

Legislative Council Panel on Transport

Supplementary Information on Traffic Conditions in Tseung Kwan O

Background

At the Legislative Council Panel on Transport held on 16 March 2001, the paper on "Traffic Conditions in Tseung Kwan O" (LC Paper No. CB (1) 814/00-01(04)) was discussed. The Administration was asked, amongst other matters, to consider conducting a trial of tidal flow operation for the Tseung Kwan O (TKO) Tunnel during the morning peak hour.

2. In May 2001, the Administration provided supplementary information to Members (LC Paper No. CB (1) 1313/00-01 (01)) advising that while the Transport Department (TD) had reservations over the effectiveness of the proposed tidal flow operation, TD would be prepared to arrange a trial subject to agreement from both the Kwun Tong District Council (KTDC) and Sai Kung District Council (SKDC).

3. This paper informs Members of the outcome of the consultations with the two District Councils. Members are also requested to note the current position of the various short, medium and long term measures to improve the traffic conditions in Tseung Kwan O.

Consultations on Tidal Flow Proposal

4. TD consulted the KTDC twice on 17 April and 11 June 2001 respectively. Members of the KTDC noted TD's traffic assessment on the proposed tidal flow operation and requested TD to further explore other alternatives to smoothen the traffic in TKO with no indication of support for the proposed trial.

5. TD also consulted the Traffic and Transport Committee (TTC) of the SKDC twice on 20 April and 14 June 2001 respectively. The views of the SKDC members were mixed. While some members tended to support the trial, others had reservations about the traffic impact of the tidal flow operation, and hence, no conclusion was reached at these meetings. The SKDC thereafter wrote to KTDC suggesting that a joint meeting be convened to discuss the issue. Response from KTDC was, however, not positive.

6. Attempting to explore further the feasibility of the tidal flow trial, TD met with the DC and TTC Chairmen of the KTDC and SKDC in late June 2001 where views on the subject were extensively exchanged. However, consensus between the two DCs could not be reached.

7. Given the lack of a consensus from the two District Councils on the proposed trial, TD decided not to pursue the proposal for the time being having regard to the following:

- (a) though the tidal flow operation would bring slight benefit to motorists leaving TKO, it might cause serious traffic congestion problems on the Kowloon side;
- (b) members of the SKDC TTC have mixed views on a tidal flow trial at the consultation meetings in April and June 2001; and
- (c) the criteria for assessing the effectiveness of the operation have to be agreed with both District Councils before it is put on trial. However, a consensus could not be reached on the proposal.

Other Improvement Measures

8. Notwithstanding the above, the Administration will continue to pursue various measures to tackle the traffic situation in TKO, for the immediate, medium and long term. The progress of these measures is set out below.

Short-term measures

9. To ensure smooth traffic flow in TKO, TD, the Police, the bus and tunnel operators maintain close liaison and will introduce contingency traffic arrangements should any major traffic disruption occur at major junctions in TKO. Such arrangements have been working satisfactorily.

10. Further to the widening of the entry section of the Po Shun Road approach to the R1 roundabout to improve access for vehicles in late 2000, we have completed the widening of the section of TKO Tunnel Road near the R1 roundabout to facilitate traffic left turning from Po Hong Road in mid 2001. Since then, vehicular flow at these locations has improved significantly.

11. We would review the option of installing part-time traffic signals at all approaches to the R1 roundabout to improve traffic circulation at the roundabout junction after commencement of road works for a grade-separated interchange at the R1 roundabout (see paragraph 13 below).

12. There have been suggestions of introducing a bus-only lane along TKO Tunnel Road to ease traffic congestion during the morning peak. Since buses now constitute only 8% of the traffic throughput of TKO Tunnel, priority use of the limited road space by buses must be considered with due care to avoid bringing possible adverse impact on the other road users, such as goods vehicles and private cars, which account for 20% and 70% respectively of the total traffic throughput at the moment. We will continue to closely monitor the traffic situation and review the need for a bus-only lane where situation so warrants.

Medium-term measures

13. The project to replace the R1 roundabout junction with a grade-separated interchange has been planned to help alleviate the congestion on Po Shun Road. At the Public Works Sub-Committee (PWSC) meeting held on 3 May 2001, Members did not support this project and requested for a review of the noise mitigation measures in relation to the project. The Administration is now reviewing the way forward for the project. We will provide additional information to Members on the traffic arrangements during the construction period before commencement of the project.

14. The extension of the MTR line from Lam Tin to TKO is progressing well for commissioning by end 2002. The project will provide significant relief to the TKO tunnel traffic in the medium term.

Long-term measures

15. The dualling of Hang Hau Road and Clear Water Bay Road from Tai Po Tsai to Hang Hau Road are progressing as scheduled. These projects are currently planned for completion by 2007 and 2008 respectively.

16. In addition, the Administration has planned for the construction of the Western Coast Road to provide an alternative route to link up TKO with east Kowloon in addition to the TKO tunnel. The Administration is currently investigating the feasibility of an alternative tunnel alignment to address the environmental concerns.

17. Between now and commencement of the new MTR Line in late 2002, the Administration will closely monitor the progress of the various planned traffic measures and will continue to review the traffic requirement of TKO to cope with the long-term demand.

Transport Bureau

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