

Summary of Minutes of the 6th Meeting of the Traffic and Transport Committee (2014-2015)

Meeting

The Traffic and Transport Committee (“TTC”) held its sixth meeting on 12 September 2014.

Request for Study on Combining Services of Routes K58 and K53 and Provision of Full Day Services

2. The representative of the Mass Transit Railway Corporation Limited (“MTRCL”) said that the captioned study had commenced in May. It would take time to look into passengers’ travelling patterns, patronage and the allocation of existing resources. She added that there was room for consolidating routes K51, K53 and K58. The TTC would be consulted on the consolidation proposal after the MTRCL had completed the study. The Chairman requested the MTRCL to submit a progress schedule or give a direct written reply in due course.

Calling for Improvement of Traffic Condition and Provision of Feeder Roads at Tuen Mun Road

3. This item had been discussed repeatedly at the meetings of the Working Group on Traffic Problems within Tuen Mun District. However, since a consensus was yet to be reached with the Transport Department (“TD”), the item was referred back to the TTC for discussion. Members’ discussion was highlighted as follows: (i) They considered that the TD rejected the provision of feeder roads at Tuen Mun Road without reasonable grounds. A proposal should be made to the Planning Department (“PlanD”) that development and housing construction in So Kwun Wat should be conditional upon the provision of feeder roads; and (ii) They enquired whether police officers were deployed to divert traffic in the vicinity of Harrow International School Hong Kong (“the School”) during morning heavy traffic hours. They suggested that discussions be made with the TD and the School on measures to ensure the smooth flow of traffic. A representative of the Hong Kong Police Force replied that manpower had been deployed to monitor the traffic situation in the vicinity of the School at around 7:30 a.m. at the beginning of the new school term. They would continue to monitor the traffic condition until mid-October and a review would then be conducted. A representative of the TD responded that at an earlier meeting with the Police and the School management, the department had made clear recommendations to the School to use school buses to carry students or to require vehicles to pick up and drop off students at Cafeteria Beach. The department would reflect the issue to the Education Bureau and meet with the School for follow up. In addition, although the department had explained earlier that there was no immediate need to construct feeder roads, Members’ strong request was noted and their views would be reconsidered if any major development took place in the district. After discussion, the Chairman summed up that the proposed provision of feeder roads would be referred to the Working Group on Development and Planning of Tuen Mun District for follow up. However, since the traffic issue in the vicinity of the School was not covered in the captioned discussion paper, it should not be referred to the Working Group on Traffic Problems within Tuen Mun District for follow up.

Enquiry on the Alignment and the Setting of Services of the “East West Corridor”

4. As requested by the Working Group on Traffic Problems within Tuen Mun District, this item was referred back to the TTC for discussion so that the MTRCL could give a presentation to Members on the progress of the “East West Corridor”. The representative of the MTRCL stated that the Shatin to Central Link was a strategic rail line which offered an alternative for travelling from the New Territories to urban areas. Upon the completion of the proposed Tai Wai to Hung Hom Section, the Ma On Shan Line starting from Wu Kai Sha Station would be connected with the West Rail Line by the Shatin to Central Link at Hung Hom Station, forming the “East West Corridor”. The procurement contracts for 148 new train cars running along the “East West Corridor” had been awarded. In the future, the West Rail Line linked up with the Ma On Shan Line would become a single rail line operating with eight-car trains. The service frequency between Tuen Mun Station and Hung Hom Station would remain unchanged at 20 trains per hour (i.e. a headway of three minutes) during morning peak hours. With an unchanged service level, increased numbers of train cars and enhanced carrying capacity, the “East West Corridor” would serve as an additional route to urban areas and help facilitate passenger diversion.

Bus Route Development Programmes for Tuen Mun District (2014-2015) **Strongly Request the Transport Department and KMB to Retain the Original Routing of Route Nos. 60M and 66M**

5. Given the similar nature of the two captioned items, the TTC merged them for discussion. To facilitate discussion, the TTC discussed the re-routing of routes one by one. After Members had expressed their views on the re-routing of route nos. 60M/66M/61X/66P, the Chairman asked them to vote on the proposal of re-routing this group of routes, which included running two additional trips on route no. 60M (i.e. a headway of six minutes) during rush hours. A review would be conducted two months later. The re-routing proposal was approved by the TTC, with 24 Members voted for it, two voted against and three abstained.

6. As regards the re-routing of route nos. 58M/58P, a representative of the TD said that the service frequency of route no. 58P could be reduced in phases by cutting two trips first, one before 6 a.m. and one after 8 p.m., which would be subject to review later. Regarding the re-routing of route no. 59A, the representatives of the TD and Kowloon Motor Bus remarked that upon the commissioning of the bus-bus interchange there, the route saw a particularly significant drop in passenger volume during non-rush hours. Also, passengers had the option of taking route no. 59X to Sham Shui Po to save time. Moreover, the fare would be reduced after the re-routing. Since a number of Members opposed the re-routing proposal, the Chairman concluded that route no. 59A would remain unchanged for the time being. The discussion would be continued at the next meeting. As to the re-routing of route nos. 259B/259C/259E, a representative of the TD indicated that for maximisation of resources, the buses not needed as a result of cutting the trips on route nos. 259B, 259C and 259E could be re-deployed to other routes in need. If the service frequency of route no. 259C could not be adjusted, it would be difficult to increase the trips on other routes. Since a number of Members voiced their objections, the Chairman concluded that this group of routes would remain unchanged for the time being. The discussion would be continued at the next meeting. Lastly, a number of Members urged the TD to introduce the proposed sectional fares for route nos. 60X, 66X, 63X, 59X, 67X and 260X as soon as possible. A representative of the TD agreed to follow up on the issue.

“Universal Accessibility” Programme

Provision of Barrier-free Access Facilities at a Footbridge in Tuen Mun District

7. A representative of the Highways Department briefly introduced the project design and background of footbridge NF100 to the meeting. The TTC supported the project.

Request for Immediate Study on Diverting Traffic from Lam Tei Quarry Site to Yuen Long Highway

8. The proponent of the captioned discussion paper said that local residents had not been consulted in the consultation exercise on the renewal of the Lam Tei Quarry contract, and the Government did not provide the necessary resources for the district. Moreover, although space provision was made in the design of the Hong Kong-Shenzhen Western Corridor for the construction of other link roads to divert traffic, no such works had been carried out since its commissioning in 2007. Also, the schedule for the widening of Fuk Hang Tsuen Road was yet to be set. As a result, a large number of heavy vehicles went in and out of Lam Tei. He opined that vehicles should use Yuen Long Highway to have access into and out of Lam Tei Quarry. A representative of the TD responded that the PlanD was considering the land uses of Lam Tei Quarry site following its closure and the overall planning of its adjoining areas, as well as measures to improve the traffic situation and road network in the vicinity of Fuk Hang Tsuen Road. The department would consult the Tuen Mun District Council and members of the public who were stakeholders in due time. For the meantime, the number of vehicles going in and out of Lam Tei Quarry had stabilised. The TD would implement various measures to divert traffic, hoping to help ease the vehicular flow in and out of Lam Tei Quarry so as to minimise the nuisance to residents in the neighbourhood of Fuk Hang Tsuen Road. After discussion, the Chairman summed up that this item would be referred to the Working Group on Development and Planning of Tuen Mun District for follow up, and he would relay Members' views to the Development Bureau in writing.

Request for Suppression of the Problem of Noise Nuisance at Traffic Interchanges

9. A proponent of the captioned discussion paper remarked that the provision of overnight parking at Siu Hong Station South and North Public Transport Interchanges would create noise disturbing residents and asked the TD to address the problem. A representative of the TD responded that the department attached importance to the impact of overnight parking on local residents. It had, with the assistance of the Tuen Mun District Office, collected views of the departments concerned and residents nearby, in the hope of setting the conditions for allowing overnight parking of buses. In addition, it would arrange for buses to be parked overnight at covered public transport interchanges as far as possible. If buses on some nearby routes had to be parked in open areas, the bus companies would minimise the noise generated. A number of Members put forward their views which included: (i) The TD should require the bus companies to prove that parking spaces were available before licences were granted or renewed; and (ii) The concerns raised in response to the earlier public consultation were not addressed and Members were not informed of the consultation results. The department should explain the overall situation of overnight parking in Tuen Mun District. The Chairman requested the TD to consider Members' views.

Request for Provision of Additional Car Parking Spaces and Car Parks

10. On behalf of the proponents of the captioned discussion paper, a Member asked the TD to follow up on the requests for provision of additional car parking spaces and

car parks and identification of sites for multi-storey car parks. A representative of the TD responded that the department was liaising with the Lands Department to identify sites for temporary car parks and Members' advice was sought on the suitable locations. The Chairman requested the Working Group on Traffic Problems within Tuen Mun District to follow up on this item.

Request for Widening and Improvement of Access

11. A proponent of the captioned discussion paper said that she had conducted a site visit to the access mentioned in the paper with a representative of the TD on 10 September and put forward the captioned request. She indicated that it was not a proper access, but only a temporary access created to facilitate the construction of Lung Chak Road and accommodate some motorcycles. As it was connected with a cycling track, the access would pose a danger to residents. After the site visit, the TD agreed to explore the feasibility of the request. The Chairman requested the Working Group on Traffic Problems within Tuen Mun District to follow up on this item.

Request for Redesignation of Yau Oi (South) Bus Terminus as No-smoking Area

12. On behalf of the proponents of the captioned discussion paper, a Member said that Yau Oi (South) Bus Terminus was once a no smoking area. It was surrounded by housing estates and residents nearby were used to taking buses there. However, it had subsequently become a smoking area under the criteria for designating no smoking areas, and residents were not used to it. She asked the Department of Health ("DH") to review the criteria for designating no smoking areas and redesignate Yau Oi (South) Bus Terminus as a no smoking area. A representative of the Tobacco Control Office of the DH responded that under the Smoking (Public Health) Ordinance, only upon fulfilling one of the following criteria would public transport facilities be designated as no smoking areas: (i) consisting of the termini of two or more modes of public transport and being used for facilitating interchange between them; or (ii) being any bus terminus of more than one franchised bus route. In the case of Yau Oi (South) Bus Terminus, it had been designated as a no smoking area since 1 December 2010 in the past because it was the termini of routes 61M and 260C, which fulfilled the second criterion. However, it was no longer a no smoking area since 1 June 2013 because it had become an en route stop instead of the terminus for route 260C due to a change of public transport routes. The Chairman requested the DH to examine the criteria for designating no smoking areas and give a written reply.

Secretariat, Tuen Mun District Council

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