

LCQ13: Public transport services between Kwai Fong and Yau Tong

Following is a question by the Hon Albert Chan Wai-yip and a written reply by the Acting Secretary for Transport and Housing, Mr Yau Shing-mu, in the Legislative Council today (November 23):

Question:

I have recently received complaints from members of the public that they need to take two bus journeys when commuting from Kwai Fong to Yau Tong on weekdays and, including the waiting time for buses, it takes them a total of one-and-a-half to two hours to arrive at their destinations. They have further pointed out that those buses plying the relevant routes break down quite often, rendering the bus schedules highly unreliable. I have learnt that at present a bus trip from Tin Shui Wai to Central only takes 45 minutes, but it takes the residents in some areas in Kwai Fong twice as long to travel to Yau Tong by bus. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(a) whether there are guidelines or criteria in place at present which require the authorities, in planning public transport services (eg bus routes), to enable members of the public in various districts to travel to other districts in Hong Kong within a reasonable time; if so, of the details; if not, whether the authorities will formulate such guidelines or criteria; and

(b) whether the authorities will assess if it is reasonable for the aforesaid residents in Kwai Fong to spend one-and-a-half to two hours on bus trips to travel to Yau Tong, and whether they need to make improvement; if improvement is needed, what action will be taken by the authorities to improve the aforesaid situation; if no such improvement is needed, of the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

(a) To minimise traffic congestion, improve roadside air quality and promote sustainable development of Hong Kong, the Government's current transport strategy is to accord priority to developing railways, which are environment-friendly, reliable

and efficient mass carriers. In planning public transport services, the Administration uses railways as the backbone of Hong Kong's passenger transport system and coordinates various public transport services (including franchised bus services) to meet the needs of passengers and to enhance the efficiency of franchised bus networks at the same time. The Government does not encourage the introduction of long haul point-to-point franchised bus services in the railway catchment areas.

At present, members of the public may choose suitable public transport services to reach their destinations with regard to factors such as the routes, journey time and fares. In determining the frequencies and routes of the relevant public transport services, the Transport Department takes into account all the relevant factors, including passenger demand, existing public transport network, utilisation and effectiveness of the public transport services, and the impact of the relevant services on the busy corridors in the urban areas. The Administration does not consider it necessary to specify the travelling time for using public transport services to and from any districts in Hong Kong.

(b) Regarding the public transport services between Kwai Fong and Yau Tong, members of the public may choose to travel by (1) rail; or (2) franchised buses and then change to other public transport modes for journeys to and from different locations in the two districts. Passengers who prefer to take franchised buses throughout their trips may take Route 38 and then Route 14B, both operated by The Kowloon Motor Bus Company (1933) Limited ("KMB"). Alternatively, they may take KMB Route 40 and then Route 14B. Given the relatively long distance between Kwai Fong and Yau Tong, an all-bus ride usually takes about 80 minutes. Commuters opting for a faster trip may consider using railway services. A single journey between Kwai Fong and Yau Tong via railway takes only about 36 minutes at a fare more or less the same as the total charges for the all-bus ride option.

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