

## ***Public Transport Services and Facilities***

### ***Franchised Bus Operation***

The TAC discussed at its meeting of 22 November 2005 the review of the basis for considering bus fare adjustment and applications from Citybus Limited (concerning its franchise on the Hong Kong and cross-harbour routes), New Lantau Company (1973) Limited and Kowloon Motor Bus Company (1933) Limited for the granting of new franchises for 10 years, which would take effect upon the expiry of their current franchises in 2006 and 2007. Members were of the view that the proposed fare adjustment arrangement was an improvement over the past arrangement. In particular, the new proposal would facilitate bus fares to go upward and downward in response to the prevailing economic conditions and improve the objectivity of the fare adjustment process. The TAC also discussed and commented on the three bus companies' applications for new franchises having regard to relevant factors including the bus companies' performance, their source of revenue and their ability to provide proper and efficient service. The TAC supported the applications and its advice was conveyed to the Chief Executive in Council. The TAC's advice and recommendations were set out in a letter from the TAC Chairman to the Secretary for the Environment, Transport and Works at Annex B.



On 19 July 2005, the TAC considered the performance of the franchised bus operators in 2004. Members noted that the performance of the franchised bus operators was generally satisfactory in 2004. Members also considered that the operators had made improvements in a number of areas of franchised bus services.

*TAC visited New  
World First Bus  
and Citybus in  
November 2005*



These areas included continuous upgrading of the bus fleet by providing more environmentally-friendly, air-conditioned and wheelchair accessible buses, and improving the provision of passenger information by installing bus stop announcement systems on buses or information panels at bus stops and termini. The TAC urged the franchised bus operators to continue to further enhance their operational efficiency, quality and competitiveness.

On 14 July 2004, members considered the performance of the franchised bus operators in 2003. Members noted that the performance of the franchised bus operators was generally satisfactory in 2003. The TAC considered that despite being hard hit by the impact of SARS in 2003, the franchised bus operators had made improvements in a number of areas of bus services. In the face of future challenges, the TAC urged the franchised bus operators to take measures to further enhance their efficiency and improve their operation.

On 25 May 2004, members discussed the review conducted by franchised bus operators to enhance safety arrangements of bus operation. Members noted that the Transport Department and the franchised bus operators were considering a series of measures to further enhance bus safety, including the requirement of annual medical checks for drivers aged 50 or above, enhancement of driver training, introduction of guidelines on working schedules of drivers, installation of safety devices and measures to monitor driving behaviour, more stringent vehicle examination and

promotion of drivers' and passengers' safety awareness. The TAC urged the Government and the franchised bus operators to implement these measures as soon as possible to enhance safety.

### *Railway Operation*



On 25 October 2005, members considered KCRC's one-month pass schemes for East Rail and West Rail, and a similar scheme proposed for Ma On Shan Rail. Members generally welcomed the initiatives of KCRC in boosting patronage of the railways.

*TAC Visited KCR Ma On Shan Rail in  
December 2005*

### *Taxi Operation*

Members discussed at the meeting of 7 January 2005 the proposed revision of permitted operating areas of New Territories (NT) taxis. Members noted the Government's proposal to allow NT taxis to access Hong Kong Disneyland, the new air passenger terminal at SkyPlaza at the Airport and Hang Hau MTR Station under specified routes. The TAC welcomed the proposed extension of permitted operating areas of NT taxis.

Members considered at the meeting of 23 March 2004 on the Government's efforts to curb taxi toutting activities. Members were glad to note that the Government had stepped up enforcement action and publicity against taxi toutting activities in the past year and welcomed such actions in combating the offence. At present, drivers are not allowed by the law to induce passengers to use their vehicles by offering discounts. The TAC urged the Government to monitor the situation closely and pursue with the taxi trade measures to tackle illegal taxi toutting activities in future.

### *Non-franchised Bus Operation*

In late 2003, in response to concern in the public transport trade that there had been an oversupply of non-franchised buses and that some operators had been providing unauthorised services, the Administration invited the TAC to conduct a review on the regulatory framework and licensing system for Non-franchised Bus (NFB) operation. The TAC set up the Working Group on Review of Regulation of Non-franchised Bus Operation (“the Working Group”) in December 2003. The Working Group had held a series of meetings. To better understand the problems and exchange views on measures to be recommended, the Working Group had held a number of consultation sessions with representatives of the NFB, public light bus and taxi trades. It had also conducted a site visit to black spots of unauthorised NFB activities and invited opinions and suggestions from various sectors including other transport operators. The Working Group studied the views and suggestions gathered carefully and took them into full account in mapping out the recommendations (details at Annex A) made to the Administration at the end of the Review in July 2004. At the meeting of 7 January 2005, members discussed the Administration's proposed measures to improve the regulation of non-franchised bus operations. These revised measures were drawn up based on the Working Group's recommendations and taking into account the NFB trade's concerns expressed during further consultation conducted after July 2004. The TAC supported the revised proposed measures put forward by the Administration.

### *Public Light Bus Operation*

At the meeting of 23 March 2004, members considered the progress of the trial green minibus (GMB) scheme on Route 3. Having considered the number of eligible applicants and the driver requirement of the trial GMB routes, the TAC supported the Government's plan to pursue one trial GMB route between Yuen Long and Jordan. The TAC also urged the Government to help the eligible applicant drivers to join together to form a company for the operation of the trial GMB route.

