

立法會

Legislative Council

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by the Administration and
cleared with the Chairman)

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Legislative Council Panel on Transport

Minutes of Special Meeting held on Friday, 21 September 2001, at 9:00 am in Conference Room A of the Legislative Council Building

- Members present** : Hon Mrs Miriam LAU Kin-ye, JP (Chairman)
Hon David CHU Yu-lin, JP
Hon Albert HO Chun-yan
Ir Dr Hon Raymond HO Chung-tai, JP
Hon CHAN Kwok-keung
Hon TAM Yiu-chung, GBS, JP
Dr Hon TANG Siu-tong, JP
Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, JP
Hon WONG Sing-chi
- Non-Panel members attending** : Hon Cyd HO Sau-lan
Hon CHOY So-yuk
Hon IP Kwok-him, JP
Hon Audrey EU Yuet-mee, SC, JP
- Members absent** : Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, JP (Deputy Chairman)
Hon Mrs Selina CHOW LIANG Shuk-ye, JP
Hon Andrew WONG Wang-fat, JP
Hon LAU Chin-shek, JP
Hon LAU Kong-wah
Hon Andrew CHENG Kar-foo
Hon Albert CHAN Wai-yip
Hon LAU Ping-cheung

**Public officers
attending**

: Transport Bureau

Mr Paul TANG
Deputy Secretary for Transport

Ms Shirley LAM
Principal Assistant Secretary for Transport

Transport Department

Mr Tony SO
Chief Engineer, Strategic Roads Division, Planning Branch

Mr K B TO
Chief Engineer, Transport Planning Division

Highways Department

Mr E J ROBLIN
Deputy Project Manager,
Major Works Project Management Office

Mr Arun SHAH
Chief Engineer, Major Works Project Management Office

**Attendance by
invitation**

: Hong Kong Institute of Planners

Mr Ian BROWNLEE
Council Member

Mr Roger TANG
Council Member

The Hong Kong Institution of Engineers

Ir Patrick W M NG
Chairman - Public Relations Committee

Ir Dr C K LAU
Immediate Past Chairman of Geotechnical Division

Save Our Shorelines Society

Ms Christine LOH
Chair

Mr Elbert LEE
Member

Clear The Air

Ms Reena KHUBCHANDANI
Chair

The Duchess of Kent Children's Hospital

Mrs Mei-ling FOK
Member, Hospital Governing Committee

Society for Protection of the Harbour Limited

Mr Winston Ka-sun CHU
Chairman

The Conservancy Association

Dr Gordon T L NG
Chief Executive

Individual

Mr John MANSFIELD

Southern District Council

Mr WONG King-cheung
Vice Chairman, Southern District Council

Mr CHU Chun-yin
Chairman, Traffic and Transport Committee,
Southern District Council

Central & Western District Council

Mr CHAN Choi-hi
District Councillor, Central & Western District Council

Wanchai District Council

Mr NG Kam-chun
Chairman of the Traffic and Transport Committee,
Wanchai District Council

The In-Corporation Owners of Grandviews Garden

Mr AU Lap-shing
Chairman

Wong Chuk Hang Women Association

Ms MAR Yuet-har
Chairman

Wong Chuk Hang Estate Block 10 M.A.C.

Mr YUEN Leung-kwong
Chairman

Wong Chuk Hang Estate Block 4 M.A.C.

Mr WONG Wai-chung
Chairman

South Horizons Estate Owners' Committee

Mr Gofrey K H LAW
Chairman

Mr LEE Long-ping
Member

Shek Pai Wan (Tin Wan) Kaifong Welfare Association

Mr MIU Wah-chang
Chairman

Aberdeen Inhabitants Union Association L.T.D.

Mr MAN Hon-ming
Chairman

Kellett Bay Women's Association

Ms CHAN Fung-sim
Chairman

The Hong Kong Southern District Alliance

Mr CHAN Fu-chung
Deputy Chairman

Ms CHIU Ching-kit
Member

The Hong Kong Southern District Community Association Ltd

Mr CHAN Sze-chung
Secretary

Clerk in attendance : Mr Andy LAU
Chief Assistant Secretary (1)2

Staff in attendance : Ms Alice AU
Senior Assistant Secretary (1)5

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I To receive public views on Route 7
*(LC Paper No. CB(1)1987/00-01(01) - Background brief prepared by the
Legislative Council Secretariat)*

The Chairman advised that the subject on Route 7 was last discussed at the meeting held on 13 July 2001 during which members agreed that a special meeting should be held to receive public views on Route 7. As at 20 September 2001, the Panel had received written submissions from 33 organizations/individuals. One individual and 22 organizations had requested to appear before the Panel to give oral views on Route 7. She said that due to the number of organizations/individual involved, the meeting would be divided into two sessions, each lasting for one and a half hour. She then invited representatives attending the first session to give views on Route 7.

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First session

Hong Kong Institute of Planners (HKIP)
(LC Paper No. CB(1)1897/00-01(10))

2. Mr Ian BROWNLEE of HKIP pointed out that Route 7 was originally intended to provide long-term accessibility to the Pok Fu Lam and Aberdeen areas. However, with the Administration's revised proposal for Route 7, the planned intention had been changed without due explanation. As a result, the revised proposal was even more unsatisfactory than the original. Apart from failing to provide long-term accessibility to the Southern District, the project, which included a token tunnel of no real benefit, would still devastate the environment and the coastline.

3. Mr BROWNLEE further pointed out that according to the Third Comprehensive Transport Studies (CTS-3), the environmental conditions from transportation, in terms of air and noise pollution, would be unacceptable by 2016. Taken together with the Administration's assessment that all the relevant road sections would be at capacity by 2016, it was clear that the revised proposal was a short-term measure. Hence, the road link would become congested as well as polluted in 2016. It would also appear to be poor use of public funds as the road link would only provide access to Cyberport without any long-term benefits to residents and commuters in the areas.

4. Mr BROWNLEE stressed that while HKIP welcomed the Administration's decision to review Route 7, the review should be carried out in accordance with the Government's professed policies and objectives as follows:

- (a) According to "HK Moving Ahead: A transport strategy for the future", land use, transport and environmental planning would be closely integrated. With the on-going land use planning and development study for the Southern District, as well as tourism studies for Aberdeen, the planning for Route 7 should not be considered simply from the perspective of road construction. Instead, it was a component of the complex urban environment and any professionally sound decision should be made in such a context.
- (b) As repeatedly stated in the Government's major transport policies including CTS-3 and the Railway Development Strategy-2000 (RDS-2000), priority would be accorded to railways. RDS-2000 stated that new passenger lines were required to serve existing urban areas not presently linked to the rail system, such as the Aberdeen-Wong Chuk Hang-Ap Lei Chau area. A stand alone rail link was identified and it was proposed that its implementation should be investigated for implementation if planning parameters changed significantly. In considering this option, different ways of implementing the rail link should be identified. Some of the savings from the curtailed Route 7 project should be used to fund the rail

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link. It was time that roads and rail should be looked at as integrated parts of a full network.

- (c) Under the Sustainable Development Study, an integrated system for assessing options for development and transport infrastructure by the Government was proposed. When assessing options for long-term transport links to the Southern District, a full sustainable development assessment should have been undertaken so that all relevant criteria could be taken into account. However, there was no indication that this approach had been adopted.

In conclusion, Mr BROWNLEE said that HKIP did not consider that a sustainable transport system was planned for and implemented through the revised Route 7 proposal. A re-assessment was thus urgently required, in conjunction with a genuine attempt to see how a railway could be implemented.

The Hong Kong Institution of Engineers (HKIE)

5. Ir Patrick NG, Chairman of the Public Relations Committee of HKIE, said that HKIE also preferred the construction of a rail link in the Southern District to meet the transport needs of the area. As the forecast population of the Southern District was about 310 000, HKIE considered that the railway option would be financially viable. Depending on further developments, planning for a supplementary road link could be undertaken at a later stage.

Society for Protection of the Harbour Limited (SPHL)

6. Mr Winston CHU, Chairman of SPHL, referred to SPHL's submission tabled at the meeting and introduced the findings of a study undertaken by the Society regarding the implementation of an alternative railway system in the Southern District. He explained that under the proposal, a medium capacity rail which was well-suited to the terrain of the southern part of Hong Kong Island had been identified. With an interchange with the present Island Line of the Mass Transit Railway (MTR) at Belcher Gardens, this railway would connect Sheung Wan with Ocean Park via Queen Mary Hospital, Cyberport, Wah Fu, Ap Lei Chau, Aberdeen and Wong Chuk Hang. Further extensions to Happy Valley and Wanchai could be considered at a later stage. Apart from providing relief to road traffic, Mr CHU said that the proposed rail would serve the main population centres in the area and have the added advantages of enabling the commuters in the Southern District direct access to the extensive MTR system, as well as serving the proposed tourism developments in Aberdeen.

(Post-meeting note: SPHL's submission was subsequently circulated to members vide LC Paper No. CB(1)2076/00-01(01).)

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7. Mr CHU further said that while the Society was not against improvements of road traffic, the proposed Route 7 would destroy the environment of the beautiful south-west coastal regions of Hong Kong Island. In addition, the proposed Green Island Reclamation which was the starting point of Route 7 would partially block the Sulphur Channel and create safety risks for vessels coming from Macau. Hence, SPHL strongly opposed to the present alignment of Route 7. The Society considered that there was an urgent need to pursue the proposed railway system to address the traffic needs of the local residents. As a responsible government, the Administration should conduct a proper comparative evaluation of Route 7 and the proposed medium rail so that the best way forward could be identified with public support. Citing the experience of the Spur Line project, he said that much time and money would be saved if proper planning could be made in the first place.

Save Our Shorelines Society (SOSS)
(LC Paper No. CB(1)1897/00-01(08))

8. Concurring with the views expressed by the previous deputations, Ms Christine LOH, Chair of SOSS, said that instead of commissioning a new Engineering Review and Preliminary Design consultancy study for the proposed road link, the Administration should use the \$26 million left under the previous study for a comparative evaluation of the road and rail options. The objective was to plan for the provision of transport infrastructure that could truly meet the long-term development needs of the Southern District, taking into account the population growth and planned developments in the area. Expressing serious doubts about the cost-effectiveness of the proposed road link, Ms LOH considered that the Administration should make a decision that could improve the accessibility of the western and southern parts of Hong Kong Island and benefit the most people.

9. Ms LOH further said that had it not for the lack of a commitment on the Government's part to build a railway in the Southern District, the dire transport needs of the local residents might have been addressed much earlier. Hence, she remarked that the solution which the residents hoped for would not come in the form of Route 7 as it clearly failed to accommodate the long-term changes in the area.

10. Mr Elbert LEE supplemented that as a resident in the Southern District, he was well aware of the local residents' demand for better external transport link. However, it was clear that the proposed road link or even the full-length Route 7 would not benefit the majority of residents living in the area. Instead, many environmental problems and associated health implications, as well as landscape destruction would be created. He thus urged the Administration to carefully review the issues involved and consider providing the Southern District with better and more environmentally-friendly transport infrastructure.

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Clear The Air (CTA)
(LC Paper No. CB(1)1897/00-01(09))

11. Ms Reena KHUBCHANDANI, Chair of CTA, stated that CTA was opposed to Route 7 as building new highways would inevitably attract more road users and produce more noise and air pollution. She was particularly concerned that the Government's proposal to build a dual-two lane or dual-three lane carriageway along the western coastline of Hong Kong Island had departed from its professed transport policy to reduce the demand for road-based transport.

12. Considering that the Government should seriously address the impacts of long-term transport planning and its effects on air quality, Ms KHUBCHANDANI cautioned that there was no room for complacency as vehicle emission would increase due to the growth of vehicle fleet. As Route 7 would pass through areas with a high concentration of hospitals, schools and elderly homes, many of the vulnerable members of the society would effectively be exposed to further negative effects of air pollution. Instead of waiting for the decline of air quality, the Administration should look at other sustainable ways to increase accessibility for Hong Kong residents. Although a railway serving the main population of Ap Lei Chau, Aberdeen and Wah Fu might initially have a higher capital cost, the benefits of a more efficient transport system and avoided health costs would probably be more advantageous in the long-term and result in much less environmental impact.

13. Ms KHUBCHANDANI also pointed out that it made no sense for the Government to spend millions of dollars on technical measures to clean up air pollution while encouraging more vehicles on the roads by provision of new highways. In order to address wide public concern on air quality, CTA urged the Government to look into the long-term implication of Route 7 and consider all alternatives when there was still time.

The Duchess of Kent Children's Hospital (DKCH)
(LC Paper No. CB(1)1897/00-01(04))

14. Mrs Mei-ling FOK, Member, Hospital Governing Committee of DKCH, stated that she was also speaking on behalf of Prof. Keith LUK, Hospital Executive of DKCH and Chair Professor of the Orthopaedic Surgery of the University of Hong Kong, who had made a written submission to the Panel on Route 7 (LC Paper No. CB(1)1897/00-01(04)). She said that DKCH did not support the current plan for Route 7 and the rail option was preferred. The Hospital Governing Committee of DKCH was strongly of the view that the Government should conduct a thorough comparative study on Route 7 and the rail option before committing further funds for the project.

15. Mrs FOK also pointed out that in Sandy Bay area where DKCH was located, there were also many schools, hospitals, higher education institutions, rehabilitation centres, elderly homes and sports facilities. Given the known health risks involved, the

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inevitable increased exposure of children, the youth and frail elderly people to air pollution was totally unacceptable. In particular, she drew members' attention to the fact that there was an increasing need for DKCH to provide specialized medical services in pulmonary rehabilitation. The children who required such services had a much lower tolerance to air pollutants. She was gravely concerned that it would be very difficult for such already medically fragile children to tolerate the massive construction and eventual traffic emission associated with the Route 7 project.

The Conservancy Association (CA)
(LC Paper No. CB(1)1965/00-01(12))

16. Dr Gordon T L NG, Chief Executive of CA, considered that inadequate justifications were given by the Administration for its decision to replace the original Route 7 plan with a new road link between Kennedy Town and Pok Fu Lam. While it appeared that the proposed road link would solely serve the new development in Pok Fu Lam which was likely to be the Cyberport development, CA was of the strong opinion that the derived transport demand, both passenger and freight, would not justify the proposed dual-two lane link road. Such demands could be met by other alternatives which required smaller-scale transport infrastructure, such as ferries and barges.

17. Dr NG added that the construction of large infrastructure such as road and rail would certainly generate destruction on land and the landscape. Citing possible adverse impacts caused by the construction and operation of the proposed road link to the affected areas, he said that CA did not support the Administration's present proposal.

Mr John MANSFIELD
(LC Paper No. CB(1)1965/00-01(13))

18. Mr John MANSFIELD said that as a permanent resident of Hong Kong, he would like Hong Kong to remain as a vibrant and livable city. He considered that the objectives of a major transport infrastructure should be to facilitate commuters and industrial traffic, to alleviate congestion and to reduce pollution to the environment. However, none of these objectives would be achieved by the Administration's present proposal. By building the proposed road link, the Government was encouraging the use of private cars and taxis, and as a result, more congestion and pollution would be created. Hence, he was opposed to the proposed road link which did nothing to the commuters and industrial traffic, increased pollution and destroy the shoreline. He thus urged the Administration to conduct a thorough study on all alternatives including the rail option.

Discussion between members and deputations

19. Ms Audrey EU sought elaboration from SPHL about the feasibility, viability and estimated completion time of its medium rail proposal. Mr Winston CHU replied that there was proven application of such urban transit systems worldwide. With advanced

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rail transport system technology, a medium capacity rail could be constructed to overcome the difficult terrain and to serve the moderate demand in the Southern District. As a medium rail would have smaller stations, both land requirement and construction costs would be lowered. Due to the relatively smaller scale of the proposed system, he was confident that the implementation schedule would be comparable with building the dual-three lane Route 7. In response to enquiry from Ir Dr Raymond HO, Mr CHU explained that the proposed rail system would enhance the existing MTR system as interchange between the two systems would be provided at Belcher Gardens.

(Post-meeting note: A set of materials on "Urban Transit System" provided by SPHL was tabled at the meeting and subsequently circulated to members vide LC Paper No. CB(1)2076/00-01(02).)

20. Taking into account the time difference for developing the two systems, Ir Dr HO sought HKIP's views on how the choice between road and rail should be assessed against the need to address the long-term and short-term transport requirements of the Southern District. Mr BROWNLEE replied that before any decision was made, there should be a proper urban assessment of the future developments in the concerned areas. The Government should recognize that as the original Route 7 was put on the drawing board a long time ago, the whole project should be reviewed taking into account the changing values and requirements of the society. If it was decided that a railway should be built to accommodate most of the users, it would also be necessary to consider other improvements to the road system to accommodate the short-term transport needs as well as other vehicle requirement.

21. Mr IP Kwok-him opined that as roads could facilitate the movement of freight and provide better connections to other road networks, road infrastructure would still be needed even if a railway was built. Concurring with this view, Ir Patrick NG said that while railway should be given the priority, roads would still have a supplementary role to perform. When considering the choice between road and rail, an integrated approach should be adopted so that the timing for provision of transport infrastructure could be assessed realistically against changing planning parameters. As for the Southern District, HKIE took the view that without a railway system, the area's long-term development would be hampered.

22. Ir NG further said that notwithstanding the Government's stated transport policy, railway projects were often delayed or dropped due to considerations such as financial viability and population size. As a result, roads would have to be built to meet the transport demand. In order to change this unsatisfactory situation, the Government might need to review the existing arrangement for entrusting the construction and operation of railways to railway corporations. Expressing similar views, Ms Christine LOH suggested that the Transport Panel should take up this important policy issue with the Government. Mr Ian BROWNLEE also said that instead of using the traditional approach of assessing the financial viability of the railway proposal, the Government

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should consider the principle of sustainable development, the environmental benefits and other long-term benefits. If there was a public benefit, the Government should consider funding the construction of the railway.

23. In response to questions from Mr IP Kwok-him and Mr David CHU about the technical feasibility of building Route 7 in tunnel form and a railway in the Southern District, Ir NG advised that from an engineering point of view, he believed that no major difficulties would be presented with either proposal given Hong Kong's extensive experience in highway and railway projects. However, more detailed study would be required to ascertain the best alignment taking into account various factors such as land requirement and environmental impacts.

24. Referring to the discrepancies between the forecast population of the Southern District as provided by the Transport Bureau in its paper and that published by the Census and Statistics Department in August, Miss Cyd HO considered that the lack of relevant information from the Government had made it very difficult for members and the public to assess the Administration's proposal and other alternatives for Route 7. She was particularly concerned that the Administration had not disclosed the findings of previous studies and reviews on Route 7. Miss HO opined that the Government should have the responsibility of providing accurate relevant information to the public. Sharing this view, Ms Christine LOH remarked that as these studies were undertaken with public funds, such information should be made readily available to the public through the Internet so that all interested parties could take part in the future development of Hong Kong. Mr BROWNLEE also referred to the lack of supporting information and justifications from the Government about its revised proposal on Route 7.

25. The Chairman thanked the deputations to the meeting.

Second session

Southern District Council (SDC)
(LC Paper No. CB(1)1987/00-01(02))

26. Mr WONG King-cheung, Vice Chairman of SDC, said that SDC was very concerned about the inadequate external transport links in Southern District, which relied heavily on the Aberdeen Tunnel and Pok Fu Lam Road. SDC had been urging the Administration for the early construction of Route 7 from Kennedy Town to Aberdeen since the opening of the Aberdeen Tunnel in 1982. He pointed out that in the absence of the project, no direct access to the Central district and Kowloon through the Western Harbour Crossing would be available. In addition, traffic congestion at the Aberdeen Tunnel, Wan Chai and Cross Harbour Tunnel would not be alleviated. He said that SDC was dissatisfied that the project had been dragged on for almost 20 years. Worse still, the Administration now proposed to reduce the scope of the project and truncate the route at Pok Fu Lam instead of Aberdeen as promised previously when the

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Cyberport project was discussed at SDC. He advised that SDC had held a special meeting on 23 July 2001 to discuss the Administration's proposal. SDC members unanimously objected to the current proposal put forward by the Administration. They strongly requested the Administration to honour its own commitment and to deliver the Route 7 project in its original form in two phases with the completion of phase I in 2007 and phase II in 2010.

(Post-meeting note: Extract of minutes of SDC's special meeting held on 23 July 2001 was tabled at the meeting and subsequently circulated to members via LC Paper No. CB(1)2076/00-01(03).)

27. Mr CHU Chun-yin, Chairman, Traffic and Transport Committee of SDC, supplemented that SDC was not objecting to the provisioning of a rail link to Southern District. However, in view of the uncertainty of a railway project and the lead time required for implementation, the Administration should first focus on the delivery of the Route 7 project, which had been discussed for years at district level. He also opined that railway itself was not a replacement of road-based transport infrastructure, bearing in mind the Administration's initiative to promote tourism in Southern District and the additional bus trips so generated. SDC could not accept the Administration's proposal to reduce the scope of the Route 7 project on financial grounds and requested LegCo members to urge the Administration to speed up the delivery of the project in its original form as committed earlier by the Administration.

*Central & Western District Council (CWDC)
(LC Paper No. CB(1)1897/00-01(07))*

28. Mr CHAN Choi-hi, District Councillor, CWDC, said that there was a pressing need for the early construction of the full-length of Route 7 from Kennedy Town to Aberdeen within the environmental constraints so as to cater for the direct transport needs of residents. He opined that the construction of Route 7 in tunnel form could satisfy the requirements for environmental protection. He called on the Administration to speed up the delivery of the project along this line. He also expressed dissatisfaction that the Government had not provided adequate information to CWDC for consideration when the latter was consulted on the latest position of Route 7.

Wanchai District Council (WDC)

29. Mr NG Kam-chun, Chairman of the Traffic and Transport Committee, WDC, highlighted the existing congestion problem at Aberdeen Tunnel and the resulting impacts on both Wanchai and Southern Districts. He pointed out that the early construction of the full-length of Route 7 from Kennedy Town to Aberdeen could help relieve the congestion problems at both districts. In the long-run, the implementation of a rail link project in Southern District could further enhance the external transport link in the areas.

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The In-Corporation Owners of Grandviews Garden (IOGC)
(LC Paper No. CB(1)1987/00-01(03))

30. Mr AU Lap-shing, Chairman of IOGC, highlighted the congestion problem at Aberdeen Tunnel. In some occasion, it took two to three hours for passengers to travel from Aberdeen to Wanchai/Kowloon. Given the long expectation of residents in Southern District for the early construction of Route 7, he hoped members would urge the Administration to speed up the delivery of the project from Kennedy Town to Aberdeen.

Wong Chuk Hang Women Association (WCHWA)
(LC Paper No. CB(1)1987/00-01(04))

31. Ms MAR Yuet-har, Chairman of WCHWA, pointed out that the Route 7 project had been discussed for almost 20 years. During these periods, the population of Southern District had already increased to 280,000 with various developments put in place. The Administration also decided to build the Cyberport in Telegraph Bay. With these changes, a link road between Kennedy Town and Pok Fu Lam was not adequate to meet the dire transport needs of residents and congestion would remain at critical corridors. She also reminded the Administration to avoid committing the same mistake as observed in the planning of the Ap Lei Chau Bridge where the Administration was not willing to build an additional bridge on financial ground. As a result, serious congestion was observed at Ap Lei Chau Bridge upon the population intake of South Horizon Estates. She therefore requested the Administration to adhere to its original proposal and speed up the delivery of Route 7 from Kennedy Town to Aberdeen.

32. Ms MAR also urged the Administration to review the green time signals to facilitate the outbound traffic from Aberdeen to Wanchai during peak periods.

Wong Chuk Hang Estate Block 10 MAC (WCHE Blk 10 MAC)
(LC Paper No. CB(1)1987/00-01(05))

33. Mr YUEN Leung-kwong, Chairman of WCHE Blk 10 MAC, said that his views had already been expressed by other attending representatives.

Wong Chuk Hang Estate Block 4 MAC (WCHE Blk 4 MAC)
(LC Paper No. CB(1)1987/00-01(06))

34. Mr WONG Wai-chung, Chairman of WCHE Blk 4 MAC, highlighted the traffic problem in Southern District, particularly when Po Fu Lam Road or Wong Chuk Hang Road was closed for emergency repairing. Given the natural scenery of Southern District and its development potential, the Administration should provide an efficient traffic and transport network to facilitate its development. He stressed that there was an urgent need for the early provisioning of Route 7 from Kennedy Town to Aberdeen to address the congestion problem in Southern District, taking into account the rising

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demand generated from the Cyberport, the development of new tourist spots and other planned developments in the areas.

South Horizons Estate Owner's Committee (SHEOC)

35. Mr Gofrey K H LAW, Chairman of SHEOC, said that South Horizons Estate comprised 9,812 units with a population size of about 45,000. The Owner's Committee had recently conducted a survey to gauge residents' view on Route 7. Within a week, more than 1,523 questionnaires were received, of which 1,497 indicated that they were in support of the original Route 7 proposal from Kennedy Town to Aberdeen. He stressed that middle class in South Horizons, Chi Fu and Pok Fu Lam had expressed dissatisfaction about the Administration's decision to truncate the route at Pok Fu Lam. He pointed out that the travelling cost in Southern District was much higher than other districts due to insufficient traffic and transport infrastructure. He therefore called on members to support the original Route 7 proposal and urged the Administration to speed up its delivery, otherwise electors would be disappointed with members' decision.

Shek Pai Wan [Tin Wan] Kaifong Welfare Association (SPWKWA)

36. Mr MIU Wah-chang, Chairman of SPWKWA, said that he had been pressing for the Route 7 project back in 1985 when he was a District Board member. He was disappointed to note the Administration's recent proposal to truncate Route 7 at Pok Fu Lam. In his view, this was a reflection of the Administration's failure to honour its own commitment and would certainly affect the Administration's image and the livelihood of residents in Southern District. Given the Administration's initiative to promote tourism in Southern District and the consensus views of local residents on the implementation of Route 7, he urged the Administration to speed up the delivery of the project. On railway development, he said that he was not objecting to the proposal. After all, railway and road infrastructure were not mutually exclusive. The Administration should provide adequate infrastructure to support the development of Southern District.

(Post-meeting note: A submission from SPWKWA was tabled at the meeting and subsequently circulated to members vide LC Paper No. CB(1)2076/00-01(04).)

Aberdeen Inhabitants Union Association Ltd. (AIUAL)

37. Mr MAN Hon-ming, Chairman of AIUAL, pointed out that at present, the external traffic in Southern District was heavily relied on Aberdeen Tunnel and Pok Fu Lam Road. Due to population increase and the congestion problem at Aberdeen Tunnel, Route 7 should have been in place a few years ago. Given the Administration's recent initiative to promote tourism in Southern District, there should be a corresponding improvement in the traffic and transport networks, otherwise it would

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seriously affect the tourism development in the district. He opined that the reduced scope of Route 7 would not be effective in addressing the traffic problem faced by Southern District residents. He urged members to support the early delivery of Route 7 in its original form.

(Post-meeting note: A submission from AIUAL was tabled at the meeting and subsequently circulated to members vide LC Paper No. CB(1)2076/00-01(05).)

Kellett Bay Women's Association (KBWA)

38. Ms CHAN Fung-sim, Chairman of KBWA, opined that Route 7 was essential for relieving the traffic congestion problem in Southern District. An efficient transport network could also help promote tourism development in the areas which was in line with the Administration's own initiative. Given the population increase and the planned developments in Southern District, she saw the need for the early provisioning of Route 7 to relieve the congestion problem there.

(Post-meeting note: A submission from KBWA was tabled at the meeting and subsequently circulated to members vide LC Paper No. CB(1)2076/00-01(06).)

The Hong Kong Southern District Alliance (HKSDA)

39. Mr CHAN Fu-chung, Deputy Chairman of HKSDA, said that due to insufficient transport infrastructure, residents in Aberdeen and Ap Lei Chau had been suffering from traffic congestion for a long period. He said that according to the original planning intention, Route 7 would be a strategic road link running from Aberdeen to Kennedy Town. Motorists could continue to travel via Western Harbour Crossing and Route 3 to reach the mainland. He opined that the Administration's recent proposal to reduce the scope of Route 7 was unacceptable, taking into account the undertakings given by the Administration in the past, and the additional demand arising from the increase in population and the planned developments in the areas, including the Cyberport and various tourist spots. He opined that the Administration should provide adequate infrastructure to facilitate the economic growth in Southern District, and hence, the implementation of Route 7 should be given top priority.

40. Ms CHIU Ching-kit of HKSDA added that in view of the Administration's initiative to promote tourism in Southern District and that residents in the areas had been suffering from traffic congestion for a long time, the Administration should speed up the delivery of the project.

(Post-meeting note: A submission from HKSDA was tabled at the meeting and subsequently circulated to members vide LC Paper No. CB(1)2076/00-01(07).)

The Hong Kong Southern District Community Association Ltd. (HKSDCAL)

(LC Paper No. CB(1)2033/00-01(01))

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41. Mr CHAN Sze-chung, Secretary of HKSDCAL, criticized the Administration's proposal to reduce the scope of Route 7. On one hand, the Administration had worked out a series of initiatives to promote tourism in Southern District. On the other hand, it did not provide adequate transport infrastructure to support the programme. This was a reflection of the poor co-ordination within the Government. On the implementation of Route 7, he pointed out that he could not accept the Administration's recent proposal to reduce the scope of the project, given the prevailing congestion at Aberdeen Tunnel and the strategic role of Route 7 to serve as a gateway between Southern Hong Kong Island and North West New Territories via Western Harbour Crossing and Route 3. The Administration's move also reflected that it had ignored the interests of residents in Southern District and failed to honour its own commitment to build the full-length of Route 7. On railway development, he said that Southern District residents were not objecting to the proposal. But given the lead time required for planning and implementation, it could not immediately help address the problem faced by residents, not to mention the fare implications on passengers. In his view, the Administration should fast track the implementation of Route 7, which could relieve the demand generated by the existing and planned developments in Southern District.

Discussion between members and deputations

42. Ms Audrey EU sought the deputations' views on whether frequent road openings in Southern District had aggravated the traffic congestion in the areas.

43. Mr WONG King-cheung of SDC responded that a number of road improvement projects in Southern District were being carried out to cater for the additional demand generated by the new housing developments in the district. He criticized that the Administration only provided relief measures in a piecemeal manner whenever there were new developments in the district. It had failed to adopt a forward looking approach in planning for an efficient infrastructure network for the district in advance.

44. Mr CHAN Sze-chung of HKSDCAL shared the view of Mr WONG and pointed out that with the gradual development of the road improvement works, local traffic conditions would improve next year. However, there was an urgent need to improve the external transport link to cater for the additional demand arising from other planned developments. Hence, it was necessary to give priority to Route 7.

45. Mr David CHU Yu-lin opined that Government should be held accountable for the traffic congestion in Southern District. He sought the deputations' views on whether they would support a railway link in the district.

46. Mr CHU Chun-yin of SDC replied that they were in support of the concept of environmentally-friendly. He said that a highway free of traffic congestion would also be desirable as it generated lesser emission and helped reduce fuel consumption. Whilst welcoming a rail link proposal, he was worried that it would take a long time to complete and hence, could not immediately help address the transport needs of

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residents. Given that railway and road infrastructure were not mutually exclusive, the Administration should now concentrate on the delivery of Route 7, followed by the provision of a rail link for Southern District.

47. Mr MIU Wah-chang of SPWKWA responded that he was also in support of the concept of environmentally-friendly. In his view, Route 7 could be constructed within the environmental constraints, say in the form of tunnel.

48. Mr MAN Hon-ming of AIUAL said that as Government had already carried out substantial work on Route 7, it should first focus on the delivery of the project to avoid further wastage of time. After all, railway and road infrastructure were two different projects, the former alone could not satisfy the demand in the area, taking into account the demand generated by both passenger and freight transport. He also opined that bus trips generated by tourists and other car trips could not be replaced by railway.

49. Mr WONG King-cheung of SDC echoed the view of Mr MAN and said that railway and road infrastructure were too different projects and should not be mixed into one. After all, railway could not help relieve the demand generated by vehicular traffic.

50. The Chairman thanked the deputations to the meeting. She then invited the Administration to respond to the views expressed by the deputations.

51. Deputy Secretary for Transport (DS for T) replied that the feasibility of providing a rail link in Southern District was always on the agenda of the Administration. In this regard, the Second Railway Development Study had identified a number of possible railway schemes which might be worthy of further consideration. This included the South Island Line linking Admiralty along the north foreshore of Hong Kong Island with Wah Fu and Ap Lei Chau. However, in determining the priority of the project, there was a need to consider the planned developments on the southern side of Hong Kong Island and the priority attached to implementing other more pressing railway projects such as the Shatin to Central Link, the Island Line Extension and the Kowloon Southern Link. With regard to the proposal to build the South Island Line along the west foreshore of Hong Kong Island as suggested by SPHL, the Administration's view was that it would not be justified on both transport and financial grounds given the dispersed developments on the west foreshore of Hong Kong Island.

52. DS for T said that the construction of Route 7 and the provision of a rail line in Southern District were not mutually exclusive and, indeed, they provided two different transport modes to satisfy the needs of different populations. In view of the forecast traffic congestion at Po Fu Lam Road, the Administration saw the need to provide an alternative link road from Kennedy Town to Pok Fu Lam by 2011. Regarding the road link extension to Aberdeen, the Administration saw a less urgent need to build the road at this stage but it would be considered when there were further developments in the

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Southern District. He stressed that the implementation of public works projects in phases was a normal practice.

53. As regards the deputations' concern about the inadequate information provided by the Administration, DS for T said that the general public had various means to access information held by the Administration. The Second Railway Development Study and CTS-3 reports were made available on the Internet. The Administration would see whether further information could be made available to the interested parties.

54. Mr WONG Sing-chi criticized the Administration's policy to provide new infrastructure to cater for the development of Cyberport but not the existing developments in Southern District where serious traffic congestion existed for years. Given the prevailing traffic condition, he opined that there was no need to wait for further developments in the Southern District before a decision could be made on the extension of the link road from Pok Fu Lam to Aberdeen. He said that the Democratic Party supported the original Route 7 but not the scaled down project as proposed which could not resolve the transport problems faced by residents. To ensure that the project was built within the environmental constraints, the Administration should urgently explore the tunnel option. In the long-term, the Administration should also explore the railway option for the benefits of residents.

55. Mr IP Kwok-him said that the Democratic Alliance for Betterment of Hong Kong could not accept the proposed replacement of Route 7 by a railway link. They also objected to the scaled down Route 7 project as proposed. He pointed out that railway and Route 7 were two different form of infrastructure and they served different purposes as well. He urged the Administration to speed up the delivery of Route 7 from Kennedy Town to Aberdeen as one single project rather than the phased approach as proposed pending further developments in the areas. He said that there were environmentally-friendly approach in building new roads and the Administration should further explore the tunnel option. Meanwhile, the Administration should also explore the proposed railway link for the long-term benefit of residents.

56. Mr David CHU Yu-lin said that residents in Southern District had been suffering from traffic congestion for years. He was disappointed to note that the Administration had proposed a phased approach for the construction of Route 7 which could not effectively resolve the problems faced by residents. He urged the Administration to speed up the delivery of the project whilst examining the feasibility of providing a rail link to Southern District.

57. Miss Cyd HO said that she had already expressed her views on the project at the last meeting. In light of comments made by the deputations, she sought the Administration's view on the latest progress of the South Island Line. Whilst appreciating the traffic and transport problems faced by residents, she remarked that this was a result of the poor planning at the outset. She requested the Administration to provide further information on the following:

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- (a) the demand arising from the Administration's initiative to promote tourism in Southern District, including both vehicle and passenger trips so generated; and
- (b) the planning intention of providing a strategic link from Southern Hong Kong to North West New Territories via Route 7, Western Harbour Crossing and Route 3, and the potential trips and traffic so generated.

58. In response to the Chairman, DS for T replied that the Administration would consider the views expressed by members and the deputations, and revert to the Panel in October 2001.

II. Any other business

59. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 12:30 pm.

Legislative Council Secretariat
3 January 2002