

Summary of Minutes of the 11th Meeting of the Traffic and Transport Committee (2014-2015)

Meeting

The Traffic and Transport Committee (“TTC”) held its eleventh meeting on 10 July 2015.

Replacement of Water Mains at Tuen Mun Heung Sze Wui Road - Method Statement for On Ting Estate to Wong Chu Road (underneath the Flyover) Section

2. While agreeing in general that there was a need to replace the water mains, Members expressed concern over the traffic arrangements. The representative of the Water Supplies Department (“WSD”) indicated that the inter-departmental Traffic Management Liaison Group had agreed on the present temporary traffic arrangements, and the Transport Department (“TD”) and the Hong Kong Police Force (“HKPF”) had requested that a transport test should be introduced as a pre-requisite of the works. If the TTC’s consent was obtained, the WSD would conduct the transport test for Method 1; in case of serious congestion, the WSD would terminate the temporary traffic arrangements and explore furthering the works by Method 2 or 3 instead. After discussion, the TTC resolved to suggest that the WSD should carry out the transport test in two phases during the first weekends of August and September and bring up this issue later for further discussion.

TD’s Traffic and Transport Work Plan (2015-16)

3. Members made different comments on the work plan, in particular expressing their concern about the problem of illegal parking and suggesting addition of parking spaces. The TD representatives responded that while the work plan covered more specific and confirmed items, the TD would from time to time review the status of parking spaces in the district and join the relevant District Council (“DC”) Members for site visits to identify suitable locations for addition of parking spaces. After the meeting, the TD would report on the numbers of and data on parking spaces at the locations concerned, and would also seek information from the Planning Department (“PlanD”) on whether the Government had any plan to build a multi-storey car park in the district. The TTC asked the TD to consider Members’ comments and provide supplementary information. It also resolved to invite representatives of the PlanD to attend the next meeting for further discussion on this issue.

Barrier-Free Environment

Request for the Provision of Lifts at Walkways

4. A TD representative responded that a site inspection and a survey on passenger flow had been conducted in the area of Kim Bo Building and Common Bond Building, where lifts were proposed to be provided as stated in the paper. The result of the survey showed that the passenger flow there was about 180 persons per hour. The proposal could hardly be

supported as the TD's guidelines stated that there had to be passenger flow of up to 3 000 persons per hour before lifts could be built at the area and there were barrier-free facilities for access to Tsing Chui Path. The Member who submitted the paper and a number of Members were concerned about the TD and the HyD adopting a rigid and uncaring standard on retrofitting of lifts, opining that the Departments should factor in safety when considering provision of lifts. The TTC resolved to write to Chief Executive and Secretary for Transport and Housing ("STH") expressing its opinions on the standard.

Improve the Traffic Condition of Busy Spots in Tuen Mun

5. A Member who submitted the paper remarked that the yellow box marking at the junction of Ho Pong Street and Tuen Mun Heung Sze Wui Road had caused a dilemma: on one hand, some business operators had indicated that the marking deprived goods vehicles of space for loading and unloading of goods, but on the other hand, congestion was not significantly relieved and the only resort was to front-line police officers. The Member indicated that parking space was actually a matter of planning. A TD representative responded that: (a) as some members of the public had indicated that vehicles parked at the shopping centre opposite to Prime View Garden would impair the sightline of pedestrians using the crossing, it was suggested that single yellow lines be marked on King Fung Path; (b) space was available on the road off San Hui Market for provision of four 30-minute parking spaces while the existing pedestrian crossing would be moved outward for the convenience of residents who drove to the market for shopping; and (c) after consulting members of the local community, the TD had issued a works order for marking yellow boxes at the traffic-choked junction of Ho Pong Street and Tuen Mun Heung Sze Wui Road. The Chairman suggested that the TD join the Members who submitted the paper and the DC Member of the constituency concerned for a site inspection at King Fung Path while the Secretariat arrange a site inspection at San Tsing Street and Ho Pong Street.

(Post-meeting note: After the site inspections, the TD would amend its design drawings, and this issue would be brought up for further discussion.)

Barrier-Free Environment

Request for Improvement to the Problem of Uneven Road Surface

6. The representative of the Highways Department ("HyD") responded that the Department had received a letter from an organisation called "Windward Association for the Handicapped" and learnt that the location of concern was a light signal crossing between Leung King Commercial Complex and the Tin King bus stop. After receiving the document, the HyD had conducted a visit around the location and found that one of the kerbs of the crossing at the exit of Siu Lung Court was slightly higher than the standard. As part of the crossing fell within Leung King Estate, so this issue had been referred to the Housing Department for follow-ups, yet a site inspection could be arranged to clarify the exact location with the association and the relevant DC Members. The Chairman would like the HyD to arrange the site inspection with the relevant Members by itself after the meeting.

Strongly Oppose the Fare Increase of Green Mini Bus Route No. 46 of Tuen Mun

7. Noting that the fare of Mini Bus Route No. 46 had increased before the date of this meeting, a Member who submitted the paper criticised the TD for ignoring the opposing views raised in a district consultation and the paper and approving the fare increase application of the minibus operator which had failed to keep the promise it had made upon the previous fare hike. The Member regretted that the TD had disregarded public opinion. A TD representative responded that the Department always kept close tabs on the standard of minibus services and processed fare increase applications in accordance with the established mechanism. Besides, it had consulted the local community via the District Office and the opinions so collected were mainly related to the standard of the service of the minibus route. The TD received the paper submitted by the Members only after it had approved the fare increase application in respect of the minibus route, so it was sheer coincidence that the fare hike had been confirmed before this meeting. The TD would pay attention to situations of this kind in the future. The TTC resolved to write to the TD requesting the Department to maintain communication with DC Members before any fare hikes in the future, so as to avoid any fare increase being approved again before a meeting.

Request for Widening of Crossings at Light Rail Transit Lam Tei Station and Pedestrian Crossings at Platform No. 2

8. The Member who submitted the paper indicated that bicycle-pedestrian conflicts might arise as the usage of Lam Tei Light Rail Stop was relatively high and there would probably be bicycles passing the crossing after the cycleway was extended to the road junction of the vegetable market. The Member hoped that the TD and the MTR Corporation Limited (“MTRCL”) would explore ways to facilitate the passenger flow on the platforms and use the bicycle parking spaces beside the platform to widen the crossing. The MTRCL representative responded that according to site observation, the passenger flow on Platform no. 2 was smooth even during the morning peak hours when more passengers were there. The MTRCL would explore different measures to facilitate the passenger flow on the platform and continue to monitor pedestrians’ and cyclists’ use of the crossing while keeping contact with government departments for studying the feasibility of widening the crossing. A TD representative responded that as the widening of the MTR walkway connecting to Platform no. 2 might affect the existing bicycle parking spaces, the TD would render assistance to the relevant departments as far as possible having regard to the MTRCL’s feasibility study on the widening of the walkway. The Chairman asked the MTRCL and the TD to contact the Member who submitted the paper for follow-ups.

Request for Improvement to the Chaotic Traffic Condition at Futian Port

9. A proposer of the paper said that the complicated problem at Futian Port involved not only factors including geographical setting and narrow roads, but also a large number of stakeholders. At present there was no direct transport service between Tuen Mun and

Futian, so it was necessary to provide a transport route running from Tuen Mun to Futian via Tin Shui Wai and Yuen Long, so that the problem of long queues of residents waiting at Futian could really be solved. After discussion, the TTC resolved to write to STH and Director of the TD putting forth again its demand for minibuss service between Tuen Mun and Futian. It hoped that the Government would consider Members' views.

Request for Review of the Operation of Tuen Mun Road Bus-Bus Interchanges

10. A Member who submitted the paper expressed the hope to know about the data on passengers' and buses' use of the Tuen Mun Road Bus-Bus Interchanges, so that the Member could offer objective ideas on bus route planning programme for the coming year based on sufficient information. The TD representative responded that there were currently some 12 000 and 18 000 persons per day using the interchanges towards Kowloon and Tuen Mun respectively. Buses at the interchanges could complete the passenger drop-off and pick-up procedures within some five minutes during the morning peak hours, whilst passenger drop-off and pick-up were even smoother in other hours. The TD would adjust bus routes in light of the travelling patterns of passengers. After research and data collection from bus companies, if it was found that the number of passengers of a bus route declined, the TD would consider suggesting service changes such as frequency reduction in a bus route planning programme. The Chairman asked the TD to consider Members' views, and it was resolved that this issue would be brought up for further discussion on the development of the interchanges and the feasibility of dispatching more buses to the interchanges for passenger pick-up.

Request for Installation of Screen Doors at the Platforms of Light Rail Transit Stations by the MTRCL

11. The MTRCL representative responded that the heavy rail and Light Rail systems were basically different in that a Light Rail vehicle was manually operated and in some busy stops there might be several Light Rail vehicles arriving at the platforms simultaneously and stopping at different positions of the platforms. Therefore, it was quite difficult to dovetail the operation of screen doors with the passenger drop-off and pick-up of a Light Rail vehicle at a stop. At present, the MTRCL had put in place various measures to facilitate people flow and passenger drop-off and pick-up. A number of Members hoped that the MTRCL would study the techniques for retrofitting of screen doors to ensure the total safety of the public. The Chairman concluded by asking the MTRCL representative to relay Members' safety concern over the Light Rail and their opinions on safety enhancement to the MTRCL for consideration.

Request for Extension of Departure Time of the Last Bus of Route No. K51

12. A Member who submitted the paper said residents living in the area of Fu Tei had indicated that they could not take the feeder bus route no. K51. Noting that the MTRCL was going to purchase new buses, the Member hoped there would be new resources to

support the extension of the service hours of the bus route. The MTRCL representative responded that while the feeder bus route no. K51 provided service until 11:45, the MTRCL would adjust arrangements and resources for the route to provide service in accordance with passengers' needs. After the delivery of the new Light Rail and bus compartments, which cost \$300 million, the MTRCL would study the arrangements on the Light Rail and bus services in light of the findings on passenger volumes in the government-published traffic study. Nevertheless, the MTRCL would keep in view the situation and maintain communication with DC Members. The Chairman asked the MTRCL to give consideration to Members' demand for the extension of the service hours of the bus route no. K51.

Review of the Operating Hours and Areas of the Bus-Only Lane on Tuen Mun Road

13. The Chairman suggested addition of an exit in the bus-only lane, which meant that the restriction for the prohibited zone in the bus-only lane along the Siu Lam exit leading from Castle Peak Road to Tuen Mun Road should be lifted, so as to enable residents living in Castle Peak Road to drive from a three-lane carriageway to a four-lane carriageway. The Chairman enquired whether the TD could implement the suggestion for a one-month trial period, which would be followed by a review. A number of Members opined that the TD should collect data and study the arrangements on the bus-only lane first. After discussion, the Chairman concluded by asking the TD to study the suggestion of lifting the restriction for the prohibited zone in the bus-only lane along the Siu Lam exit leading from Castle Peak Road to Tuen Mun Road.

Request for Advancing the First Departures of Citybus Route No. 962X

14. A Member who submitted the paper indicated that the route no. 962X played a major role in the transport service between Tuen Mun and Causeway Bay, but its first departures from Lung Mun Oasis and Causeway Bay left as late as 8:40 a.m. and at 9:15 a.m. respectively. The Member suggested advancing the first departures of the route no. 962X and re-organising the whole series of route no. 962. The TD representative responded that the Department had been paying attention to the route no. 962 series. Although the first departure of the route no. 962X left at 8:42 a.m. at present, passengers' demand could be met by the service of the route nos. 962 and 962B, which departed from Chi Lok Fa Yuen before 8:40 a.m. The representative of Citybus Limited ("Citybus") responded that a survey conducted in June 2015 showed that there was still room in the first departure of the route no. 962X for passengers to get aboard when it reached the last stop in Tuen Mun, and that the Citybus did not have adequate resources to introduce suitable measures to satisfy the request proposed in the paper at the moment. Yet, the Citybus would keep track of the passenger volume and consider the proposal in the paper if necessary. The Chairman asked the Citybus to consider Members' views and, if practicable, put the proposal in the paper into implementation.

Request for Stepping Up the Laying of Rubber Tiles at Crossings of Light Rail Transit

Stations

15. A Member who submitted the paper said that Siu Hong Stop was one of the locations where rubber tiles were applied to pedestrian crossings on a trial basis, but there was only one crossing between Platform nos. 1 and 2 having switched to rubber tiles. As some residents had indicated that rubber tiles had better anti-slip properties and could prevent high heels and trollies from getting stuck, the Member hoped that rubber tiles could be put into trial use at all crossings in Siu Hong Stop to facilitate review of their effectiveness. The MTRCL representative responded that the design of Light Rail pedestrian crossings had to meet the requirements of government departments and the safety requirements of the MTRCL, so whether concrete or rubber tiles were applied to the surfaces of crossings, it made no difference when it came to risk assessment on pedestrian safety, because all the crossings had to fully meet the safety requirements. Rubber tiles were in trial use at some crossings in Siu Hong and Yuen Long to meet the maintenance needs of certain road sections, and it took time to review the effectiveness of the material. The MTRCL would keep in touch with DC Members to understanding their concern. The Chairman said that he would like the MTRCL to first consider Members' views on the trial use of rubber tiles at all crossings in Siu Hong Stop, while the implementation in other regions could be discussed later.

Request for Facing Up to the Issue of Safe Loading of Goods Vehicles

16. A Member enquired what legislations had to be complied with by heavy goods vehicles carrying materials such as I-beams and steel bars, and how the current situation of enforcement was. The HKPF representative responded that according to Regulations 55 and 56 of the Road Traffic (Traffic Control) Regulations (Cap. 374G), materials such as I-beams and steel bars should not extend forwards more than 1.5 metres from the front of a heavy goods vehicle and backwards more than 1.4 metres behind the rear of the vehicle, and the total width of such materials should not exceed 2.5 metres and their height should not exceed 4.6 metres. For identification purposes, moreover, a red flag of one square metre should be hung at the rear of the heavy goods vehicle, and the white head-lights and red rear-lights of the vehicle should also be on at night. Patrolling police officers would observe or directly measure good vehicles to see if there was any violation of the law, such as insecure placing of materials like I-beams and steel bars. After discussion, the TTC asked the HKPF and the TD to consider stepping up enforcement and amending the legislation on goods vehicle safety.

Secretariat, Tuen Mun District Council

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