

**Legislative Council Panel on Transport**

**2017 Policy Address and Policy Agenda**

**Transport-related Policy Initiatives of  
the Transport and Housing Bureau**

**Introduction**

The 2017 Policy Address and Policy Agenda set out the Government's initiatives in the coming year. This paper elaborates on those initiatives that are relevant to the land transport portfolio.

**2017 Policy Agenda – New initiatives**

***Chapter 2 - Land, Housing and Transportation***

**(a) Public Transport Strategy Study (“PTSS”)**

2. Since late 2014, the Government has progressively rolled out the two parts of the Public Transport Strategy Study (“PTSS”), namely the Role and Positioning Review (“RPR”) and Topical Study, to conduct a comprehensive and systemic review of the roles and positioning of public transport services other than heavy rail and study some important and more time-sensitive topical issues that are of concern to the public transport trades. The aim is to enhance the existing strategic arrangements of our public transport services in tandem with the further development of the heavy rail network so as to ensure the long-term, balanced, efficient, multi-modal and sustainable development of public transport services.

3. In view of the public views towards taxi and public light bus (“PLB”) services, we have accorded priority to the reviews of these two services under the RPR. The study on **PLB services** has been completed, in which we recommend to increase the maximum seating capacity of PLBs (i.e.

green minibuses and red minibuses) from 16 to 19 seats. This can enhance the overall carrying capacity of PLBs to cater for the passenger demand, in particular during peak periods. We have briefed this Panel on the study outcome and implementation details and canvassed the members' views in December 2016. We are preparing for the necessary legislative amendments. Meanwhile, we are studying how to enhance **personalised and point-to-point transport services** (including the proposal to introduce premium taxis) to meet the demand of various passenger groups. We have briefed this Panel on the progress of the study and canvassed the members' views in June 2016. We plan to report to this Panel within the first quarter of 2017. The Transport Department ("TD") has all along been keeping close communication with the taxi trade to help enhance the service quality of ordinary taxis to meet passenger demand. More operators are currently providing pre-booked taxi service of higher quality in the form of hire-as-a-whole service in accordance with the law. The number of such taxis with larger compartments and better facilities has increased from about 20 in early 2015 to over 150 at present.

4. Moreover, we have reported to this Panel the result of all eight Topical Studies within 2014-15 and 2015-16 legislative years. These include the service level of franchised bus service, school bus service, seating capacity of PLBs, supply of taxis, taxi fuel surcharge, statutory cap on the PLBs, review of ferry service and accessible public transport services for people with disabilities.

5. The whole PTSS is expected to be completed by mid-2017. A consolidated report will then be released.

#### **(b) Taking Forward Transport Infrastructure Projects**

6. In view of the social and economic development of Hong Kong and the changes in traffic demand, we need to take forward transport infrastructure projects timely to enhance the local transport network. We will implement the construction of the **Central Kowloon Route** ("CKR")

project to link Yau Ma Tei Interchange in West Kowloon with Kowloon Bay and the Kai Tak Development in East Kowloon. The CKR can enhance the capacity of major east-west road corridors in Kowloon, thus relieving the existing traffic congestion problem and meeting future traffic needs. CKR together with Tseung Kwan O-Lam Tin Tunnel and the Trunk Road T2 under planning will form Route 6, linking up West Kowloon and Tseung Kwan O. Upon its commissioning, the journey time between West Kowloon and Kowloon Bay via CKR will be around five minutes during rush hours, about 25 minutes less compared with the journey time without CKR. We will strive to seek funding approval for the construction of the CKR in this legislative session with a view to commencing the construction works in the latter half of 2017 for completion in 2025.

**(c) Conducting Feasibility Study on Route 11**

7. For the long-term development of Northwest New Territories (NWNT), including the proposed Hung Shui Kiu New Development Area and Yuen Long South development, we will take forward Route 11 to connect NWNT and the urban areas to cope with the increase in traffic demand, and at the same time, improve the “external connectivity” of Lantau and the airport island. The Route 11 will provide a third strategic access to Lantau on top of Tsing Ma Bridge and Tuen Mun-Chek Lap Kok Link, thus enhancing the robustness of the road network connecting to the airport. The proposed Route 11 will link up North Lantau and Yuen Long and is a large scale project. It will take more than 10 years for going through the conception, consultation of stakeholders, detailed design, environmental impact assessments, land resumptions and acquisitions, gazettal and actual construction stages. In order to kick start the works, we will conduct a feasibility study on Route 11 and plan to seek support from this Panel in the first quarter of this year for the application for the required funding.

**(d) Improving Ancillary Facilities for Public Transport**

8. The Government has been pursuing a public transport-oriented policy. At present, over 90% of passengers use public transport services with some 12 million passenger trips. We will continue to strive to enhance the level of public transport services and enhance the ancillary facilities (including the enhancement of the passenger waiting environment and provision of more convenient interchange facilities).

**(e) Pilot Projects for Renovating Public Transport Interchange and Ferry Pier**

9. We plan to carry out renovation projects for enhancing existing covered public transport interchanges (“PTIs”) and ferry piers for providing the public with a better waiting environment. The renovation projects seek to keep up the exterior design and facilities of the PTIs and ferry piers with the times so as to cater for the practical needs of the public. Our preliminary approach is to renovate one PTI and one ferry pier on a pilot basis, through which we will explore a variety of enhancements including add-ons for passengers’ convenience (such as Wi-Fi services, toilets, passenger information panels, vending machines, convenience stores and seats etc.), exterior refurbishment and brighter lighting. Upon completion of the pilot projects, we will consider renovating more covered PTI and ferry piers in the light of the project outcome and passengers’ feedback. We will also examine applying such new standards when the Government builds the same type of facilities in future.

**(f) Subsidising the Tramways for Replacement of Tram Track at Key Locations with New Technology**

10. At present, around 180 000 passenger trips daily are made by tram service. Apart from providing public transport service to the public, the tram is also welcomed by tourists. Regular replacement of worn out tracks is important for safeguarding the operational efficiency and

providing safe tram service. In order to reduce the traffic impact brought by the track replacement works and provide more comfortable service for passengers, the Government has earmarked around \$20 million<sup>1</sup>, which will be provided on a matching basis in three years from 2017/18 to 2019/20, to subsidise the Hong Kong Tramways Limited (“the Tramways”) to expedite the track replacement of the key bends and junctions with the use of new technology<sup>2</sup>. Upon the completion of the works in three years, it is expected that about 2.4 kilometres of tracks<sup>3</sup> would be replaced.

11. The Tramways has already adopted the new technology to replace about 80 metres of tracks at its Shau Kei Wan Terminus. This has generally been well-received by passengers. In order to expedite the replacement of tracks at the key bends and junctions, the Government will subsidise the Tramways to replace these tram tracks. The subsidy by the Government will only cover costs for the replacement works and the materials required for replacing the tracks using the new technology. Provision for the subsidy will be reflected in the Estimates of TD of the relevant financial years. The expenditure arising from subsequent daily

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<sup>1</sup> The cost of using the new technology to replace the tracks is \$16,730 per metre, which is calculated based on the expenditure for replacing the tracks at its Shau Kei Wan Terminus with the new technology. Since 2 350 metres of tracks are considered to be suitable for replacement by the new technology, the total replacement cost will be \$39,316,000. Under the matching basis, for every metre of the track (in a pair) which the Tramways has committed to replace, the Government will provide funding for the installation of another metre of the track on a reimbursement basis. Hence, the total subsidy by the Government is \$19,658,000.

<sup>2</sup> The new technology is the “rail jacket technology”. Unlike the existing traditional method where tram tracks are directly embedded in concrete, the new technology makes use of a layer of eco-friendly elastic rubber material to wrap the tracks before the tracks are installed onto the concrete road surface. Subsequent replacement of the same section of tracks will only require removal of the worn out section wrapped in the rubber jacket through boring holes without the need to excavate and repave the road surface. This will help reduce the work duration and impact on the surrounding traffic. The new technology can extend the track life and effectively enhance the tracks to absorb vibration, as well as reduce the noise of tram operation and provide passengers with more comfortable service.

<sup>3</sup> TD and the Tramways have identified 20 locations of curve tracks totaling 1 584 metres and 10 locations of key junctions totaling 766 metres that will be replaced with the new technology. They add up to around 2.4 kilometres, about 8% of the total length of the tram track (29 kilometres).

maintenance and repair of the new tracks will be absorbed by the Tramways. TD expects to start accepting application for subsidy from the Tramways from mid-2017 onwards, and the track replacement works is expected to start in the fourth quarter this year.

### **(g) Outlying Island Ferry Services**

12. The Government will continue to provide special helping measures for the six major outlying island ferry routes<sup>4</sup> so that residents need not bear hefty fares. Separately, we will examine in the mid-term review (in the first half of 2019) of the next three-year licence period (2017-20) whether the special helping measures are the most desirable long-term operation model for maintaining the financial viability of ferry services. The review will cover, inter alia, extension of licence duration and a study of the pros and cons of possible options such as letting the Government own the ferry fleet and outsource its operation. The objective is to ensure enhanced service quality, financial viability and reasonable fare level of ferry services.

### **(h) MTR Fare Adjustment Mechanism**

13. We are reviewing the Fare Adjustment Mechanism (“FAM”) jointly with the MTR Corporation Limited (“MTRCL”). The main direction of the review is to see how the operation of FAM could better respond to public concern about the relationship between FAM and MTRCL’s profitability as well as passengers’ affordability, whilst still respecting the

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<sup>4</sup> Routes operated by the New World First Ferry Services Limited :

(1)“Central – Cheung Chau”;

(2)“Inter-islands” between Peng Chau, Mui Wo, Chi Ma Wan and Cheung Chau ; and

(3)“Central – Mui Wo” routes.

Routes operated by the Hong Kong & Kowloon Ferry Holdings Limited’s three subsidiaries :

(4)“Central – Peng Chau”;

(5)“Central – Yung Shue Wan”; and

(6)“Central – Sok Kwu Wan” routes.

financial prudence required of MTRCL as a listed company, on the premise that a transparent fare adjustment mechanism based on public and objective data and a direct-drive formula will be retained.

14. We expect that the review will be completed in the first half of this year. The MTR fares will be adjusted according to the new FAM in June 2017.

**(i) Alleviating Road Traffic Congestion**

15. The Government attaches great importance to alleviating road traffic congestion. We have adopted a multi-pronged approach, and are taking forward progressively the short, medium and long-term measures recommended by the Transport Advisory Committee earlier. Those recommendations include carrying out an in-depth feasibility study for the Electronic Road Pricing Pilot Scheme in Central and its adjacent areas, exploring measures to control vehicle growth, and commencing a car parking review with priority accorded to addressing the parking demand and supply of commercial vehicles within this year to come up with appropriate measures to address the parking need of commercial vehicles. Furthermore, we have commenced a study on the overall strategy for the rationalisation of traffic distribution among the three road harbour crossings and three land tunnels between Kowloon and Sha Tin for submission of the proposed toll adjustment options to the Legislative Council Panel on Transport within the 2017-18 legislative year for discussion. To combat illegal parking, we will introduce into the Legislative Council legislative amendments to raise the fixed penalty charges for congestion-related traffic offence in Q1 2017. The Police will also continue to strengthen enforcement actions against congestion-related offences.

**(j) Transport for all**

16. To facilitate the access of wheelchair users to PLBs, the Government and green minibus operators have identified new low-floor

wheelchair-accessible PLBs models, which will be introduced for trial on three hospital routes<sup>5</sup>. TD and the operators are studying in detail the specifications of the models, including the dimensions and position for wheelchair access. If the length of such low-floor wheelchair-accessible PLB models exceeds the current statutory length limit of PLBs at 7 metres in Hong Kong, the Commissioner for Transport will consider exercising her discretionary power to grant exemption in respect of vehicle length to facilitate the trial runs of those low-floor PLB models in Hong Kong. We expect that the trial scheme will commence in the second half of this year.

17. At the present stage, operators would purchase and operate the vehicles themselves. Upon commencement of the trial scheme, we will review the operational effectiveness of the vehicles with the operators, including the feasibility of the technical operation, repair and maintenance, and passengers' feedback. If the trial is considered feasible and desirable after the review, we will discuss with the trade the feasibility of further promoting low-floor PLBs.

## ***Chapter 5 - Environment and Conservation***

### **(k) Combating Climate Change and Energy Conservation**

#### **Foster “Walk in HK”**

18. We aim to encourage people to walk the “first mile” to and “last mile” from public transport. To this end, we will actively promote “Walk in HK”. Promoting walkability is not only a key element in the Government's effort to combat climate change, but will also help encourage a healthy lifestyle, strengthen community interaction and build an age-friendly environment. We will consolidate our past efforts in promoting walkability and foster the concept of “Walk in HK” under a

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<sup>5</sup> The three proposed trial routes include those green minibus routes operating via Queen Mary Hospital, Prince of Wales Hospital and St. Teresa's Hospital.

coordinated strategy. We will launch a series of new measures<sup>6</sup> under four themes, namely “Make it smart”, “Make it connected”, “Make it enjoyable” and “Make it safe”.

19. First, we will “Make it smart” by providing user-friendly information on walking routes. We will, with reference to overseas experiences, design clear and pedestrian-friendly walking maps and directional signage. We will also enhance information dissemination on larger scale pedestrian networks. Second, we will “Make it connected” by enhancing our pedestrian networks. We will study measures to enhance the existing pedestrian networks in Admiralty and Wan Chai and linking up the Sun Yat Sen Memorial Park in Sai Ying Pun with the existing footbridges in Central. We will also explore enhancing accessibility of other pedestrian networks so that at-grade footways, footbridges and subways will be joined up in a coherent manner. Moreover, we will continue to take forward the various hillside escalator links and elevator systems (HEL) projects, and also commence a study at the end of 2017 to review and improve the assessment mechanism for proposed HEL projects (see paragraph 37-39 below).

20. Third, we will “Make it enjoyable” by making walking a pleasant experience. We will explore relaxing the requirements for adding covers to public walkways as stipulated in the Transport Planning & Design Manual, and select two areas for pilot study to test out innovative measures for a comfortable walking environment. We will also beautify selected footbridges and subways depending on resources. Finally, we will “Make it safe” by providing a safe and quality pedestrian environment. We will review and update the relevant planning standards and design in relation to pedestrian environment and facilities. Examples include greening for carriageway and footway, widths of footway and buffer zones, pedestrian crossing facilities, barrier free facilities, and roadside facilities such as

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<sup>6</sup> We have earmarked about \$21.6 million to undertake a consultancy study for “Walk in HK” from 2017-18 to 2021-22, among which around \$17 million is reserved for the study, \$4 million for public engagement exercises and the rest will serve as contingent expenditure. Provision for the study will be reflected in the Estimates of the relevant years.

street lighting, railings, and street furniture. We will also join hands with stakeholders such as MTR Corporation Limited to promote walkability. Our aim is to enhance the walkability of our city for Hong Kong people to commute, to connect and to enjoy, making walking an integral part of Hong Kong as a sustainable city.

## **2017 Policy Agenda – On-going initiatives**

### ***Chapter 2 - Land, Housing and Transportation***

#### **(l) Strategic Studies on Railways and Major Roads beyond 2030**

21. We are going to take forward strategic studies on railways and major roads beyond 2030 based on the results of the “Hong Kong 2030+: Towards a Planning Vision and Strategy Transcending 2030” study and its public engagement exercise with regard to the planning directions for Hong Kong beyond 2030, which include exploring the transport infrastructure required for the developments at Lantau, Northwest New Territories and North New Territories, with a view to preliminarily formulating the layout of infrastructure and proposing implementation timetable for the infrastructure according to the changes in the distribution of population and employment. Thus, the planning of major transport infrastructure can cope with the needs arising from the overall long-term land development of Hong Kong and bring the greatest benefits to Hong Kong. We plan to seek support from the Committee in the second quarter of this year for the application for the required funding.

#### **(m) Developing Railways**

22. The Kwun Tong Line Extension and the South Island Line (East) commenced operations in the fourth quarter of 2016 (October) and end 2016 respectively in accordance with the revised targets put forward by the MTRCL to provide local residents with convenient and fast railway service.

23. Regarding the **Shatin to Central Link (SCL)**, in view of the delay of 11 months arising from the archaeological discoveries and other factors encountered during construction, there is about a year delay in commissioning the project, i.e. the “Tai Wai to Hung Hom Section” deferred to end 2019 and the “Hung Hom to Admiralty Section” deferred to 2021. Now, with the efforts of the construction team, the delay recovery measures implemented at the “Tai Wai to Hung Hom Section” is becoming effective progressively. Hence, the target commissioning date of this section is advanced to about mid-2019, while that of the “Hung Hom to Admiralty Section” remains at 2021. We will continue to coordinate and oversee the construction of the Shatin to Central Link, with a view to commissioning the project in accordance with the above revised targets.

24. In terms of long-term railway development, we have invited the MTRCL to submit proposals for the Northern Link (and Kwu Tung Station), Tuen Mun South Extension, East Kowloon Line and Tung Chung West Extension (and Tung Chung East Station) pursuant to the indicative implementation window as recommended in the **Railway Development Strategy 2014 (RDS-2014)**. We will progressively take forward the remaining three railway projects recommended in the RDS-2014, i.e. the Hung Shui Kiu Station, the South Island Line (West) and the North Island Line. The actual implementation of individual projects is contingent upon the outcome of detailed engineering, environmental and financial studies relating to each project, as well as updated assessment of passenger demand and availability of resources at the time. Prior to the finalisation of any new railway schemes, we will further consult the public and the relevant District Councils on such details as the detailed alignment, locations of stations, pedestrian connection facilities, mode of implementation, cost estimate, mode of financing, actual implementation window, etc.

## **(n) Improvement of Road and Public Transport**

### **Central-Wan Chai Bypass and Island Eastern Corridor**

25. The Central-Wan Chai Bypass and Island Eastern Corridor (CWB) project, which is a large-scale and complex road infrastructure project, has encountered various unforeseeable difficulties and risks since the commencement of construction in end 2009. These include the complex bridge reconstruction and improvement works being carried out at the North Point section of Island Eastern Corridor while maintaining its normal operation simultaneously, the need of removal of the large metal object found at the seabed of the works area in Wan Chai North, more-than-expected inclement weather condition, worse-than-expected underground condition, etc. As the works progress had been constrained by the aforementioned difficulties and risks, the CWB could not be commissioned in 2017 as originally scheduled.

26. However, there remain very complicated and challenging tasks in the construction works, including installation, testing and integration of various electrical and mechanical systems in the CWB tunnel. These works still face different potential risks which may affect the works progress and thus the commissioning of the project. The Highways Department (“HyD”) together with the consulting engineer will closely monitor the works progress, assess the implications of the potential risks, and urge the contractors to adjust the schedule of works and take measures correspondingly, with the target of achieving full commissioning of the CWB in end 2018 or in the first quarter of 2019. Upon commissioning of the CWB, it will only take about five minutes to drive from Central to Island Eastern Corridor at North Point. The east-west traffic on Hong Kong Island will become more direct and smoother.

### **Tseung Kwan O – Lam Tin Tunnel**

27. Shortly after obtaining funding approval from the Finance Committee

of the Legislative Council in June last year, the first two construction contracts of the Tseung Kwan O-Lam Tin Tunnel (“TKO-LTT”) (including the main tunnel contract and Road P2 contract) of a total value about \$10.4 billion were awarded in July 2016. TKO-LTT, together with the to-be-implemented Central Kowloon Route and the Trunk Road T2 under planning will form Route 6, linking up West Kowloon and Tseung Kwan O. After completion of the advance works such as pre-construction site investigation and setting up of plants etc., the main construction activities commenced in early December 2016 for completion in 2021. TKO-LTT will become an additional major road link between Tseung Kwan O and East Kowloon and relieve the traffic load of Tseung Kwan O and Tseung Kwan O Tunnel. Besides, some of the existing traffic between TKO and the Eastern Harbour Crossing can make use of the new tunnel without routing through roads such as Tseung Kwan O Road and Lei Yue Mun Road of Kwun Tong district, thereby significantly relieving the heavy traffic load at these roads during peak hours.

### **Bus Route Rationalisation**

28. Bus route rationalisation is an ongoing task of TD. Through cancellation or amalgamation of routes with persistently low patronage, the resources so saved may be redeployed to strengthen existing services with increased demand or introduce new services. TD and the franchised bus companies have pursued bus route rationalisation through the annual Route Planning Programmes and implement them after consultation with the District Councils. Over the past few years, franchised bus services in North District, Tai Po, Tuen Mun, Yuen Long, Sha Tin, Tsing Yi and Kowloon were also rationalised under the “Area Approach”, through which bus service was reviewed holistically for a district as a whole, rather than on a route-by-route basis, with a view to maximising the overall benefits to the community. Through these endeavours, between 2013 and June 2016, a total of 30 bus routes with low patronage were cancelled or amalgamated with other routes, and 263 routes had been truncated or had its frequency reduced. Some 3 830 bus trips (around 12.7%) have been reduced daily

along bus corridors in Mongkok, Central and Causeway Bay. Meanwhile, franchised bus companies have redeployed the resources so saved for operating 27 new routes and increasing the frequency of 249 routes to better meet the changing demand of passengers. The reduction in unnecessary bus trips, which helps alleviate traffic congestion and roadside emissions in busy corridors, is in line with the strategy of current-term Government on combating climate change. Moreover, with the opening of the Kwun Tong Line Extension and the South Island Line (East) in October and December 2016 respectively, TD will reorganise the road-based public transport services around the catchment of the two new railway lines in the light of changing passenger demand so as to enhance the coordination among various public transport services and their complementarity.

### **Subsidising the installation of real-time arrival information display panels and seats by franchised bus companies**

29. The Government announced last year a new initiative through which franchised bus companies will receive subsidies for expediting their installation of real-time bus arrival information display panels and seats at bus stops. This seeks to provide more comprehensive ancillary facilities that can keep up with the times for the convenience of passengers, especially the elderly and those in need. For the real-time arrival information display panels, the Government will provide subsidy, on a matching basis<sup>7</sup>, to franchised bus companies for their installation of the display panels at covered bus stops with electrical installation<sup>8</sup>. As regard

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<sup>7</sup> This means that for every display panel (inclusive of protective case and data receiver) which a franchised bus company has committed to install, the Government will provide funding for the installation of another display panel. Figures concerning display panels in subsequent paragraphs are inclusive of the display panels with installation cost to be borne by the Government as well as those by franchised bus companies pursuant to the aforesaid arrangements.

<sup>8</sup> The expenditure of the subsidy scheme is estimated at around \$88 million for franchised bus companies to install display panels at around 1 300 covered bus stops with electrical installation and to install seats at around 2 700 covered bus stops in or before 2019-20. By then, all suitable covered bus stops across the

the seats, franchised bus companies will receive subsidies for installing seats at covered bus stops without seats<sup>9</sup>. The subsidy scheme is progressing well. TD and franchised bus companies have all along been carrying out preparatory work and gearing up for tendering exercises actively. Installation works will commence gradually from the first half of 2017 onwards, while franchised bus companies are expected to be able to equip 800 bus stops with seats and 230 bus stops with display panels by end-2017. Our target is for franchised bus companies to provide seats and/or display panels at all existing suitable covered bus stops by 2019-20.

### **(o) Enhancing Monitoring of the MTRCL**

30. Railway is the backbone of our public transport. The Government understands that the public have high expectation of MTR service. The Government will continue to proactively carry out its duty as the Corporation's majority shareholder by enhancing the monitoring of the MTRCL and reflecting the common concerns of the community on MTR operations to the Board from time to time. The Government will continue to require MTRCL to strengthen its internal management to provide high-quality services and proper delivery of new railway projects, as well as identify early the risks faced by the Corporation in different aspects and carry out necessary reform so as to enhance service performance and maintain an overall high standard of corporate governance.

### **(p) Fostering a Pedestrian and Bicycle-Friendly Environment**

#### **Pedestrian Environment Improvement Schemes**

31. We will continue to foster pedestrian environment improvement, including taking forward the proposed pedestrian environment improvement schemes in Yuen Long, Mong Kok and Causeway Bay.

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territory will be equipped with display panels and/or seats.

<sup>9</sup> Franchised bus companies shall remain responsible for funding the installation of seats when erecting new covered bus stops.

32. In Yuen Long Town, we have completed ten improvement measures, comprising all nine small to medium-scale improvement measures, such as widening of pedestrian crossings and footpaths at various locations, etc., and a relatively large-scale improvement measure of streetscape enhancement along both sides of Fung Yau Street North. For the proposed footbridge extending southward from West Rail Long Ping Station to Kau Yuk Road which is a relatively larger-in-scale improvement measure, the environmental impact assessment report of the project was approved by the Director of Environmental Protection under the Environmental Impact Assessment Ordinance (Cap. 499) in October 2016. Gazettal of the project under the Roads (Works, Use and Compensation) Ordinance (Cap. 370) was also completed. No objection was received upon expiry of the statutory objection period on 28 December 2016 and the project is thus authorized accordingly. The HyD is now taking forward the detailed design for early implementation of works.

33. As for the proposed footbridge system in Mong Kok, the HyD commenced a further investigation study in October 2013. The scope of the study covers the assessments of the anticipated usage of the proposed footbridge system and the impacts on the traffic, environment and underground utilities during the construction and operation stages of the project, etc. Subsequent to the substantial completion of the study in 2016, we commenced the public consultation for the preliminary scheme of the project in January 2017. Through soliciting public views on the preliminary proposals, we hope to improve the proposals with the aim to achieve the goals of enhancing pedestrian environment and minimizing vehicle-pedestrian conflicts in the Mong Kok district.

34. For the scheme in Causeway Bay, the 2014 Policy Address announced a pilot study on underground space development in selected strategic urban areas including Causeway Bay; whereby the relevant work falls under the Development Bureau. As the proposed subway system in Causeway Bay is geographically covered in the pilot study, we would review the need for

the proposed subway system as well as its implementation plan and timetable after taking into account the results of the pilot study. At present, we are implementing short-term traffic improvement measures, e.g. widening of signal-controlled crossing, with a view to enhancing the pedestrian environment along the proposed subway route. The TD conducted public consultation on some of the measures in 2016 and relevant works would commence in early 2017 in phases.

### **Universal Accessibility Programme**

35. The Government has been installing barrier-free access facilities at public walkways (i.e. public footbridges, elevated walkways and subways maintained by the HyD, where technically feasible, for years on the recommendation of the Equal Opportunities Commission (the “Original Programme”). Apart from continuing to implement the projects under the “Original Programme”, we have been continuing to enhance the barrier-free access facilities at other existing public walkways through the “Expanded Programme” of the “Universal Accessibility” Programme implemented by the Government of the current term in August 2012. As at end-2016, the Government has completed 45 items under the programme and will continue to implement some remaining 160 items spread across the 18 districts to facilitate the public especially the elderly to travel.

36. Furthermore, the Government has been inviting the 18 District Councils (“DCs”) again, starting from December 2016 to the second quarter of 2017, to further nominate not more than three existing walkways in each district for implementation in the next phase of the Universal Accessibility Programme. The walkways eligible for consideration by the DCs will no longer be confined to public walkways maintained by the HyD, provided that the following criteria are met to ensure proper use of public funds—

- (i) the walkways span across public roads maintained by the HyD;
- (ii) they are open for public access from public roads at all times;

- (iii) the walkways are not privately owned; and
- (iv) the parties responsible for the management and maintenance of these walkways agree to such lift retrofitting proposals and are willing to cooperate with the Government during the implementation of the said lift retrofitting works as well as the subsequent management and maintenance works of the lifts.

No land resumption should be involved for the retrofitting works. Upon completion of the DC consultation exercise, the Government plans to start in 2017-18 the feasibility study and design work for the items selected by the DCs for implementation in the next phase, with a view to commencing the construction of these new items as soon as the majority of the retrofitting works items under the current phase are completed.

### **Hillside Escalator Links and Elevator Systems**

37. The Government established in 2009 a set of comprehensive, objective and transparent scoring criteria for assessing proposals for HEL to determine the priority for conducting preliminary technical feasibility studies for the 20 project proposals received at that time. The Government consulted the Panel on this in May 2009, and upon completion of the assessment, the results were reported to the Panel in February 2010. Two proposals were screened out initially, and 18 others were ranked. The Government indicated at that time that preliminary technical feasibility studies for the proposals ranked top ten would be conducted by batches, and that the remaining proposals would be followed up after the smooth implementation of the top ten proposals. Later on, after reviewing the human resources of departments, the Government conducted preliminary technical feasibility studies for the proposals ranked 11th and 12th.

38. Among the 18 ranked proposals (see **Annex**), certain sections of the proposal ranked first “Pedestrian Link at Tsz Wan Shan” have been opened for public use. The remaining sections are scheduled for completion by phases in 2017. The proposal ranked 13th “Yuet Wah Street Pedestrian

Linkage” has been opened for public use since October 2015. The proposal ranked 14th “Lift and Pedestrian Walkway System between Lai King Hill Road and Princess Margaret Hospital” (one of the two proposals ranked 14th) is under construction. For the progress of other proposals, please refer to the **Annex**.

39. Besides continuing to implement the relevant ranked proposals, we will commence a study at the end of 2017 to review and improve the assessment mechanism for HEL, and on the basis of the study outcome, to carry out screening, traffic assessments and preliminary technical feasibility assessments for other proposals received in the past years so as to draw up a timetable for implementing the proposals in future. The study will take about 30 months. Upon completion of the study, we will seek resources for implementing proposals that are considered feasible after preliminary technical assessments gradually.

### **Elevated Walkway and Footbridge**

40. In addition, to enhance local pedestrian network, we will continue to implement the elevated walkway between Tong Ming Street and Tong Tak Street, Tseung Kwan O and the footbridge connecting Tsuen Wan Plaza, Skyline Plaza and adjacent landscaping area, to facilitate the public especially the elderly to get around town centres, major public transport facilities and streets. After obtaining funding approval from the LegCo, construction of the former project commenced in December 2016, while advance construction works of the latter project is on-going and its main construction works is expected to commence in mid-2017.

### **Bicycle Friendly Environment**

41. To foster a green community, we will continue to create a “bicycle-friendly environment” in new towns and new development areas, including improving existing cycle tracks and bicycle parking facilities, as well as enhancing education and publicity on cycling safety, so as to

facilitate the public to ride bicycles for short-distance commuting or leisure purpose. We will also study how to assist organisations to operate self-financing community bicycle rental services on a non-profit making basis, so that the public can cycle between public transport stations and living places or offices for first and last mile short-distance connection.

#### **(q) Enhancing External Transport Links**

##### **Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge**

42. Spanning over Lingdingyang, the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge (“HZMB”), an unprecedented mega transport infrastructure project co-built by Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao, will connect the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region in the East and the Macao Special Administrative Region and Zhuhai City of Guangdong province in the West. The entire HZMB project consists of two parts: (1) the HZMB Main Bridge (i.e. a 22.9km-long bridge and 6.7km-long subsea tunnel) situated in Mainland waters which is being taken forward by the HZMB Authority; and (ii) the link roads and boundary crossing facilities under the responsibility of the three governments. Regardless of whether it is the HZMB Main Bridge or the related projects of the three sides, challenges in the construction and in meeting the programme schedule have been encountered.

43. Having regard to the progress of the HZMB Main Bridge and the related projects of the three sides, the governments of Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao as well as the HZMB Authority have been compiling and assessing the works programme and dealing with the difficulties and risks while ensuring the quality of the project and safety of works. Reports have been made to the inter-ministry Task Force of HZMB, which is chaired by the National Development and Reform Commission and attended by representatives from the three governments. The Task Force attached great importance to the completion and commissioning date of the HZMB and considered that the three sides should strive for simultaneous

commissioning in view of the significance of this unprecedented cross-boundary transport infrastructure connecting Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao.

44. The Task Force has recently reviewed the works progress of the HZMB Main Bridge, the Hong Kong projects (including the Hong Kong Boundary Crossing Facilities (“HKBCF”) and the Hong Kong Link Road (“HKLR”), the Zhuhai projects (including the Zhuhai Boundary Crossing Facilities and the Zhuhai Link Road) and the Macao projects (including the Macao Boundary Crossing Facilities and the Macao Link Road). The latest progress of the Main Bridge and the Hong Kong projects is as follows:

- (a) Regarding the **Main Bridge situated in Mainland waters**, the construction of the tunnel and artificial islands of the HZMB Main Bridge is still in progress. Its critical process involves the placement of 33 sub-sea tunnel segments and the final connection. As of end-December 2016, 31 sub-sea tunnel segments were placed. Given that the works site is in a complex environment in the sea, the project faces huge technical difficulties arising from the need to cater for wind speed and under-water current conditions. Its challenges include overcoming the inclement weather and sedimentation of the tunnel bedding conditions. The bridge section of the HZMB Main Bridge was connected in end-September 2016 and paving works for the bridge surface are underway. Given the immense scale of the paving works and the high technical requirements, the progress of works may also be affected by inclement weather. In addition, remaining works for the HZMB Main Bridge include the installation of public utilities and testing for commissioning. **Judging from the current works progress, the HZMB Main Bridge project is expected to be completed in December 2017.**

- (b) As for the **Hong Kong projects**, the engineers have been working

hard to overcome the construction difficulties and challenges of the HKBCF and HKLR such as the unstable supply of materials, shortage of labour, restriction in airport height, constraints in environmental protection requirement and the slower-than-expected consolidation performance of reclamation works, etc. Reclamation for the HKBCF was largely completed in late 2016 while the remaining works of installing armour rocks and the removal of preloading materials are in progress. The nine works contracts for the superstructures of the HKBCF are now in full swing: the construction of superstructures and installation of prefabricated roof segments are being carried out for the passenger clearance building; foundation works and installation of precast bridge deck segments are being carried out for the land infrastructure works; construction of the vehicle clearance plaza, ancillary buildings and associated facilities are also in progress. As regards HKLR, bored piles, pile caps and piers for the marine viaduct and land viaduct have all been completed. The bridge decks of land viaduct have all been erected and stressing of their post-tensioning tendons is being carried out. The construction of the tunnel section is also in progress. According to the latest works progress, the HyD assesses **that the target to achieve readiness for commissioning of the Hong Kong projects by end 2017 remains unchanged.** The HyD and its resident site staff have been closely monitoring the works progress of the Hong Kong projects and will adopt appropriate measures to ensure the progress.

45. The Task Force noted the difficulties and pressure (including risks in respect of technical challenges, extreme weather, works safety and works interface, etc.) encountered by the HZMB Main Bridge as well as projects of the three sides. At this stage, to commission the project by end 2017, there are still certain problems that will have to be resolved. Without compromising the quality and safety of works, the HZMB Authority and the three sides are adopting every possible measure to resolve the problems

they encountered so as to proceed with their relevant projects. Based on the further consolidated assessment by the Joint Works Committee comprising the governments of the three sides, **the three sides strive to complete the entire HZMB project by end 2017 for early simultaneous commissioning subject to factors such as the implementation of cross-boundary transport arrangements.**

46. To prepare for the commissioning of the HZMB, the three governments have been actively studying and discussing the relevant cross-boundary transport arrangements. These arrangements include regulation and quota system of cross-boundary vehicles, toll level for cross-boundary vehicles, traffic management, operation and maintenance, rescue and emergency plan, enforcement coordination, customs clearance facilitation, etc. We will have regard to the functions and characteristics of the HZMB to put in place transport arrangements which will complement the local road system and bring HZMB's benefits for the economy and transport into full play.

### **Tuen Mun – Chek Lap Kok Link**

47. The total length of Tuen Mun-Chek Lap Kok Link (“TM-CLKL”) is about 9km. Upon completion, it will provide a strategic link connecting the North West New Territories with the HKBCF of the HZMB, North Lantau and the Hong Kong International Airport. As indicated in the press release of HyD on 31 October last year, according to the original plan, the completion date of the Southern Connection of the TM-CLKL would tie in with that of the HZMB whilst the Northern Connection was targeted for completion in end 2018. However, in view of the various technical difficulties, the construction programme is very tight. It is believed that the TM-CLKL project cannot be completed according to the original plan as indicated above. The HyD has been closely monitoring the progress of works so as to overcome the technical difficulties and to catch up with the progress. The HyD is also conducting a comprehensive review on the commissioning date of TM-CLKL. When the HZMB is commissioned, the traffic between the HKBCF and the Lantau Island can temporarily route

through the existing roads on the airport island. Therefore, even though the Southern Connection of TM-CLKL could not be completed timely, the commissioning of the HZMB will not be affected.

### **Hong Kong section of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link**

48. The Hong Kong section of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link (“XRL”) is a high-speed rail link connecting Hong Kong with Shenzhen and Guangzhou. It will also connect with the national high-speed rail network, thereby greatly shortening travelling time between Hong Kong and major cities in the Mainland, enhancing people-to-people and cultural exchange between Hong Kong and the Mainland. The XRL will help both economies complement each other and consolidate Hong Kong's position as a regional transport hub, bringing enormous economic and social benefits to Hong Kong.

49. Currently, the works of the XRL is over 85% complete. We will continue to coordinate and monitor the construction works of the XRL and take forward various pre-commissioning preparatory works, including the testing, commissioning and trial operation of the XRL from the second quarter of 2017 as planned. Our target is to commission the XRL by the third quarter of 2018.

## ***Chapter 6 - Education, Population and Human Resources***

### **(r) Elderly-Friendly Society**

50. We will continue to take forward the initiatives in last year's Policy Address on building an age-friendly environment. We have consulted the 18 District Councils on the initiative to provide covers for one public walkway in each district base on district needs. As at December 2016, three District Councils selected their own public walkways. The TD and

HyD will continue to offer comments and assist District Councils in selecting suitable walkways. Depending on the time needed for subsequent planning and design procedures, we plan to commence the works in stages from 2018. In addition, the TD has already commenced the consultancy study on examining the application of information technologies to extend the pedestrian green time to facilitate the elderly and people with mobility difficulties in crossing signalised road junctions. The study is expected to be completed in mid-2018 with feasible options for implementation. As for the enhancement of the HKeTransport services to facilitate its use by the elderly, the work has entered the final stage and it is expected to be commissioned in early this year.

**Transport and Housing Bureau**  
**January 2017**

## Annex: Hillside Escalator Links and Elevator Systems Proposals

Rank	Proposal	Progress
1	Pedestrian Link at Tsz Wan Shan	The pedestrian link is implemented under the Shatin to Central Link project. The construction works commenced in July 2012. As at end December 2016, 10 out of the 15 facilities under this pedestrian link have already been opened for public use, while 3 more facilities are expected to be completed gradually and opened for use in early 2017. Regarding the remaining two facilities, the target completion date is the third quarter of 2017.
2	Braemar Hill Pedestrian Link	The preliminary technical feasibility study has been completed. HyD has engaged consultants to undertake the investigation and preliminary design.
3	Lift and Pedestrian Walkway System at Cheung Hang Estate, Tsing Yi	The Government obtained funding approval from LegCo in May 2016. HyD plans to commence construction works in the first quarter of 2017.
4	Escalator Link and Pedestrian Walkway System at Pound Lane	The preliminary technical feasibility study has been completed. HyD consulted the Central and Western District Council (C&WDC) and held a public forum on the refined scheme in 2015. HyD is collating and analyzing views received and plans to report the progress to C&WDC in the first half of 2017.
5	Lift and Pedestrian Walkway System between Kwai Shing Circuit and Hing Shing Road	The Government obtained funding approval from LegCo in May 2016. HyD started the tender invitation in January 2017 and plans to commence construction works in the second quarter of 2017.

<b>Rank</b>	<b>Proposal</b>	<b>Progress</b>
6	Lift and Pedestrian Walkway System between Castle Peak Road and Kung Yip Street	The preliminary technical feasibility study has been completed. HyD has engaged consultants to undertake the investigation and preliminary design.
7	Lift and Pedestrian Walkway System between Lai Cho Road and Wah Yiu Road	The preliminary technical feasibility study has been completed. HyD has engaged consultants to undertake the investigation and preliminary design.
8	Pedestrian Link at Chuk Yuen North Estate	The preliminary technical feasibility study has been completed. HyD has engaged consultants to undertake the investigation and preliminary design.
9	Lift and Pedestrian Walkway System at Waterloo Hill	The Government obtained funding approval from LegCo in May 2016. The construction works commenced in December 2016.
10	Lift and Pedestrian Walkway System between Lai King Hill Road and Lai Cho Road	It is revealed in the preliminary technical feasibility study that the project involves two dangerous private slopes. HyD will revisit the project after the party responsible has completed repairing the dangerous slopes.

<b>Rank</b>	<b>Proposal</b>	<b>Progress</b>
11	Lift and Pedestrian Walkway System between Tai Wo Hau Road and Wo Tong Tsui Street, Kwai Chung	<p>The preliminary technical feasibility study has been completed. HyD has engaged consultants to undertake the investigation and preliminary design, and has consulted the Traffic and Transport Committee of Kwai Tsing District Council on the preliminary design and gained the Committee's support.</p> <p>The project scheme was gazetted under the Roads (Works, Use and Compensation) Ordinance (Chapter 370) on 2 December 2016. If no objection is received during the objection period of scheme gazettal, the Government plans to seek funding approval from LegCo within this legislative session to take forward the construction of the proposal. The advance construction works is expected to commence in the first quarter of 2018 and the main construction works will commence in the second quarter of 2018.</p>
12	Lift and Pedestrian Walkway at Luen On Street	The preliminary technical feasibility study has been completed. HyD engaged consultants to undertake the investigation and preliminary design.
13	Yuet Wah Street Pedestrian Linkage	To complement the Kwun Tong Town Centre Redevelopment, the Civil Engineering and Development Department commenced the construction of this project in April 2013. The Linkage has been completed and opened for public use since October 2015.

<b>Rank</b>	<b>Proposal</b>	<b>Progress</b>
14 (same ranking)	Escalator Link System between Hong Sing Garden and Po Hong Road	This proposal will be followed up after the smooth implementation of the higher-ranking proposals.
	Lift and Pedestrian Walkway System between Lai King Hill Road and Princess Margaret Hospital	The project is being implemented by the Hospital Authority. The construction works commenced in November 2015 and is expected to be completed in 2017.
16	Lift and Pedestrian Walkway System between Saddle Ridge Garden and Sai Sha Road	This proposal will be followed up after the smooth implementation of the higher-ranking proposals.
17	Lift and Pedestrian Walkway System between Hing Shing Road and Tai Wo Hau Road	This proposal will be followed up after the smooth implementation of the higher-ranking proposals.
18	Escalator Link System between Sha Tin Sui Wo Court and MTR Fo Tan Station	This proposal will be followed up after the smooth implementation of the higher-ranking proposals.