

LCQ22: Ancillary transport facilities for Hong Kong Science Park

Following is a question by Professor the Hon William Wong and a written reply by the Secretary for Transport and Logistics, Ms Mable Chan, in the Legislative Council today (June 18):

Question:

According to the information of the Hong Kong Science and Technology Parks Corporation (HKSTPC), the working population in the Hong Kong Science Park (HKSP) has increased substantially from 13 500 to 24 000 over the past three years. Regarding the ancillary transport facilities for HKSP, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether comprehensive assessment and adjustment relating to the ancillary transport facilities in HKSP have been made by the authorities in the past three years in response to the growth of the working population in HKSP; if so, of the details; if not, whether such assessment and adjustment will be made;

(2) given that, according to the paper submitted by the Innovation, Technology and Industry Bureau and the Innovation and Technology Commission to the Panel on Commerce, Industry, Innovation and Technology of this Council on July 16 last year, the works of Batch 1 of Stage 2 of the Science Park Expansion Programme is expected to be completed in the first quarter of this year, whether the works have been completed, and of the details of the relevant additional transport planning support facilities;

(3) whether it has compiled statistics on whether the on-time performance of the public bus and minibus routes in HKSP is up to standard; if it has compiled the statistics and the outcome is in the negative, of the measures to improve the on-time performance of the relevant services;

(4) whether it knows if HKSTPC has regularly collected feedback from the people working in and business operators in HKSP on the ancillary transport facilities in HKSP; if HKSTPC has, of the details; if not, whether HKSTPC will make the relevant arrangements;

(5) as quite a number of people working in HKSP have relayed that they have wasted considerable time waiting for buses since the waiting time for a number of public bus routes in HKSP during non-peak hours is 15 to 30 minutes, whether the authorities will discuss with the franchised bus companies to increase bus service frequencies during non-peak hours;

(6) whether it knows if HKSTPC has considered increasing the shuttle bus service frequencies for staff members working in HKSP; and

(7) as it has been reported that the Transport Department is taking forward

the project on automated light buses travelling between HKSP and the MTR University Station, whether the authorities have confirmed the specific implementation timetable for the project; of the routes of the automated light buses, and whether such routes will run through the various buildings and major facilities in HKSP, so as to facilitate mobility of the people working in and visitors to HKSP?

Reply:

President,

The Transport Department (TD) has been working closely with the Hong Kong Science and Technology Parks Corporation (HKSTPC) to closely monitor the transport demand of the Hong Kong Science Park (HKSP) with a view to planning suitable transportation facilities and services to facilitate the commuting of HKSP staff for work. Having consulted the TD, the Innovation and Technology Commission and HKSTPC, our reply to Professor the Hon William Wong's questions is as follows:

(1) To cater for the transportation needs of HKSP staff to commute to and from work, 20 franchised bus routes terminating or passing through HKSP are currently in service during the morning and evening peak hours on working days. Their service areas cover a wide range of districts across the Hong Kong Island, Kowloon and the New Territories, including Sha Tin, North District, Tai Po, Tuen Mun, Yuen Long, Tsuen Wan, Kwai Tsing, Tseung Kwan O, Kwun Tong, Yau Tsim Mong, Wan Chai, Eastern District and Islands District (including the Airport). In addition, there are six franchised bus routes and five green minibus (GMB) routes providing whole-day feeder services during non-peak hours, which connect HKSP to the MTR University Station, MTR Shatin Station, Sha Tin and Ma On Shan.

The TD has all along been actively maintaining close liaison with the relevant public transport operators (PTOs) to timely adjust the services to and from HKSP in light of changes in passenger demand, so as to meet the travelling needs of passengers. In the past few years, having regard to the development of HKSP and its vicinity as well as changes in passenger demand, the TD has enhanced the transport services to and from HKSP upon discussion and co-ordination with PTOs. These include introducing new franchised bus routes, arranging for special departures and increasing services during peak hours. Details are set out at the Annex.

(2) Batch 1 of Stage 2 of the HKSP Expansion Programme involves the construction of a building primarily for wet laboratories (i.e. Building 18W), the construction of public transport facilities on the Science Park East Avenue, and improvement works at the junction of Science Park Road and Chong San Road. Relevant improvement works at the junction of Science Park Road and Chong San Road were completed and commissioned in December last year; the construction of Building 18W was completed in March 2025 and is expected to be commissioned in July 2025; while the public transport facilities are expected to be commissioned upon completion in July 2025.

The TD has discussed with franchised bus operators (FBOs) regarding the

development of HKSP and will flexibly enhance the services in light of the patronage in due course (such as strengthening the service of KMB Route No. 272K).

(3) According to TD's observation, the highest occupancy rate of the current franchised bus routes serving HKSP during the busiest hours ranges from about 10 per cent to 70 per cent, illustrating that the service can meet the passenger demand. Overall speaking, FBOs have generally been able to provide services in accordance with the scheduled timetable except for circumstances beyond their control (such as delays and lost trips resulting from inclement weather, unexpected traffic congestion or other incidents).

GMB operators serving HKSP are able to deploy resources flexibly to enhance the services in response to passenger demand. In fact, the actual services of the routes concerned during peak hours are more frequent than scheduled to flexibly meet passenger demand during these periods.

(4) HKSTPC conducts transportation surveys with tenants and merchants from time to time. The latest survey was conducted in the third quarter of last year with more than 1 000 questionnaires collected. Major views included requests for lowering fares and increasing frequencies. HKSTPC will take into account relevant survey results in reviewing the operational arrangements for the employees' bus service of HKSP.

(5) As mentioned above, there are six franchised bus routes providing services to and from HKSP during non-peak hours. In fact, the TD reviews the overall demand for transportation services in HKSP from time to time. For instance, to improve the transportation services during non-peak hours, the TD rationalised the resources of two franchised bus routes (i.e. Route Nos. 272A and 272K) in January this year with a view to enhancing the off-peak services connecting HKSP to the MTR University Station. The TD will continue to monitor the operation of public transport services in HKSP and timely discuss with PTOs on service enhancement proposals having regard to the passenger demand.

(6) Given that the current patronage of the employees' bus service of HKSP is still far below its maximum carrying capacity, HKSTPC has no plans to increase the frequency of the shuttle bus service at present. Nonetheless, HKSTPC will closely monitor the operation and patronage of the shuttle bus service, and optimise the bus routes and frequencies based on actual needs and operating conditions.

(7) Since 2017, autonomous vehicle (AV) projects operating under Movement Permits issued by the TD have been conducting trials within HKSP. These trials aim to assess the technical feasibility of AV applications in Hong Kong while gathering valuable data and experience. In 2024, the Government introduced a new regulatory regime for AVs, enabling the TD to provide flexibility for AV trials while ensuring road safety, so as to foster the trials and application of more advanced AV technologies in Hong Kong. To date, the TD has issued two pilot licences for AV trials in North Lantau and the West Kowloon Cultural District, proactively driving advancements in the application of this technology and assisting the trade in taking forward the

projects, including autonomous light buses running between HKSP in Sha Tin and the MTR University Station. Funded by the Smart Traffic Fund, this project is currently under development. Upon completion of the autonomous driving system development, demonstrating safe operation through the subsequent assessment by the TD, the research institution expects to conduct road trials at the public roads of HKSP after acquiring a pilot licence by the first quarter of 2026. The proposed route is already under planning and is expected to cover the MTR University Station and the major buildings/facilities within HKSP, including the Harbour View Square on Science Park East Avenue and the Enterprise Place on Science Park West Avenue. Upon successful completion of the trial projects, we anticipate that the AV technology can be progressively refined and implemented to offer enhanced transportation alternatives for both HKSP and neighbouring communities.