

TAC briefed on progress of Sha Tin to Central Link and use of electric vehicles on expressways

The Transport Advisory Committee (TAC) was briefed today (May 4) on the latest developments of the Sha Tin to Central Link (SCL) project.

The SCL is a strategic railway between the New Territories, East Kowloon and Hong Kong Island. It will link up a number of existing railways in the territory to form two strategic railway corridors, namely the East West Corridor and the North South Corridor.

TAC Chairman, Mr Rimsky Yuen, said that the project should help redistribute railway passengers to different railway lines, and relieve the current congestion on the East Rail Line, the Kwun Tong Line and the Tsuen Wan Line during peak hours.

"It will also increase accessibility within the existing railway network as well as other planned railways in the pipeline such as the Kwun Tong Line Extension and the South Island Line (East) by facilitating interchanging activities," he said.

TAC members were also briefed on the Administration's study on a measure to facilitate use of electric vehicles (EVs) on expressways. Under current traffic regulations, an electric vehicle propelled purely by an electric motor and with no cylinder engine is not allowed to run on expressways unless it is given an expressway permit. Members noted that to facilitate appropriate EVs to run on expressways, the rated power of an electric motor is proposed to be a criterion and suitable thresholds will be set for screening appropriate EVs to access expressways without requiring expressway permits. The rated power of an electric motor of an EV is analogical to the cylinder capacity of a gasoline/diesel engine.

"We note that the Transport Department (TD) has researched into overseas practices and collected views from vehicle manufacturers and the motor trade, technical bodies and local experts on electric vehicles before coming up with the proposals. The TAC agrees that with a suitable criterion and thresholds for allowing EVs to run on expressways, the use of EVs in the territory would be facilitated," Mr Yuen said. The TD will pursue the necessary legislative amendments with a view to implementing the measure in 2011.

Members were also briefed on the progress of the Pedestrian Environment Improvement Scheme in Yuen Long Town taken forward by the Highways Department (HyD). Proposed measures include improvement works along Castle Peak Road (Yuen Long Section), improvements of local roads, provision of new footbridges, and streetscape improvements.

Relatively straightforward improvement measures will be taken forward as minor works for early completion in the next two to three years, while detailed feasibility studies will be conducted for measures of a larger scale.

"The measures put forward by the Administration will be conducive to improving the pedestrian environment in Yuen Long Town. We believe that the various works proposed will bring about substantial improvements not only to pedestrian circulation, safety and comfort, but also traffic in general in Yuen Long Town," Mr Yuen said.

"Members support HyD's efforts in taking forward the improvement scheme and look forward to the early implementation of the proposed measures," Mr Yuen added.

Ends/Wednesday, May 4, 2011

Issued at HKT 17:56