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Should Hong Kong trams be preserved?

Aside from being known for a shopping paradise, Hong Kong is also famous for its effective transportation system. As the transportation network in Hong Kong becomes more and more efficient, some people think that trams have finished their mission and should retire honorably. However, I believe trams are irreplaceable and should always hold a special place in our city's transport system. The reasons are threefold.

Environmentally, trams reduce pollution and they meet the principles of sustainable development of modern society. Environmental issues have been under the spotlight in recent decades. Electric trams can help alleviate the serious roadside air pollution on Hong Kong Island. According to a research conducted by the tram company, for the same journey, carbon emissions of trams are 15 times lower than that of other vehicles. This shows that the tram that runs on electricity is the most eco-friendly transportation on Hong Kong Island and can even be part of the solution to the city's degrading air quality.

Socially, the tram is a cheap and convenient transportation for many local citizens, especially the grassroot. The Transport Department carried out a survey in 2011, showing that 2% of respondents used trams as a transportation means on a daily basis. This reflects that a certain number of citizens regard trams as a main transportation

means. Although its passenger capacity is not as large as the MTR and it may not be as comfortable as buses, the fares are relatively low, which make trams a popular transportation for the grassroots and the elderly. It is only \$2.6 for adults, \$1.3 for children and \$1.2 for the elderly. Also, there are substations every 250 m on average, which makes trams very convenient for many short-distance passengers and elderly compared to the many stairs passengers have to walk up and down to get to an MTR train.

Historically, the tram is a collective memory of many Hong Kong people, which helps enhance social cohesion. Hong Kong Tramways was officially in service in 1904 and has a history of over 100 years. Trams have witnessed the development of Hong Kong from a small fishing village to an international city. Its historical value is beyond doubt. Trams indeed serve as the connection between the past and the present. They are the bridge between the young and the elderly. Trams also allow the young generations to understand, experience and inherit the spirit of the previous generations. The older generation can remember the good old days on a tram ride whereas the young ones can deepen their knowledge and have first-hand experience of Hong Kong history.

Based on the premise of environmental protection, convenience and historical value, it is unwise to remove trams. In terms of speed and

passenger capacity, trams may not be as good as the MTR, but it offers a convenient, economical and greener alternative to local citizens. Therefore, I firmly believe that trams should not be removed on Hong Kong Island.