

Legislative Council Panel on Transport

Staffing proposal for Highways Department and Transport Department to take forward the new railway projects recommended by Railway Development Strategy 2000

PURPOSE

This paper informs Members of the staffing proposal of Highways Department (HyD) and Transport Department (TD) to take forward the new railway projects recommended by the Railway Development Strategy 2000. Pending the advice of the Standing Committee on Directorate Salaries and Conditions of Service, the proposal will be submitted to the Establishment Subcommittee of Finance Committee for consideration on 20 December 2000. Any comments on the proposal from Members are welcome before this item is put to the Establishment Subcommittee.

STAFFING NEEDS

2. The Director of Highways (D of Hy) and the Commissioner for Transport (C for T) require additional dedicated directorate support to take forward the planning and implementation of the priority railway projects recommended by the Railway Development Strategy 2000 (RDS-2000), and to ensure that the current railway projects are delivered timely, so as to support the continued population growth and economic development in Hong Kong as well as the increasing cross-boundary social and economic activities with the Mainland.

3. We propose to create –
 - (a) one permanent post of Principal Government Engineer (PGE) (D3), to be offset by the deletion of one supernumerary post of PGE (D3), to continue to head the Railway Development Office (RDO) of Highways Department (HyD);
 - (b) create one permanent post of Government Engineer (GE) (D2) to head the Railway Development Planning Group in the RDO comprising the Technical Services Division, the Railway Planning Division 1 and the Railway Planning Division 2;
 - (c) create one permanent post of Chief Engineer (CE) (D1) to head the Railway Planning Division 2 in the RDO;
 - (d) create one permanent post of Chief Engineer (CE) (D1) to head the Priority Railway Division of the Planning Branch of Transport Department (TD); and
 - (e) create one permanent post of Principal Transport Officer (PTO) (D1) to head a new Railway Division under the Bus Development Branch, which is to be reorganised and renamed the Bus and Railway Development Branch.

JUSTIFICATION

4. In May 2000, based on the findings of the Second Railway Development Study (RDS-2), the Government formulated RDS-2000 which maps out the next phase of railway network development for Hong Kong up to the year 2016. Specifically, RDS-2000 has recommended the implementation of six new railway projects (costing about \$80 to 100 billion in 1998 prices) to serve the development needs of the community. They are the Island Line Extensions (ISL), Shatin to Central Link (SCL), Kowloon Southern Link (KSL), Northern Link (NOL), Regional Express Line (REL) and Port Rail Line (PRL). The Railway Development Strategy 2000 was presented to the Panel on 25 May 2000.

5. Apart from the railway expansion under RDS-2000, works relating to the current priority railway projects (namely, KCR West Rail (WR), Tseung Kwan O Extension (TKE), and Quarry Bay Relief Works, Ma On Shan to Tai Wai rail link (MOS Rail), Tsim Sha Tsui Extension (TST Extension)) recommended by the Railway Development Strategy (RDS) in 1994, the Sheung Shui to Lok Ma Chau Spur Line (Spur Line) and the Penny's Bay Rail Link (PBRL) due to open in time for the Disney Theme Park, have to continue. These current railway projects, costing over \$100 billion in money-of-the-day prices, are at different stages of implementation and are scheduled for completion between 2002 and 2005.

6. The works involved in the planning and implementation of the 12 railway projects are complex and require senior level staff support in HyD and TD. HyD provides the essential engineering input into planning and implementation projects. Before the railway corporations take over the projects, HyD is responsible for ensuring that the chosen routes for future railway projects are not affected by future public and private sector development through a vetting of all such proposals along the future railway alignments to identify interface problems and co-ordinate a solution. HyD also verifies the preliminary engineering feasibility of the routes recommended by the RDS-2 consultant and develop these as the projects take shape. This will continue when the railway corporations take over the design of the individual projects as HyD is the Secretary for Transport's engineering adviser in determining whether route proposals from railway corporations are acceptable. HyD is also part of the team to examine project proposals from railway corporations to ensure that the most comprehensive and latest land use, population, economic, and financial data are used. Together with Lands Department, HyD ensures that all gazettal drawings are accurate and properly reflect the intentions of the project. HyD takes a major part in resolving objections to railway schemes and ensuring that railway corporations take full account of the residents' needs and wishes in devising engineering solutions to design problems. HyD also scrutinises advance work for future railway projects in other infrastructure works. HyD also monitors progress and helps to resolve interface problems between railway projects and other works on site. TD

provides major traffic engineering input into railway project planning and implementation. A lot of planning data used by the railway corporations, such as traffic demand and modal split, require vetting, and these have a major bearing on the viability of railway projects. The future co-ordination of the different transport modes after new railway projects commence operation depends on the adequate provision of suitable numbers of public transport interchanges at suitable locations and TD plans for such provision. TD also provides critical input into resolving traffic diversion during the construction period and plans for the co-ordination of the services of the different public transport modes and negotiates for its implementation.

7. To meet the tight implementation plans of the various RDS-2000 projects, we will invite in early 2001 the Mass Transit Railway Corporation (MTRC) and Kowloon Canton Railway Corporation (KCRC) to submit implementation proposals for the ISL and the KSL respectively. We will also need to work with the two railway corporations in early 2001 on the bid package for the SCL. Furthermore, the planning and implementation of the Spur Line and PBRL will be at a critical stage in early 2001 and additional senior level staff support in HyD and TD will be required to oversee these projects.

Highways Department

Railway Development Office (RDO)

8. Vide EC(98-99)26, Members approved on 12 March 1999 the creation of one PGE post on a supernumerary basis for a period of two years, designated as PGE/RD, to head HyD's RDO for planning and implementing all committed railway projects and undertaking the Second Railway Development Study. The continued need for the PGE/RD post is to be reviewed before the end of 2000 in accordance with the findings of the RDS-2000 and the future railway development plan.

9. The RDO, in conjunction with the Transport Bureau (TB) and the railway corporations, is closely involved in the planning, development and implementation of railway projects in Hong Kong. It oversees all railway projects from conception through to completion to ensure effective budget control and on-time project delivery. It comprises two core groups, namely the Project Administration Group (PAG) which is responsible for the detailed planning and implementation of the current railway projects, and the Railway Development Planning Group (RDPG) which is responsible for railway development planning, strategic review and the detailed planning and implementation of the six new railway projects recommended in RDS-2000.

Principal Government Engineer/Railway Development

10. To enable the RDO to take forward the new initiatives recommended in the RDS-2000 and to ensure an effective budget control and a timely delivery of the current and new railway projects, the establishment of the RDO, including the directorate staff and the professional, technical, clerical and secretarial support, needs to be strengthened.

11. As head of the RDO, the PGE/RD is responsible for the overall planning of the territory's railway network and taking charge of all priority railway projects, as well as those new railway projects, from conception through to completion. He has to liaise with the Mainland Authorities on issues related to cross-boundary and infrastructure development and is responsible for formulating the railway development strategy and advising the way forward, and identifying new railway routes in the overall development context and initiating actions on railway route protection. He is also responsible for providing expert advice to TB on all matters arising from or related to the implementation of railway projects. The planning, management, co-ordination and legislative responsibilities of the PGE/RD post have increased significantly and will continue to increase in the next 15 years up to 2016.

12. To take charge of the comprehensive planning, management and co-ordination of the six new railway projects and initiate legislative proposals, adequate senior and experienced directorate input is of utmost importance to the RDO. The existing supernumerary post of PGE/RD will lapse on 12 March 2001. The management expertise and professional knowledge required for taking charge of these projects are however beyond the level of the current permanent GE post in RDO and an experienced directorate officer at PGE level is definitely essential. As the implementation of the new railway projects as announced in RDS-2000 will be completed in phases between 2008 to 2016, continuous commitment from RDO is essential in managing and monitoring these railway projects. We therefore see a long-term need of the existing supernumerary post of PGE/RD post and propose to make it permanent with immediate effect.

13. The proposed PGE/RD, to be assisted by the existing Government Engineer/Railway Development (GE/RD) to head the PAG and the proposed Government Engineer (to be designated as Government Engineer/Railway Planning (GE/RP)) to head the RDPG, will continue to direct, co-ordinate, control and monitor the planning and implementation of railway development in Hong Kong.

Government Engineer/Railway Planning

14. Upon the announcement of RDS-2000 in May 2000, the RDO has been under heavy pressure from the public as well as legislators to complete the SCL between 2008 to 2011. To achieve this, it has been necessary to advance the process of selecting an operator for the SCL, to allow enough time for the bidding process to be completed by the end of 2001 and an operator to be appointed in early 2002 for completion of the Link by around 2008. Owing to the tight planning and implementation programme, a supernumerary Government Engineer (GE) post in RDO has been created in HyD under delegated authority on 25 July 2000 for six months to head the RDPG. The supernumerary GE post will lapse on 25 January 2001.

15. We need a permanent GE post in the RDO to continue the work on the SCL and to assist PGE/RD on all matters relating to the planning of future railway development, implementation of the six railway projects recommended in the RDS-2000, and provide continuity on project management. The proposed GE post, to be designated as GE/RP, will prepare the bid packages, assessment criteria and project briefs and invite proposals for the construction and operation of the new railway projects as well as carry out all statutory procedures and approval processes. He will also manage the railway district administration duties and oversee the updating and maintenance of the railway transport model¹. As the planning of long-term railway development network and implementation of the new initiatives as announced in the RDS-2000 requires continuous monitoring, review and updating to match the long term economic, social, land and housing developments of Hong Kong, we propose to create a permanent GE post with immediate effect.

Chief Engineer/Railway Planning (2)

16. The proposed Chief Engineer post, to be designated as Chief Engineer/Railway Planning(2) (CE/RP(2)), will head the Railway Planning Division 2 and assist the GE/RP in managing and overseeing the detailed planning and implementation of the SCL and ISL, monitoring the performance of consultants and co-ordinating actions to rationalise route protection for the new railway routes. Upon creation of the proposed CE/RP(2) post, the responsibilities of the three divisions in the RDO will be re-shuffled as follows -

¹ The railway transport model is a sophisticated computerized railway planning tool. It encompasses a huge database of socio-economic and land-use data in a computerized modelling system and is designed to produce patronage forecasts. Assisted by the Chief Engineer/Technical Services, GE/RP will be responsible for updating of railway patronage forecasts, overseeing the compilation and analysis of data on railway ridership, collation of key planning and land-use information for railway transport planning, maintaining and improving a transport demand model, and also the on-going review and enhancement of the railway planning database.

- (a) Technical Services Division – to establish and manage, modify and adapt the railway transport model and data base so as to produce a reliable, effective and responsive planning tool to produce contemporary and continuing assessments of the future rail-based transport developments. It will take charge of the detailed planning and implementation of the NOL and REL, including preparation of the project brief, assessment of proposals from the corporations, formulation of the Project Agreement, undertaking necessary statutory procedures, acquisition of land and subsequent monitoring and aiding the implementation of the projects during construction. In addition, the team will handle all district administration matters for the whole of Hong Kong as regards railway development and initiate actions to rationalise route protection for the new railway routes;
- (b) Railway Planning Division 1 – to monitor and aid in the planning and implementation of the PBRL. It will also take charge of the detailed planning and implementation of the PRL and KSL, including preparation of the project brief, assessment of proposals from the corporations, formulation of the Project Agreement, undertaking necessary statutory procedures, acquisition of land and subsequent monitoring and aiding the implementation of the projects during construction, and initiating actions to rationalise route protection for the new railway routes; and
- (c) Railway Planning Division 2 – to take charge of the detailed planning and implementation of the SCL and ISL, including formulating the bid package for the SCL and undertaking the technical assessment of the submission, preparation of the project brief for the ISL, assessment of proposals from the corporations, formulation of the Project Agreement, undertaking necessary statutory procedures, acquisition of land and subsequent monitoring and aiding the implementation of the projects during construction, and initiating actions to rationalise route protection for the new railway routes.

17. As the planning and implementation of the new initiatives announced in the RDS-2000 require continuous monitoring in the transport performance of the railway network, we see a long-term need for the CE/RP(2) post and propose it to be created on a permanent basis with effect from 1 April 2001. The existing and proposed organisation charts of HyD are at Enclosures 1 and 2.

Encl. 1 & 2

18. To render support to the expanded RDO, we also need to create eight non-directorate civil service staff, namely three Senior Technical Officers (Civil), two Senior Survey Officers (Engineering), one Senior Clerical Officer, one Personal Secretary I and one Personal Secretary II.

Transport Department

Chief Engineer / Priority Railway

Encl. 3 19. At present, TD's Priority Railway Division (PRD) of the Planning Branch (PB) is served by two engineering teams led by two Senior Engineers (SE), and a Priority Railway (Public Transport) Section led by one Chief Transport Officer (CTO). The PRD is already heavily involved with the current on-going priority railway projects. The two SEs and the CTO currently report directly to the Assistant Commissioner/Planning (AC/P) as shown in the existing organisation chart at Enclosure 3.

20. With three of the RDS-2000 new railway schemes coming on stream, TD will be tasked with additional workload which includes -

- (a) Providing input to the selection and evaluation of the operating agency for the SCL;
- (b) Evaluating technical submissions from the railway corporations on the three new railways;
- (c) Providing input to scheme gazettal and resolution of objections arising therefrom;
- (d) Providing professional input on traffic engineering matters for the railways and their related developments at both the detailed design and construction stages; and
- (e) Managing traffic and transport diversions during railway construction.

Encl. 4 21. To cope with the surge in workload, we propose to create a new permanent CE (D1) post with effect from 1 April 2001 to provide guidance and directive to the PRD which will be responsible for the current as well as the new railway projects in terms of engineering and transport planning inputs. The CE will also take up the day-to-day administration of the PRD, which is presently shouldered by an SE acting as Officer-in-charge. Depending on cross-boundary traffic build-up and growth of rail-borne freight, the three remaining railway schemes, namely, the NOL, REL and PRL would likely be taken forward with completion time frames planned in 2016 or beyond. The CE will report to the Assistant Commissioner/Planning. The proposed organisation chart is at Enclosure 4.

Principal Transport Officer / Bus and Railways

22. The Bus Development Branch (BDB) was originally tasked with the planning and regulation of franchised and non-franchised bus services. The scope of BDB has recently been expanded to include railway services and other environmentally friendly public transport modes. A small section was created in 1999 to assist the Assistant Commissioner for Transport / Bus Development (AC/BD) to deal with railway issues. On 25 April 2000, a supernumerary PTO post was created for six months under delegated authority in BDB to study the feasibility of trolley bus operation in Hong Kong, and to co-ordinate initiatives of vehicle technology and alternative fuels for franchised buses. Another supernumerary PTO post was created for six months under delegated authority on 25 October 2000 to deal with the provision and upgrading of public transport interchanges, as well as overseeing the planning matters in Lantau Island including Disneyland development. The supernumerary PTO is also required to monitor and liaise with the MTRC Limited (MTRCL) on a regular basis since the privatisation of the MTRC which requires the company to operate railway services in accordance with an operating agreement. The existing organisation chart is at Enclosure 3.

Encl. 3

23. At present, the Priority Railway (Public Transport) Section under PRD is responsible for devising service re-organisation plans for the new railways, planning of public transport interchanges and public transport diversions for railway construction. To achieve greater efficiency and enhance interface between road and rail transport, it is considered necessary to transfer the Priority Railway (Public Transport) Section currently under the PRD to the BDB.

24. The railway duties of the BDB are expected to increase in quantity and complexity with the implementation of the RDS-2000 and the privatisation of the MTRC in 2000. With the completion of the nine new railways during 2002 to 2013, TD is required to map out a well co-ordinated public transport network with railway as backbone. We therefore consider it necessary to re-organise the BDB to form a Bus and Railway Development Branch (BRB) with a Bus Development Division headed by PTO/Bus Development to deal with road-based public transport modes, and a Railway Division (RD) amalgamating the existing Priority Railway (Public Transport) Section from the PB, to be under a PTO, the post for which is proposed to be created. The proposed organisation chart of BRB is at Enclosure 4.

Encl. 4

25. The Government's target is to increase the railway market share of total public transport trips from the present 31% to 39% by 2006. This target can only be achieved with the smooth provision of the railway system as well as better co-ordination with other transport modes. The proposed PTO will be responsible for ensuring the smooth implementation of the railway projects during the

construction stage with minimum disruption to the existing public transport services. The PTO will also have to plan public transport interchanges at the new railway stations to ensure the provision of good quality interchange facilities to enhance the attractiveness of the rail modes. The PTO will have to plan ahead with transport service re-organisation and rationalisation programme to maximise the benefits of the new railways, to minimise adverse impact on passengers and to re-organise the operation of the affected operators (including buses and minibuses). The transfer of the Priority Railway (Public Transport) Section to RD of BRB will consolidate service-related work of road-based and railway modes under one roof.

26. Other than the new railways, the PTO will also have to monitor the performance of the existing railways and particularly that of the recently privatised MTRCL, to ensure that the high quality services are maintained and to encourage use of the more efficient and environmentally friendly mode.

27. The planning and monitoring of railway services are complex tasks requiring much inter-modal co-ordination. Due to the increased competitiveness of the transport modes, resolving conflicts among different modes and striking a balance between healthy competition and co-ordination is becoming an increasingly complex and contentious task. Monitoring and regulation of railways is a complex subject. TD will need to expand gradually its expertise and capability to monitor the passenger services of the privatised MTRCL. Monitoring and regulatory procedures and internal systems will have to be set up and much more frequent liaison will need to be established to fulfill our role as regulator and in vetting performance standards and requirements. When the Legislative Council was briefed on matters relating to the Mass Transit Railway Bill in 1999, we mentioned that we would need to strengthen our capability in monitoring and regulating the railways by bidding for additional resources. We consider this to be the appropriate time to create a permanent PTO post with effect from 1 April 2001 to tackle all these complicated duties to ensure the provision of a well co-ordinated and efficient public transport system with railways as the backbone.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

28. The Government formulated the first Railway Development Strategy (RDS) for Hong Kong in 1994 and accorded priority to the implementation of priority railway projects, namely, the KCR West Rail, the MTR TKE and the MOS Rail coupled with an extension of the KCR East Rail from Hung Hom to Tsim Sha Tsui. These rail projects are now at different stages of implementation. In 1999, Executive Council decided that we should proceed with the implementation of the Spur Line for an additional rail passenger boundary crossing to provide relief to Lo Wu. Executive Council also decided in late 1999 that the PBRL should be built and completed in time for the opening of

the Theme Park. Thus a total of six new railway lines are scheduled for completion between 2002 and 2005.

29. In March 1998, the Government commissioned the RDS-2 to examine how best to further expand the rail network in Hong Kong in order to meet the rail transport needs arising from population growth and increase in cross-boundary activities for the next two decades. RDS-2 is now completed and based on its findings, the Government formulated RDS-2000 which underlines Government's policy on railway development and indicates which rail schemes should be included in the next phase of railway network development for Hong Kong.

Highways Department

30. Vide EC(96-97)46, Finance Committee (FC) approved on 6 December 1996, the creation of one supernumerary post of Chief Engineer for five years for planning of the priority railway projects recommended by RDS.

31. Vide EC(98-99)26, FC approved on 12 March 1999, the creation of one supernumerary Principal Government Engineer post for two years, and two supernumerary Chief Engineers posts for six years to provide additional dedicated directorate support for planning and implementation of new railway projects and future railway development. The supernumerary Principal Government Engineer post will lapse on 12 March 2001.

32. On 25 July 2000, a supernumerary Government Engineer post was created under delegated authority for six months to assist PGE/RD on matters relating to future railway development and implementation of RDS-2000 new railway projects. The post will lapse on 25 January 2001.

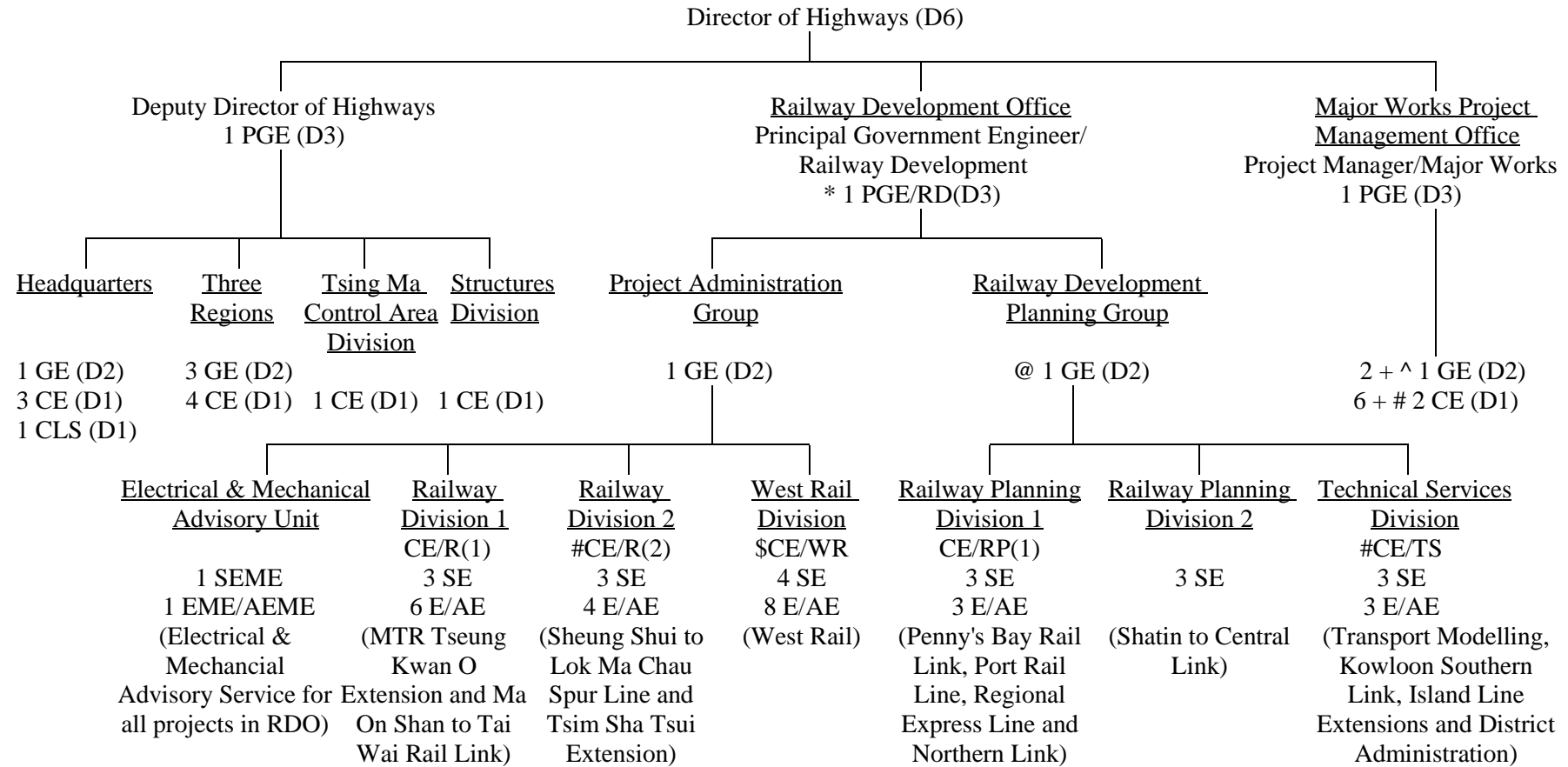
Transport Department

33. TD's Priority Railway Division (PRD) was set up in 1998 and charged with the responsibility of providing professional input on traffic and transport aspects to these railway schemes. The PRD establishment must now be strengthened to cater for the additional initiatives set out in RDS-2000. In particular, the PRD can no longer effectively function without a CE(D1) officer as Division Head to provide the necessary leadership and ensure that proper input is provided in a timely manner to this urgent and vital work.

34. A small Railway Division in Bus Development Branch (BDB) was originally set up under PTO/Bus Development and AC/BD and charged with the responsibilities of preparatory work for the monitoring of MTRCL. With the growing complexity in this task and the public transport planning and co-ordination work associated with the new railways, it is now necessary to transfer the Priority Railway (Public Transport) Section from the Planning Branch to the reorganized BDB which is to be renamed Bus and Railway Development Branch, and to create a PTO(D1) post to lead the team and provide adequate support to the retitled Assistant Commissioner for Transport/Bus and Railway Development.

Transport Bureau
December 2000

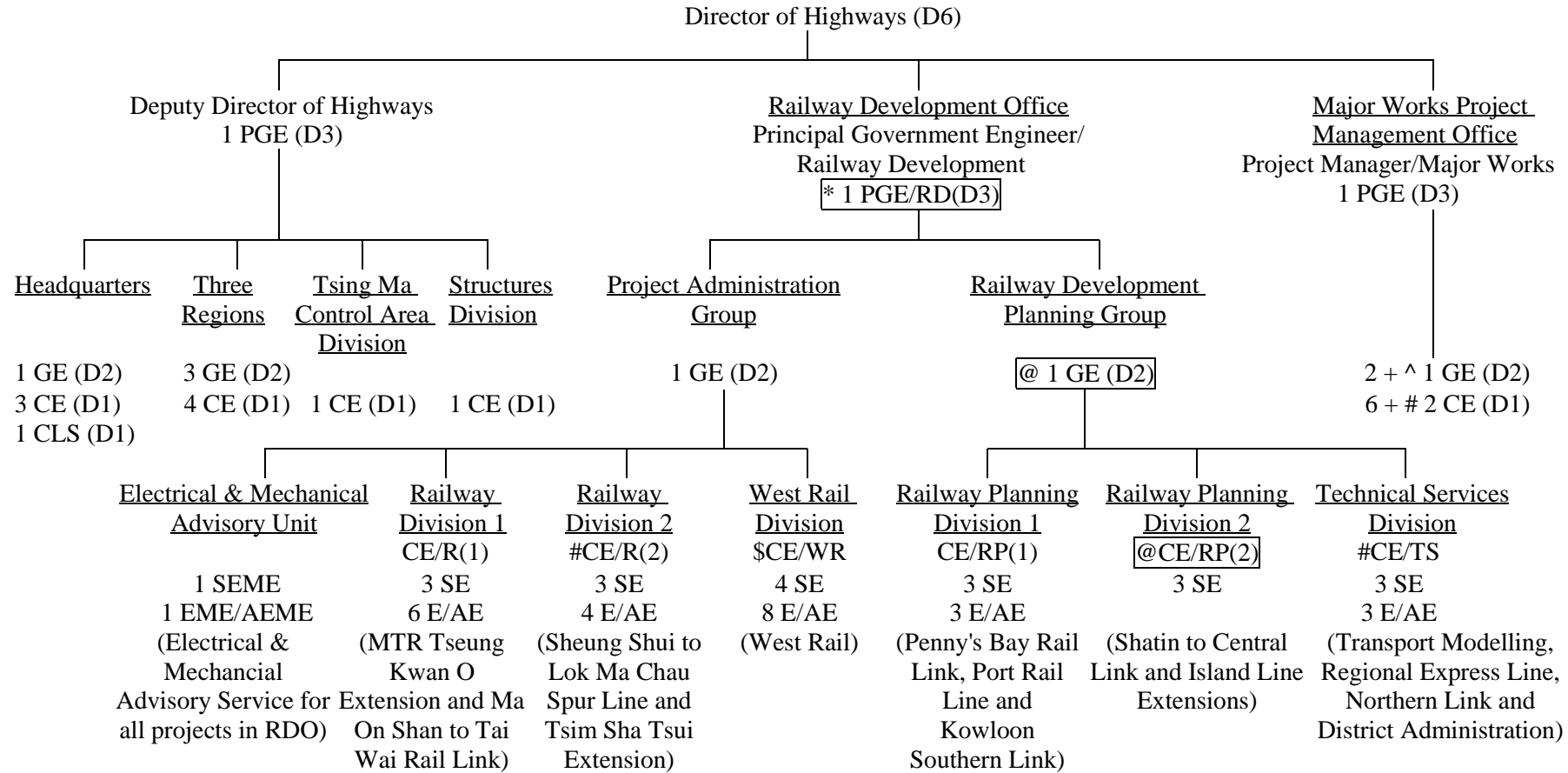
Existing Organisation Chart of Railway Development Office, Highways Department



LEGEND

- | | | | | | |
|------|---------------------------------|----------|---|----|--|
| PGE | - Principal Government Engineer | CLS | - Chief Land Surveyor | * | - Supernumerary PGE post to lapse on 12.3.2001 |
| GE | - Government Engineer | SEME | - Senior Electrical & Mechanical Engineer | @ | - Supernumerary GE post to lapse on 25.1.2001 |
| CE | - Chief Engineer | EME/AEME | - Electrical & Mechanical Engineer/
Assistant Electrical & Mechanical Engineer | ^ | - Supernumerary GE post to lapse on 12.3.2005 |
| SE | - Senior Engineer | | | \$ | - Supernumerary CE post to lapse on 6.12.2001 |
| E/AE | - Engineer/Assistant Engineer | | | # | - Supernumerary CE posts to lapse on 12.3.2005 |

Proposed Organisation Chart of Railway Development Office, Highways Department



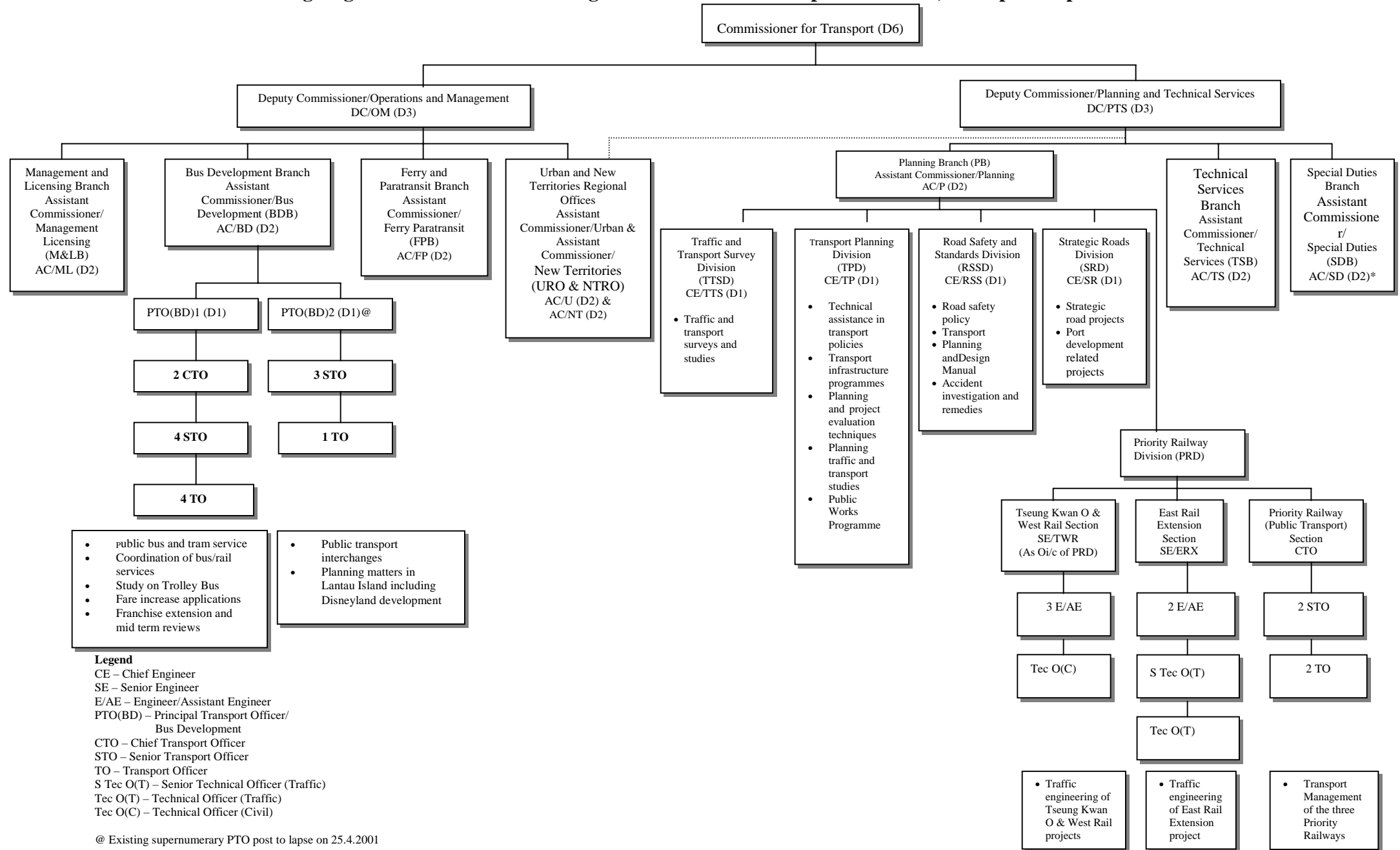
LEGEND

PGE - Principal Government Engineer
 GE - Government Engineer
 CE - Chief Engineer
 SE - Senior Engineer
 E/AE - Engineer/Assistant Engineer
 CLS - Chief Land Surveyor
 SEME - Senior Electrical & Mechanical Engineer
 EME/AEME - Electrical & Mechanical Engineer/Assistant Electrical & Mechanical Engineer

* - Proposed directorate post to be converted into permanent post
 @ - Proposed permanent directorate posts to be created
 ^ - Supernumerary GE post to lapse on 12.3.2005
 \$ - Supernumerary CE post to lapse on 6.12.2001
 # - Supernumerary CE posts to lapse on 12.3.2005

(Note: The continuous needs of the supernumerary directorate posts will be reviewed in due course.)

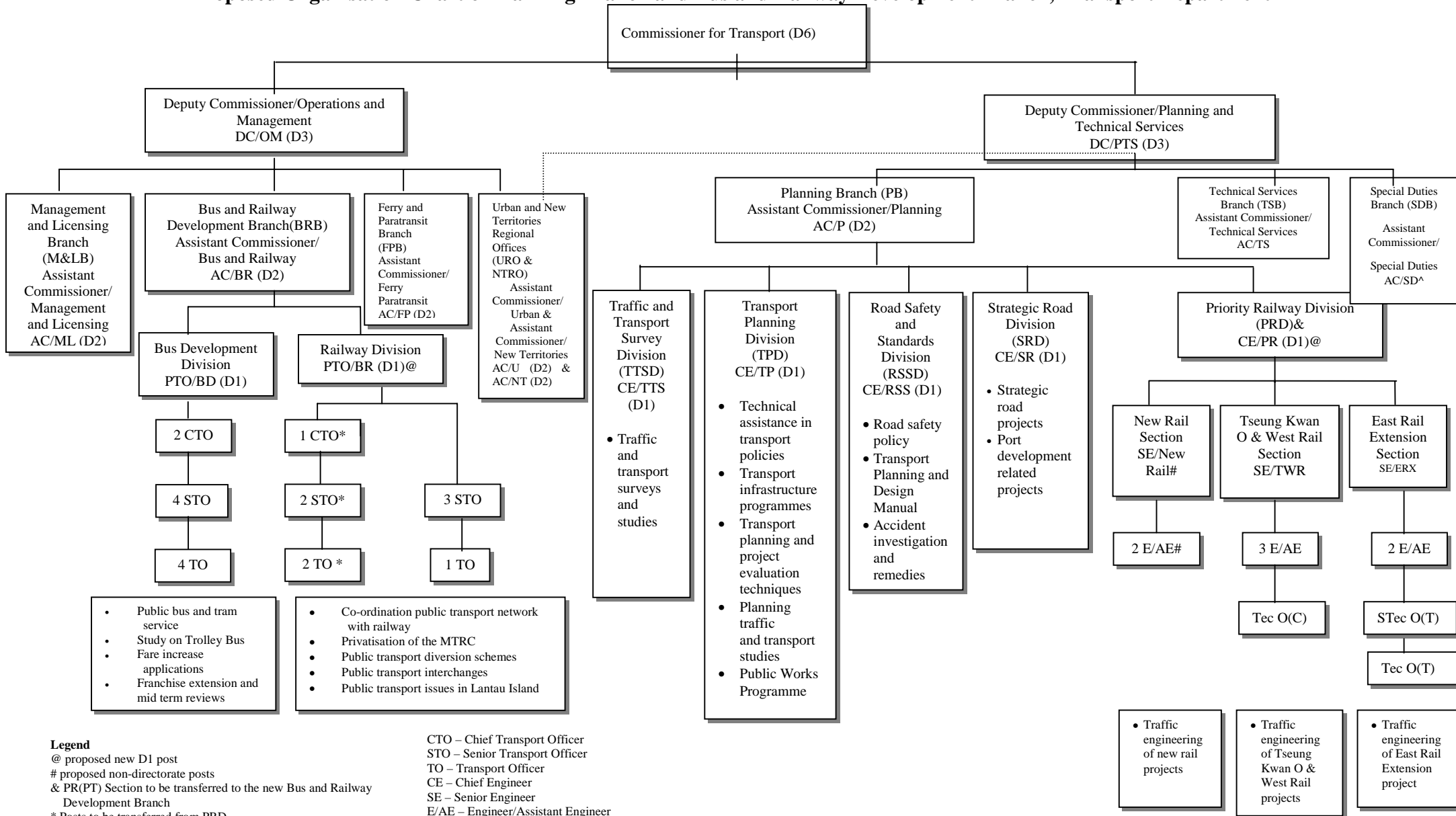
Existing Organisation Chart of Planning Branch and Bus Development Branch, Transport Department



Legend
 CE – Chief Engineer
 SE – Senior Engineer
 E/AE – Engineer/Assistant Engineer
 PTO(BD) – Principal Transport Officer/Bus Development
 CTO – Chief Transport Officer
 STO – Senior Transport Officer
 TO – Transport Officer
 S Tec O(T) – Senior Technical Officer (Traffic)
 Tec O(T) – Technical Officer (Traffic)
 Tec O(C) – Technical Officer (Civil)

@ Existing supernumerary PTO post to lapse on 25.4.2001
 * Existing supernumerary AC/SD post to lapse on 24.1.2001

Proposed Organisation Chart of Planning Branch and Bus and Railway Development Branch, Transport Department



Legend
 @ proposed new D1 post
 # proposed non-directorate posts
 & PR(PT) Section to be transferred to the new Bus and Railway Development Branch
 * Posts to be transferred from PRD
 PTO/BD – Principal Transport Officer/Bus Development
 PTO/BR – Principal Transport Officer/Bus & Railway Development

CTO – Chief Transport Officer
 STO – Senior Transport Officer
 TO – Transport Officer
 CE – Chief Engineer
 SE – Senior Engineer
 E/AE – Engineer/Assistant Engineer
 S Tec O(T) – Senior Technical Officer (Traffic)
 Tec O(T) – Technical Officer (Traffic)
 Tec O(C) – Technical Officer (Civil)

^existing supernumerary AC/SD post to lapse on 24.1.2001