIP	Planning Officer, Citybus Limited
Mr Stephen WAN	Manager, Operations, Long Win Bus Company Limited
Mr Desmond TANG	Assistant Manager, Planning and Development, Long Win Bus Company Limited
Mr Karl HUEN	Assistant Manager, Public Affairs, Long Win Bus Company Limited
Mr Peter CHU	Senior Manager (Operations and Administration), New Lantao Bus Company (1973) Limited

In Attendance

Mr LI Ho, Thomas
Ms HO Chung-yin
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 Anthea CHAU

Ms Sophia WOO

Mr Peter TSANG

Assistant District Officer (Islands)1, Islands District Office
Engineer/Islands(3), 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
Senior Corporate Communications Manager,
Sun Ferry Services Company Limited
Assistant General Manager - Transportation,
Discovery Bay Road Tunnel Company Limited
Discovery Bay Transit Services Limited
Senior Manager - Transportation,
Discovery Bay Transportation Services Limited/
Discovery Bay Road Tunnel Company Limited/
Discovery Bay Transit Services Limited

Secretary

Ms CHEUNG Hoi-kam, Nicole

Executive Officer (District Council)3,
Islands District Office

Absent with Apology

Mr CHOW Yuk-tong, SBS, MH

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**Welcoming remarks**

The Chairman welcomed Members, representatives of the government departments and organisations to the meeting.

2. Members noted that Mr CHOW Yuk-tong was unable to attend the meeting due to other commitments.

I. Confirmation of the Minutes of Meeting held on 22 May 2023

3. The Chairman said that the captioned 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. Members voted by a show of hands. The minutes were endorsed unanimously.

(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 Ken WONG, Mr HO Chun-fai, Mr NG Man-kit, Mr WAN Yeung-kin, Mr Eric KWOK and Mr FONG Lung-fei.)

II. Discovery Bay Road Tunnel Company Limited - Proposal on Toll Adjustment  
(Paper T&TC 28/2023)

5. The Chairman welcomed Ms Sophia WOO, Assistant General Manager - Transportation and Mr Peter TSANG, Senior Manager - Transportation of the Discovery Bay Road Tunnel Company Limited (DBRTCL) to the meeting to present the paper.

6. Mr Peter TSANG briefly presented the paper.

7. Mr FONG Lung-fei enquired the DBRTCL about the reasons for tunnel tolls being charged for government and rescue vehicles but not taxis, and the average number of government vehicles using the Discovery Bay Tunnel each day. He considered it unreasonable to charge tolls for government vehicles, which would increase government expenditure and taxpayers' burden. He asked the Transport Department (TD) why government and rescue vehicles were required to pay tolls to the DBRTCL.

8. Mr Eric KWOK agreed with Mr FONG Lung-fei's views. It was against the principle of equity for the DBRTCL to collect tunnel tolls for private light buses and public and private buses (including the Discovery Bay residents' buses) but not taxis, which were also commercial vehicles. He requested the DBRTCL to charge tolls for taxis instead of government vehicles.

9. Mr Peter TSANG said that the arrangement of the collection of tunnel tolls for designated types of vehicles and the toll schedule had been in use since the commissioning of the Discovery Bay Tunnel in 2000. Moreover, given that the taxis using the Discovery Bay Tunnel mainly served residents of Discovery Bay, the DBRTCL, after consulting the Discovery Bay City Owners Committee, exempted taxis from the tolls in response to the request of the representatives of residents. In addition, the DBRTCL was required to pay a franchise fee to the Government.

10. Ms Doris YEUNG said that regarding the toll adjustment issue, the DBRTCL would submit the applications to the Government after consulting Members' views. The TD noted and would consider Members' views.

11. Mr FONG Lung-fei said that the DBRTCL had on the one hand stressed that taxis were exempted from the tunnel tolls because they served residents of Discovery Bay, but on the other hand required government vehicles serving residents of Discovery Bay to pay the tolls. He asked whether the TD could revise the above charging mode.

12. Mr Eric KWOK said that the DBRTCL had on the one hand claimed that taxis using the Discovery Bay Tunnel were exempted from the tunnel tolls because they mainly served residents of Discovery Bay, but on the other hand required the Discovery Bay residents' service that also mainly served residents of Discovery Bay to pay the tolls, which was contradictory to its claim. Since one of the functions of District Councils was to ensure the proper use of public funds, he would not rule out the possibility of expressing the above queries and concerns to the Legislative Council (LegCo) Panel on Transport.

13. Mr Ken WONG asked the TD whether other tunnel companies had imposed tunnel tolls on government vehicles. If the DBRTCL exempted government vehicles from the tunnel tolls, it might need to increase the tolls for other types of vehicles (such as buses) to maintain revenue, which would in turn increase the burden on other users (including residents of Peng Chau and Nim Shue Wan).

14. Mr WONG Man-hon asked whether the TD imposed tolls on government vehicles and buses holding Lantau Closed Road Permits (LCRP) for entering the closed roads on Lantau Island.

15. Ms Mini FUNG said that both government vehicles and non-government vehicles (including buses) were required to apply for the LCRP from the TD before entering the closed roads on Lantau Island, but the former were not required to pay the permit fees. The Department would provide additional information on whether other tunnel companies had imposed tunnel tolls on government vehicles after the meeting.

(Post-meeting note: Apart from the Tai Lam Tunnel operated by a private company under the Build-Operate-Transfer mode and the privately-operated Discovery Bay Tunnel, all other road tunnels were government tunnels.

Under the Road Tunnels (Government) Regulations, government vehicles using government tunnels were not required to pay tunnel tolls. On the other hand, under the Tai Lam Tunnel and Yuen Long Approach Road Bylaw, all vehicles (including government vehicles) were required to pay tolls for passing through the toll areas (including the Tai Lam Tunnel), except for vehicles carrying persons in the public service of the Government engaged on duty relating to the toll areas.)

16. Mr Peter TSANG said it was preliminarily estimated that government vehicles accounted for less than one percent of the overall traffic of the Discovery Bay Tunnel, while the actual figures would be supplemented after the meeting.

(Post-meeting note: The DBRTCL said according to the tunnel traffic in the past 12 months, government vehicles accounted for about 1% of the overall traffic.)

17. Mr FONG Lung-fei said that under the “user pays” principle, it was very reasonable for taxi passengers to pay the tunnel tolls for using the tunnel. Since the DBRTCL said that the number of government vehicles using the Discovery Bay Tunnel was not large, there should be no significant impact on its revenue even if government vehicles were exempted from the tunnel tolls. Instead, charging tolls for taxis would bring more revenue to the DBRTCL, while there was no need to increase the tolls for buses. He did not understand why the TD had approved the toll exemption for taxis but not government and emergency rescue vehicles at that time. Moreover, he said that since other tunnel companies had all along been charging tunnel tolls for taxis, it was reasonable for taxis to pay the tolls.

18. Mr HO Chun-fai said that any vehicles (including taxis) travelling through the Discovery Bay Tunnel would cause wear and tear on the tunnel. However, since the DBRTCL exempted taxis from the tunnel tolls and only charged tolls for designated types of vehicles, the relevant maintenance costs would only be borne by the tunnel users who were required to pay the tolls, which was unfair to them. Therefore, the DBRTCL should charge tunnel tolls for taxis on a non-discriminatory basis.

19. Mr WAN Yeung-kin opined that since taxi passengers had higher affordability, it was believed that the increase in tunnel tolls for taxis would not greatly affect the passengers. Therefore, the tunnel tolls for taxis should be increased to make up for the loss in revenue arising from the toll exemption for government vehicles.

20. Ms Sophia WOO reiterated that the Discovery Bay Tunnel was a private tunnel and the above charging mode had been in use since 2000. It was the first time in 23 years that the DBRTCL had applied for a toll increase since the commissioning of the tunnel, and the increase was not significant. The DBRTCL had consulted the major stakeholders (including taxi associations) on the toll increase application and had taken into account the views of the majority of stakeholders. She stressed that the charging of tolls for government and rescue vehicles would not delay any rescue work.

21. The Chairman invited the DBRTCL to note and consider Members’ views.

22. Mr WAN Yeung-kin said that the charging mode established in the past should be changed if it was not reasonable.

23. The Chairman invited the TD to note and consider Members’ views.

(Ms LAU Shun-ting arrived at around 3:15 p.m.)

III. Question on the use of cycles, scooters and electric mobility devices in public housing estates  
(Paper T&TC 22/2023)

24. The Chairman welcomed Mr CHEUNG Lai-shun, Benedict, Senior Engineer/Walkability 2 of the TD; Mr TANG Chi-sum, Terence, Property Service Manager/Service (Hong Kong Island and Islands) 5 of the Housing Department (HD); and Mr LUE Yat-fung, District Operations Officer (Lantau District) of the Hong Kong Police Force (HKPF) to the meeting to respond to the question. The written replies of the TD and the HKPF had been distributed to Members for perusal before the meeting.

25. Mr Eric KWOK briefly presented the question.

26. Mr Terence TANG said that the HD had all along been monitoring the use of cycles, scooters and electric mobility devices (EMDs) within housing estates. The Department received one relevant written complaint from Yat Tung Estate and one from Mun Tung Estate in the past two years, but there were no accidents, injuries or prosecution cases. The HD prohibited residents and visitors from using cycles, scooters and EMDs (except electric wheelchairs) in the public areas of the housing estates (including pavements, podiums and parks) to ensure residents' safety. On daily routine control, security guards would advise offenders to stop using the devices immediately. In case the offenders ignored the advice, the estate offices would consider reporting to the Police. The estate offices had posted notices and erected notice boards at locations with high pedestrian flow within the estates, displayed banners at the main entrances of the estates and posted notices at the lobbies of all estate buildings to remind residents and visitors not to use the above devices within the estates.

27. Mr Benedict CHEUNG said that it was currently an offence to use unregistered EMDs. The TD discussed the proposal for the amendment of the regulatory framework for EMDs at the LegCo in June this year. After the legislative amendment, EMDs meeting the specified specifications (including size, speed and weight) could be used on designated cycling tracks. By then, relevant certification arrangements would be introduced and there would be regulation on EMD users. Please refer to the relevant paper for the meeting of the LegCo Panel on Transport held in June 2023 for details.

28. Mr LUE Yat-fung said that the HKPF had handled a total of three complaints about EMDs in Yat Tung Estate and Mun Tung Estate from January 2021 to June 2023, while other figures could be found in the written reply. He stressed that the numbers of accidents and prosecuted persons listed in the written reply did not involve Yat Tung Estate and Mun Tung Estate. The Lantau Police District was aware of the use of cycles, scooters and EMDs in public housing estates. The Police would step up enforcement, publicity and education in a targeted manner in response to the situation in Tung Chung.

29. Mr Eric KWOK said that he lodged at least a dozen complaints to the estate management companies of Mun Tung Estate and Yat Tung Estate about the relevant problem every year. However, the HD claimed that there was only one complaint received relating to each of the above estates in the past two years. He queried that the management companies did not truthfully reflect the relevant complaints to the Department. He pointed out that the illegal use of the above devices was very common and some residents had complained to him about why no improvement had been made to the problem over the years. He invited Members and guests to refer to the appendix of the paper. It was shown in the appendix that a resident had driven an electric bicycle into a lift. He queried that the security guards did not regulate the situation. He opined that merely giving advice to the offenders was insufficient and suggested that the HD and the management company should adopt punitive measures to make an example of the offenders. Moreover, he agreed with the TD's approach of enacting legislation to regulate EMDs.

30. Mr FONG Lung-fei suggested that the Police should deploy plain-clothes officers to step up enforcement at black spots (such as the entrances and exits of Fuk Yat House and Yung Yat House) to prosecute offenders in order to achieve a deterrent effect. He said that many residents did not call the Police if the injuries were minor. Some of them even did not know they could seek assistance from the Police or claim compensation. Therefore, he suggested that the Police should step up publicity to raise the legal awareness of residents and let them know their rights.

31. Mr Ken WONG said that the above problem had existed for a long time. He considered that the enforcement work of the departments concerned was poor, and believed that the legislative amendment could not fully address the problem. He opined that since currently the Police only prosecuted the offenders concerned for failing to take out third party insurance, it was difficult to secure a conviction, resulting in a limited deterrent effect. He said that enforcement was the crux of the problem since the use of the above devices outside the designated cycling tracks would still be an offence even after the legislative amendment. However, it was believed that enforcement would be difficult in view of limited police manpower in rural areas. He suggested that the TD should take into account the feasibility of enforcement when amending the legislation and the Department should consider introducing a licensing system for suitable EMDs so that licensed drivers could use the devices outside cycling tracks.

32. The Chairman hoped that the HD would ensure proper management of the housing estates.

33. Mr Terence TANG said that he had inspected Yat Tung Estate and Mun Tung Estate and witnessed a similar situation. At that time, a security guard had immediately given advice to the person using an EMD, who was not a resident of Mun Tung Estate. He pointed out that security guards encountering similar situations would first give advice to the persons concerned. If the advice was not heeded, they would report to the Police. In response to Mr Eric KWOK's query on why only one complaint from Yat Tung Estate and one from Mun Tung Estate were recorded, he

explained that the above figures were written complaints and he did not have the figures for verbal complaints.

34. Mr Eric KWOK suggested that the management companies should step up inspections and record the units with the above devices placed outside the door. In the event that residents were found using the above devices, the management companies might issue warning letters or even allot penalty points to them. For recalcitrant offenders, their public housing units should be recovered.

35. Mr FONG Lung-fei suggested that the HD should display the penalties for illegal use of the above devices (such as the marking scheme) in the relevant publicity materials. Moreover, he pointed out that the crux of the problem was the difficulty in prosecution. He hoped that the TD would streamline the prosecution procedures and increase the fines when amending the legislation.

36. Mr Terence TANG said that in case the security guards found the above devices placed in public areas, they would post notices to remind the owners to remove the devices within 24 hours. Otherwise, the security guards would clear them away. Moreover, the Department would consider Mr Eric KWOK's suggestion.

#### IV. Question on the addition of electric vehicle charging stations in South Lantau (Paper T&TC 20/2023)

37. The Chairman welcomed Mr WONG Yui-him, Tim, Engineer/Islands 1 of the TD to the meeting to respond to the question. The written reply of the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) had been distributed to Members for perusal before the meeting.

38. Mr Randy YU briefly presented the question.

39. Mr Tim WONG said that in order to expand the electric vehicle (EV) charging network in South Lantau, the Government planned to provide EV charging facilities in the public car parks to be constructed under the Improvement Works at Mui Wo, Phase 2 Stage 2 and the Improvement Works at Tai O, Phase 2 Stage 2. The Department would continue to assist the relevant departments in implementing the measures to meet the public demand for the EV charging facilities.

40. Mr Randy YU pointed out that the previous Secretary for the Environment had indicated in October 2019 that it was the wish of the Government to phase out fuel-propelled private cars in the next ten to twenty years. As far as he knew, the Government proposed in 2021 measures to cease new registration of fuel-propelled private cars by 2035 and a target of achieving carbon neutrality in 2050. 2035 was only twelve years away from the date of the meeting, yet the EV parking spaces in Mui Wo, Tai O and South Lantau would only be increased by 270 between 2025 and 2026, while the current number of the LCRP issued had already exceeded 10 000. Although the EPD stated in the written reply that the Department planned to install EV charging-



enabling infrastructure for 150 000 parking spaces in 2025, the measures were mainly targeted at private buildings and estates. Since the EV parking spaces on Lantau Island were located in the open spaces or on the roadside rather than in the estates or buildings, the above measures would hardly benefit the rural areas. He asked if residents of Lantau Island replaced all their fuel-propelled private cars with EVs by 2035, how the Department would satisfy their demand for EV charging facilities. He hoped that the Department would provide a concrete reply on the planning of the EV parking spaces on Lantau Island.

41. Mr Eric KWOK agreed with Mr Randy YU's views. He said that it was dangerous for some residents of South Lantau to charge the EVs by themselves within their residential areas. He hoped that the TD would make proper planning to increase EV charging facilities in Mui Wo, Tai O and South Lantau to cope with the increase in the number of EVs.

42. Mr HO Chun-fai agreed with Mr Randy YU's views. He said that although the number of EVs in South Lantau was increasing, there were insufficient charging facilities, causing many vehicle owners to drive to Mui Wo for charging. He hoped that the TD would identify more places for the provision of car parks and the installation of EV charging facilities.

43. Mr Tim WONG said that the TD was not the department responsible for the planning of the ancillary facilities for charging EVs. The Department noted Members' views and would reflect to the relevant departments. It would also assist in exploring the feasibility of retrofitting EV charging facilities at public parking spaces.

44. Mr Randy YU said that the implementation of the policy fell short of its objectives. Since he learnt about the plan in 2019, the implementation work of the Department had had no merit worth mentioning. As vehicles in Mui Wo had to be parked in the town centre or near the entrance plaza, residents were not able to make use of the EV charging facilities installed by themselves in their premises. He hoped that in addition to providing sufficient parking spaces, the TD could retrofit charging facilities for every parking space by 2035. He invited the TD and the EPD to submit a written reply on the blueprint and planning for the provision of sufficient EV charging facilities on Lantau Island (including the rural areas) by 2035 before the meeting of the Traffic and Transport Committee to be held on 18 September this year.

45. Mr Tim WONG said that the TD would endeavour to identify suitable locations for the addition of parking spaces and would assist the relevant departments in exploring the feasibility of retrofitting EV charging facilities at the parking spaces.

46. The Chairman said that the shortage problem of EV charging facilities was serious. Since there were insufficient EV charging facilities in South Lantau, some vehicles had to go to Tung Chung town centre for charging, which further strained the supply of the charging facilities in Tung Chung town centre. She asked the Secretariat to write to the TD and the EPD to request them to provide a written reply to Mr Randy YU's question.

(Post-meeting note: The Secretariat wrote to the TD and the EPD on 8 August 2023 to follow up the above issues. The written replies from the above departments were forwarded to Members on 29 August 2023.)

V. Question on the increase of fare concession by the New Lantau Bus Company (1973) Limited for residents of South Lantau  
(Paper T&TC 21/2023)

47. The Chairman welcomed Ms FUNG Sin-yee, Mini, Senior Transport Officer/Islands 2 of the TD; Mr Peter CHU, Senior Manager (Operations and Administration) and Mr HO Lee-yip, Manager, District Relations of the New Lantau Bus Company (1973) Limited (NLB) to the meeting to respond to the question.

48. Mr Randy YU briefly presented the question.

49. Mr Peter CHU said that due to the increase in overall operating expenses (including staff salaries), the NLB were still under certain financial pressure after the fare increase. The NLB would continue to explore the possibility of providing more concessions for residents of Lantau having regard to its financial position. As for the monthly ticket, since it involved software development, the NLB expected to provide more relevant information to Members in the third quarter. In respect of the same day return concession, the early bird concession period would be extended to 10 a.m. starting from 30 July this year. The NLB would consider whether it would further extend the concession period or adjust the concession scheme in the light of the actual situation.

50. Ms Mini FUNG said that the Government had been encouraging franchised bus operators to provide various fare concessions for passengers having regard to their operational and financial conditions, the service nature of individual routes and the needs of passengers, with a view to reducing the travelling expenses of the public. At present, the NLB provided a number of fare concession schemes for passengers, including sectional fares, special elderly fare concessions, interchange concessions with the MTR Corporation Limited (MTR) and the “E” routes of the Long Win Bus Company Limited, as well as the early bird same day return concession on designated routes on Sundays and public holidays. The TD and the NLB would closely monitor the utilisation of various concessions and would explore the introduction of more fare concession schemes subject to the financial situation of the NLB.

51. Mr Randy YU said that residents of Lantau Island travelling on Sunday might not be able to board the buses before 10 a.m. He hoped that the NLB would collect and review the usage data after the extension of the early bird concession period, and consider further extending the concession period in the short term (such as two months), or even extending the concession period to the whole day. As for the interchange concessions, he hoped that the NLB would introduce more interchange concessions in

collaboration with other bus companies and the MTR and announce the relevant details shortly.

52. Mr Eric KWOK supported Mr Randy YU in striving for the monthly ticket concession for residents of South Lantau. In addition, he requested the NLB to abolish the holiday surcharge imposed on residents of Lantau Island. Since there were many tourists visiting Lantau Island during holidays, the departures of NLB's routes were always full, seriously affecting the travel of residents in South Lantau. Moreover, it was unfair that the residents had to pay the surcharges during holidays. As such, he hoped that NLB's monthly ticket concession could be extended to benefit all residents of Lantau Island.

53. Mr WONG Man-hon asked why the NLB only provided short-haul sectional fares for the Mui Wo Pier-bound route 3M, and requested that the short-haul concessionary sectional fares should be extended to the departures of the said route heading to the Tung Chung Station Bus Terminus. Moreover, he queried that on the one hand, the NLB said it was facing operational difficulties, but on the other hand, it invested resources in the organisation of large-scale annual events and football activities, etc. As for the provision of buses by Kwoon Chung Bus Holdings Limited (KCB) during holidays to support NLB's services, he opined that the TD and the NLB should make public the charges and relevant information on the hiring of KCB buses.

54. Mr HO Chun-fai opined that route 3M should provide two-way short-haul concessionary sectional fares.

55. Mr Peter CHU said that the NLB would explore the possibility of providing two-way short-haul concessionary sectional fares for route 3M. In addition, given that the KCB provided local non-franchised bus services, its charges and hiring terms were subject to the approval of the TD, and it was required to report the patronage data to the Department on a regular basis. The revenue generated from the relevant services would be credited to the NLB's account.

56. Mr WONG Man-hon hoped that the NLB would abolish the holiday surcharge imposed on residents of Lantau Island.

57. The Chairman asked the Secretariat to write to the TD to seek the department's explanation as to why there was no short-haul sectional fare for departures of route no. 3M bound for the Tung Chung Station Bus Terminus.

(Post-meeting note: The Secretariat wrote to the TD on 10 August 2023 to follow up on the above issue. The written reply of the TD was forwarded to Members on 29 August 2023.)

58. Ms Mini FUNG said that the TD and the NLB would actively explore the provision of short-haul sectional fare concession for trips from Mui Wo to Pui O on route no. 3M. In addition, the department would closely monitor the operation of the NLB and the use of the early bird same-day return concession, and would study with

the NLB to further extend the concession hours of the same-day return fare discount where feasible.

(The Vice-chairman Mr HO Siu-kei left at around 4:35 p.m.)

VI. Question on the Discovery Bay Transit Services Limited's acceptance of Octopus cards as the sole means of fare payment  
(Paper T&TC 24/2023)

59. The Chairman welcomed Ms YEUNG Yuk-shan, Doris, Senior Transport Officer/Islands 1 of the TD and Mr Peter TSANG, Senior Manager - Transportation of the Discovery Bay Transit Services Limited (DBTSL) to the meeting to respond to the question. The written reply of the Competition Commission had been distributed to Members for perusal prior to the meeting.

60. Mr FONG Lung-fei briefly presented the question.

61. Ms Doris YEUNG said the Discovery Bay residents' bus service was a non-franchised bus service. The details of the service (including the means of fare payment, routeing, operating hours, etc.) were determined by the DBTSL after consulting the resident representatives. The DBTSL informed the TD on 4 April this year that the company had obtained the consent of the resident representative (i.e. the Discovery Bay Services Management Limited) and planned to cease the acceptance of fare payment by cash on its bus routes from 1 May this year. The DBTSL pointed out that the use of electronic payment methods could facilitate the company's audit, and could also effectively enhance the operational efficiency and reduce its costs. In this connection, the department had reminded the DBTSL to clearly explain the payment arrangements to residents through various channels (including the passenger liaison group meetings and resident representatives' meetings), so as to minimise the impact on passengers. The DBTSL later postponed the implementation date of the proposal to accept Octopus cards as the sole means of fare payment. The company put forward the proposal at the passenger liaison group meeting held on 23 May this year and received the support of the participants. The DBTSL informed the department again on 30 May this year that the company would implement the proposal on 18 June, and would inform passengers of the arrangements and enhance staff training as soon as possible, so as to provide timely assistance to passengers in need. The DBTSL said it understood that residents need time to adapt to the new measures. If residents encountered any difficulties with the payment methods, they were welcomed to contact the DBTSL directly.

62. Mr Peter TSANG responded as follows:

- (a) The DBTSL checked the records maintained by its customer service department and frontline staff and did not find any cases of passengers being unable to board the bus due to insufficient balance in their Octopus cards. The DBTSL had never issued any guidelines to instruct bus

captains to refuse the boarding by passengers with insufficient balance in their Octopus cards. Instead, the company had instructed its frontline staff to exercise flexibility in handling such situations. In addition, there was a transition period for the arrangement to accept Octopus cards as the sole means of fare payment since 18 June this year. The fare boxes on the buses had not yet been removed. If any passengers had insufficient balance in their Octopus cards, they could tell the bus captains immediately, and the captains would allow them to pay the fares by cash as appropriate.

- (b) The vast majority of Discovery Bay residents had registered their Octopus cards with the DBTSL and they could enjoy discounted fares on routes of the DBTSL by using their registered Octopus cards. Elders aged 60 or above had to use JoyYou Cards or Elder Octopus cards to enjoy the \$2 concessionary fare. If they made the fare payments by cash, they would have to pay the full fares. Therefore, the proportion of passengers paying the fares with Octopus cards on the routes of the DBTSL was very high, with an average of 95%. On certain routes, this percentage could even reach 98%. The DBTSL was also exploring the feasibility of other electronic payment methods with its suppliers.
- (c) As for the loss of Octopus cards, residents of Discovery Bay generally knew that they could call the hotline of the City Management Office or seek assistance from the management office staff if they encountered such a problem. The DBTSL would make special arrangements for them, so that they could continue to use the bus services of the DBTSL while waiting for the issuance of new Octopus cards.
- (d) Prior to the implementation of the arrangement of accepting Octopus cards as the sole means of fare payment, the DBTSL had communicated with residents with regard to the arrangement in the Discovery Bay Passenger Liaison Group (Liaison Group). Residents in general agreed to the arrangement. Since the implementation of the arrangement on 18 June this year, the number of enquiries and complaints received by the DBTSL was a single-digit. In the past two weeks, no complaint was received by the company.

63. Mr FONG Lung-fei opined that although electronic payment methods were convenient, not all Hong Kong residents used electronic payment tools. Currently, many local tourists would visit Discovery Bay, and some residents of the outlying islands would also travel to Tung Chung via Discovery Bay. If passengers could not take the bus routes of the DBTSL when their Octopus cards were lost, it would be inconvenient for them. In addition, overseas tourists visiting Discovery Bay might not have an Octopus card. Cash was the most popular means of payment. He hoped the DBTSL would continue to accept cash payment for the convenience of passengers. If the DBTSL only accepted Octopus cards for fare payment, he hoped the company

would extend the transition period (for example, for six months to one year) to allow passengers more time to adapt to the arrangement.

64. Mr Eric KWOK opined that the DBTSL should retain the option of cash payment for the public, otherwise it would deprive them of the right to choose. For tourists who did not have an Octopus card, the arrangement of refusing cash payment would affect the image of Discovery Bay as it could easily cause disputes between passengers and bus captains, and might even hinder the departure of buses.

65. Mr Peter TSANG said that as understood by the company, the arrangement of accepting Octopus cards as the sole means of fare payment had earlier been implemented for the residents' bus services in other districts. Having made reference to the experience of the bus companies concerned, the DBTSL believed that such arrangement could enhance its operational efficiency. In addition, the company had listened to the opinions of the Liaison Group and provided a transition period that was long enough. Currently, the transition period for the above-mentioned arrangement was still in place, and the new arrangement had been operating very smoothly since its implementation. In addition, the DBTSL was also happy to provide assistance to individual residents in need.

66. Mr Ken WONG said that nowadays, fewer and fewer people used cash. Since the Government had launched the Public Transport Fare Subsidy Scheme, except for designated transport tickets, members of the public were required to use an Octopus card in order to participate in the scheme. Therefore, he believed that the majority of the public would take public transport with Octopus cards. In addition, given that some other bus companies accepted credit cards for fare payment, he suggested that the DBTSL should introduce diversified electronic payment methods (such as credit cards and Alipay).

67. Mr Eric KWOK said that although the percentage of passengers of the DBTSL bus routes paying the fares with Octopus cards was as high as 98%, there were still 2% of the passengers who did not use Octopus cards. He shared the view of Mr Ken WONG on the introduction of a variety of electronic payment methods.

68. Mr FONG Lung-fei asked the TD about the composition of the Liaison Group. As far as he knew, the resident representatives were just representatives of the DBTSL, rather than Discovery Bay residents. He had asked Discovery Bay residents about the details of the Liaison Group meetings, but they replied that they did not know much about the meetings. In addition, he opined that if passengers were unable to board the buses of the DBTSL because they did not have an Octopus card and argued with the bus captains, the image of Hong Kong would be tarnished. He hoped the TD would monitor the relevant matters. In addition, although electronic payment tools were popular in the Mainland, cash payments were still accepted because cash was a currency for transaction.

69. Mr WAN Yeung-kin said that Hong Kong dollar was the legal tender, and questioned whether the refusal of payments by cash was in breach of the law. Despite

the popularity of electronic payment tools in the Mainland, it was illegal for merchants to refuse payments by cash.

70. Ms Sophia WOO said the new measures of the DBTSL would be implemented only after careful consideration. The company was also actively exploring and studying the feasibility of introducing other electronic payment tools, such as Alipay or credit cards mentioned by Mr Ken WONG. As for Members' claim earlier that the Liaison Group was comprised mainly of representatives of the company, she emphasised that it was not true. The operation of the Liaison Group was the core of the governance team of the company. She did not intend to comment on the composition of the resident representatives at the meeting.

71. The Chairman asked the TD whether other bus companies had more than one means of fare payment.

72. Ms Doris YEUNG said that some franchised bus services to the boundary control points or the airport accepted other payment methods, but what the DBTSL provided was residents' bus services, which were different from franchised bus services. As for the composition of resident representatives, since it was related to the deed of mutual covenant of the private premise or the relevant clauses, the question had to be answered by the DBTSL. When the TD was informed by the DBTSL that only Octopus cards would be accepted by the company for fare payment, the department had actively encouraged the DBTSL to collect the opinions of people other than the resident representatives through different channels, and had also requested the DBTSL to release the relevant information as soon as possible. The department hoped the DBTSL would take note of and consider Members' views.

(Mr WONG Man-hon left at around 5 p.m.)

VII. Question on the addition of a bus route between Tung Chung and Princess Margaret Hospital  
(Paper T&TC 23/2023)

73. The Chairman welcomed Ms YEUNG Yuk-shan, Doris, Senior Transport Officer/Islands 1 of the TD, Mr Peter CHU, Senior Manager (Operations and Administration) and Mr HO Lee-yip, Manager, District Relations of the NLB, Mr Stephen WAN, Manager, Operations, Mr Desmond TANG, Assistant Manager, Planning and Development, and Mr Karl HUEN, Assistant Manager, Public Affairs of the LWB, and Mr Calvin TSANG, Senior Corporate Communications Officer and Mr Dennis YIP, Planning Officer of Citybus Limited (Citybus) to the meeting to respond to the question. The written replies of the Hospital Authority, the LWB and Citybus had been distributed to Members for perusal before the meeting.

74. Mr FONG Lung-fei briefly presented the question.

75. Ms Doris YEUNG responded as follows:

- (a) When making planning for public transport services (including the addition of bus routes), the TD would take into account factors such as the existing supply of public transport services, passenger demand, the passenger volume and the traffic load arising from the new route, as well as the utilisation of resources.
- (b) Currently, Tung Chung residents who wanted to go to Princess Margaret Hospital could take the Citybus E21 series (including route nos. E21, E21A, E21B and E21D) to the Kwai Chung Interchanges on Kwai Chung Road, and then walk for five to ten minutes; or take the LWB route no. E31 to Sha Tsui Road near Bo Shek Mansion, and then interchange for route no. 30 of Kowloon Motor Bus Company (1933) Limited (KMB); or take the LWB route no. E32 or E32A to the vicinity of Kwai Fong Station, and interchange for KMB route no. 30 or 42. Apart from the above-mentioned franchised bus routes, passengers could also take the MTR to Lai King Station and then interchange for the New Territories GMB route no. 313, 407, 407A or 413 to Princess Margaret Hospital, for which interchange discounts would be provided.
- (c) The department understood that members of the public hoped to have direct bus services to their destinations, but the road and transport resources were limited in Hong Kong. Under the general principle of efficient use of resources, the department encouraged members of the public to use the existing public transport services to reach their destinations through interchanges. Give that there were already transport services between Tung Chung and Princess Margaret Hospital, the department had no plan to provide additional direct bus routes between Tung Chung and Princess Margaret Hospital at this stage. However, the department noted Members' views. It would continue to closely monitor the operation of relevant bus routes and the needs of passengers in Tung Chung, and would study the feasibility of improving the services with the bus companies when necessary.

76. Mr Calvin TSANG said Citybus noted the proposal for an additional bus route between Tung Chung and Princess Margaret Hospital. It would continue to monitor the utilisation of the E21 series routes and Tung Chung's future demand for transport services, and would discuss with the TD in a timely manner to optimise the external bus routes of Tung Chung.

77. Mr Desmond TANG said Tung Chung residents could take route no. E31, E32 or E32A to Kwai Fong, and then interchange for route no. 30, 46X or 42 to Princess Margaret Hospital. Since the above bus routes did not stop at the Main Block of Princess Margaret Hospital, some passengers would choose to interchange for minibus services at Kwai Fong. The LWB would continue to monitor the passenger demand, and would consider the optimisation proposal when necessary, so as to facilitate Tung Chung residents' access to Princess Margaret Hospital.



78. Mr HO Lee-yip said the NLB would carefully review the feasibility of adding such a route.

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

- (a) North Lantau Hospital would not be converted into a general hospital in the next ten years. Tung Chung residents who needed to receive specialist treatment had to interchange for different bus routes to go to Princess Margaret Hospital, which imposed a burden on the elders, chronic patients and patients with serious conditions.
- (b) He supported the bus companies' provision of interchange schemes for members of the public going to work or school, but he opined that bus companies should also provide direct bus services to Princess Margaret Hospital for patients.
- (c) Although Rehabus services were provided by the hospital, patients reported that it was difficult to make a reservation.
- (d) He proposed to provide an additional bus route from Mui Wo or Tai O to Princess Margaret Hospital via Yat Tung Estate, North Lantau Hospital and Tung Chung North, with two departures in each direction daily to facilitate Lantau residents' access to Princess Margaret Hospital. If necessary, the above route could also pass through Tsing Yi or West Kowloon to pick up more passengers going to Princess Margaret Hospital.

80. Ms Doris YEUNG said the TD noted the views of Members, and would study the feasibility of the above proposal with the bus companies in due course.

(Mr NG Man-kit left at around 5:15 p.m.)

VIII. Question on the insufficient frequency of Airport-bound (Ground Transportation Centre) bus route numbers A41 and A31  
(Paper T&TC 26/2023)

81. The Chairman welcomed Ms YEUNG Yuk-shan, Doris, Senior Transport Officer/Islands 1 of the TD, and Mr Stephen WAN, Manager, Operations, Mr Desmond TANG, Assistant Manager, Planning and Development, and Mr Karl HUEN, Assistant Manager, Public Affairs of the LWB to the meeting to respond to the question. The written reply of the LWB had been distributed to Members for perusal prior to the meeting.

82. Mr Eric KWOK briefly presented the question.

83. Ms Doris YEUNG responded as follows:

- (a) The LWB route nos. A31 and A41 ran at a headway of 15 minutes during peak hours. According to the operation records of the LWB, the occupancy rate of the above routes during the busiest one hour were approximately 55% and 40% respectively, indicating that the service could meet passenger demand. After the full resumption of normal travel between Hong Kong and the Mainland early this year, the number of passengers going to the Hong Kong Port of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge (HZMB) had increased. In response, the TD had requested the LWB to deploy buses with a higher passenger capacity or increase the service frequency on weekends and long holidays, so as to address the passenger demand. In addition, the LWB had increased its service frequency during the peak hours in the Labour Day Golden Week. In the busiest hour, the average occupancy rate of the routes concerned was about 70%, which indicated that the increased frequency could meet passenger demand.
- (b) With the introduction of the LWB route no. A30 on 25 June this year, the number of bus routes that travelled via the Lantau Link Bus-Bus Interchange to the Hong Kong Port of the HZMB had increased to three.
- (c) The department confirmed that route nos. A43 and A47X would be routed to operate via the Hong Kong Port of the HZMB, and it was actively discussing with the LWB to expedite the implementation of the arrangement. The department would continue to monitor the passenger demand at the Hong Kong Port of the HZMB, review the routeing arrangement with bus companies and increase the service frequency as appropriate.

84. Mr Stephen WAN said that after the full resumption of normal travel between Hong Kong and the Mainland, especially during the Easter holiday this year, the patronage of route nos. A31 and A41 had risen significantly. The LWB would send staff to the bus stop at the Hong Kong Port of the HZMB to observe the passenger volume during long holidays, and would immediately increase the number of special or short-working departures to address the passenger demand when necessary. The LWB noted Members' proposal on arranging more routes to operate via the Hong Kong Port of the HZMB, and would study the proposal with the TD.

85. Mr Eric KWOK hoped that before arranging route nos. A43 and A47X to operate via the Hong Kong Port of the HZMB, the LWB would increase the frequency of route nos. A31 and A41 during peak hours, so as to solve the existing problem of insufficient service frequency.

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

- (a) According to the information, a bus could provide about 96 seats and

about 49 standing places, but he queried that the lower deck of a bus could not accommodate 49 standing passengers.

- (b) Route nos. A41 and A31 were the airport routes, but the luggage rack space in the bus compartment was insufficient. As a result, passengers could only place their luggage on the aisle, which might pose dangers. The buses of the above routes were often full, but the TD and the bus company stated that the occupancy rate was only about 70%. The data were questionable. In addition, due to crowdedness of the bus compartments, there were often passengers standing outside the yellow line area. He hoped the department and the bus company would pay attention to the safety issues.
- (c) Currently, the service frequency of the LWB was insufficient to cope with the passenger volume at the bus stop at the Hong Kong Port of the HZMB. He hoped the LWB would increase its service frequency as appropriate.

87. Mr Desmond TANG said that although the LWB was currently understaffed, the company would try its best to make frequency improvement. In addition, the LWB would implement the arrangement of route nos. A43 and A47X operating via the Hong Kong Port of the HZMB as soon as possible.

IX. Question on the follow-up of the construction works of bus shelters for the bus stop at Yung Yat House of Yat Tung Estate  
(Paper T&TC 27/2023)

88. The Chairman welcomed Ms YEUNG Yuk-shan, Doris, Senior Transport Officer/Islands 1 of the TD, and Mr Stephen WAN, Manager, Operations, Mr Desmond TANG, Assistant Manager, Planning and Development, and Mr Karl HUEN, Assistant Manager, Public Affairs of the LWB to the meeting to respond to the question. The written reply of the LWB had been distributed to Members for perusal prior to the meeting.

89. Mr Eric KWOK briefly presented the question.

90. Ms Doris YEUNG said the TD had approved the construction of shelters for the bus stop and would urge the LWB to complete the works as soon as possible.

91. Mr Karl HUEN said after the approval letter for the construction of the bus stop shelters was issued by the TD in December 2022, the LWB had immediately followed up with the contractor, hoping to apply for an excavation permit from the relevant departments as soon as possible to launch the works.

92. Mr Eric KWOK said it was unacceptable that the construction of the bus stop shelters would take more than four years. As far as he knew, the TD had approved the

works in 2020. He did not understand why the LWB waited until now to follow up on the details. He asked the LWB to provide the timetable and expected completion date of the works.

93. Mr FONG Lung-fei said that the bus stop at Yung Yat House of Yat Tung Estate would be exposed to very strong sunlight starting from 10 a.m. As a result, passengers often queued in the shaded area behind the bus stop, making it easy for them to miss the buses. He hoped the LWB would construct the shelters as soon as possible and remind the bus captains to make sure that all waiting passengers had boarded the bus before leaving the bus stop.

94. The Chairman said that the bus stop at Yung Yat House of Yat Tung Estate was an open space, therefore, queuing passengers were always battered by the scorching sun and drenching rains. She hoped the LWB would complete the works as soon as possible.

95. Mr Karl HUEN said the LWB and the contractor were actively following up on the above-mentioned works. Since the location of the works was close to the bus stops of other bus companies, the LWB would discuss the details and sort out the relevant issues with the TD and the bus companies concerned before applying for an excavation permit from the relevant departments to launch the works as soon as possible.

96. The Chairman asked the LWB to provide a detailed reply before the T&TC meeting to be held on 18 September this year.

(Post-meeting note: With regard to the construction of shelters for the bus stop at Yung Yat House of Yat Tung Estate, after the approval letter was issued by the TD in December 2022, the LWB had applied to the relevant departments for an excavation permit. Upon the issuance of the permit, the LWB would allocate resources to carry out the works as soon as possible. In general, the bus company would access the environment of the bus stop. If there were pipes underground, the shelters might not be constructed.)

97. Mr Eric KWOK asked the TD to monitor the progress of the above-mentioned works with the target for completion within this year.

(Mr Randy YU left at around 5:45 p.m.)

X. Question on pedestrian safety on Yu Tung Road outside Fuk Yat House of Yat Tung Estate  
(Paper T&TC 25/2023)

98. The Chairman welcomed Mr WONG Yui-him, Tim, Engineer/Islands 1 of the TD and Ms HO Chung-yin, Engineer/Islands(3) of the Highways Department (HyD) to the meeting to respond to the question. The written reply of the MTR Corporation had

been distributed to Members for perusal prior to the meeting.

99. Mr FONG Lung-fei briefly presented the question.

100. Mr Tim WONG said the MTR Corporation had followed up with the government departments concerned on the issue that some of the street lights on Yu Tung Road outside Fuk Yat House of Yat Tung Estate were blocked by trees, and the TD had nothing to add.

101. Ms HO Chung-yin said the MTR Corporation had contacted the HyD on the above issue. The department had immediately deployed its staff to inspect the site, and it was found that the trees on the road section concerned were under the purview of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD). As such, the MTR Corporation needed to contact the LCSD for following up on the issue.

102. The Chairman asked which department was responsible for the lighting of the road section concerned.

103. Ms HO Chung-yin replied that during the implementation of temporary traffic control measures at the above location, the MTR Corporation was responsible for the temporary lighting system.

104. The Chairman opined that the HyD should communicate with the LCSD to solve the problem after it had identified it.

105. The Chairman asked the HyD whether it had communicated with the LCSD with regard to the above problem prior to the meeting.

106. Ms HO Chung-yin said the HyD did not know about the problem until it received the question raised by Mr FONG Lung-fei.

107. Mr FONG Lung-fei said that many cyclists used the road section. He hoped the relevant departments would provide clear road signs for cyclists and pedestrians.

## XI. Any Other Business

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

108. The Chairman welcomed Ms HO Chung-yin, Engineer/Islands(3) 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 late June this year before the meeting. Members were welcomed to ask questions and express their views.

109. Mr FONG Lung-fei asked the HyD whether the bus stop project on Chung Yan Road near Yu Tai Court and the motorcycle parking spaces project on Yu Tung Road near Hong Yat House of Yat Tung Estate could be completed in December this

year as scheduled. He hoped the HyD would follow up as soon as possible.

110. Ms HO Chung-yin said that since the location of the bus stop project on Chung Yan Road near Yu Tai Court was close to a construction site of the Civil Engineering and Development Department (CEDD), as requested by the Police, the HyD had to first discuss and deal with the temporary traffic arrangement issue with the CEDD. As for the motorcycle parking spaces project on Yu Tung Road near Hong Yat House of Yat Tung Estate, the department could not commence the works until the site was vacated by the CEDD.

111. Mr Eric KWOK said he did not understand why the above-mentioned projects were not yet completed after years of discussion. He hoped the departments would resolve the related issues and complete the projects as soon as possible.

112. The Chairman asked the Secretariat to arrange site visits for Members and the relevant departments to discuss how to expedite the projects.

(Post-meeting note: Site visits were conducted by the TD, the HyD, the CEDD and four Members on 14 August 2023. The HyD would continue to follow up on the preliminary preparation work for the above-mentioned projects, so that the works could commence as soon as possible.)

## XII. Date of next meeting

113. There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:10 p.m. The next meeting would be held at 2 p.m. on 18 September 2023 (Monday).

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