

立法會
Legislative Council

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Legislative Council
Panel on Transport

Minutes of special meeting held on
Friday, 17 December 2001, at 2:40 pm
in the Chamber of the Legislative Council Building

- Members present** : Hon Miriam LAU Kin-ye, JP (Chairman)
Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, JP (Deputy Chairman)
Dr Hon David CHU Yu-lin, JP
Ir Dr Hon Raymond HO Chung-tai, JP
Hon CHAN Kwok-keung
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 LEUNG Fu-wah, MH, JP
Hon WONG Sing-chi
Hon LAU Ping-cheung
- Non-Panel members attending** : Hon Cyd HO Sau-lan
Hon Eric LI Ka-cheung, JP
Hon Emily LAU Wai-hing, JP
- Members absent** : Hon Mrs Selina CHOW LIANG Shuk-ye, JP
Hon Albert HO Chun-yan
Hon Andrew WONG Wang-fat, JP

**Public officers
attending**

: Transport Bureau

Mr Paul TANG
Deputy Secretary for Transport

Ms Shirley LAM
Principal Assistant Secretary for Transport

Transport Department

Mr Tony SO
Chief Engineer

Highways Department

Mr Robert LLOYD
Project Manager, Major Works Project Management Office

Mr Adrian NG
Deputy Project Manager,
Major Works Project Management Office

Mr Norman MAK
Acting Deputy Project Manager,
Major Works Project Management Office

**Attendance by
invitation**

: Faculty of Business and Economics, The University of Hong Kong

Prof Richard WONG
Acting Dean and Professor of Economics

Port and Maritime Board

Dr Sir Gordon WU, KCMG, FICE
Chairman

Ir Leo K K LEUNG
Assistant to Sir Gordon WU

The Hong Kong Institution of Engineers

Ir Dr Alex S K CHAN
Vice President

Ir Kenneth K S AU-YEUNG
Executive Member

Save Our Shorelines Society

Ms Christine LOH
Chairperson

The Association of Consulting Engineers of Hong Kong

Mr K W LEE
Council Member

Route 3 (CPS) Company Limited

Mr Winston K S CHU
Vice-Chairman

Mr Edwin HULL
Technical Director, Wilbur Smith Associates Limited

The Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport in Hong Kong

Mr K Y LEUNG
Council Member

Clerk in attendance : Mr Andy LAU
Chief Assistant Secretary (1)2

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

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I Shenzhen Western Corridor, Deep Bay Link and Route 10

The Chairman welcomed the representatives of the Administration and the attending deputations to the meeting.

2. The Chairman recapitulated that when the three projects - Shenzhen Western Corridor (SWC), Deep Bay Link (DBL) and Route 10 were last discussed by the Panel on 23 November 2001, members had expressed serious concerns on the following:

- (a) The gap between the completion of SWC/DBL and Route 10 causing

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congestion on Tuen Mun Road;

- (b) The projected utilization of Route 10 vis-à-vis Tuen Mun Road which was an untolled road; and
- (c) The need to review the tolling strategy of Route 3 (Country Park Section) (Route 3) and Route 10, taking into account the need to ensure traffic diversion, and the need to achieve optimal utilization of scarce tunnel resources.

3. Members noted the written submission from the Hong Kong Institute of Planners (LC Paper No. CB(1)600/01-02(01)). The Chairman also drew members' attention to the three submissions tabled at the meeting from the Yuen Long District Council, Friends of the Earth and Mr Richard YU (issued subsequently after the meeting vide LC Paper Nos. 655/01-02(04), (05) and (06) respectively).

4. The Chairman invited members to note the views of Mr Andrew WONG who was not available to attend the meeting. Mr Andrew WONG opined that the Administration should defer the Route 10 project and consider providing a direct connection from SWC/DBL to Route 3.

5. The Chairman then invited the attending representatives to present their views on the three projects.

Meeting with deputations

Professor Richard WONG

Acting Dean and Professor of Economics, Faculty of Business and Economics, The University of Hong Kong

6. Prof Richard WONG referred to the submission he tabled at the meeting and stated that the cost of constructing Route 10 which was estimated to be \$22 billion represented a considerable outlay of public funds at a time when the Government was facing a forecasted deficit of some \$60 billion in the coming year. Therefore, it would require careful consideration on the rationale for taking the project forward at this stage in its present form.

(Post-meeting note: The submission from Prof WONG was subsequently issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(1)655/01-02(01).)

7. In terms of providing a connection to SWC/DBL and relieving traffic on Tuen Mun Road, Prof WONG considered that as there would be a three-year gap between the completion of SWC/DBL and Route 10, traffic congestion on the already over-utilized Tuen Mun Road would become extremely severe. Even after the three-year period, traffic congestion would still build up at Ting Kau Bridge. Hence, Route 10

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did not provide a satisfactory solution for connecting traffic into the urban areas.

8. Regarding the Government's stated objective of providing an additional road link to Lantau Island via Tsing Lung Bridge, Prof WONG opined that the bridge could be constructed as a stand-alone project linking Lantau Island to Tuen Mun Road. He added that as presently proposed, Route 10 clearly failed to take into account future plans for the development of new container terminals and this would be poor planning in view of the correct current emphasis on developing Hong Kong's role as the logistics hub in southern China.

9. Speaking on possible alternatives, Prof WONG considered that Route 3 with its low utilization rate would suggest a more cost-effective short-term solution for connecting DBL and relieving congestion at Tuen Mun Road. If a Western Highway connecting DBL to Route 3 was to be constructed, it would provide a cheaper and earlier solution to congestion on Tuen Mun Road. He stressed that from a social point of view, it made no sense to allow Route 3 to remain under-utilized while proceeding with the construction of Route 10 to relieve congestion on Tuen Mun Road. This would be an enormous waste of public resources.

10. Prof WONG then elaborated on the pecuniary measure available to divert traffic from Tuen Mun Road to Route 3 in the form of a "shadow toll" which meant that the Government would purchase road capacity from Route 3 which was tolled. He explained that "shadow tolls" had been utilized elsewhere, for example, the United Kingdom, as temporary measures to address cases of extreme imbalance in road utilization resulting from over-congestion on toll-free roads. The purchase of road capacity on tolled roads by the Government would result in an implicit cash subsidy for those who utilized the tolled roads and an implicit subsidy for the value of time saved for those who used the toll-free roads. Such a scheme would result in an overall improvement in road utilization efficiency. Hence, there was clearly good social justification for why this should be done.

11. Prof WONG further advised that if "shadow toll" was to apply to Route 3, the amount of subsidy per vehicle could be reduced over time according to a pre-determined schedule. Moreover, the purchase of road capacity did not need to apply to all forms of traffic. The selective purchase of capacity applicable to lorries and container trucks would be a better policy measure to relieve truck and lorry traffic from Tuen Mun Road and divert them to Route 3. By selective targetting of subsidies, the amount of road capacity to be purchased could be limited while serving to support the development of the logistics industry.

12. For illustration purpose, Prof WONG said that if a \$30 subsidy was provided for the 40 000 or so trucks and lorries using Route 3 per day, the total subsidy would be approximately \$438 million a year, which still compared favourably with the average annual interest cost of \$550 million arising from the construction of Route 10 during the construction period (assuming that Route 10 had a linear expenditure time

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line for the duration of the construction period at an interest rate of 5%). Additional benefits in terms of time savings for drivers who stayed on Tuen Mun Road would also result. Summing up his views, Prof WONG said that it seemed clearly that there was a choice for traffic arrangements that was dominant to the construction of Route 10 today.

*Sir Gordon WU, Chairman of Port and Maritime Board
(LC Paper No. CB(1)618/01-02(01), revised version subsequently issued vide LC Paper No. CB(1)655/01-02)*

13. With the aid of PowerPoint, Sir Gordon WU elaborated on the eight reasons for his objection, both as a private citizen and the Chairman of the Port and Maritime Board, to the construction of Route 10 from the economic, livelihood, engineering and most importantly, logistics development points of views, as follows:

- (a) Tsing Lung Bridge was not an effective solution for connecting North West New Territories (NW NT) to the Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA) as a much longer and circuitous route was involved. A direct tunnel-bridge link between Tuen Mun and Chep Lap Kok should be built instead.
- (b) The Government's decision to proceed with Route 10 which was strictly based on erroneous traffic projections of the Third Comprehensive Transport Study (CTS-3) was highly questionable.
- (c) In view of the prevailing economic conditions, the use of existing facilities should be maximized and careful consideration would be required before hefty sums of public money were to be committed. If traffic could be diverted to the under-utilized Route 3, the construction of Route 10 might at least be delayed.
- (d) As the bridge towers of the Tsing Lung Bridge would be directly underneath the flight path, low towers would have to be built. A much higher construction cost would thus be incurred.
- (e) Tsing Lung Bridge was not a satisfactory second link to HKIA because as in the case of Tsing Ma Bridge, Tsing Lung Bridge would likewise not be able to provide all-weather access. During typhoons, the bridge would too have to be shut down, especially when it had only a single deck.
- (f) Analyzing from financial data, the economic benefits of Route 10 had yet to be established. If Route 10 was to operate on a tolled basis, the Government would never be able to recover its \$22 billion investment with a toll-free Tuen Mun Road running alongside. Assuming that the

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tolls of Route 10 were to be charged at about \$8, the daily toll income from Route 10 would be about \$1 million while the total operating costs would be about \$4.8 million per day. It would represent a net outgoing of \$3.8 million per day for Route 10.

- (g) No relief would be provided to Hong Kong for the next seven years during the construction of Route 10. Apart from failing to lessen the traffic on Tuen Mun Road and Tolo Highway, no benefits would be provided to Hong Kong's logistics industry.
- (h) The Government might face possible litigation from the Route 3 (Country Park Section) operator for breach of the "Build-Operate-Transfer" contract.

14. Echoing the views of Prof WONG on "shadow tolls", Sir Gordon suggested that as an immediate measure, the Government should purchase road capacity from Route 3 so that a reduced toll, say \$10, was charged for lorries and trucks. The option would be attractive to the truckers who could also achieve fuel cost savings. In this way, both the truckers and the Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in Hong Kong who were the mainstays of the logistics business would benefit particularly. In addition to maximizing the use of Route 3 to relieve the congestion traffic on Tuen Mun Road, this option would bring about environmental benefits as these heavy vehicles could then take to a shorter and thus less polluting route. He considered that this compensation approach could also be used to improve uneven traffic flow among the three cross harbour tunnels and between the Lion Rock Tunnel and Tate's Cairn Tunnel.

15. As an interim measure, Sir Gordon suggested that instead of building Route 10, a bridge-tunnel linking Tuen Mun and Chek Lap Kok as envisaged in CTS-3 should be constructed. Elaborating further on the engineering aspects of the proposed Tuen Mun East Bypass-Chek Lap Kok Airport Tunnel (TMEB-CLKAT), Sir Gordon advised that its construction could be completed within three years at a total cost of about \$10 billion. With TMEB-CLKAT, Hong Kong would have a 24-hour, secured all-weather alternative route to HKIA. Moreover, the local residents of Tuen Mun and Yuen Long would also benefit from a more direct link.

16. Concluding his presentation, Sir Gordon stressed that the compensation arrangement he proposed was only at a fraction of the cost for constructing Route 10. However, it would provide immediate benefits in relieving traffic on Tuen Mun Road as well as facilitating the development of logistics industry in Hong Kong.

The Hong Kong Institution of Engineers (HKIE)

17. Ir Dr Alex CHAN of HKIE introduced the written submission jointly prepared by Ir Kenneth AU YEUNG and himself on the three projects. He particularly invited

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members to note that given the time factor and the involvement of HKIE's members on different related aspects of the projects, HKIE had yet to formulate an overall view on this matter. In this connection, he himself and Ir AU YEUNG had been invited to represent HKIE and gave their own views on the projects.

(Post-meeting note: The submission was tabled at the meeting and subsequently issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(1)655/01-02(02).)

18. Ir Dr CHAN said that after studying the proposals from the Administration and others, their views were as follows:

- (a) While some of the short term traffic projections of CTS-3 might turn out to be flawed, such discrepancies might have been affected by various factors. However, the need of Route 10 to meet the longer term traffic demand up to 2007 and beyond was supported.
- (b) The current scheme on the southern section of Route 10 was better than the initial proposal.
- (c) The need to approve funding for the detailed design of the southern and northern sections of Route 10 to allow for opening flexibility from 2007 to 2010 was supported.
- (d) The use of toll at the northern section of Route 10 (i.e. Lam Tei Tunnel) to regulate traffic flow among Route 3, Route 10 and Tuen Mun Road so as to achieve maximum utilization of transport facilities was supported.
- (e) The Administration was encouraged to work closely with the Route 3 (Country Park Section) operator so that a solution could be identified to achieve traffic diversion from Tuen Mun Road and avoid any interim congestion between 2005 and 2007 when Route 10 was still under construction.
- (f) The long-term land-use planning should be fully integrated with transport planning, both for the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region as well as the overall development of the Pearl River Delta (PRD) Region.

19. In response to Ir Dr Raymond HO, Ir Dr CHAN agreed that the views of HKIE on the three projects would be provided to members for information after the meeting.

Save Our Shorelines Society (SOSS)

20. Ms Christine LOH of SOSS stated the Society's objection to the Route 10 project on both economic and environmental grounds as follows:

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- (a) During the current times of economic hardship, the Government had a duty to ensure that all resources were maximized and those resources would include both the \$22 billion earmarked for the project and the under-utilized Route 3. Contrary to some suggestion that Route 10 was required and indeed should be fast-tracked to stimulate economic growth, SOSS considered that if Route 10, as currently designed, was not justified, it should not be allowed to proceed. This vast sum of money could instead be invested in other more worthwhile projects, bringing about economic benefits to Hong Kong. Indeed, the Government should consider the pecuniary measures as suggested by Prof WONG and Sir Gordon to maximize the use of Route 3 in a multi-disciplinary manner.
- (b) SOSS was not convinced that sufficient research into the flow of traffic had been conducted by the Government. Hence, it would be a mistake to adopt the flawed projections of CTS-3 in the future. In this connection, SOSS considered that the Government should thoroughly analyze the impact of related developments on the provision of transportation support for cross-boundary freight, such as the capacity to be freed up if boundary crossings were opened for 24 hours, the impact on the amount of freight coming from the Mainland when the Multi-fibre Arrangement expired in 2005, the policy of the Guangdong authorities on the issuance of cross-boundary vehicle licence plates, etc. Without such analysis, it would be very difficult to convince the public that Route 10 was indeed justified on economic grounds.
- (c) From an environmental point of view, if the Administration went ahead with the construction of Route 10 even though the project was not justified on economic grounds, enormous environmental inconvenience and destruction would be caused unnecessarily.

*The Association of Consulting Engineers of Hong Kong (ACEHK)
(LC Paper No. CB(1)618/01-02(02))*

21. Mr K W LEE of ACEHK expressed support for the three projects because the Association considered that the projects would achieve the following:

- (a) help relieve traffic congestion along Tuen Mun Road, in Tuen Mun and all of NW NT;
- (b) strengthen the infrastructure link with the Mainland, which would create more commercial opportunities for Hong Kong based companies particularly in light of China's accession to the World Trade Organization; and

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- (c) provide a fast and economic route for traffic from the Mainland to urban areas, HKIA and the Disneyland.

22. Mr LEE said that in addition to the job opportunities to be created by the projects, Hong Kong could take advantage of the competitive bids that would result from the shortage of infrastructure works because by the time tenders were invited, major projects such as West Rail Phase I would have been completed.

Route 3 (CPS) Company Limited (Route 3 Company)

23. Mr Winston CHU of Route 3 Company expressed the Company's strongest objection to the Government's present proposal to proceed immediately with the whole of Route 10 with construction to commence in 2003 and completion by 2008, and possibly by 2007. He pointed out that when tenders were invited for the construction and operation of Route 3 in 1993, the Administration had specifically stated that the objective of Route 3 was "to relieve congestion of the Tuen Mun and Castle Peak Roads". However, with the Administration's revised proposal for Route 10, another highway to relieve the congestion on Tuen Mun Road would be built. Highlighting the grossly over-estimated forecasts of Route 3 as stated in CTS-3 and the substantial financial loss incurred by the Company, Mr CHU said that while the Company would accept its financial loss as business risks in investment, it should be recognized that the Administration's present proposal represented a serious breach of the mutual understanding reached between the Company and the Government when the franchise was negotiated that no other highway in competition with Route 3 would be built until the latter had achieved a sufficient capacity which would ensure "a reasonable but not excessive return" for the Company.

24. Mr CHU stated that while Route 3 had a capacity of 140 000 vehicles, its present daily traffic was only 44 000 vehicles. According to the Company's projections, Route 3 would not reach saturation until 2016 and before then, Route 10 would not be needed. Hence, instead of committing \$22 billion for Route 10 to provide even more spare capacity at this stage, the Government should make the best use of Route 3 to provide relief to the anticipated increased congestion on Tuen Mun Road caused by the opening of SWC/DBL. It was clearly to the benefit of the society as a whole that precious tunnel resources were maximized.

25. Mr CHU further said that even with the Administration's present proposal, the gap between the completion of SWC/DBL and Route 10 would cause unacceptable congestion on Tuen Mun Road. Apart from aggravating the traffic congestion problems faced by the local residents, such bad planning was not conducive to the development of Hong Kong's logistics industry. While acknowledging the long-term functional need of Route 10, Mr CHU added that in the meantime before Route 10 was built, the Administration could re-address the planning issues involved in the context of Hong Kong's need for a second container port and a direct all-weather alternative

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link to HKIA, as well as the requirements for the proper development of Hong Kong's logistics industry.

26. In view of the above, Mr CHU called on the Administration to consider adopting pecuniary measures as suggested by Prof WONG and Sir Gordon to ensure that traffic from SWC/DBL would be encouraged to use Route 3. The Company would gladly offer its co-operation to the Government to achieve this objective.

The Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport in Hong Kong (CILTHK)

27. Mr K Y LEUNG of CILTHK introduced the submission from the Institute which was tabled at the meeting. He advised that the submission was prepared by the Institute's Transport Policy Committee which had met on 12 December 2001 to discuss the matter, and members who had interests in the projects had not participated in the discussion.

(Post-meeting note: The submission from CILTHK was subsequently issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(1)655/01-02(03).)

28. Mr LEUNG said that after much discussion, CILTHK considered that the Government's objectives were met and the overall planning of the projects was generally fine. With the completion of these projects, Hong Kong's status as a business-trade-logistics hub in the Greater China region would be enhanced. As predicted in the Crosslinks Further Study, the estimated net benefit of SWC would amount to \$175 billion (1998 prices) over a 20 year planning horizon from 2000 to 2020. However, CILTHK opined that the Administration would need to provide comparable data for DBL and Route 10, and separate out the benefit and cost figures for each project over the planning horizon so that the cost-benefit of these projects could be properly assessed. Notwithstanding the need for infrastructure investments to pull Hong Kong out of the recession doldrums, it was incumbent upon the Government to select and implement the most worthwhile projects that could yield the most economic benefits.

29. Concurring with the strategic function of the Tsing Lung Bridge as a crucial link and alternative overland route to HKIA in emergency situations, Mr LEUNG stated that this bridge should be expedited as far as possible for safety reasons. The completion of all three projects – if demonstrated to yield high net benefits – would maintain and buttress Hong Kong's position as a regional transportation and logistics hub by expediting high-valued air freight, sapping up unemployed human resources in the process.

30. As regards the gap between the completion of SWC/DBL and Route 10, Mr LEUNG expressed concern about its likely impact on the traffic congestion at Tuen Mun Road. The Administration should find ways to deal with the problem as soon as possible before SWC/DBL were completed.

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Discussion with deputations

Possible pecuniary measures to divert traffic to Route 3

31. In respect of the “shadow tolls” proposed by Prof WONG for Route 3, Mr TAM Yiu-chung expressed concern about the long-term financial burden to be imposed on the Government if the users of other under-utilized tolled roads such as the Western Harbour Crossing also requested for subsidies from the Government.

32. Mr CHENG Kar-foo opined that it would not be justified for the Government to provide subsidies either to the users of Route 3 or Route 3 Company. However, in order to ensure that precious road resources were maximized while achieving traffic diversion, he considered that there might be a strong case for the Administration to consider buying back the ownership of Route 3 and other tunnels under private ownership and put them under the management of a Tunnels and Bridges Authority under the Government. Under this regime, the Government would have the authority to impose an optimum level of toll to achieve traffic diversion. Sharing similar views, Mr Albert CHAN sought Prof WONG’s assessment on the comparative advantages of buying back the ownership of Route 3 vis-à-vis effecting “shadow tolls”.

33. In response, Prof WONG advised that uneven traffic distribution would invariably occur when some roads were tolled and others were not. However, given that roads were expensive infrastructure and hence, their utilization should be maximized, the crux of the question was the Government’s participation in the better management of Hong Kong’s traffic network. It did not have a direct relationship with the ownership of the roads or tunnels in question. In the present case, better management of road resources could be readily achieved through the adoption of a “shadow toll” at Route 3 to achieve traffic diversion from Tuen Mun Road to Route 3. He emphasized that this “shadow toll” should not simply be regarded as a subsidy for the users of Route 3. In effect, with reduced congestion on Tuen Mun Road, the users of Tuen Mun Road would also benefit in terms of saved time costs. Thus, the objective of such pecuniary measures was to enhance the efficiency of road utilization and bring about overall benefits to the whole traffic network.

34. Prof WONG further said that if the principle of adopting pecuniary measures to achieve traffic diversion was considered desirable, he did not see why this should not be extended to apply to other roads/tunnels with different pricing structures. In this respect, he drew members’ attention to the fact that “shadow tolls” were meant to be temporary and limited measures. As the utilization of Route 3 increased, the level of subsidies would be reduced and ultimately cancelled. Regarding the proposal to buy back the ownership of Route 3, Prof WONG cautioned that given the financial loss incurred by Route 3 Company, such a move on the Government’s part might be seen by the public as the Government bailing out a loss-making private business.

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35. In this respect, Sir Gordon WU said that he did not support the proposal for the Government to buy back the ownership of Route 3 because the public would regard this as a kind of favouritism towards big corporations. Private enterprises should accept the business risks for investment decisions and it would not be fair to use public funds to acquire loss-making businesses. Referring to the calculations at pages 7 and 8 of his submission, Sir Gordon reiterated the view that the compensation approach he proposed would bring about immediate benefits to the logistics industry, i.e. the truckers and SMEs. It was not a subsidy to big businesses because Route 3 Company did not get any benefit. As the toll income of Route 3 improved to a certain level with increased patronage, the level of compensation would cease altogether.

36. In reply to Ir Dr Raymond HO's enquiry, Prof WONG advised that the exact level of "shadow toll" would have to be carefully determined to achieve the optimum level of traffic diversion. In this respect, more detailed analysis would be required.

37. While seeking Route 3 Company's stance on adopting "shadow tolls" for Route 3, Miss Cyd HO asked whether there was any room for the Company to effect a lower level of tolls to attract patronage. Expounding on the dire financial situation faced by the Company, Mr Winston CHU advised that it would not be possible for the Company to reduce the level of tolls. However, the Company did not want to increase toll either. He further said if "shadow tolls" were to be applied, the initiative would have to come from the Government and the Company would be willing to consider all fair and reasonable proposals on offer.

38. In this connection, the Chairman informed members that this matter had in fact been discussed by the Port and Maritime Board (PMB). After deliberation, PMB agreed that the Administration should be requested to consider the following options:

- (a) firstly, address the demand of cross-boundary traffic from the logistics point of view;
- (b) secondly, maximize the use of Route 3; and
- (c) thirdly, construct new road connection.

Functional need of Route 10

39. While noting Ir Dr Alex CHAN's support for funding to undertake the detailed design of Route 10 and ACEHK's call to expedite the project, Miss Emily LAU however queried whether such assertions were justified given the flawed projections of CTS-3. She was gravely concerned that if the project was allowed to proceed without a careful study on its cost-effectiveness, it would constitute a great waste of public funds. Sharing similar views, Mr Abraham SHEK opined that the Administration should account for the financial plans for the three projects when seeking funding approval from the Legislative Council. In addition, updated CTS-3

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projections should be made available to members for information if available.

40. In reply, Ir Dr Alex CHAN pointed out that while the CTS-3 projections for these two years were on the high side, the focus should be on the longer term traffic forecasts for 2007 and beyond. Looking ahead, the timely provision of an additional north-south road link in the form of Route 10 was necessary to facilitate the flow of trade and traffic between the Mainland and Hong Kong. Hence, the project was supported not only because of the job opportunities that would be created in the next few years. There were long-term economic benefits involved in the implementation of Route 10. Ir Dr CHAN added that he would be most willing to review the situation if more updated forecasts were available. Sharing similar views, Mr KW LEE advised that ACEHK's major concern was the provision of adequate transport infrastructure links between the Mainland and Hong Kong.

41. Responding to Miss Emily LAU, Prof WONG explained that in order to serve the new container terminal facilities in Hong Kong, a coastal alignment was required. However, Route 10 as currently planned had clearly failed to take this into account. Given the uncertainties about the future location of such facilities, the Administration's decision to commit a hefty sum of public money on Route 10 was premature. He was worried that without co-ordinated planning, this potentially valuable new connection for HKIA as well as the new container port might be wasted and another strategic route would be required. Citing the impact of the prevailing economic conditions on the growth of cross-boundary freight traffic, Prof WONG considered that there was no urgent need for the implementation of Route 10.

42. Mr Albert CHAN however opined that there was a need to provide adequate transport links for various committed major infrastructural developments in Hong Kong such as Container Terminal 9 and the Disneyland. Hence, notwithstanding spare capacity at Route 3 and the TMEB-CLKAT as proposed by Sir Gordon, it still did not obviate the need to construct Route 10 and Tsing Lung Bridge to meet the increased traffic demand generated for North West Lantau and Tsuen Wan.

43. Mr LAU Kong-wah considered that from an overall planning point of view, there were merits in Sir Gordon's proposal to construct TMEB-CLKAT and the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macau Bridge. Echoing this view, Mr TAM Yiu-chung called on the Administration to critically examine Sir Gordon's proposals. Referring to the construction of two trestle bridges and a tunnel between two artificial islands for TMEB-CLKAT, Ir Dr Raymond HO was concerned that more potential environmental impacts might be created by this project. Moreover, as the travelling distance from Tuen Mun to urban areas via the proposed TMEB-CLKAT and North Lantau Highway would be much longer, Ir Dr HO queried whether many local residents in Tuen Mun would indeed make use of this route.

44. Responding to Mr LAU Kong-wah's enquiry, Ir Dr Alex CHAN said that while he would support the provision of a direct link from Tuen Mun to Chek Lap Kok, Sir

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Gordon's proposal would have to be justified by relevant traffic forecasts. Moreover, he was worried that TMEB-CLKAT might take a much longer time to plan and complete than Route 10.

Meeting with the Administration

- (LC Paper No. CB(1)581/01-02(01) - List of follow-up actions arising from the discussion at the meeting on 23 November 2001;
- LC Paper No. CB(1)581/01-02(02) - The Administration's response to the issues raised at the meeting on 23 November 2001; and
- LC Paper No. CB(1)356/01-02(05) - Information paper provided by the Administration)

45. In view of time constraint, members agreed that the Panel would hold another special meeting on Friday, 11 January 2002, at 8:30 am to continue discussion with the deputations and the Administration on the three projects.

II Any other business

46. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 4:55 pm.

Legislative Council Secretariat
18 February 2002