

TAC discusses new franchises for three bus companies and progress of South Island Line (East)

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The Transport Advisory Committee (TAC) discussed today (July 26) the Government's plan to start negotiation with New World First Bus Services Limited (NWFB), Long Win Bus Company Limited (LW) and Citybus Limited (Citybus) in respect of its franchise for the Airport and North Lantau bus network (Franchise 2) in the fourth quarter of this year for renewing their franchises, which are due to expire in 2013.

TAC Chairman, Mr Rimsky Yuen, said that the TAC was pleased to note that NWFB, LW and Citybus (Franchise 2) had been providing proper and efficient bus services, and demonstrated their willingness to invest for further improvements.

"Members noted that the three franchised bus companies had indicated an interest to renew their franchises for another 10 years. The independent opinion surveys commissioned by the Transport Department (TD) on passengers' feedback showed that over 85 per cent of the respondents were satisfied with the overall quality of services provided by the three franchised bus companies," Mr Yuen said.

"Members exchanged views on the requirements of the new franchises of the three bus companies and noted that further to the consultation with the Transport Panel of the Legislative Council on July 11, the Government is inviting views from the public and the Traffic and Transport Committees of the 18 District Councils on the requirements of the new franchises until September 30," said Mr Yuen.

Members were also briefed on the overall performance of franchised bus operation in 2010 and noted that performance was generally satisfactory.

Members noted that as a result of the concerted efforts of various parties, Hong Kong's traffic fatalities were down to 117 in 2010, which was the lowest level since 1955. Members also noted a significant increase in the number of arrest cases and traffic accidents involving drug driving in 2010.

"Although the absolute number of traffic accidents involving drug driving remains small, the increasing trend and the potential road safety hazards deserve greater attention. We are pleased to know that the Government has introduced

legislative proposals to implement a package of measures to combat drug driving vigorously. We hope that the measures can be implemented as soon as possible," said Mr Yuen.

The TAC was also updated on the progress of the South Island Line (East) (SIL(E)), which will provide convenient and reliable railway service to the residents and working population of South Horizons, Lei Tung and Wong Chuk Hang, as well as visitors to Ocean Park. Construction works for the project commenced in May 2011 for completion in 2015.

At present, travelling by road-based transport between South Horizons and Admiralty normally takes about 25 to 45 minutes during rush hours. With the SIL(E), passengers from Southern District will be able to reach Admiralty in about 10 minutes.

"Members noted that during construction, the MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL) would put in place temporary traffic arrangements, in consultation with relevant government departments, to ensure smooth traffic flow and pedestrian safety," Mr Yuen said.

"Members welcomed that the Government and MTRCL had attached great importance to public consultation and community participation in taking forward the SIL(E)," Mr Yuen said.

Six community liaison groups have been set up by MTRCL for the Admiralty, Ocean Park and Chung Hom Shan, Wong Chuk Hang, Lei Tung, South Horizons and Telegraph Bay sections to maintain close contact with the local community. The latest project information would be provided to residents through various channels such as a project newsletter, a designated website and notice boards to be installed on the hoardings of the SIL(E) construction sites.

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