

Islands District Council

Paper IDC 88/2020

Transport Department

Traffic and Transport Working Plan 2020-21

Purpose

This Paper presents the Traffic and Transport Working Plan of the Transport Department for Islands District in 2020-21.

Work Objectives

2. We hope that the work programmes planned for implementation in 2020-21 can achieve the following objectives:

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

Brief Description of Work

A. Traffic Management

3. One of the major objectives of traffic management is to improve the traffic flow and to ensure the road safety. We will continue to closely monitor the overall traffic situation and to design and implement suitable traffic management scheme, if necessary, to improve the efficiency, performance and safety of the road network. The following traffic management programmes have been planned for implementation in 2020-21:

(a) Monitor the Traffic Network and Management Measures

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

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

(b) Road Network and Traffic Facilities Improvement Projects

5. We will continue to follow up the following projects to improve the road network and traffic facilities:

- (i) Road improvement works at the interchange outside Tung Chung Station Exit A;
- (ii) Construction of roundabout at the junction of Chung Mun Road and Chung Yat Street;
- (iii) Widening of roundabout at Tung Chung Road near Pa Mei Road;
- (iv) Construction of lay-bys for buses and taxis at Yat Tung Street;
- (v) Provision of pedestrian crossing traffic signal to the pedestrian crossing at Chung Yan Road near North Lantau Hospital;
- (vi) Improvement of the pedestrian crossing at Tung Chung Road near Lung Tseng Tau; and
- (vii) Provision of additional pedestrian crossing at Ngan Kwong Wan Road near Ngan Ho Court in Mui Wo.

B. Public Transport Service

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

(a) Franchised Bus

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

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

8. To better understand the passenger demand and plan for improvement measures, we will continue to conduct surveys regularly and collect opinions from the public through district councils and other channels. We will continue to encourage franchised bus companies to provide more bus-bus interchange schemes at appropriate and feasible locations to facilitate passengers to travel to different destinations with concessionary fares. This will reduce the demand for long haul and direct “point-to-point” bus services. As a result, the road space and bus resources will be better utilised and the efficiency of the bus network will be enhanced. The congestion and environmental problems caused by the overlapping of bus services can also be relieved. With effect from 1 February 2020 to 31 January 2021 inclusively, Long Win Bus Company Limited (“LWB”) and The Kowloon Motor Bus Company (1933) Limited (“KMB”) have launched a new Octopus Bus-Bus Interchange Scheme for 15 routes. Passengers taking rides on the 3 LWB routes and 12 KMB routes with specific combinations and directions can enjoy a \$5 discount per interchange. The TD will continue to encourage franchised bus operators to offer more fare concessions as far as practicable.

9. Also, the TD will continue to follow up on the facility improvement arrangements at the bus stops. The arrangements include bus shelter erection, seats and real-time bus arrival information display panels (“display panel”) installation at bus stops. As of August 2020, the bus companies have completed seats installation at 26 covered bus stops and display panels installation at 8 covered bus stops at Islands District under the Subsidy Scheme. In the second half of 2020, the bus companies

have planned to install display panels at 3 covered bus stops. The bus companies need to take into account of the geographical and technical factors when exploring the feasibility of the concerned passenger facilities installation.

10. Apart from the Subsidy Scheme, the bus companies have also planned to improve the passenger facilities in Tung Chung at their own initiative. LWB and Citybus Limited planned to erect a bus shelter at Mun Tung Estate Bus Terminus and the bus stop on Ying Hei Road respectively.

11. In view of the population intake in Tung Chung North and Tung Chung West, and to meet the passenger travelling demands, the bus companies have implemented a number of bus service improvement measures in 2019-20, of which 39 items are increase in frequency enhancement proposals, adjustment of operating hours or increase in vehicle allocation while 20 items involve expansion of service coverage, introduction of special bus services and route rationalisation. At the meeting on 23 March 2020, the Traffic and Transport Committee (“TTC”) under the Islands District Council (“IDC”) was briefed on the Bus Route Planning Programme for Islands District in 2020-21. There are 4 items of new route introduction and 20 items of service improvement/rationalisation in the Programme.

(b) Ferry Services

12. The Government announced in the 2019 Policy Address that, for the purposes of maintaining the financial viability of the ferry services, alleviating the burden of fare increases on ferry passengers, enhancing service quality and promoting the development of a green city, it would:

- (i) continue to provide Special Helping Measures (“SHM”) to the six major outlying island ferry routes (“the six major routes”)¹ and extend the measures to eight other routes²; and

¹ The six major routes are “Central – Cheung Chau”, “Central – Mui Wo”, “Inter-islands” between Peng Chau, Mui Wo, Chi Ma Wan and Cheung Chau, “Central – Peng Chau”, “Central – Yung Shue Wan”; and “Central – Sok Kwu Wan” routes.

² The eight other routes are “Aberdeen – Cheung Chau”, “Aberdeen – Yung Shue Wan via Pak Kok Tsuen”, “Aberdeen – Sok Kwu Wan via Mo Tat”, “Tuen Mun – Tung Chung – Sha Lo Wan – Tai O”, “Discovery Bay – Mui Wo”, “Ma Wan – Central”, “Ma Wan – Tsuen Wan” and “Central – Discovery Bay” routes. The “Aberdeen – Cheung Chau” ferry route ceased operation on 1 January 2020. If there are any operators interested in operating this ferry route in future, they can submit an application to the TD. The TD will consider the applications in accordance with the established procedures and provide SHM to the new operator.

- (ii) launch a new Vessel Subsidy Scheme (“VSS”), which would be carried out by phases within a period of around ten years from 2021 onwards, to replace the fleets of 11 ferry routes³ and introduce greener vessels

as the long-term operation model of outlying island ferry services.

13. The current licence periods of the six major routes will expire in mid-2020 and reach the maximum of ten years allowed under the law⁴. Taking into account the lead time required for the tender exercise and to facilitate conducting the tender exercise for the six major routes in one go, the TD has extended their current licence periods (2017 to 2020) for 9 or 12 months for co-termination by end-March 2021⁵. During the 9 or 12-month extended licence periods, the Government will continue to provide SHM for the six major routes and the fares will remain unchanged.

14. Regarding the tender exercise for the six major routes, having regard to factors such as passenger demand, overall fleet requirement, flexibility in vessel deployment, operational efficiency, and after consulting the Islands District Council, the six major routes are grouped into two tender packages for tendering:

Package (1)

“Central – Cheung Chau”; “Inter – islands” and “Central – Mui Wo” routes

Package (2)

“Central – Peng Chau”; “Central – Yung Shue Wan”; and “Central – Sok Kwu Wan” routes

15. After consulting the Islands District Council on the proposed operational arrangements for the six major routes under the tender in February 2020, the TD made tender invitation for the operation of the six major routes in April 2020 with a view to

³ These 11 routes are the six major routes, as well as the “Aberdeen – Cheung Chau”, “Aberdeen – Yung Shue Wan via Pak Kok Tsuen”, “Aberdeen – Sok Kwu Wan via Mo Tat”, “Tuen Mun – Tung Chung – Sha Lo Wan – Tai O” and “Discovery Bay – Mui Wo” routes. The “Aberdeen – Cheung Chau” ferry route ceased operation on 31 December 2019. If there are any operators interested in operating this ferry route in future, they can submit an application to the TD. The TD will consider the applications in accordance with the established procedures and include this ferry route in the Vessel Subsidy Scheme (“VSS”).

⁴ The Ferry Services Ordinance states that the period for which the licence was granted together with all extensions thereof shall not in any case exceed in the aggregate period of ten years.

⁵ Except for the “Central – Mui Wo” route of which the three-year licence period for 2017-2020 had expired on 31 March 2020, the three-year licence period (2017-2020) of the rest of the six major routes expired on 30 June 2020. The licence of “Central – Mui Wo” route has extended for 12 months and those of the rest of the six major routes will be extended for nine months so that the licence periods of the six major routes will co-terminate on 31 March 2021.

selecting the operators in Q3 2020, so as to allow sufficient time for the selected operators to prepare for commencement of the services on 1 April 2021 when the new five-year licence period starts.

C. Franchised Bus Diversion Arrangement for Commissioning of the Northern Connection of Tuen Mun – Chek Lap Kok Link

16. Tuen Mun-Chek Lap Kok Link (Northern Connection) (“Northern Connection”) will connect Tuen Mun Area 40 with the Hong Kong Port of Hong Kong – Zhuhai – Macao Bridge (HZMB) via a sub-sea tunnel. Upon commissioning of the Northern Connection, the journey distance for travelling between the Northwest New Territories and North Lantau will be shortened. In accordance with the existing practice, the Transport Department would re-organise and improve the existing franchised bus network upon commissioning of Northern Connection by diverting the franchised bus routes operating between the Northwest New Territories and North Lantau via Northern Connection in order to provide more efficient bus services to passengers. In addition, it would further improve the franchised bus network in the relevant districts by making use of the bus resources saved under the bus diversion arrangement. The Transport Department have disseminated the paper of the franchised bus route diversion arrangement to the Traffic and Transport Committees through the Secretariats of the relevant District Councils, and are currently collecting views on the arrangements. The Transport Department will consolidate and take all the views into the account, and liaise with the bus operator on improving the route diversion arrangement if necessary.

17. The TD will continue to maintain close liaison and communication with Members, listen to views of the public, and actively study the traffic and public transport matters in the district.

Transport Department
August 2020