

Under Secretary for Transport and Housing talks about rationalisation of traffic distribution among the three harbour crossings

Customer A : Restaurant owner, bus passenger

Customer B : Professional driver

Customer C : Female private car owner

USTH : Raymond So Wai-man

A : What a nuisance! These days, two of the three tunnels we have are so heavily congested just like heart diseases so serious that it is useless to perform angioplasty

B : As a professional driver I'd of course choose a tunnel with lower tolls to cross the harbour But some rich enough to drive are not willing to use Western Harbour Crossing, and choose to queue with us

C : Don't blame me I rarely drive across the harbour

But the tunnel traffic queues extend so far to connecting roads
that I am also stuck in the traffic even if I am not crossing the harbour.

A : I take buses and the journeys have become so long because of
congestion
that I often feel the urge to answer the call of nature!

USTH : Well, we don't have to be so frustrated
Have you heard of the traffic redistribution proposal for the three road
harbour crossings?

C : Yes, but who would choose a tunnel with higher tolls?

USTH : The proposal is to adjust the tolls of private cars, taxis and motorcycles
at the three road harbour crossings
to encourage more motorists to use Western Harbour Crossing instead.
Therefore, the tolls at Western Harbour Crossing will be reduced
whereas the tolls at Cross Harbour Tunnel and Eastern Harbour Crossing
will be increased.

The total queues at Cross Harbour Tunnel and Eastern Harbour Crossing during peak hours are expected to be shortened by 10% to more than 40% and the time required to cross the harbour can be reduced by as much as 13 minutes!

B : Pal, reducing the tolls at Western Harbour Crossing can already attract motorists to use it.

Why is there a need to increase the tolls at the other two tunnels?

USTH : If only the tolls at Western Harbour Crossing are reduced and the tolls at the other two tunnels are not increased then this could induce more cross-harbour traffic and bring opposite results!

USTH : Actually, the proposal not only improves cross-harbour traffic congestion, the shortened queues at Cross Harbour Tunnel and Eastern Harbour Crossing

will also reduce traffic congestion in adjoining areas.

Vehicles not crossing the harbour will not be blocked by queues for crossing the harbour.

Traffic will be smoother for those who drive, or take buses or minibuses.

B : In that case, when I drive from West Kowloon to Yaumatei in future, I will not be blocked near the fruit market by the queue on Gascoigne Road Flyover for crossing the harbour.

This should save me a lot of time

and I can do a few more runs !

USTH : Moreover, this proposal will fix the tolls of private cars, taxis and motorcycles at Western Harbour Crossing so that for over 3 years from 2020 onwards these vehicles will not face any toll increases at Western Harbour Crossing

A : But I heard that tolls for private cars to use Cross Harbour Tunnel and Eastern Harbour Crossing will be increased substantially.

Couldn't the increases be reduced?

USTH : The proposed toll adjustments are based on scientific analysis.

If the toll increases at Cross Harbour Tunnel and Eastern Harbour

Crossing are reduced,

then fewer cars will switch to use Western Harbour Crossing

and the queues at Eastern Harbour Crossing will lengthen.

With stronger overall demand for road space,

even non-harbour-crossing traffic will be congested

B: Private cars, taxis and motorcycles have to pay higher tolls for using

Cross Harbour Tunnel and Eastern Harbour Crossing.

But if this alleviates traffic congestion,

We can save commuting time

and can get home earlier after work!

Buddy, your bus journeys that cross these two tunnels will be faster too!

So this proposal can really benefit everyone!

USTH : Indeed! If the traffic using these three tunnels can be redistributed to

relieve traffic congestion

then bus passengers can get home more quickly

and vehicle emissions will be reduced,

improving the air quality.

Each year, we can expect to save a total of HK\$800 million in terms of

commuting time and fuel costs

The reduced emissions from vehicles every year

will be equivalent to planting some 160,000 trees!

USTH : Sorry,

Got to go. Goodbye!

C : You seem to know a lot

What is your profession?

USTH : I used to be a teacher.

A : He looks familiar.

B: Must be a regular customer.

A: No. I know my regular customers.

C: I have seen him on TV before.