

立法會
Legislative Council

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Legislative Council
Panel on Transport

Minutes of meeting held on
Friday, 11 January 2002, at 8:30 am
in the Chamber of the Legislative Council Building

Members present : Hon Miriam LAU Kin-ye, JP (Chairman)
Dr Hon David CHU Yu-lin, JP
Hon Albert HO Chun-yan
Ir Dr Hon Raymond HO Chung-tai, JP
Hon Mrs Selina CHOW LIANG Shuk-ye, JP
Hon CHAN Kwok-keung
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 LEUNG Fu-wah, MH, JP
Hon LAU Ping-cheung

Non-Panel members : Hon Cyd HO Sau-lan
Attending Hon Emily LAU Wai-hing, JP
Hon SZETO Wah
Hon IP Kwok-him, JP
Hon Audrey EU Yuet-mee, SC, JP

Members absent : Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, JP (Deputy Chairman)
Hon WONG Sing-chi

**Public officers
Attending**

: Transport Bureau

Mr Nicholas NG
Secretary for Transport

Mr Paul TANG
Deputy Secretary for Transport

Ms Shirley LAM
Principal Assistant Secretary for Transport

Highways Department

Mr Bob LLOYD
Project Manager/Major Works

Mr E J ROBLIN
Deputy Project Manager/Major Works (1)

Mr Adrian NG
Deputy Project Manager/Major Works (3)

Mr Norman MAK
Chief Engineer/Major Works

Transport Department

Mr George LAI
Deputy Commissioner for Transport
(Planning & Technical Services)

Mr Brian GROGAN
Assistant Commissioner for Transport (Planning)

Mr Tony SO
Chief Engineer/Strategic Roads

**Attendance by
Invitation**

: Individual

Mr Richard YU
Planning Consultant

Hong Kong Logistics Association

Mr Anthony WONG
Vice Chairman

Mr Paul KAN
Ex-com Member

Tuen Mun District Council

Mr SO Shiu-shing
Tuen Mun District Council Member

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

Mr Wilfred LAU
Member

Route 3 (CPS) Company Limited

Mr Gary K H LUK
General Manager

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

Dr Timothy D HAU
Council Member

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

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

Action

I Shenzhen Western Corridor, Deep Bay Link and Route 10

The Chairman recapitulated the recent discussions of the Panel on the three projects. Since October 2001, the Panel held four meetings to discuss the projects. It received 20 written submissions and met with 17 individuals/deputations. The Administration had also submitted a funding proposal in respect of the detailed design and associated site investigation works for the proposed Shenzhen Western Corridor (SWC) and Deep Bay Link (DBL) at the Public Works Subcommittee (PWSC) meeting on 9 January 2002. The item was subsequently withdrawn by the Administration. The Administration now intended to resubmit the item, together with the detailed design and associated site investigation works for the northern section of Route 10 (from So Kwun Wat to Yuen Long Highway) to the PWSC at its forthcoming meeting to be held on 30 January 2002.

2. The Chairman drew members' attention to the following submissions put forward by deputations, some of which were just tabled at the meeting:

- (a) a further submission from the Hong Kong Institution of Engineers circulated vide LC Paper No. CB(1) 776/01-02(03);
- (b) a further submission from the Association of Consulting Engineers of Hong Kong circulated vide LC Paper No. CB(1) 776/01-02(04);
- (c) a further submission from Sir Gordon WU issued subsequently to

members vide LC Paper No. CB(1)792/01-02(02);

- (d) a further submission from the Route 3(CPS) Company Limited issued subsequently to members vide LC Paper No. CB(1)792/01-02(03); and
- (e) a further submission from Action Group Against Siu Lam Works (Route 10) issued subsequently to members vide LC Paper No. CB(1)792/01-02(04).

3. The Chairman informed members that subsequent to the special meeting on 17 December 2001 to receive public views on the projects, three more organizations had indicated that they would like to appear before the Panel to give views on the projects. She then invited representatives of the concerned organizations to give views on the projects.

Views presented by the deputations

Mr Richard YU

[LC Paper Nos. CB(1)655/01-02(06) and CB(1)776/01-02(01)]

4. Mr Richard YU said that based on a humanistic approach and a simple comparison of the "Time-Distance Differences" between different origins and destinations via different road links, namely the proposed Tuen Mun-Chek Lap Kok (TM-CLK) Link, Route 10, Route 3 and Tuen Mun Road (TMR), he considered that the proposal to construct Route 10 was not substantiated. He said that motorists leaving SWC heading for the airport at CLK would travel via the proposed TM-CLK Link in lieu of Route 10 or Route 3 as it was the quickest route available. On the other hand, for motorists heading for urban area such as Tsing Yi, it made no major difference for them to travel via TMR, Route 10 or Route 3 as the "time-distance differences" between different road links were insignificant. Judging from the above, Route 10 did not seem to have any particular appeal to motorists.

5. Mr Richard YU also considered that with the opening of the West Rail in 2003, the congestion at TMR would be relieved. It was therefore considered that the potential bottle-neck to traffic would occur at SWC where traffic from different connecting highways such as TMR, Route 3, Fanling Highway merged together. To enhance the road infrastructure network, the Administration should press ahead with the proposed TM-CLK Link. Since Route 10 did not pass through the major population areas, any discrepancy in traffic forecast would lead to serious wastage of public resources, making it a white elephant. On the other hand, if the proposed TM-CLK Link were to be pursued, it could perform the functions of providing an alternative road link for the airport, Lantau, Tung Chung and Tuen Mun, thereby benefiting the near-by residents.

Hong Kong Logistics Association
[LC Paper No. CB(1)776/01-02(02)]

6. Mr Anthony WONG, Vice Chairman of the Hong Kong Logistics Association (HKLA) opined that HKLA welcomed the Administration's initiative to improve the infrastructural developments in Hong Kong to facilitate the logistics business. It therefore supported the proposed construction of the SWC and DBL. However, in considering the huge capital investment and the long lead time before the logistics industry could gain any benefits from the operation of Route 10 in 2007/2008, the Administration should consider buying out the ownership of Route 3 or subsidizing certain road users of Route 3 on the ground of promoting the development of logistics business. Separately, he also asked the Administration to consider providing a direct alignment linking DBL and Route 3 instead of building Route 10.

Tuen Mun District Council (TMDC)

7. Mr SO Shiu-shing, TMDC member, said that TMDC passed a motion on 19 November 2001 on the Route 10 project. In brief, TMDC supported, in principle, the proposed construction of Route 10 but requested:

- (a) that toll charges should not be imposed on Route 10; and
- (b) that a toll-free connection point should be provided at Tsing Lung Bridge to connect Kap Shui Mun Bridge.

8. Regarding the proposed TM-CLK Link, TMDC was of the view that additional infrastructure should be constructed to cater for the transport needs of residents. As such, it welcomed the proposal.

Presentation by the Administration

9. The Chairman welcomed the Secretary for Transport (S for T) and his team to the meeting. She hoped the Secretary would endeavour to attend future meetings of the Panel to enhance communication between the executive and the legislature. Mr Albert CHAN also hoped that the Secretary could make a final contribution to resolve the traffic problems in North West New Territories before his retirement. He also requested the Secretary to attend future meetings of the Panel.

10. At the invitation of the Chairman, the Chief Engineer/Strategic Roads, Transport Department briefed members on the strategic functions of Route 10. The Chief Engineer/Major Works, Highways Department also made a comparison between Sir Gordon WU's proposal of linking up Tuen Mun and Chek Lap Kok and Route 10. A set of materials presented by the Administration was tabled at the meeting and subsequently circulated to members vide LC Paper No. CB(1) 792/01-02(01).

Need for Route 10

11. Ir Dr Raymond HO sought clarification from TMDC on whether it objected to the construction of Route 10 if a toll was imposed on Route 10. Mr SO Shiu-shing of TMDC replied that TMDC supported the construction of Route 10 as it provided an alternative link to the airport and Lantau. Further, the tunnel/viaduct scheme between Siu Lam and the approaches to Ting Kau Bridge could relieve traffic on TMR. However, the imposition of a tunnel toll would certainly discourage motorists to use Route 10, and hence, defeat the purpose of providing infrastructure to relieve the traffic congestion at Tuen Mun. TMDC therefore insisted that Route 10 should be an untolled road.

12. Referring to paragraph 7 of the Administration's paper, Mr LAU Kong-wah sought the view of Sir Gordon WU on whether he agreed with the Administration's view that the proposed link between Tuen Mun and Chek Lap Kok could not obviate the need for Route 10. Sir Gordon WU replied that the quickest routes for freight traffic leaving SWC heading for container port and airport were to travel via Route 3 and the proposed TM-CLK Link respectively. He remarked that the Government's quoted AM peak hour volume/capacity (v/c) ratio of 0.8 only applied to 6 August 2001 when a major traffic accident occurred on TMR. The average figure for 2001 should be much lower and Route 3 should have sufficient spare capacity to cater for the increase in traffic. He therefore was of the view that the Tuen Mun East Bypass plus a bridge-tunnel linking Tuen Mun and Chek Lap Kok should be constructed instead of Route 10. Meanwhile, as an immediate measure, the Government should purchase road capacity from Route 3 so as to enable a reduced toll for lorries and trucks. In this way, both the truckers and the Small and Medium Enterprises in Hong Kong who were the mainstays of the logistics business would gain immediate benefits. He considered that this compensation approach could also be used to improve uneven traffic flow between the Cross Harbour Tunnel and the Western Harbour Crossing. On specific questions raised by Mr LAU, Sir Gordon WU said that he would provide a written reply after the meeting.

13. S for T briefed members that the Administration indeed had a similar long-term plan for a direct link from Tuen Mun to Chek Lap Kok (i.e. the TM-CLK Link). Such a link was identified in the Third Comprehensive Transport Study (CTS-3) as the third link to Lantau and the airport. At present, only 1% of the cross-boundary traffic was heading for the airport. With the initial opening of SWC, it was estimated that only less than 5% of the freight traffic would head for the airport. Most traffic would still use Route 10 or Route 3 to gain access to the container port. In considering the strategic functions performed by Route 10 to meet forecast traffic demand generated by cross boundary activities, to meet anticipated growth in North West New Territories and to relieve traffic on TMR, and to provide a convenient alternative access for Lantau and the airport, the Administration considered that priority should be given to Route 10. But it did not preclude the Administration's plan to build the TM-CLK Link at a later stage to cater for further development of the logistics industry in Lantau or any other developments.

14. Miss Emily LAU sought the view of HKLA on whether it supported the construction of Route 10 even though it could not help bring immediate benefits to the logistics business. Mr WONG of HKLA replied that whilst the Association welcomed the Government's initiative to provide infrastructure to facilitate logistics business, it should aim at maximizing the utilization of existing infrastructure before further investment was put on new project. With the recent establishment of the Hong Kong Logistics Development Council (LOGSCOUNCIL), which provided a forum for different sectors in the logistics industry to discuss matters relating to the development of logistics initiatives, he considered that the Route 10 project should be reviewed by the p-logistics subgroup formed under the LOGSCOUNCIL to ensure its strategic functions.

15. Miss Emily LAU also sought the view of Save Our Shorelines Society on whether it supported the Administration's plan to seek funding approval of the Legislative Council to proceed with the detailed design of the project at this stage. Ms Christine LOH replied that the Administration should examine further the proposals put forward by Sir Gordon WU and Prof. Richard WONG on how to maximize the utilization of the spare capacity of Route 3 before proceeding with the detailed design of Route 10 to save public monies, not to mention the adverse impacts associated with the construction of the project.

16. Miss Emily LAU opined that the Administration should defer the submission of the funding proposal in respect of the item, pending further deliberation by the Panel. It would be a waste of public resources if there were other alternatives to cater for the forecast demand of freight traffic in lieu of the construction of Route 10.

17. S for T advised that the three existing vehicular boundary crossings were nearly saturated. There was a need to construct the fourth land boundary crossing of SWC together with the connecting road, DBL, to satisfy the future demand. SWC and DBL would be connected to the Yuen Long Highway at Lam Tei where traffic could gain access to Route 3. The Administration was also planning for Route 10 from Lam Tei to North Lantau to provide an alternative expressway to motorists. On 9 January 2002, the Administration had put forward a funding proposal in respect of the detailed design of SWC and DBL to the PWSC for consideration. At members' request, the proposal was withdrawn by the Administration. The Administration now intended to submit the funding proposal for the three projects in one batch to the PWSC on 30 January 2002. S for T stressed that the proposed funding proposal was merely related to the detailed design of the projects. Funding arrangements in respect of the actual construction works would be prepared upon completion of the detailed design studies.

18. Whilst there was a need to examine measures to enhance the utilization of Route 3 to relieve traffic congestion in Tuen Mun/Yuen Long, Mr Albert HO remarked that the need to construct Route 10 was a separate issue and should be assessed on its own merits. He remarked that Route 10 was originally intended to serve as a

strategic link to container terminal 10 in Lantau and the Disneyland. He enquired about the Administration's plan for further port development in Hong Kong.

19. Sir Gordon WU remarked that the Port and Maritime Board was examining the future sites for new container terminal. In case additional port facility was provided at North-west Lantau, goods vehicles would need to make a detour before it could reach the port in Lantau. He hoped that the Administration could bring the related issue to the LOGSCOUNCIL for further discussion.

20. The Chairman also remarked that the present problem was due to a lack of coordination among the relevant bureaux in taking forward policy initiatives on transport and logistics developments. She urged the Administration to review the matter from a wider policy perspective and improve coordination among different bureaux.

21. S for T replied that increase in population and economic activity would certainly place additional demands on existing and future transport systems, making it vitally important to provide new systems, and improve existing infrastructure, in a timely manner. In the planning process, Government would examine the necessary supporting infrastructure to cater for the planned developments. Representatives from Transport Bureau would be involved in the planning process. As such, there was no question of a lack of coordination among different bureaux. Regarding the provision of additional port facilities in North-west Lantau, he said that the proposal was still under examination. Transport infrastructure such as the TM-CLK Link would be further pursued to tally with the possible developments in North-west Lantau including port facilities.

Time gap between the completion of SWC/DBL and Route 10

22. Referring to the peak hour v/c ratio of TMR which would be 1.2 without Route 10 in 2006 and 0.9 with Route 10 in 2008, Mr CHENG Kar-foo reiterated the concern about the gap between the completion of SWC/DBL and Route 10 causing serious congestion in Tuen Mun and Yuen Long. He therefore opined that the three projects should be taken forward in totality and could not be dealt with in a piece-meal manner.

23. S for T explained that while the southern section of Route 10 (between North Lantau and So Kwun Wat) should be completed as soon as possible to provide an additional road link to the Lantau Link, the northern section of Route 10 (between So Kwun Wat and Yuen Long) would not be required until after 2010. Notwithstanding the above, the Administration was prepared to complete the construction of the northern section of Route 10 in 2007 and the whole section in 2008 in response to concerns expressed by Members and the District Councils so as to provide a further safeguard against congestion on TMR.

24. Mr Albert CHAN sought an undertaking from the Administration to shorten the gap between the completion of Route 10 (both the northern and southern sections) and

SWC/DBL. S for T advised that the Administration's plan was to complete the detailed design in about 18 months. Funding proposal for the actual construction works would then be submitted to the Legislative Council for consideration. The Administration would try to synchronize the SWC/DBL/Route 10 projects as they formed a comprehensive road network for the cross boundary vehicles to gain access to various parts of the territory.

Traffic forecasts

25. Mr LAU Kong-wah queried why the peak hour v/c ratio for TMR (Tuen Mun Town Centre section) would remain unchanged at 1.0 under different planning scenarios such as the reference case for 2001 and the scenarios with or without SWC/DBL/Route 10 for different planning years. Deputy Commissioner for Transport (Planning and Technical Services) (DC for T) replied that the concerned peak hour v/c ratio was expressed to one decimal place (i.e. 1.0). In fact, the v/c ratio for TMR was 0.96 in 2001 and 1.03 in 2006. The slight growth in the v/c ratio for TMR was due to several factors. These included the opening of West Rail, the improvement to Castle Peak Road and the traffic diversion to Route 3. As TMR was already saturated, the v/c ratio would remain at a stable level.

26. Mr LAU Kong-wah remained not convinced of the Administration's reply. With the opening of SWC/DBL, he opined that traffic in Tuen Mun and Yuen Long would inevitably be worsened. The Chairman also queried why traffic would naturally be diverted to operate via Route 3 instead of TMR, bearing in mind the latter was an untolled road.

27. DC for T explained that during the initial stage of SWC/DBL's operation, it was forecasted that the peak traffic coming from SWC/DBL would be about 1,100 vehicles per hour. One-third of the traffic would be diverted to TMR, another one-third to Route 3 and the remaining to Yuen Long and Tolo Highway. The additional traffic so generated was not high and was already reflected in the peak hour v/c ratio for TMR in 2006. S for T added that the daily traffic on TMR was expected to increase from 62,000 vehicles in 2001 to 71,000 vehicles in 2006. For Route 3, it was expected that traffic would increase from 43,000 - 45,000 vehicles to 82,000 vehicles during the same period.

28. S for T further explained that traffic projections were not an exact science and were affected by various external factors. The programme of individual project was subject to further study having regard to latest traffic projections as well as other socio-economic changes. The Administration had instituted an annual Strategic Highway Project Review, the main purpose of which was to ensure that transport infrastructure could be provided in a timely manner to meet demands. Also, it was normal for traffic studies to cover more than one scenario, i.e. high, medium and low growth scenarios. Quoting only the high scenario in the CTS-3 report did not give readers a full picture of the CTS-3 projections. The Administration's projections were as good as any projections put forward. For example, the average traffic

volume forecast on Route 3 during the tender stage was 40,158 for 2001 under the low range scenario which was very close compared to the existing flow of over 43,000.

Tolling strategy

29. Mr CHENG Kar-foo expressed concern about the tolling strategy for Route 10 as it would have a serious impact on the utilization of Route 10, Route 3 and TMR. He said that the Democratic Party had suggested that the Administration should consider setting up a Tunnel and Bridge Authority to take over the ownership of all privately-owned bridges and tunnels and formulate a preferred tolling strategy for all competing tolled facilities towards better balancing of demand and capacity among tolled and untolled roads/tunnels/bridges. He also opined that it was not an effective means to subsidize certain classes of vehicles to use Route 3 from a public finance's point of view.

30. S for T advised that the Administration intended to impose a tunnel toll for Route 10 but this would be considered nearer the time of completion. Factors such as the need for traffic diversion, the state of the economy, etc. would be considered. Whilst noting the views expressed by TMDC that Route 10 should not be subject to any tolls, he advised that this would be a matter for further consideration by the Legislative Council nearer the time of opening.

31. S for T further advised that the Administration had examined the impact of a tunnel toll for Route 10 on other road network. Assuming that the toll level of Route 10 was pitched at the same level as that of Route 3, the peak hour v/c ratio for TMR would still be close to 1.0 after the opening of Route 10. He explained that from experience, Route 3, a tolled road, could divert traffic away from TMR, an untolled road, because the former offered a quicker and more direct route to the urban areas and the container port. For example, the daily traffic on TMR dropped by 5% over the past three years, whereas the total daily traffic for Route 3 and TMR for the same period increased by 39%. The important thing was to offer motorists a choice of a quicker albeit more expensive route.

32. Citing the existing uneven distribution of traffic between the Cross Harbour Tunnel and the Western Harbour Crossing, Mr CHENG Kar-foo maintained the view that the Administration should formulate a policy to address the issue, otherwise the same problem would arise in the case of Route 10.

33. S for T replied that the Administration had received the proposal to set up a Tunnel and Bridge Authority put forward by the Democratic Party. The proposal was now being examined. Regarding the tunnel tolls of Route 3 and Western Harbour Crossing, he said that the toll adjustment mechanism was stipulated in the related legislation approved by the Legislative Council. For major infrastructural projects, it was common that an initial operating loss would be recorded. However, with time, the operators would be able to obtain a positive return as shown in the case of the Eastern Harbour Crossing.

34. The Chairman remarked that she was not convinced of the Administration's reply as similar arguments had been put forward a few years ago when the Route 3 project was put forward for consideration. She also said that whilst TMDC was in support of the proposed construction of Route 10, the Administration had chosen to ignore its equally strong demand that Route 10 should be an untolled road.

Consultation mechanism

35. Mr Albert CHAN requested the Administration to review the consultation machinery for public works projects. He remarked that as the Route 10 project had been planned for years, he did not understand why divergent views were put forward by different bodies at such a late stage objecting to the need, alignment and timing for Route 10. Miss Emily LAU echoed the view of Mr Albert CHAN. S for T remarked that the present situation arose because the Administration was prepared to advance the completion of the northern section of Route 10 ahead of the original schedule in response to local views.

36. Mr Albert CHAN enquired whether the Administration would take any actions to compensate the Route 3 company if the actual traffic using Route 3 turned out to be significantly lower than the traffic forecast. S for T replied that he was confident that the traffic forecast provided by the Administration would be accurate. Regarding the moral obligation of the Government, S for T remarked that when the Route 3 project was put out to tender, potential bidders had been informed of the Administration's plan to build an additional strategic north-south link (the then Route "Y") in addition to Route 3. Since private investment involved risk, it should be borne by investors themselves. The Government therefore could not make a guarantee under such circumstances.

37. Mr LAU Ping-cheung enquired whether the forecast peak hour v/c ratio or volume of traffic should be used as the basis for analysis of the need for Route 10, given that the combined capacity of Tolo Highway, TMR, Route 3 and Route 10 far exceeded the present volume of traffic. DC for T replied that in order to examine whether there was a need to provide additional infrastructure to cater for future transport needs, the international practice was to use the forecast peak hour v/c ratio for assessment purpose. However, for financial assessment purpose, the forecast volume of traffic would be used instead.

38. Mr LAU Ping-cheung enquired whether the Administration would put out the project for tender under a "Build-Operate-Transfer" franchise arrangement. This could save public monies in light of the significant Budget deficit. S for T replied that whilst the Administration did not rule out the possibility of granting a "Build-Operate-Transfer" franchise in the end, the present planning intent was to use public funds to finance the project.

39. Ir Dr Raymond HO enquired about the planning assumptions behind the

concept of "Time-Distance Differences" cited by Mr Richard YU. Mr Richard YU replied that in order to enable a comparison on a like-for-like basis, it did not take into account any engineering and economic considerations. As such, planning factors such as toll levels, variation in travelling speeds or road conditions were excluded. The model was based on a humanistic approach. It aimed at comparing the journey time between different origins and destinations via different routes on a uniform basis, that was an assumed average travelling speed of 80 km/h.

40. At the request of members, the Administration was requested to provide further information on the following :

- (a) traffic forecast for TMR;
- (b) the projected economic losses if serious traffic congestion occurred at Tuen Mun and Yuen Long upon the opening of SWC/DBL; and
- (c) the alternative to providing an access road to the east from SWC/DBL.

(Post-meeting note : The requested information was circulated to members vide LC Paper No. CB(1)821/01-02(06).)

41. Members agreed to hold a meeting on 17 January 2002, at 4:30 pm to continue discussion on the projects.

II Any other business

42. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 10:45 am.

Legislative Council Secretariat
20 February 2002