

# TAC briefed on follow-up actions in relation to Report of the Independent Review Committee on Franchised Bus Service and free-flow tolling system for tunnels

The following is issued on behalf of the Transport Advisory Committee:

The Transport Advisory Committee (TAC) was briefed by the Government today (January 30) on the follow-up actions in relation to the recommendations put forward in the Report of the Independent Review Committee on Hong Kong's Franchised Bus Service (IRC), as well as the plan to implement a free-flow tolling system (FFTS) at Tseung Kwan O – Lam Tin Tunnel (TKO-LTT) and other government tolled tunnels and roads.

The TAC Chairman, Professor Stephen Cheung, said, "The IRC put forward a total of 45 recommendations under 16 areas. TAC Members noted that the Government will, in collaboration with the franchised bus operators and other relevant stakeholders, proactively pursue the recommendations with a view to enhancing the operation safety of franchised buses. Members welcomed the measures to further enhance the safety of franchised buses with a view to sustaining the safe and reliable franchised bus service in Hong Kong."

Following the fatal traffic incident involving a franchised bus on Tai Po Road in February last year, the Chief Executive set up the IRC to comprehensively review the operation and monitoring of franchised buses. The IRC commenced its work in late March last year and submitted a report to the Chief Executive on December 31 in the same year.

The Transport Department (TD) will, in conjunction with the franchised bus operators and relevant experts, proactively implement a series of measures to strengthen the safe operation of franchised bus services. The Working Group on the Enhancement of Safety of Franchised Bus, set up by the TD in March last year, has been turned into a permanent set-up so as to provide a common forum for the Government, franchised bus operators and relevant experts to continue to discuss, study, implement and promote various measures to enhance bus safety.

The TAC also noted at the meeting that, as one of the major smart mobility initiatives under the Smart City Blueprint for Hong Kong, the Government will develop an application of in-vehicle units (IVUs) to allow motorists to pay tunnel tolls without stopping at toll booths.

"Members welcomed the Government's plan to implement FFTSs at other government tolled tunnels and roads by phases, after implementing the system

at TKO-LTT upon its target commissioning in late 2021. A FFTS allows vehicle to pay tolls more efficiently by avoiding the need for them to stop at toll booths for manual toll payments, thereby making traffic flow smoother. Toll booths at toll plaza could also be removed, potentially freeing up space for improving existing bus stops. Members also believe that IVUs will lay an important foundation for pursuing smart mobility in Hong Kong. Apart from using them in FFTS, IVUs could facilitate the collection of real-time traffic data for traffic management and big data analysis, and serve other functions such as payment of parking fees by remote means," Professor Cheung said.

The proposed FFTS will read IVUs affixed to vehicles by radio frequency identification supplemented by automatic number plate recognition. To enable toll payment by FFTS at TKO-LTT upon its commissioning, the TD plans to commence issuing IVUs to registered vehicle owners in the third quarter of 2020, including issuing the first IVU for each registered vehicle free-of-charge.