

TAC discusses review on ferry services for outlying islands and TIMS

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The Transport Advisory Committee (TAC) today (May 12) discussed the review on ferry services for outlying islands, the provision of a traffic and incident management system in the Transport Department and the update on four railway projects in Hong Kong.

TAC Chairman Ms Teresa Cheng Yeuk-wah said the TAC generally welcomed the Government's proposals on the review on ferry services for outlying islands as a positive step to address the long-standing problems faced by outlying ferry services.

"We note that the Government has been providing various measures to enable ferry operators to reduce operating costs and to sublet the piers in order to increase non-fare box revenue. In view of the characteristics and the chronic problems of the outlying ferry services, the Government is of the view that the existing measures are not enough to solve the chronic problems and there is a need to step up the measures," said Ms Cheng.

"We generally agree with the Government's principles and concepts adopted in the course of the review and formulation of the proposals. These include: (a) public transport services should be operated by the private sector on commercial principles; (b) the need to ensure the long-term financial viability and maintain fare stability of outlying ferry services as they are the only means of transport for some of these outlying islands; (c) the need to strike a balance between the need to support essential services which otherwise would not be financially viable and the need to let people shoulder the appropriate responsibility for choosing to live on the outlying islands; and (d) the construction of additional floors at Central Piers No. 4 to 6 should follow

the Harbour Planning Principles," she said.

On the provision of a traffic and incident management system in the Transport Department, she said that the TAC supported the development of the Traffic and Incident Management System (TIMS) to facilitate traffic and transport incident management and dissemination of real-time traffic information to the public.

The proposed TIMS is a computerised system with the capacity to perform automatic incident detection, generate suggested contingency traffic and transport plans, provide a common view of traffic information to all stakeholder parties, streamline dissemination of traffic and transport information to the public, and coordinate existing and future traffic management and surveillance systems at a single control centre. It will also establish a common data platform for interested private sector parties to gain access to real-time traffic data to develop their value-added services.

"The system would be an important tool for incident management nowadays. It will make the incident management process more effective and efficient thus bringing benefits to road users in general," Ms Cheng said.

The TAC was updated on the latest progress of four major domestic railway projects: the West Island Line, the South Island Line (East), the Kwun Tong Line Extension, and the proposed Sha Tin to Central Link. The TAC agreed that these railway projects would bring substantial transport and economic benefits to Hong Kong, and would also be essential to Hong Kong's sustainable growth, and strongly supported their early implementation.

"We note the views and concerns of the public raised during the consultation process of each railway project, and learnt that the Government and MTR Corporation Limited have been staying in close touch with the district councils

concerned and the local communities, with a view to addressing their concerns," Ms Cheng said.

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