

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(1)1261/00-01
(These minutes have been seen
by the Administration)

Ref : CB1/PL/TP/1

Legislative Council
Panel on Transport

Minutes of Meeting held on
Friday, 16 March 2001, at 10:45 am
in the Chamber of the Legislative Council Building

- Members present** : Hon Mrs Miriam LAU Kin-ye, JP (Chairman)
Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, JP (Deputy Chairman)
Hon David CHU Yu-lin
Hon Albert HO Chun-yan
Ir Dr Hon Raymond HO Chung-tai, JP
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 TAM Yiu-chung, GBS, JP
Dr Hon TANG Siu-tong, JP
Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, JP
Hon Albert CHAN Wai-yip
Hon WONG Sing-chi
Hon LAU Ping-cheung
- Non-panel member attending** : Hon Emily LAU Wai-hing, JP
- Member absent** : Hon CHAN Kwok-keung

**Public officers
attending**

: Agenda Item IV

Transport Bureau

Ms Shirley LAM
Principal Assistant Secretary for Transport (5)

Ms Doris CHEUNG
Principal Assistant Secretary for Transport (6)

Transport Department

Mr Robert FOOTMAN
Commissioner for Transport

Mr SIN Kwok-keung
Chief Traffic Engineer/NT East

Mr LAM Kwong-shun
Chief Engineer/Kowloon (Atg.)

Territory Development Department

Mr NG Kam-chi
Chief Engineer/Tseung Kwan O

Agenda Item V

Transport Bureau

Miss Margaret FONG
Deputy Secretary for Transport

Mr Brian LO
Principal Assistant Secretary for Transport (2)

Transport Department

Mr Robert FOOTMAN
Commissioner for Transport

Mr Thomas THUMB
Assistant Commissioner for Transport/
Technical Services

Clerk in attendance : Mr Andy LAU

Chief Assistant Secretary (1)2

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

Action

I Confirmation of minutes and matters arising

(LC Paper No. CB(1)808/00-01 - Minutes of meeting held on 19 January 2001)

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 January 2001 were confirmed.

II Information papers issued since last meeting

(LC Paper No. CB(1)809/00-01 - Proposed Mass Transit Railway (Amendment) Bylaw 2001;

LC Paper No. CB(1)810/00-01 - Public Transport Interchanges at Hang Hau Station, Tseung Kwan O Station and Tiu Keng Leng Station of the MTR Tsueng Kwan O Extension;

LC Paper No. CB(1)826/00-01 - Traffic and transport arrangements for newly-built housing estates;

LC Paper No. CB(1)827/00-01 - Route 3 (Country Park Section) - Toll Increase; and

LC Paper No. CB(1)834/00-01 - Replacement of tunnel systems and equipment)

2. Members noted the above information papers issued since last meeting. Mr CHAN Wai-yip opined that the Panel should have been consulted earlier on the proposed toll increase for Route 3 (Country Park Section). He remarked that as the toll increase would take effect on 1 April 2001, the Panel had to convene a special meeting to discuss the issue urgently.

3. After deliberation, members agreed that the visit to West Rail on 30 March 2001 should be deferred to make way for discussion of the following three papers at a special meeting to be held on the same date at 8:30 am:

- (a) Route 3 (Country Park Section) - Toll Increase;
- (b) Public Transport Interchanges at Hang Hau Station, Tseung Kwan O Station and Tiu Keng Leng Station of the MTR Tsueng Kwan O Extension; and
- (c) Replacement of tunnel systems and equipment.

Action

4. Members agreed to include the remaining two papers in the list of outstanding items for discussion by the Panel.

5. Mr LAU Chin-shek proposed to discuss the privatization of Government tunnels at a future meeting. The Chairman advised that as the Administration was conducting an overall review on the operation of tunnels, including the toll differential and the uneven distribution of traffic amongst different tunnels, she suggested that Mr LAU's proposal be discussed in that context when the findings of the Administration's review was presented to the Panel in June 2001.

III Items for discussion at the next meeting scheduled for 27 April 2001

(LC Paper No. CB(1)814/00-01(01) - List of outstanding items for discussion; and
LC Paper No. CB(1)814/00-01(02) - List of follow-up actions)

6. Members agreed to discuss the following items at the next meeting scheduled for 27 April 2001:

- (a) Route 10 - North Lantau to Yuen Long Highway section between North Lantau and So Kwun Wat; and
- (b) Traffic conditions at Lok Ma Chau.

7. Members also noted the Administration's intention to raise the item "Replacement of the Transport Department Licensing Computer System" for discussion by the Panel at the next meeting to be held on 27 April 2001. However, in view of the heavy agenda for the meeting, members considered it more appropriate for the Administration to brief them on the subject item by means of an information paper.

IV Traffic conditions in Tseung Kwan O

(LC Paper No. CB(1)814/00-01(03) - Information paper provided by the Administration)

8. At the invitation of the Chairman, the Chief Traffic Engineer/New Territories East (CTE/NTE) briefed members on the salient points of the paper as set out in LC Paper No. CB(1) 814/00-01(03).

Tidal flow operation

9. Given the traffic congestion at the roundabout junction of Wan Po Road/Tseung Kwan O Tunnel/Po Shun Road (the R1 roundabout) and the resulting traffic queue on the tunnel approach roads, Mr CHENG Kar-foo opined that the

Action

Administration should undertake trials and studies for implementing tidal flow operation at the Tseung Kwan O (TKO) Tunnel during the morning peak hour. Mr Andrew WONG echoed Mr CHENG's view and opined that the improvement to the R1 junction should have been put in place when the project was implemented at the outset. He also expressed serious concern about the traffic and transport problems faced by local residents and called on the Administration to implement measures to relieve the problems.

10. CTE/NTE advised that the Administration had explored the feasibility of implementing tidal flow operation at the TKO Tunnel during the morning peak hour to provide short-term relief. Upon detailed examination of the traffic flow at the TKO Tunnel, the Administration was of the view that it was not a viable option. He explained that at present, the TKO Tunnel had a throughput of about 2 400 vehicles per hour in the TKO bound direction and the alternative route (i.e. Po Lam Road) had a throughput of about 600 vehicles per hour. If tidal flow operation were implemented, around 1 400 vehicles would be diverted to travel via Po Lam Road instead of TKO Tunnel to TKO each hour. Due to the design capacity of Po Lam Road, which was below 1 000 vehicles, extensive traffic queue and congestion on the Kowloon side would be resulted. The Administration therefore considered it not desirable to implement tidal flow operation at the TKO Tunnel.

Admin

11. Mr CHENG Kar-foo opined that the proposed tidal flow operation would inevitably affect road users and incur a social cost. In order to examine the feasibility of the scheme, the Administration should conduct a trial to establish its costs and benefits, and provide the necessary traffic data to members' for information.

12. Mr Andrew WONG also sought clarification on the distribution of the traffic coming from the TKO Tunnel to TKO during the morning peak hours. CTE/NTE advised that the majority of these traffic were destined for the industrial areas or areas in the vicinity of Sheung Tak Estate. Further, traffic was also attracted to the public filling area in Area 137 and the MTR depot in Area 85.

13. Mr LAU Kong-wah expressed concern about the traffic blockage caused by traffic accidents and enquired about the details of the contingency plans in the vicinity of the tunnel areas. CTE/NTE advised that the Transport Department, the Police, the bus and tunnel operators had been maintaining close liaison to introduce contingency traffic arrangements should any major traffic disruption occurred at major junctions in TKO. Towing vehicles had now been deployed at strategic locations to speed up the clearance process. In the medium term, it had to wait until the completion of the MTR TKO extension which would provide an alternative efficient transport mode for the TKO residents and significant relief to the TKO tunnel traffic.

Bus lanes

Action

14. On Mr CHENG Kar-foo's suggestion to designate bus lanes on the approach roads leading to the tunnel portal, CTE/NTE advised that the Administration was basically in support of the proposal but it was considered not an appropriate time to take forward the proposal. He explained that at present, vehicles had already had difficulty to enter the R1 roundabout from the approach roads, if further road spaces were taken away for the purpose of bus lanes, traffic congestion would be aggravated. The benefits of the bus lane would likely be offset by the additional delay at the roundabout. He however undertook to review the proposal upon completion of the grade-separated interchange at the R1 roundabout.

Concessionary fares and tolls for early bird users

15. Mr LAU Chin-shek enquired whether the Administration had ever considered requesting the bus companies to introduce concessionary fares for early bird passengers from 7:00 am to 8:00 am so as to help spread out the traffic during the peak period. CTE/NTE advised that the Administration maintained regular dialogue with bus companies to discuss matters of mutual interest including the feasibility of introducing concessionary fares where appropriate. The Deputy Chairman also opined that concessionary tolls could also be introduced to encourage motorists to advance their trips.

Admin

16. At the request of Mr LAU Chin-shek, CTE/NTE undertook to provide information on the passenger throughput at TKO tunnel during the morning peak period.

Western Coast Road

17. To cope with the projected developments and population growth in TKO, Mr CHENG Kar-foo opined that there was an urgent need to press on with the construction of the Western Coast Road (WCR).

18. The Chief Engineer/Tseung Kwan O advised that a preliminary study on the construction of the WCR was already completed. The Administration was currently investigating the feasibility of an alternative tunnel alignment, taking into account the implications of the revised proposal on the planned developments in TKO. It was expected that the study could be completed by 2003. By then, the Administration was able to draw up the implementation programme for the project.

19. In light of the prevailing traffic congestion in TKO, Mr CHENG Kar-foo and the Chairman felt dissatisfied about the prolonged time taken in implementing the WCR project. They also queried the rationale for undertaking further studies to evaluate the alternative tunnel alignment, given that a preliminary study on the project had been completed.

Action

20. The Principal Assistant Secretary for Transport (5) advised that the tunnel alignment might not be able to serve certain planned developments in TKO. There was therefore a need to evaluate the alternative tunnel alignment having regard to the land use planning in the whole area. The Administration was mindful of the need to speed up the implementation of the WCR project and would take necessary steps as appropriate.

Additional road link

21. Noting that there was no immediate plan which could effectively relieve the congestion at the R1 roundabout, Mr LAU Kong-wah opined that the Administration should extend the existing access road at Ocean Shores to link the road network at the new development areas in TKO so as to provide short-term relief.

22. CTE/NTE advised that the private road referred to was an access road leading from Pik Wan Road to Ocean Shores. Given the limited capacity of the road network, the proposed connection could aggravate the traffic situation on the Kowloon side. Mr LAU Kong-wah remarked that as the WCR project would take a long time to complete, he urged the Administration to examine the alternative route to provide short-term relief in the interim. CTE/NTE noted the member's request and undertook to examine the matter further.

Traffic during construction

Admin

23. Members expressed grave concern about the traffic arrangements during construction of the grade-separated interchange and called on the Administration to put in place adequate measures to address the problem. The Administration noted the members' concern and would provide further information in due course.

V Application of information technology to transport management

(LC Paper No. CB(1)814/00-01(04) - Information paper provided by the Administration)

Admin

24. Mr LAU Kong-wah requested the Administration to provide a copy of the consultancy study report on the Intelligent Transport System (ITS).

25. Mr LAU Kong-wah remarked that without the new initiatives as mentioned in paragraph 13 of the paper such as the installation of navigational guidance systems for motorists, the proposed ITS was no more than a replication of the existing technologies but with a separate packing under the new name of ITS. He was dissatisfied that the paper did not contain sufficient information on the enhanced features to be launched by the private sector and the corresponding legislative framework to be introduced by the Administration. He also remarked

Action

that he had pressed on the Administration to install digital indicators ahead of the critical diversion point at Tolo Highway/Tai Po Road for years. He felt dissatisfied about the slow progress of the work.

26. The Assistant Commissioner for Transport/Technical Services (AC for T/TS) advised that the Government would be responsible for providing the basic infrastructure in support of the ITS. The traffic and transport data so generated would, in turn, facilitate commercial utilization. However, development of value-added commercial applications would be a matter for the private sector to pursue, having regard to their own financial positions, technical know-how and other relevant factors.

27. Given that development of commercial applications would dependent upon private sector initiative, Mr LAU Kong-wah queried the need for creating additional directorate posts to steer the development of ITS as set out in paragraph 20 of the paper.

28. AC for T/TS replied that it was considered more appropriate for the Government to take up the responsibility for the development of:

- (a) the Transport Information System (TIS), which was a centralised data warehouse for the collection, processing, analysis and dissemination of comprehensive transport information including traffic conditions, progress of road works, traffic diversion measures, public transport services, and traffic incident investigation; and
- (b) the Traffic Management and Information Centre (TMIC), which would replace the existing control centres and take direct control of all existing and future Area Traffic Control (ATC) systems and Traffic Control & Surveillance (TCS) facilities.

29. The Commissioner for Transport (C for T) added that the paper was intended to give members an overview on the different aspects of ITS, which emphasized integration of individual systems as well as integration of functions. Detailed justifications on individual projects would be submitted to the Panel before they were put to the Finance Committee for consideration. Under the TIS, the Administration planned to put transport and traffic data into a centralized data warehouse such that information could be made available to the general public via the Internet. On the other hand, private service providers, using the basic information and the intelligent road network obtainable from the TIS, would be able to develop value-added applications for the public. The TMIC would in future replace the existing control centres and take direct control of all existing and future ATC systems and TCS facilities including CCTV cameras, variable message signs and lane control signals for more effective co-ordination of traffic and incident management of the whole territory. The implementation of ITS

Action

would bring about significant benefits to the society. It aimed at providing better traffic and transport information, better availability of such information and better incident and network management.

30. The Deputy Secretary for Transport (DS for T) added that over the years, different information and telecommunication technologies had been applied to traffic management but they were mostly single-purpose systems and implemented independently on a small scale. The proposed ITS aimed at integration of systems. With the ITS in place, the general public would have access through the Internet to obtain one-stop information on all public transport services. Information on routes and fares, including options based on price, time, and the need to interchange would be provided. Motorists would have access to a travel route finding function. Furthermore, variable message signs would be provided to advise motorists of traffic conditions on alternative routes so that they could make an informed choice on their route well ahead of critical diversion points.

31. On private sector initiative, DS for T advised that a series of seminars had been organized by the Transport Department to keep the interested parties informed of the proposed ITS and how they could make use of the traffic and transport information for the development of value-added applications.

32. Mr CHAN Wai-yip opined that Hong Kong lagged behind advanced countries like Japan in developing ITS. He felt dissatisfied about the slow implementation programme in Hong Kong and enquired how the general public could benefit from the ITS and the proposed implementation timetable. He was also worried that the value-added service proposed by the private sector might not be accessible to the general public as they could not afford any payment in this regard.

33. AC for T/TS advised that phase I of the TIS development would be completed in early 2003. By then, the general public would have access through the Internet to obtain one-stop static information on all public transport service.

34. Mr CHAN Wai-yip was disappointed with the Administration's reply. He said that the general public might not have easy access to the Internet. He cited the example in Japan whereby citizens could simply make a telephone call to obtain the relevant traffic and transport information and called on the Administration to introduce similar service at reasonable price, say one dollar per call. Given that the Administration had already spent a lot of monies in applying information technology to traffic management and that a lot of traffic and transport information was already uploaded onto the Internet, he queried why it was still necessary to wait until 2003 before the general public could have access to obtain the required information.

Action

35. AC for T/TS replied that some static traffic and transport information was already made available on the Internet. However, if users wished to make a particular query based on their own preferences, there was a need to develop an application system for the purpose. DS for T added that the Administration was already disseminating information on major road incidents to radio operators. The Administration noted members' concern about the development timeframe and would speed up the programme, if possible.

36. Mr Andrew WONG opined that in order to facilitate members' understanding of the ITS, additional information on the end product should be provided together with an account of the necessary enhancement and improvement to the existing systems and the costs incurred. He also opined that in addition to the installation of fixed CCTV cameras, consideration should be given to installing mobile traffic surveillance facilities on buses, police cars or emergency vehicles for traffic surveillance purposes.

37. AC for T/TS replied that with existing technologies, the Administration could already obtain relevant information to detect the traffic speed and whether there were any major incidents or congestion on major corridors. He however undertook to consider Mr Andrew WONG's suggestion in future traffic management plans.

38. Mr TAM Yiu-chung enquired about the implications of high rise buildings to the implementation of the global positioning system. AC for T/TS clarified that the Administration could deploy different technologies to detect traffic speed in urban areas. In addition, there were plans to extend the ATC systems to cover all New Towns so as to collect the necessary traffic and transport information.

39. Mr TAM Yiu-chung and Mr LAU Ping-cheung were concerned about the privacy implications of the proposed ITS. They were concerned about the mechanism, if any, to prevent abuse of the system so as to safeguard the privacy of road users. AC for T/TS advised that different kinds of technologies were available in the market for collecting traffic and transport information and they would not impose any privacy implications. Mr LAU was also worried about the privacy implications of the private sector initiatives, particularly the installation of in-vehicle reception units which could log down all vehicle movements in detail. The Chairman concluded that in taking forward the project, the Administration should take note of members' concern and take necessary steps to prevent abuse of the systems by both the Government and the private sector.

40. Mr LAU Ping-cheung was also concerned whether the provision of transport and traffic information to the private sector for developing commercial application was a kind of subsidy. DS for T advised that the general public would have access through the Internet to obtain information on public transport services and would also have access to a travel route finding function free of

Action

charge. On the other hand, if commercial entities wished to make use of these data for commercial utilization, a fee would be imposed on them.

41. Mr CHENG Kar-foo opined that in view of the significant financial implications of the ITS which cost around \$3.2 billion, he considered it necessary for the Panel to examine in detail whether the proposed ITS was cost-effective before individual projects were put to the Finance Committee for consideration. He also commented that the paper did not contain adequate information for members' to scrutinize the related financial proposals. Miss Emily LAU echoed Mr CHENG's view and opined that the Panel should be given ample time to examine the proposals in detail and to receive public views, if necessary, before individual projects were put to the Finance Committee.

42. C for T reiterated that the paper was intended to give members an overview of the ITS, which was made up of different systems and projects. The Administration would provide detailed information to members to justify each project on its own before it was put to the Finance Committee. Regarding the proposed extension of ATC systems to cover all new towns, C for T advised that the existing ATC systems had proved to be working well. They also helped to enhance efficient and effective traffic management and incident management.

43. In concluding, the Chairman remarked that the Panel would decide whether it was necessary to follow up on individual projects upon receipt of the Administration's papers on the same. In this regard, members noted that the Administration would seek the approval of the Finance Committee in May 2001 on funding for implementation of the TIS and the Journey Time Indication System (JTIS).

44. Mr Andrew WONG was of the view that the Administration should not split up the ITS into separate projects for submission to the Finance Committee. However, in order not to delay the implementation of the TIS and JTIS, he would support the arrangements for putting these two proposals to the Finance Committee separately. He urged the Administration to review the matter and speed up the delivery of the project. DS for T noted the member's view.

45. Members noted that under the ATC system, traffic signal controllers would be installed to regulate pedestrian movement and vehicular traffic during different time periods and priorities would also be given to pedestrians during off-peak periods.

Action

VI Any other business

46. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 1:00 pm.

Legislative Council Secretariat

23 May 2001