

Summary of Minutes of the 10th Meeting
of the Traffic and Transport Committee (2012-2013)

Meeting

The Traffic and Transport Committee (TTC) held its 10th meeting on 12 July 2013.

Improvement Works at Tuen Mun Road Bus-Bus Interchange

2. The representative of the Transport Department (TD) said that the Highways Department (HyD) had fitted heat-insulating films to appropriate parts of the shelters at the waiting area of Tuen Mun Road Bus-Bus Interchange (BBI) having regard to the actual operation of the BBI. Works at the Kowloon bound BBI had largely been completed, while works at the Tuen Mun bound BBI was in progress and would be completed before its commissioning. The Chairman asked HyD and the bus companies to consider Members' views.

Calling for the Provision of Bus Routes to Tai Po and Tseung Kwan O as well as Express Bus Route to the Airport at the Bus-Bus Interchange

3. Members who submitted the paper said that there was no direct transport from Tuen Mun to districts such as Tai Po, Tseung Kwan O and Sai Kung as well as the airport and that many local residents had complained about the public light bus service to/from Sheung Shui. They therefore urged TD and the bus companies to consider operating direct bus routes between Tuen Mun and the above places. TD's representative responded that TD intended to collect data after the BBI was fully commissioned and review its operation with Members at the meetings of the Working Group on Tuen Mun External Traffic before implementing other plans as well as re-examining the deployment of resources and carrying out bus route rationalisation. Subject to availability of resources, deployment of resources to services between Tuen Mun and the above areas or other areas could be considered. After discussion, the Chairman asked the Working Group on Tuen Mun External Traffic to continue following up on the matter.

Calling for the Retendering of Services of Bus Route Nos. E33 and E33P

4. Members who submitted the paper said that although it was expected that more and more Tuen Mun residents would travel to the Tung Chung area, Long Win Bus Company Limited (LW) had failed to respond to the request for increasing the frequency of Route Nos. E33 and E33P over the years. A lesser request for the provision of inter-company

interchange fare concession at the BBI by Kowloon Motor Bus and LW, which were in the same company group, was also rejected. It was considered that LW did not have the capability and sincerity to operate the two routes for it seemed hard for LW to deploy additional buses. The Members therefore strongly urged TD to resume the operating rights of the two routes and put them out to open tender.

5. The response of TD's representative was summarised as follows:

- (a) Retendering of the routes due to LW's unsatisfactory performance or introduction of new routes at the BBI would involve extensive tendering procedures;
- (b) On the whole, LW had actively followed up by increasing the frequency of operation and optimising the routings having regard to changes in passenger volume. Since the launch of the two routes, LW had been making adjustments to the number and frequency of buses and enhanced the service one to two times a year. TD and LW had also been monitoring the changes in passenger volume and travel patterns of passengers and would arrange for additional special departures in the mornings before and after holidays. Starting from the previous week, an additional special departure of Route No. N30 had been arranged; and
- (c) LW was open to the suggestion on providing interchange fare concession at the BBI. TD and LW would actively consider the arrangements for implementing fare concession.

6. After discussion, the Chairman asked the representative of TD to convey Members' views to the senior management of TD. He also asked the Working Group on Tuen Mun External Traffic to follow up on the matter.

Calling for the Provision of Implementation Time Table for the "Universal Accessibility" Policy

7. On behalf of the local residents, some Members expressed that the highest pedestrian flow per hour of footbridge no. NF98 (Across Wu King Road near Siu Hei Commercial Centre) was 1 405. They opined that the highest pedestrian flow per hour should be adopted as a criterion for classifying priority projects. As the demand for lifts was great due to the ageing population in nearby housing estates, it was hoped that HyD and the Civil Engineering and Development Department would classify NF98 as a priority project. The Chairman asked the departments to consider the Member's views.

Calling for the Optimum Use of Tuen Mun Ferry Terminal

What will become of Tuen Mun Ferry Terminal? Calling upon the Government to Make Optimum Use of Tuen Mun Ferry Terminal

8. Members expressed their views on the resumption of cross-boundary ferry services between Tuen Mun and Macao, policy on the operation of Tuen Mun Ferry Terminal (TMFT), the function and future use of TMFT and the opening up of the SkyPier to non-air passengers, etc. After discussion, the Chairman asked the representatives of the Transport and Housing Bureau (THB) and the Marine Department to convey the views of TTC to their Bureau and Department for consideration. He also asked the Working Group on Tuen Mun External Traffic to follow up on the matter. In addition, TTC would write to the Chief Secretary for Administration (CS) to call on the Government to resume the ferry route between Tuen Mun and Macao, and to review the existing policy and function of TMFT by operating TMFT as a public pier and reducing rental fees. The letter was sent to CS on 1 August 2013.

Tuen Mun Road, A Road Like Hell?! Calling Strongly for Improving Problems of Traffic Congestion and Large Number of Accidents at Tuen Mun Road

9. The views of the Member who submitted the paper were summarised as follows:
- (a) Although there were views that reconstruction and improvement of Tuen Mun Road was the cause for the increase in traffic accidents, he opined that there were inherent dangers in the design of Tuen Mun Road. Review should be conducted taking into consideration the road design and driving attitude of drivers. Although the width of the widened traffic lanes would be up to standard upon completion of the project, the road was still not in the safest condition and there would still be serious traffic congestion if there were breakdowns and traffic accidents;
 - (b) It was expected that traffic congestion would become more serious because there would be only two access points along Tuen Mun Western Bypass (TMWB). Moreover, vehicle emissions would affect local residents' health;
 - (c) It was considered that with the extension of the landfill, there would be hundreds more refuse collection vehicles passing through Tuen Mun Road and Wong Chu Road, making the roads even more congested; and
 - (d) It was hoped that the Police could step up patrols as a short term measure, while in the long run, the Government should re-consider the construction of Route 10

or buy out the Tai Lam Tunnel as soon as possible. He would continue striving for the resumption of constructing Route 10 and the addition of a third access point at TMWB. It was hoped that other Members would give their support.

10. After discussion, the Chairman asked TD, HyD and the Hong Kong Police Force to consider the Member's views.

Calling Strongly for the Increase in Bus Services of Route No. B3A

11. The representatives of Citybus (CTB) and TD briefed Members on the development plan of Route No. B3 series, such as increase in the frequency of Route Nos. B3 and B3A in certain timeslots on Saturdays, and the proposal on operating Route No. B3M during the non-peak hours from 9:50 am to 7:50 pm. Members expressed their views on the service of Route No. B3. After discussion, the Chairman said that Members welcomed CTB's service enhancement and hoped that TD would provide detailed information.

Calling for the Improvement of Blind Spot on the Road

12. The representative of TD said that after site inspection, TD suggested slightly narrowing the carriageway and extending the kerb at the zebra crossing. Consultation on the design had been made in the district and support was received. The improvement works would be implemented as soon as possible. In addition, TD had replaced the common railings at the crossing with railings suitable for road junctions and crossings. Such railings were fitted with horizontal iron bars and could improve the sight lines of road users. The representative of Mass Transit Railway (MTR) responded that according to the safety requirements of the relevant government departments, the railings on the platforms of Light Rail Transit (LRT) must be fitted with vertical iron bars with narrow gaps to prevent passengers from falling onto the pavements from platforms or pedestrians from climbing onto the platforms from pavements. MTR understood Members' concern over pedestrian safety at the zebra crossing near Kei Lun Station and had therefore examined the railing design of LRT platforms. However, in view of the safety consideration and statutory requirements, MTR did not have plans to change the railing design of the existing platforms. After discussion, the Chairman asked TD and MTR to consider Members' views. He also asked the Working Group on Traffic Problems within Tuen Mun District to continue following up on the matter.

Calling for Extending the LRT Extension to Tuen Mun Area 54

13. The Member who submitted the paper said that the planning of Tuen Mun Area 54 had not included plans for railways to facilitate people flow. She was concerned that Siu Hong

Station might be overloaded with residents from Area 54. Moreover, with the completion of the housing developments, there would be no space left for building railways. She therefore requested that the LRT Extension be extended to Area 54. The representative of MTR responded that new railways and LRT development projects had to be initiated by the Government. If the Government decided to plan and build new railway extensions or additional stations, MTR would facilitate accordingly. After discussion, the Chairman asked TD and MTR to consider Members' views. He also asked the Working Group on Traffic Problems within Tuen Mun District to continue following up on the matter. In addition, TTC would write to THB regarding this item and other LRT-related items.

Calling for the Provision of More Octopus Service Points (Refund Machines)

14. Members who submitted the paper said that Leung King Plaza managed by the Link Management Limited was the only place in Tuen Mun where there was an Octopus Service Point. It was located in an inconspicuous corner with unclear directional signs. It was hoped that more Octopus Service Points could be installed in places such as LRT platforms, shopping centres managed by different companies and convenience stores for easy access by the public. The Chairman asked the Octopus Cards Limited, the Link Management Limited, MTR and the bus companies to consider Members' views.

Calling upon the MTR to Expeditiously Purchase New Light Rail Train Compartments

15. Members who submitted the paper said that MTR had purchased 22 new LRT train compartments years ago but three of them had been damaged by impact and disposed of. Moreover, since the Light Rail incident at Hung Shui Kiu, LRT trains had reduced their speed for safety reasons and this had seriously affected the service and frequency of LRT. With the continuous development of Tuen Mun, many local residents and visitors travelled by LRT and there was an urgent need to purchase new train compartments. Members requested MTR to provide information on the insurance compensation arrangements in respect of the damaged and disposed compartments as well as the arrangements for replacing the compartments. The representative of MTR responded that insurance compensation for the LRT train damaged in the incident was being arranged. If necessary, MTR could deploy train compartments reserved for replacement under the train modernisation programme to the existing rail network. Therefore, there were enough train compartments for operation and deployment. MTR had been monitoring the LRT service and adjusted train frequency in a flexible manner. It had also implemented various measures with a view to carrying more passengers.

Calling upon the MTR to Provide Bus Services to Supplement the Services of Light Rail Route No. 614 during Rush Hours

16. The Member who submitted the paper said that MTR should enhance the service of Route No. 614 because it was the only route running between Tuen Mun and Yuen Long (via Prime View). The Route also served as a link connecting the section from Tuen Mun Town Centre to Tuen Mun Ferry Pier with the West Rail Line. He pointed out that in the worst case, Route No. 614 ran at an interval of 10 to 14 minutes. Therefore, it was hoped that MTR could first enhance the service of Route No. 614 during rush hours by, for example, deploying more train compartments for the Route or arranging feeder buses to supplement the service of the route, and then provide a timetable for studying the proposal. After discussion, the Chairman said TTC would invite representatives from THB and MTR to a special meeting to discuss issues related to LRT.

Calling for the Extension of Platform Shelters of Light Rail Stations

17. Members who submitted the paper said that shelters of some LRT platforms were so short that Octopus entry/exit processors at the two ends of the platforms were not covered. On rainy days, passengers had to brave the rain to validate their cards and ran for shelter on the narrow platforms. Furthermore, rainwater would splash on the display panels of the entry/exit processors and hence affect card detection. It was therefore hoped that MTR could provide information on the locations of platform shelters planned for extension and the timetable. The Chairman asked the Working Group on Traffic Problems within Tuen Mun District to follow up on the matter.

Convening of a Special Meeting

18. Regarding the items “Calling for Extending the LRT Extension to Tuen Mun Area 54”, “Calling upon the MTR to Expeditiously Purchase New Light Rail Train Compartments” and “Calling upon the MTR to Provide Bus Services to Supplement the Services of Light Rail Route No. 614 during Rush Hours”, TTC decided to invite representatives from THB and MTR to attend a special meeting to discuss in detail the railway policy and LRT development and services in Tuen Mun District as well as the item “Calling for the Resumption of Services of LRT Route No. 506”. The special meeting was scheduled for 27 August 2013.

Secretariat, Tuen Mun District Council

Date: 19 August 2013

Ref: HAD TM DC/13/30/TTC/4