

Progress Report of the Traffic and Transport Committee

The fourth meeting of the Traffic and Transport Committee (TTC) in 2012 was held on 26 July 2012. The major issues discussed are summarised below:

Proposal to prohibit vehicles to enter Nam Sang Wai Road (single-lane road section for two-way traffic) during the general holidays

2. This item of agenda will be postponed till next meeting for discussion.

Requesting MTRC to improve the problems relating to passenger flow of West Rail Tin Shui Wai Station

3. Members considered that MTRC had underestimated the population growth of Tin Shui Wai and the throughput of Light Rail Transit (LRT) Tin Shui Wai Stop when constructing the station, which led to the station's overcrowding condition during the rush hour and caused great inconvenience to passengers as they always had to wait for minutes on the platform before they could take the escalator and interchange at the West Rail station. Members proposed to provide additional escalators at the platform of that LRT stop for diversion purpose. Members also proposed to provide additional LRT Octopus exit processors inside the West Rail Tin Shui Wai Station to avoid congestion caused by the great number of passengers waiting for placing their cards over the exit processors at LRT platforms. Members urged MTRC to take concrete measures to address the said problems as soon as possible, and proposed that MTRC should conduct a joint site visit with Members for the discussion of viable improvement measures.

4. The representative of MTRC responded that at present there were two escalators in place at each LRT platform interchanging with the West Rail station for the use of passengers who needed to travel between LRT platforms and the West Rail stations, and the condition of LRT Tin Shui Wai Stop was similar to those of other MTR stations in that passengers had to queue up for taking the escalators leading out of the platform whenever a train compartment approached with a sudden increase in the passenger flow during the morning

rush hour. MTRC had provided fences beside the escalators in the station and assigned more platform assistants to provide assistance to passengers so as to maintain order when passengers queuing up for taking the escalators. He said that he would relayed to the responsible section Members' proposals to provide more LRT Octopus exit processors at the West Rail Tin Shui Wai Station and provide extra escalators inside LRT Tin Shui Wai Stop, etc. He was readily prepared to conduct a joint site visit with Members to explore viable measures.

Requesting MTRC to operate an additional last train departing from West Rail Tin Shui Wai Station for Light Rail Route 706

5. Members relayed the fact that at present late-night commuters could only take the last train of LRT Route 705 if they wished to go to Tin Shui Estate, Locwood Court and Tin Chung Court, etc, but it took a longer journey with its circuitous route. Members proposed that MTRC should operate an additional last train departing from the West Rail Tin Shui Wai Station at 12:51 a.m. for LRT Route 706, whereby to effectively shorten the journey of LRT travelling to the southern part of Tin Shui Wai by 15 minutes to meet residents' needs.

6. In response, the representative of MTRC said that as the current service hours of LRT were from around 5am to after 1:30am, the time available for the maintenance work on LRT at night would be reduced should an additional last train be operated, and thus MTRC would not consider extending the service hours of LRT in the meantime to ensure the provision of safe LRT service to passengers. Given the current average patronage of the last train of LRT Route 705 bounding for Tin Shui and Locwood was around 10 every night, MTRC would not operate any additional last train for LRT Route 706 in view of the current patronage needs, but would keep a close watch on the operation of the route and consider increasing the service when necessary.

Requesting MTRC to improve the problem relating to the gap between train compartments and platforms at Light Rail Chung Fu Stop

7. Members relayed the large gap between train compartments and platforms at LRT Chung Fu Stop, which posed danger to passengers and wheelchair users. Some members proposed to install movable steps inside the train compartments, which would automatically come down to bridge the gap between train compartments and platforms. Some members proposed to install flashing lights at LRT platforms to remind passengers to be mindful of

the gap. Members requested MTRC to take measures to address the said problem as soon as possible so as to prevent accidents.

8. The representative of MTRC responded that MTRC had installed extendable steps for platforms at Lowu Station on a trial basis to narrow the gap between train compartments and platforms; however, as the platform of that station was situated in an open area, rainfall and silt, etc would affect the operation of those steps and hence reduce their reliability, and the measure was thus inapplicable to LRT. Besides, as the lighting of open platforms was rather adequate, the flashing effect would become less significant, while the use of strong lights might even trigger sickness in passengers with a specific type of illness, it was thus infeasible to install flashing lights. To narrow the gap of platforms effectively, MTRC planned to install foam cords for some LRT platforms and the relevant works had successively commenced and were scheduled for completion at the end of 2012 and early 2013.

Request for extending the routing of green minibus route no. 34 to service Shenzhen Bay Port

9. Members proposed to extend the routing of green minibus route (GMB) no. 34 to Shenzhen Bay Port so as to provide a direct route for residents and Mainland tourists who traveled to Lau Fau Shan, which could not only increase the patronage of the route, but also promote the economic development of Lau Fau Shan and increase employment opportunities. Some members requested the department to conduct a long-term and effective planning of local traffic network and to progressively consider and fine-tune the revised routing made by Members to meet passengers' needs.

10. The representative of the Transport Department (TD) responded that as regards Members' proposal to extend the routing of GMB route no. 34 to service Shenzhen Bay Port, with the significant changes in terms of the proposed routing and service areas, coupled with the adequacy of the existing public transport network to provide service for passengers who travelled from Yuen Long and Tin Shui Wai to Shenzhen Bay Port and vice versa, and the availability of route B2P at the Tin Shui Wai Railway Station for residents of Lau Fau Shan to travel to Shenzhen Bay Port, TD was not supportive of the proposal.

Request for improving the design of Pok Oi Roundabout

Proposal to provide a feeder road leading directly to Au Tau at Pok Oi Roundabout

11. Members relayed the frequent traffic congestion at Pok Oi Roundabout, which not only caused inconvenience to road users but also caused obstruction to ambulances getting in and out of Pok Oi Hospital, delaying the ambulance service as a result. In view of the rapid development in the district in recent years, some members raised concerns over further deterioration of the problem with the successive completion of new residential estates, and thus they requested for TD's early commencement of the improvement to Pok Oi Roundabout and its active supervision of the works progress so as to expedite the completion of the works and improve the traffic congestion of the area. Members made several views and proposals on the said works and requested TD to submit a detailed design of the works for Members' reference.

12. The representative of TD responded that the works of the improvement to Pok Oi Roundabout included construction of southbound and northbound slip roads connecting with the ground level sections of Yuen Long Highway and its elevated flyover, which enabled vehicles to travel between Yuen Long South and Kowloon or North District without the need to bypass Pok Oi Roundabout; and construction of a segregated left-turn lane at the southbound slip road of Yuen Long Highway leading to the Roundabout, which enabled vehicles to travel to Au Tau and Kam Tin without the need to run past the roundabout. The works were scheduled for commencement in the third quarter of 2012 and for completion in mid-2015. TD would explore the feasibility of implementing all the major works in phases so as to relieve the congestion at Pok Oi Roundabout as soon as possible. He also said that he would submit the relevant information on the said works for Members' reference after the meeting.

(Post-meeting note: The Secretariat had referred the information paper submitted by TD on the improvement to Pok Oi Roundabout for Members' reference.)

Proposal to reverse the traffic flow at the road sections of Tai Shui Ha Road East or Kung Um Road near Ma Tong Road, Yuen Long

13. Members relayed the fact that, as the road sections of Tai Shui Ha Road East and Kung Um Road near Ma Tong Road were southbound carriageways, nearby villagers who cycled to downtown Yuen Long via the road sections were always prosecuted; if they took Shap Pat Heung Road and Yuen Long Tai Yuk Road, they needed to take a longer journey and run past an expressway, which caused danger to bicycle users; in addition, the problem of illegal parking at Kung Um Road was severe. As such, Members considered the designs of the said road sections were improper, and hoped that the authority could feel sympathy for villagers' needs by considering improving the vehicular designs of the relevant road sections and providing additional cycle tracks for the use of bicycle users. Some members hoped that the Hong Kong Police Force (the police) could exercise discretion when carrying out enforcement action in rural areas on individual cases, and proposed to provide signage at the said road sections to remind residents to observe the relevant road regulations. Members requested for a joint site inspection with the relevant departments to explore viable measures for improving the condition.

14. The representative of TD responded that the reversion of Kung Um Road's traffic flow to northbound would involve addition of a set of traffic lights at the junction of Kung Um Road to control vehicles turning from Kung Um Road to Ma Tong Road, and the said arrangement would lengthen the light-controlled cycle time for the junction of Ma Tong Road, Ma Tin Road and Kung Um Road, and the traffic of Ma Tong Road and Ma Tin Road would be affected as a result. If reversing the traffic flow of Tai Shui Ha Road East to northbound, the traffic at the westbound carriageway of Ma Tong Road would be affected when vehicles right-turned to the eastbound carriageway of Ma Tong Road. Besides, as Tai Shui Ha Road East was flanked by a nullah and village settlements, there was no adequate room for the provision of cycle tracks. Given the current traffic flow of a section of Kung Um Road between Shap Pat Heung Road and Ma Tong Road ran from south to north, the traffic was infrequent, and thus bicycle users might go to Ma Tong Road and downtown Yuen Long from south to north via that section of Kung Um Road. TD considered that the existing traffic arrangement for the area should be maintained, but would keep monitoring the traffic condition in the neighbourhood of Kung Um Road and Tai Shui Ha Road East.

15. The representative of the police responded that generally speaking the police would take enforcement action in the light of the traffic accident

figures in nearby areas and the complaint cases, and would deal with minor offence cases by way of education and warning.

Request for improving the road safety of the southern part of Yuen Long town

16. Members pointed out that the traffic was very heavy in the southern part of downtown Yuen Long near La Grove and the vehicular flow in the area had increased with the rapid population growth. To ensure the road safety of that road section, Members had requested TD to provide additional traffic lights and pedestrian signals at the junction of Shap Pat Heung Road, Kung Um Road and Kiu Hing Road and designate no-stopping lines at the road sections of Tai Tong Shan Road near Kiu Hing Road to prohibit large vehicles from parking over there years ago, but TD had yet to implement the improvement measures. Members requested TD to progressively consider the relevant proposals and implement the relevant arrangements as soon as possible to ensure the safety of road users and local residents.

17. In response, the representative of TD said that TD had issued works requests to the Highways Department (HyD) for installation of signalised crossings at the junction of Shap Pat Heung Road, Kung Um Road and Kiu Hing Road; HyD was following up with the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD) on the design of the cableway system and had submitted the redesigned temporary traffic arrangement to various departments for consideration; after the said arrangement had finished, the works would commence, and TD would continue to follow up with HyD on the progress of the said works. As regards the problem of roadside parking in the vicinity of Tai Tong Shan Road near Kiu Hing Road, as Tai Tong Shan Road was a public road regulated under the traffic ordinances, it was illegal to park at the roadside of Tai Tong Shan Road, and illegal parked vehicles were liable to prosecution. TD had conducted a district consultation on the proposal of the police's setting up a prohibited zone between 7a.m. and 7p.m. earlier on, and a lot of objections were received. TD would conduct a fresh review of the improvement proposals with the police and ask the police to strengthen enforcement before the implementation of the improvement measures.

Proposal to provide a pedestrian crossing at the junction of Tin Sau Road and Tin Shui Road (near Tin Chak Estate)

18. Members proposed to provide a pedestrian crossing at the junction

of Tin Sau Road and Tin Shui Road to facilitate the elderly and wheelchair users to visit Tin Fai Road Sports Centre and Community hall to be commissioned soon. They also considered that the relevant proposal had minimal impact upon the existing traffic facilities, urging the department to expedite the implementation of the relevant proposal. Some members considered that an at-grade pedestrian crossing would be more accessible for needy residents despite the existence of a footbridge over there. They wished that TD and the relevant members could conduct a joint site visit as to progressively explore viable improvement measures.

19. The representative of TD responded that as there existed a footbridge system with staircases and ramps which were up to the current design standard at the junction of Tin Sau Road and Tin Shui Road, a signalised crossing at the junction of Tin Yan Estate and Tin Fu Court, and a pedestrian walkway along Tin Shui Wai riverside about 160 metres away from the existing footbridge, residents could easily reach their destinations in Tin Chak Estate and Tin Yan Estate via the said routes in a convenient and safe manner without the need to cross the road. As regards Members' proposal to provide a pedestrian crossing under the existing footbridge at Tin Sau Road, as the junction of Tin Sau Road and Tin Shui Road was a larger road junction which involved several carriageways and LRT rail tracks, the space available was limited. Besides, the provision of a signalised crossing at the road section of Tin Sau Road between Tin Shui Road and Tin Ying Road would involve the conversion of one of the carriageways into a pedestrian crossing island, which would affect the operation of the traffic lights at that road section.

Proposal to alter the planter at Tin Shui Road near Light Rail Tin Yat Stop to a pedestrian walkway for connecting Light Rail Tin Yat Stop with the bus stop at Tin Shui Road near Grandeur Terrace

20. Members raised concerns over the circuitous routing from LRT Tin Yat Stop to the bus stop at Tin Shui Road near Grandeur Terrace and the danger posed to residents who crossed the railing near LRT platforms and walked to the said bus stop along the roadside planter. To provide convenience to residents and prevent traffic accidents, Members proposed that TD should explore the feasibility of altering the planter to a pedestrian walkway.

21. The representative of TD responded that at present LRT Tin Yat Stop and the bus stop at Grandeur Terrace were not interconnected and the

circuitous routing from the LRT stop to the bus stop had caused inconvenience to residents. As the proposal would affect 15 trees in the planter and the operation of public facilities and LRT, TD needed to collect detailed traffic figures in relation to the relevant proposal and conduct relevant studies in this regard, and to discuss with the relevant departments and bodies about the feasibility of the proposal.

Request for widening the bus stop outside Yiu Shing House at Tin Wu Road

22. Members relayed the existence of as many as 11 bus routes stopping at the bus stop outside Yiu Shing House and buses had to queue up for pulling in the bus stop to pick up passengers due to the frequent traffic congestion during the morning rush hour. Members proposed that TD should consider removing the planter in front of the bus stop and widening the said bus stop to minimise lost trips arising from the failure of buses to pull in the bus stop.

23. The representative of TD responded that TD had sent officers to conduct a site inspection, and as both ends of the bus bay were in close proximity to the junction with traffic lights, there was inadequate room for widening the bus bay. According to TD's observation, the stopping points for several bus routes were situated at the frontal part of the bus bay with none at its rear part, and thus it was necessary for buses travelling on the carriageway of Tin Wu Road to queue up for pulling in the bus bay during the morning rush hour. As regards the layout of bus stops inside the bus bay, TD would discuss with the bus company as to review the arrangement relating to the bus stops of the routes, and would examine the feasibility of relocating some of the bus stops to the rear part of the bus bay so as to improve the condition and put the entire bus bay to its optimal use.

Proposal to discuss the provision of a bus stop at Vianni Cove for loading of passengers

24. Members relayed the severe inadequacy of service facilities for transportation at Vianni Cove, which caused great inconvenience to residents. Thus, they requested the department to feel sympathy for villagers' needs and progressively explore the feasibility of providing a bus stop for loading and unloading of passengers at Vianni Cove. Members relayed local residents' increasing demand for local public transport service with the commissioning of Tin Shui Wai (Tin Yip Road) community health centre and the low technology

involved in providing a bus stop, and thus they requested for early implementation of the relevant measure.

25. The representative of TD responded that TD could not accept Members' proposal to provide a bus stop for loading of passengers at Vianni Cove in the meantime, and the major reason was that the close proximity of the proposed bus stop to the existing bus stop in Tin Ching Estate would affect the travelling time of buses. Besides, the provision of a bus stop at the roadside of Tin Kwai Road near Vianni Cove might need to remove roadside planters and cycle tracks in order to release space for the provision of the bus stop, and the said arrangement would affect the uniformity of cycle tracks at Tin Kwai Road. TD would need to consider the impact of the relevant measure upon the travelling time of buses and the distribution of bus stops. He noted Members' views, and said that he would closely monitor local development and residents' demand, and was readily prepared to conduct a site visit with Members as to discuss viable improvement measures.

Proposal to re-pave pedestrian walkways to minimise the nuisance caused by accumulation of stagnant water and to provide new street names

26. Members relayed the fact that the catch-drain at the pedestrian access between Sau Fu Street and Castle Peak Road (Yuen Long Section) was installed at a height higher than the level of the pool of stagnant water and could not effectively address water pooling and that the road surface was still uneven after the resurfacing works. Thus, Members requested HyD to follow up on the matters all together. Members also enquired about the progress on the provision of new street names.

27. In response, the representative of HyD said that HyD originally planned to reconstruct the entire section of pedestrian access to improve its drainage capacity, but the works were met with objection from commercial tenants at both sides of the pedestrian access; after conducting a survey, HyD had arranged for the provision of a catch-drain and resurfacing works at the road section near Castle Peak Road (Yuen Long Section) first, and the works were preliminarily completed in mid-July 2012. HyD would continue to follow up on the drainage capacity of the said new facilities and to perfect the relevant drainage system. As regards the road sections near Sau Fu Street, HyD would further explore viable options to address the accumulation of stagnant water in the light of the complexity of the buried services.

28. The representative of the Lands Department (LandsD) responded that LandsD had commenced the consultative process of street naming upon the request of Members, and had contacted HyD and the District Office/Yuen Long in relation to the matters of erecting road signs, etc, and was awaiting replies from the departments.

Proposal to discuss the matters relating to bicycle parking spaces at Kiu Hing Road and Shap Pat Heung Road

29. Members relayed the increasing number of bicycle commuters and countryside trekkers in recent years and the random parking of bicycles at several places in the district, which not only affected local cityscape and caused inconvenience to residents, but also endangered the safety of road users. As such, Members urged TD to seek suitable sites for early provision of bicycle parking spaces in the district so as to meet bicycle users' needs and eliminate obstruction of pedestrian walkways caused by parking of bicycles.

30. The representative of TD responded that the bicycle parking sites provided by the government aimed at providing parking spaces for bicycle users on a temporary basis rather than for bicycle users on a long-term basis. At present, TD would usually provide bicycle parking spaces near bicycle tracks, inside major public transport interchanges or at sites near railway stations so as to facilitate bicycle users to park their bicycles for rest, tending to personal affairs or interchanging to other modes of transportation. TD was also supportive of the provision of bicycle parking spaces inside housing estates under some of the new development projects for the use of bicycle users.

Proposal to discuss the accident occurred at Chun Yin Square involving an escalator

31. Members raised concerns over the frequent accidents involving elders while using the escalator at Chun Yin Square. Members considered that the major reasons of the accidents included the speed of the escalator and slippery environment in the neighbourhood and thus requested the department concerned to take effective measures to address the problem, which included adjusting the escalator to a slower speed to ensure the safety of residents while using the escalator and prevent recurrence of similar events. Members also relayed the inconvenience caused by frequent breakdowns of the escalator to

users. They proposed that the authority should progressively consider installing an additional escalator for the footbridge. Some members requested EMSD to assist in following up with the contractor on compensation claims.

32. In response, the representative of EMSD said that EMSD was responsible for the maintenance and repair service of elevators and escalators under the instruction of HyD. In response to Members' request for adjusting the escalator at Chun Yin Square to a slower speed, EMSD had adjusted the speed of the escalator from 0.65 metres per second to 0.6 metres per second in mid-July 2012, and, if needed, would further reduce the speed of the escalator to its lowest speed at 0.5 metres per second after the meeting. As regards Members' enquiry about compensation claims, EMSD would deal with incidents involving death and personal injuries happened within the area of the escalator according to the established procedure, and would, upon request, provide the claimant with the details about the contractor so that he could file a claim application to the contractor on his own.

(Post-meeting note: EMSD reduced the speed of the escalator at Chun Yin Square to 0.5 metres per second (i.e. the lowest speed of the escalator) on the morning of 28 July 2012, and the Secretariat referred the information paper submitted by EMSD on the reduction in the escalator's speed for Members' reference on 9 August 2012.)

Progress Report from the Transport Department

33. Members noted the above report and were concerned about the progress of several works projects set out therein.

Statistics on Cycling Accidents and Related Enforcement Actions

34. Members noted the above report.

Yuen Long District Council Secretariat
August 2012