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Briefing Paper

Major Review of Route 10

A. BACKGROUND

The original intended functions of the proposed Route 10 which is estimated to cost more than \$100 billion were as follows:-

- (1) To take traffic from Shekou via North West New Territories and Lantau Island to Hong Kong Island.
- (2) To serve the proposed Container Port on Lantau Island.
- (3) To provide an alternative access to the Chek Lap Kok Airport.

B. SECTIONS OF ROUTE 10

Route 10 originally consists of the following sections:-

- (1) **Green Island Reclamation** - linking Kennedy Town on Hong Kong Island to Green Island
- (2) **Green Island Link** - linking Green Island to Lantau via Kau Yi Chau and the Container Port Reclamation
- (3) **Chok Ko Wan Link Road** - linking the Container Port on Lantau Island to the Tsing Lung Bridge
- (4) **Tsing Lung Bridge** - linking North Lantau to the So Kwun Wat Complex
- (5) **So Kwun Wat Complex** - linking the Lam Tei Tunnel Section of Route 10 to the Tsing Lung Bridge and to Tuen Mun Road via the Siu Lam Link Road
- (6) **Lam Tei Tunnel Section** - linking the So Kwun Wat Complex to Yuen Long Highway

C. NEED FOR MAJOR REVIEW

Since the original planning of Route 10, the following major events have occurred thus requiring a major review of the whole concept of Route 10 in accordance with the Third Comprehensive Transport Study which recommended 'a review system to ensure that the need, timing, scope and priorities of the relevant highway projects are re-assessed before implementation in light of the latest development'.

- (1) Postponement and likely cancellation of the Container Port on Lantau as a result of the development of Disneyland at Penny's Bay
- (2) Cancellation of the Green Island Reclamation
- (3) Saturation of Tuen Mun Road
- (4) Unexpected spare capacity of Route 3
- (5) Completion of West Rail in 2003
- (6) Government's newly announced rail-based transport policy
- (7) High level of infrastructural spending and Government fiscal deficit

D. IMPACT ON ROUTE 10

- (1) **Green Island Reclamation** - Abandoned
- (2) **Green Island Link** - Abandoned
- (3) **Chok Ko Wan Link Road** - No need

Without the Container Port and the link to Hong Kong Island, this coastal road which is a six-lane super highway will lead nowhere and will serve no purpose as Disneyland will have its own major road linking it to the North Lantau Highway.

A direct link between the Tsing Lung Bridge and the North Lantau Highway should be considered so that traffic going to the Airport need not do an unnecessary 5 kilometers loop adding an extra 5-10 minutes travelling time.

(4) **Tsing Lung Bridge - Re-design necessary**

This Bridge originally was primarily intended to take goods vehicles from Shekou to the Container Port and the original plan was not to provide any connection between Tsing Lung Bridge and Tuen Mun Road.

A secondary function was to provide a second link to Lantau Island and the Chek Lap Kok Airport as it is sensible town planning to provide for a second access to Lantau and the Airport because the Tsing Ma Bridge may be threatened by. (a) Accident, (b) Terrorism and (c) Eventual traffic saturation.

However as the primary function has now disappeared with the likely cancellation of the Container Port, the secondary function namely, an alternative access to Lantau, has become the primary function.

The present design is that there is access to the Bridge only via Route 10 from the west. Therefore traffic from the urban areas has to go all the way to Tuen Mun and to turn back at the So Kwun Wat Complex to get on to the Bridge.

A major review is therefore necessary to consider whether there should be an eastern link so that traffic on Tuen Mun Road can have direct access on to the Bridge without doing an unnecessary 12 kilometers loop and adding 10-15 minutes travelling time.

As this Bridge is estimated to cost over \$10 billion and will have a major impact on the traffic pattern of Hong Kong for the next 50 years, a proper design of the access to the Bridge is vital in the interest of Hong Kong. Any re-design and re-alignment now will represent tremendous savings in time, effort and money in the future.

(5) **So Kwun Wat Complex - Re-alignment necessary**

The So Kwun Wat Complex is presenting a major environmental problem. Since its gazettal last year, more than 500 objections had been lodged by local residents.

Furthermore, it includes a new 'Siu Lam Link Road' which will take traffic from Route 10 coming from the north on to Tuen Mun Road toward Tsuen Wan and the urban areas. This will over-burden the already saturated Tuen Mun Road and will cause unacceptable traffic congestion.

(6) **Lam Tei Tunnel Section** - Review necessary

This section will take traffic away from the following present catchment areas of Route 3 and divert it on to Tuen Mun Road via the Siu Lam Link Road:- (a) Hung Shui Kiu, (b) Tin Shui Wai, (c) Tuen Mun, and (d) Yuen Long.

The immediate effect is that the already congested and badly designed and dangerous Tuen Mun Road will be flooded by additional traffic creating unacceptable traffic congestion.

Route 3 was originally designed to relieve Tuen Mun Road so that traffic from the aforesaid catchment areas would make use of Route 3 to proceed to the urban areas. This Lam Tei Tunnel Section of Route 10 will have the effect of doing the opposite.

Route 3 which was originally expected to become saturated by 2009 is now found to be under-utilised and will not become saturated before 2016. Route 3 has an ultimate capacity of 140,000 vehicles per day, but the present daily traffic is only 45,000. There will therefore be ample spare capacity for many years to come.

E. URGENT REVIEW

The Government is proposing to spend \$240 billion on infrastructural projects. This astronomical sum must be spent wisely. The whole concept and alignment of Route 10 and, in particular, the Tsing Lung Bridge must be urgently reviewed before more taxpayers' money is spent.

The above sections of Route 10 are estimated to cost more than \$35 billion and should be most carefully reviewed before any section is committed and constructed. The great danger is that if any one section of Route 10 is committed and constructed, then the mistake will have to be compounded by building the other sections also.

A comprehensive review of Route 10 should be taken at a high level before any further funds are allocated to this highly questionable highway project. The whole concept of Route 10 must be subjected to careful scrutiny. Government must justify to the public that this highway is really necessary and is the best solution. The public expects and deserves no less.