

NOTE FOR PUBLIC WORKS SUBCOMMITTEE OF FINANCE COMMITTEE

Supplementary information on 72KA – Improvement works at Lo Wu Terminal Building

INTRODUCTION

In considering PWSC(2002-03)8 on **72KA** at the Public Works Subcommittee (PWSC) meeting held on 17 April 2002, Members requested the Administration to provide supplementary information on the following –

- (a) existing contractual arrangement between Government Property Agency (GPA) and Kowloon-Canton Railway Corporation (KCRC) on the sharing of management fees for Lo Wu Terminal Building; and
- (b) an overview of the Government's plans to facilitate cross boundary traffic.

THE ADMINISTRATION'S RESPONSE

Existing arrangement between GPA and KCRC on the sharing of management fees for Lo Wu Terminal Building

2. The basis for apportionment and contribution of costs is laid down in a schedule of responsibilities between KCRC and Government which covers various maintenance and management issues. On a pro-rata basis, Government shares about 70% of the costs.

3. With the stage III vesting of the remainder of Lo Wu Terminal in KCRC on 2 January 2002, Government is discussing with KCRC details of a formal management agreement.

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An overview of the Government's efforts to facilitate cross boundary traffic

4. We have put in place a series of measures and will consider the introduction of new technology to improve the cross-boundary facilities for clearance of passengers and vehicles. Details are as follows –

(a) Passenger traffic

5. **“Co-location” of immigration and customs facilities on the Shenzhen side** – We plan to pursue the concept of co-location of facilities for handling passenger traffic at Huanggang. Under this concept, the majority of the passenger traffic will be diverted to the Huanggang Control Point to undergo clearance procedures required by both sides. This will leave all vehicle lanes at Lok Ma Chau free for the clearance of goods vehicles. Such an arrangement will not only bring travel convenience to passengers but will also enhance the efficiency of clearance of goods vehicles. Co-location arrangement will also be adopted for the Shenzhen Western Corridor when it opens in 2005-06.

6. **Contra-flow (tidal flow) arrangement** – Since December 1999, we have been making arrangements to open some arrival counters for departure clearance during departure peaks and vice versa to ease passenger traffic at the dominant flow direction.

7. **Extension of operating hours** – With effect from 1 December 2001, the operating hours for passenger traffic at Lo Wu and Lok Ma Chau control points have been extended, running from 6:30 am to midnight.

8. **Enhancement of manpower resources** – The Immigration Department has created 117 posts at the Lo Wu Control Point in financial year 2001-02 and will further strengthen manpower there in 2002-03. As for the Customs and Excise Department, the number of posts will be increased by 33 at the Lo Wu Control Point in financial year 2002-03 to cope with the increasing passenger traffic.

9. **Issue of machine-readable travel documents** – The Immigration Department introduced new machine-readable Re-entry Permits in December 2001. The Department will also enhance existing non machine-readable Re-entry Permits (totaling around 400 000) by attaching machine-readable labels on them free of charge. This would shorten clearance time at control points by doing away with the need to manually input the personal data of holders, and would help speed up the passenger flow. For similar reasons, the Department also intends to issue machine-readable Document of Identity by end 2002.

10. **Expansion works at Lok Ma Chau** – We commenced the Phase II Expansion project at Lok Ma Chau in November 2000. Upon completion, the passenger hall will be expanded and renovated, and the number of immigration counters will be increased to 50. This will increase the handling capacity of the control point to 7 000 passengers per hour. The project will be completed in phases with full completion scheduled for September 2003.

11. **Improvement works at Lo Wu Terminal** – A major improvement initiative is the project to widen the passageway to alleviate congestion, expansion of the Departure Hall and addition of immigration counters to cater for clearance of more passengers during peak periods. PWSC endorsed this project on 17 April and works are expected to be completed by phases by February 2005.

12. **Widening of passenger lanes and installation of jet fans on Lo Wu Footbridge (completed)** – This is a short-term improvement project jointly conducted with the Shenzhen authorities. The works covered widening of passenger lanes, replacement of floor tiles and ceilings and installation of 72 jet fans on Lo Wu Footbridge. The works were completed in early February 2002.

13. **Widening of the passageway to the Departure Hall of Lo Wu Terminal Building** – The works cover widening of the passageway to the Departure Hall of Lo Wu Terminal Building by relocating the Police Reporting Centre on the ground floor to a mezzanine deck to be built above the northern end of Platform 3. The works, to be carried out under a separate minor works project, are expected to start in the third quarter of 2002 for completion in early 2004.

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14. **Replacement of existing immigration clearance counters** – The works involve the replacement of 46 side-facing counters with 48 front-facing counters at the Arrival Hall of Lo Wu Terminal Building so as to provide 3 metres of additional circulation space for each counter. The works, to be carried out under a separate minor works project, are expected to start in the third quarter of 2002 for completion by phases in early 2003.

15. **Installation of air-conditioning on Lo Wu Footbridge** – Agreement in principle has been reached with the Shenzhen authorities to install air-conditioning on Lo Wu Footbridge. The project would require the construction of independent structures to support the curtain walls to enclose the Footbridge. Discussions with the Shenzhen authorities on implementation details are on-going.

(b) Goods vehicular traffic

16. **Dedicated lanes for unladen goods vehicles scheme** – Customs & Excise Department introduced this scheme in August 1999. At present, unladen goods vehicles account for 60% and 30% of northbound and southbound traffic respectively. Through separate processing of unladen and laden goods vehicles, the average handling capacity of a customs kiosk in respect of unladen vehicles can be increased from 60-90 vehicles to 110-130 vehicles per hour.

17. **Land cargo advance clearance system** – Customs and Excise Department has been operating a trial scheme of Land Cargo Advance Clearance System at Lok Ma Chau Control Point since March 2000. Under the scheme, vehicular clearance time will be shortened by advance submission and processing of cargo manifest. This scheme may bridge over to the future Road Manifest Electronic Data Interface.

18. **Super Link China Direct** – Customs and Excise Department introduced the Super Link China Direct scheme in August 2000. Transshipment air cargo headed for the Mainland via Lok Ma Chau Control Point will be checked at the airport by Customs and then sealed. The sealed cargo will usually not be checked again, and the corresponding clearance time at land boundary crossings can thus be shortened.

19. **Opening of more lanes at night** – With effect from 1 December 2001, two northbound lanes and four southbound lanes have been open from 10 pm to midnight at the Lok Ma Chau/ Huanggang Control Point.

20. **Expansion works at Lok Ma Chau** – Following the completion of Phase I expansion project in December 1999, the number of inspection kiosks at the Lok Ma Chau Control Point has been increased from 14 to 24. Upon completion of Phase II of the project in September 2003 which includes the replacement of the old kiosks, the vehicular handling capacity of the Control Point will be raised to 32 000 vehicles per day, as opposed to the original daily capacity of 19 000 vehicles before the expansion project began. We will also install fixed vehicle x-ray systems for checking vehicles.

(c) Introduction of new technology

21. **Automatic vehicle recognition system** – Through installing an automated computer system to recognise vehicle registration numbers by the use of digital cameras and infrared equipment, the processing time for each vehicle will be reduced by two to three seconds on average. Installation works will commence in June this year in customs kiosks at Lok Ma Chau, Man Kam To and Sha Tou Kok Control Points respectively by phases.

22. **Automated passenger clearance** – The Immigration Department aims to introduce smart identity cards in mid 2003 and to replace the existing identity cards in phases within a four-year period. The new identity cards provide a platform for using biometric recognition technology, and would facilitate the launching of a self-service immigration clearance system in future. System analysis and design for the smart identity cards are now in progress. It is estimated that the self-service clearance system would be implemented in 2004-05.

23. **Automated vehicle clearance** – Operating on a similar basis to Automated Passenger Clearance, self-service vehicular clearance kiosks would be set up by using vehicle and biometric identification technology. The Immigration Department plans to speed up the implementation of the Automated Vehicle Clearance System so as to tie in with launching of the Automated Passenger Clearance System as soon as possible.

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24. **Road Manifest Electronic Data Interface (EDI)** – In order to ease the long-term pressure arising from cargo clearance, Customs and Excise Department is now actively studying the feasibility of introducing Road Manifest EDI. Under the system, land cargo manifest can in future be submitted to Customs and Excise Department for advance clearance by electronic means. Implementation of the system, if proved feasible, would greatly reduce the processing time for vehicles at customs kiosks.

(d) New boundary crossings

25. We will build new boundary crossings to alleviate congestion at existing control points and meet the ever growing demand. The Shenzhen Western Corridor and the Lok Ma Chau Spur Line are scheduled for completion in 2005-06 and mid 2007 respectively. The estimated traffic of Shenzhen Western Corridor in 2006 is 28 400 vehicles per day, and can be further increased to handle 44 000 vehicles by 2011. The planned capacity for Lok Ma Chau Spur Line is 150 000 passengers per day initially, and it can be further increased to handle 300 000 passengers. The Lok Ma Chau terminal has design provision to allow future expansion to double its immigration clearance capacity. KCRC can also increase the train frequency to Lok Ma Chau to cope with the increase.

Security Bureau
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