

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(1)2200/01-02
(These minutes have been seen
by the Administration)

Ref : CB1/PL/TP/1

Legislative Council
Panel on Transport

Minutes of meeting held on
Friday, 26 April 2002, at 10:45 am
in Conference Room A 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
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 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

Members absent : Hon LAU Chin-shek, JP
Hon WONG Sing-chi

Public officers : **Agenda Item IV**
attending

Transport Bureau

Ms Doris CHEUNG
Principal Assistant Secretary for Transport (6)

Transport Department

Mr Robert FOOTMAN
Commissioner for Transport

Mr Thomas THUMB
Assistant Commissioner for Transport/Technical Services

Agenda Item V

Transport Bureau

Ms Shirley LAM
Principal Assistant Secretary for Transport (5)

Highways Department

Mr CHAN Wai-cheung
Deputy Project Manager, Major Works

Mr TSUI Wai
Chief Engineer/Major Works

Transport Department

Mr Tony SO
Chief Engineer/Strategic Roads

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

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

Action

I Confirmation of minutes and matters arising

(LC Paper No. CB(1)1270/01-02 - Minutes of joint meeting held with Environmental Affairs Panel and Planning, Lands and Works Panel on 15 January 2002;

LC Paper No. CB(1)1325/01-02 - Minutes of joint meeting held with Environmental Affairs Panel on 24 January 2002;

- LC Paper No. CB(1)1557/01-02 - Minutes of meeting held on 22 February 2002; and
LC Paper No. CB(1)1517/01-02 - Minutes of meeting held on 15 March 2002)

The above minutes of meetings were confirmed.

II Information papers issued since last meeting

- (LC Paper No. CB(1)1341/01-02(01) - Information note on concessionary MTR fares of full-time students aged above 25 provided by the MTR Corporation Limited;
- LC Paper No. CB(1)1391/01-02(01) - Submission from the Environmental Light Bus Alliance on policy on public light bus dated 4 February 2002;
- LC Paper No. CB(1)1391/01-02(02) - Submission from the Environmental Light Bus Alliance on policy on public light bus dated 13 March 2002;
- LC Paper No. CB(1)1391/01-02(03) - The Administration's response to the submissions from the Environmental Light Bus Alliance;
- LC Paper No. CB(1)1392/01-02(01) - Views on franchised bus services in Tseung Kwan O raised by Sai Kung District Council Members at the meeting with LegCo Members on 14 March 2002;
- LC Paper No. CB(1)1513/01-02(01) - Extract of minutes of meeting between LegCo Members and Wong Tai Sin District Council on 10 January 2002 on Sha Tin to Central Link;
- LC Paper No. CB(1)1513/01-02(02) - Extract of minutes of meeting between LegCo Members and Central & Western District Council on 31 January 2002 on Pedestrian scheme at Queen's Road Central;
- LC Paper No. CB(1)1513/01-02(03) - Extract of minutes of meeting between LegCo Members and Central & Western District Council on 31 January 2002 on Co-ordination among different modes of transport;
- LC Paper No. CB(1)1604/01-02(01) - Referral from case conference to follow up on issues raised at the meeting between LegCo Members and Sai Kung District Council Members on 14 March 2002 - Western Coast Road;

- LC Paper No. CB(1)1533/01-02(01) - Parking meter system replacement programme;
- LC Paper No. CB(1)1575/01-02(01) - Ma On Shan to Tai Wai Link - Essential public infrastructure works;
- LC Paper No. CB(1)1577/01-02(01) - Chok Ko Wan Link Road - Penny's Bay Section;
- LC Paper No. CB(1)1578/01-02(01) - Dualling of Hang Hau Road; and
- LC Paper No. CB(1)1587/01-02(01) - Ting Kok Road upgrading, Stage 1, Phase II)

2. Members noted the above information papers issued since last meeting.
3. Members agreed that a special meeting would be held on 6 May 2002 at 2:30 pm to discuss five financial proposals to be submitted by the Administration to the Finance Committee (FC) and its Subcommittee for consideration (relevant papers issued vide LC Paper Nos. CB(1)1533/01-02(01), CB(1)1575/01-02(01), CB(1)1577/01-02(01), CB(1)1578/01-02(01) and CB(1)1587/01-02(01) respectively). In view of the heavy agenda, the Chairman suggested that members could forward their questions on the items to the Clerk in advance, if they wished, so that the Administration could be requested to provide written replies where appropriate, for the meeting on 6 May 2002. Members agreed to the suggestion.
4. At Mr Andrew WONG's request, members agreed that the item on "Western Coast Road" as raised by the Sai Kung District Council (LC Paper No. CB(1)1604/01-02(01) refers) be included in the Panel's list of outstanding items for discussion. Mr CHENG Kar-foo also said that there was a need to follow up on the details of the transport service plan to be implemented to tie in with the opening of MTR Tseung Kwan O Extension.

III Items for discussion at the meeting on 24 May 2002

- (LC Paper No. CB(1)1558/01-02(01) - List of outstanding items for discussion; and
- LC Paper No. CB(1)1558/01-02(02) - List of follow-up actions)

5. Members agreed to discuss the following items as suggested by the Administration at the next meeting to be held on 24 May 2002:
 - (a) The Second Parking Demand Study; and
 - (b) Applications for renewal of bus franchises
 - Citybus Limited (franchise for Airport and North Lantau routes)
 - Long Wing Bus Company Limited

- New World First Bus Services Limited.

Admin In connection with item (a), Mrs Selina CHOW suggested and members agreed that the Administration should also be asked to review the provision of parking facilities at major tourist attractions and measures to be taken to cater for the sudden surge of parking demand at such locations during holidays. In addition, the Administration should also provide an update on the latest position regarding the provision of a multi-storey carpark at Stanley Market.

Admin 6. After going through the Panel's lists of outstanding items for discussion and follow-up actions (LC Paper Nos. CB(1)1558/01-02(01) and (02) respectively), members agreed that the Administration should be requested to provide information papers on the following before deciding whether it was necessary to hold a separate meeting to discuss the items:

- (a) Progress update on the proposal to convert the Tuen Mun Pier to a cross-boundary passenger terminal; and
- (b) Progress update on the Intelligent Transport Systems.

In connection with item (b), members expressed concern about the channels of dissemination of information and whether the general public could simply make a telephone call to obtain the relevant traffic and transport information at low price. They were also concerned about the implementation programme of the Transport Information System and the development of global positioning system in Hong Kong.

IV Electronic Audible Traffic Signal

(LC Paper No. CB(1)1558/01-02(04) - Information paper provided by the Administration)

7. The Commissioner for Transport (C for T) apologized to members for the late submission of the information paper (LC Paper No. CB(1)1558/01-02(04)) as there was some administrative problems which had to be addressed before the paper could be issued. He said that such problems had now been resolved and a clear programme was proposed for members' consideration.

8. With the aid of PowerPoint, the Assistant Commissioner for Transport/Technical Services (AC for T/TS) gave a presentation on the Administration's proposal to replace the existing electro-mechanical type of audible traffic signals (ATS) installed at some signalized pedestrian crossings with a new type of electronic ATS (e-ATS) and to install such e-ATS at all other signalized pedestrian crossings currently without audible devices.

9. AC for T/TS stated that since January 1994, ATS had been provided as a standard facility at all new signalized junctions with pedestrian crossings. At present,

66% (or 954) of the 1 445 signalized junctions with pedestrian crossings were installed with some 6 000 units of ATS to facilitate the visually impaired in crossing the roads. However, the provision of ATS had been a conflicting concern of both the visually impaired and the public. While the visually impaired had strongly pressed for 24-hour operation at all signalized pedestrian crossings, other residents close to the ATS had complained about the nuisance caused by the ATS sound particularly at night time when the environment was relatively quiet. The e-ATS, available in recent years and being used in many countries, were equipped to adjust its output sound level automatically in response to the ambient noise level. In addition, a vibrating unit might be included as an option of the e-ATS, which was capable of indicating whether a crossing was on "red" or "green" phasing. This was particularly useful at those junctions with a number of closely-spaced pedestrian crossings. A small number of these units had been tried out. Having regard to the satisfactory trial results, the Administration's plan was to install or retrofit a total of 11 400 units of e-ATS at all such junctions in phases in accordance with a priority list agreed with organizations representing the visually impaired.

10. Members noted that the total non-recurrent cost for implementing the e-ATS project was estimated to be \$52,668,000. The estimated recurrent expenditure for the operation and maintenance of e-ATS was \$6,088,000. On-site installation was expected to be completed in July 2004. Subject to members' views, the relevant funding proposal would be submitted to FC for approval on 10 May 2002.

Implementation programme

11. Mrs Selina CHOW expressed support for the proposal. She however queried why it took five years for testing and delivering the project. Highlighting the utter urgency to speed up progress to enhance road safety for the visually impaired, she urged the Administration to consider expediting the programme. In particular, she questioned whether it was necessary to conduct a pre-qualification exercise if suitable e-ATS products had already been identified during the testing stage. As a matter of principle, she opined that for the purpose of enhancing efficiency, the Administration ought to consider whether tenders should be invited in the first place for undertaking testing, development, supply and installation work all in one go.

12. The Chairman also said that early implementation could be achieved if both the pre-qualification exercise and the installation programme were compressed. To expedite progress, Mr CHENG Kar-foo said that the e-ATS should first be installed in locations most needed by the visually impaired while the noise nuisance was less disturbing. Also stating support for early implementation of the present proposal, Mr Andrew WONG asked whether the technology to produce the e-ATS was available in Hong Kong and whether local suppliers would be considered during pre-qualification.

13. In response, AC for T/TS explained that although the e-ATS were widely available and being used in many countries, the Transport Department (TD) would need to assess products from different suppliers to ensure that the specific design

requirements were met. In fact, modifications were required for all of the products tested in the pilot scheme. After a series of technical tests, three e-ATS products were found to be suitable for application in Hong Kong and a small number of these units had been tried out at four junctions.

14. Regarding pre-qualification, AC for T/T/S advised that while three suitable e-ATS products had been identified, other suppliers might have different products which could also meet the specific requirements as the technology required was not very complex. Hence, a short pre-qualification exercise was proposed to ensure participation from as many suppliers as possible. Noting members' views and suggestions, he said that TD would review whether the implementation plan could be expedited. Addressing the point raised by Mr CHENG kar-foo, AC for T/T/S said that a priority list had already been agreed with organizations representing the visually impaired and the programme would be undertaken in phases.

Nuisance caused to nearby residents

15. Referring to footnote 2 of the paper, Mr LAU Kong-wah was gravely concerned that the output sound level of the e-ATS was set at 3 decibels (dB) to 12 dB above ambient noise level and their output range could reach as high as 90 dB. As such, he expressed reservation about the suggestion to fast-track the implementation programme, and called on the Administration to adopt a more cautious approach in taking forward the proposal, especially in the handling of complaints lodged by nearby residents about the nuisance caused by the ATS sound. Given that the statutory noise limit was only 70 dB, he considered that such a level of incessant and monotonous noise would be quite unacceptable to those residing close to the e-ATS. While acknowledging the need to take care of the visually impaired, Mr LAU queried whether it was the right approach to extend the scope of the plan territory-wide merely on the basis of so-called "satisfactory" response from nearby residents surveyed in a pilot scheme conducted in only four locations.

16. In reply, AC for T/T/S elaborated on the problem with the existing ATS which was an electro-mechanical device generating "tic-tac" sound at a fixed output level of 68 dB at one metre from source. Although this sound level had been found to be generally acceptable, the visually impaired had complained about the audible signals being masked by high ambient noise. On the other hand, the residents nearby might find this sound level on the high side when the environment was relatively quiet. i.e. at night. To address such conflicting considerations, the e-ATS were proposed as their output sound level could be adjusted automatically in response to changes in ambient noise level. The differential between the e-ATS output and ambient noise level would be 9 dB at day-time (i.e. from 7:00 am to 11:00 pm) and 3 dB at night-time. For instance, at night-time when the ambient noise level was only 55 dB, the e-ATS output would be reduced to 58 dB, a significant improvement when compared with 68 dB from existing ATS.

17. AC for T/TS also clarified that the settings of 3 dB to 12 dB above ambient noise level and the output range of 55 dB to 90 dB given in the paper were merely technical specifications of the e-ATS. He stressed that the setting of the e-ATS output at 9 dB above ambient noise level was meant to ensure that the signals could be heard by the visually impaired at a distance of one metre away from the device. However, it did not mean that the ambient noise level would be increased by 9 dB. As there would be some distance between the residential units and the crossing facility, not much difference would be made in respect of the exact noise level felt by the residents.

18. Notwithstanding the Administration's explanation, the Chairman remarked that at places where the ambient noise level was quite high already, say 70 dB, the situation of nearby residents would actually be worse-off as the e-ATS output would be 79 dB (i.e. 9 dB above ambient noise level) when compared with the existing ATS output of 68 dB. Mr LAU Kong-wah also said that if the scope of e-ATS was extended to cover all signalized junctions with pedestrian crossings as presently proposed, many more households would be affected.

19. While expressing support for the provision of the e-ATS to meet the need of the visually impaired, Mr CHENG Kar-foo highlighted the importance of balancing this against the nuisance caused to the residents nearby who were exposed to such noise constantly. He opined that given the sensitive hearing senses of the visually impaired, it might not be necessary to fix the setting of e-ATS output at 9 dB above ambient noise level at day-time. In this connection, the Administration should liaise with organizations of the visually impaired to examine whether the e-ATS output could be capped at below the permissible level of 70 dB. The Chairman also enquired about the feasibility of giving signals to the visually impaired by the vibrating unit alone. Ir Dr Raymond HO said that with the use of a tactile guide path, the visually impaired could be easily led to the vibrating unit. The provision of such facilities should be incorporated in the Administration's long-term planning for pedestrian facilities in Hong Kong.

20. In response, AC for T/TS advised that although the general guideline was to set the e-ATS output at 9 dB above ambient noise level at day-time, the actual output level would be adjusted accordingly if necessary after consultation with the visually impaired. However, if only the vibrating unit was used, problems might arise as only one visually impaired person could receive the signals at any one time. He also pointed out that apart from facilitating the visually impaired, the e-ATS might also serve as an additional audible device to assist the general pedestrians when using the crossing facility. As regards the provision of tactile guide path in footpath, AC for T/TS informed members that pilot schemes were in progress to facilitate the visually impaired on crossing the roads.

21. Ir Dr Raymond HO however considered that those who were able-sighted should be responsible for their own safety when crossing the streets. He suggested that the problem might be resolved with the use of a remote sensor to activate the e-ATS. Mr TAM Yiu-chung also said that such device was already available in

Admin Canada. In this connection, Ir Dr HO requested the Administration to further examine his suggestion and provide relevant information on overseas experience to members for reference. AC for T/T/S replied that although the member's suggestion might be feasible technically, it would be necessary to ensure that the remote sensors were made available to every visually impaired person.

Admin 22. Mr LAU Kong-wah reiterated his view that a prudent approach should be adopted when taking forward the present proposal. In this connection, he requested the Administration to respond to the following:

- (a) TD to disclose the findings of the relevant survey indicating a "satisfactory" response from nearby residents in the pilot scheme;
- (b) The view of the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) on the fact that in some cases, the e-ATS output level might exceed the statutory limit of 70 dB;
- (c) Taking into account the views expressed by members at the meeting, the Administration should conduct further application tests, especially in new locations, to ascertain the response from both the visually impaired and the nearby residents; and
- (d) TD should identify whether any better technology was available to minimize the noise nuisance created, in particular the use of remote sensor as suggested by Ir Dr Raymond HO.

23. AC for T/T/S responded that the e-ATS were now undergoing the second stage of application tests and the devices were installed in 32 additional locations all over the territory to solicit more views from the residents in the neighbourhood and the visually impaired. In addition, TD would also liaise with EPD on the matter. While noting the concerns and useful comments raised by members at the meeting, C for T stressed that at present, some 6 000 units of ATS were already installed in 954 signalized junctions all over the territory and they had been working quite smoothly. To further improve the situation, the Administration had come up with the e-ATS which was in fact a much better system with its ambient noise responsive feature. After careful testing and planning, he believed that a reasonable balance was achieved and the plan should proceed as proposed. However, he assured members that when the proposal was put into implementation, TD would continue to adopt a sensitive and sympathetic manner in dealing with any local issues that might arise, particularly when the e-ATS were put into new areas.

24. Responding to Mr Andrew WONG's remark that bird tweeting sound might be a better option than the mechanical "tic-tac" sound, AC for T/T/S reported that when consulted, the visually impaired stated their preference for the existing "tic-tac" sound.

25. Summing up the discussion, the Chairman invited the Administration to note that the provision of the e-ATS to facilitate the visually impaired was supported in principle by all members. Some members took the view that the implementation programme should be expedited while other members had expressed serious concern about the noise nuisance to be suffered by the residents nearby. In this connection, the Administration should ensure that a proper balance was maintained. In particular, the Administration should consider whether the e-ATS output could be lowered or capped below the statutory noise limit of 70 dB.

V Central Kowloon Route

(LC Paper No. CB(1)1558/01-02(03) - Information paper provided by the Administration)

26. Mr Abraham SHEK declared interest that he was a member of the Antiquities Advisory Board.

27. With the aid of PowerPoint, the Deputy Project Manager, Major Works of Highways Department (DPM/MW, HyD), introduced the revised alignment of the Central Kowloon Route (CKR) as set out in LC Paper No. CB(1)1558/01-02(03).

(Post-meeting note: A set of presentation materials tabled at the meeting was subsequently issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(1)1633/01-02(01).)

28. DPM/MW, HyD stated that the proposed CKR, a 4.7-kilometre trunk road (including a 3.9-kilometre tunnel), would connect the West Kowloon reclamation and the future South East Kowloon Development (SEKD) and on to Tseung Kwan O via Road T2 and Western Coast Road. It would relieve traffic congestion on the existing east-west roads across Central Kowloon. He went on to explain that in 1998, a dual-2 lane tunnel option for CKR was proposed. With subsequent changes proposed for SEKD, which essentially involved a smaller scale of reclamation and promoted the use of sub-surface roads, an alignment review was conducted for the section of CKR to the east of Ho Man Tin. A better route to the north, passing through the bus terminus at Kowloon City Ferry Pier, was identified. The revised alignment, which extended the original tunnel section to match with the revised SEKD scheme, was considered superior to the original alignment. It allowed the tunnel to run at a greater depth within the existing bed rock stratum, thus substantially reducing the effects of tunnel construction on existing roads and services along the alignment in To Kwa Wan area.

29. DPM/MW, HyD further stated that the revised alignment could accommodate the tunnel in a conventional side-by-side configuration, and was capable of expanding to dual 3-lane without adding significant resumption or reprovisioning requirements. In the context of the latest Strategic Highway Project Review, the Administration had reassessed the adequacy of the originally proposed dual 2-lane tunnel based on the latest planning parameters and population forecast. The traffic forecasts showed that a dual 2-lane CKR would be operating at capacity during peak periods immediately

following the opening of the road in 2011 and it would be working above capacity in the subsequent design years. Given the one-off opportunity to build this tunnel, the Administration proposed to adopt a dual 3-lane tunnel configuration to cope with the long term traffic demand.

30. Members noted that the Administration's intention was to start preliminary design and the associated site investigation for the revised alignment in the second half of 2002 for completion in end 2003. Funding approval of the Public Works Subcommittee would be sought accordingly. The Administration would then commence the detailed design of CKR in 2004 and the construction of CKR in 2007 for completion by 2011.

31. Mr Albert CHAN was not satisfied that no cost estimates was given in the paper. In response, the Principal Assistant Secretary for Transport (5) (PAS for T(5)) explained that the Administration's intention was to seek members' views on the revised proposal for CKR first. Subject to members' agreement, the Administration would work out the financial implications involved and revert to the Council in due course. As a very rough estimate, she advised that the original estimated cost for a dual-2 lane CKR was about \$8.2 billion. It was expected that the cost for the revised dual-3 lane configuration would increase by about 10% to 20%. Mr Albert CHAN said that he considered the estimated cost of about \$10 billion acceptable.

32. Citing the existing budget deficit, Mr Abraham SHEK suggested that the Administration should consider whether CKR could be developed through "Private Finance Initiative". Under this arrangement, the Government could avoid the need for capital expenditure at the beginning of the project in exchange for making payments for the service as it was delivered. A private sector contractor funded any asset required and was then paid for the service provided over a period of say twenty years. In reply, PAS for T(5) said that as the CKR would be untolled, the conventional "Build-Operate-Transfer" mode might not be feasible. However, the Administration would further consider the member's suggestion.

Cost-effectiveness of the project

33. The Chairman welcomed the dual-3 lane configuration of CKR under the revised alignment. Sharing this view, Mr CHENG Kar-foo however was concerned that notwithstanding the hefty sum of public monies spent on the project, CKR would in fact be operating close to capacity immediately following its opening (the projected volume/capacity ratio was 0.8 and 0.9 in 2011 and 2016 respectively). Moreover, not much relief would be provided to the relevant road sections such as Argyle Street and Waterloo Road as they would still be operating close to or above capacity in 2011 to 2016. Hence, he called on the Administration to make early planning to address the problem of congestion at these relevant road sections.

34. Acknowledging the member's concern about the heavy traffic at both CKR and the relevant road sections, PAS for T(5) explained that given the presence of various

geological and site constraints, it would not be feasible to further expand CKR to a dual-4 lane configuration. Moreover, as Central Kowloon was already densely developed, it would also be very difficult to construct new roads or widen the existing roads to cope with the demand. As such, the Administration would instead focus on the implementation of traffic management measures to provide relief. To supplement, the Chief Engineer/Strategic Roads of Transport Department explained that while CKR would take away some long haul traffic from the existing roads in Central Kowloon, it could not provide much relief to the said critical road sections because of heavy local traffic demand. In this connection, further consideration would be given when traffic impact assessment of CKR was conducted and any improvement measures identified would be taken up in the local context.

35. Referring to the existing congestion in Yau Ma Tei area during morning peak, Mr Albert CHAN was worried that after CKR was completed, the local road network might not be able to cope with the additional traffic generated and the situation would be aggravated. To avoid creating bottlenecks, he considered that more exit points should be provided, particularly in SEKD, to facilitate access by people in the neighbouring areas. Similar views were also expressed by Ir Dr Raymond HO and Mr Abraham SHEK.

36. In response, PAS for T(5) explained that CKR would be connected to Route 3 in the west via the existing Yau Ma Tei Interchange. As Route 3 had dual-3 lane configuration, adequate capacity should be available to take up the traffic coming from CKR. She further advised that during the planning process, close consultation had been held with both Planning Department (PlanD) and Territory Development Department. Therefore, the proposed alignment had already taken into account the planned SEKD. Given that SEKD would be established as an environmental city, only one exit point was provided in SEKD to discourage road traffic. From a technical point of view, she said that as a large section of CKR was in fact a bored tunnel, it was unlikely that an exit point could be provided in the middle. Otherwise, significant resumption and reprovisioning would be required.

37. Mr Albert CHAN however considered that from a planning perspective, he found it totally unacceptable that such an important and expensive strategic road would only have two exit points along its full length of 4.7 kilometre. He thus strongly requested the Administration to reconsider its planning for CKR and provide additional exit points, particularly in areas along the fringe of South East Kowloon such as To Kwa Wan. In this connection, he also opined that the provision of access roads for CKR should not be dictated by the draft Outline Zoning Plan for SEKD. To facilitate members' understanding, he requested the Administration to provide a supplementary note elucidating the interface between the development of CKR and SEKD. He also requested for additional information on the traffic forecasts of the interchanges at both ends of CKR.

Admin

Admin

Reprovisioning arrangements

38. Mr Andrew WONG expressed concern about the reprovisioning of the Yau Ma Tei Police Station which was a Grade III historical building. Considering that the Administration should take the lead in the preservation and conservation of historical buildings in Hong Kong, he called on the Administration to further examine whether bored tunnel could be used for that section so as to obviate the need to take away any part of the Police Station. While expressing support for the revised CKR alignment, Mr Abraham SHEK also asked whether any other alternative alignment could be considered to minimize impact on the Police Station.

39. In response, PAS for T(5) explained that the Yau Ma Tei Police Station consisted of two buildings. Only the non-historical Annex to the Police Station would be demolished. Due to tunnel construction works, part of the original Police Station building affected by the alignment would be taken down temporarily and then restored. As the Yau Ma Tei Police Station would be relocated, the restored Police Station building could be surrendered for other purposes. She further advised that as the tunnel was coming out of the ground to join the at-grade road ahead, this tunnel section was not very deep. Hence, the cut and cover method would have to be used. DPM/MW, HyD supplemented that as the soil structure of the area was rather loose, it would not be technically feasible to adopt a bored tunnel option. Responding to Mr Abraham SHEK, PAS for T(5) reported that the possibility of alternative alignment had been examined in detail by the Administration. However, significant resumption and reprovisioning would be required.

40. Referring to the Yau Ma Tei Jade Hawker Bazaar, Mr Abraham SHEK said that this was a major tourist attraction and the Administration should ensure that its operation would not be affected by construction works. In reply, PAS for T(5) advised that to ensure continuity of the existing services to the public, all the affected buildings and facilities would be properly reprovisioned before the commencement of the CKR tunnel works in the area.

41. The Chairman cautioned that accessibility should be the prime consideration in identifying new locations for reprovisioning facilities. In this connection, she called on the Administration to review the proposed location for the Yau Ma Tei Multi-storey Car Park Building and Yau Ma Tei Public Library. She suggested that consideration might be given for the provision of pedestrian subways to facilitate access. Acknowledging the member's concern, PAS for T(5) agreed that the suggestion would be carefully considered by the Administration. She acknowledged that after reprovisioning, the service area of the car park might shift towards West Kowloon. However, subject to demand, planning for the provision of additional parking facilities in Yau Ma Tei area would be made.

Construction

42. Citing the problem of uneven ground settlement caused by the Strategic Sewage Disposal Scheme tunnels in Tseung Kwan O, Ir Dr Raymond HO expressed concern about the impact of boring such a long tunnel deep under the existing bed rock stratum. In this connection, he asked whether the feasibility of the revised alignment had been verified by relevant geotechnical data obtained from site investigations.

43. In reply, DPM/MW, HyD reported that the feasibility of the proposed alignment had been confirmed by preliminary site investigation. Subject to more detailed investigation during the preliminary and detailed design stages, the Administration would ensure that the geological situation of the affected areas was well-understood so that construction work would be planned and implemented accordingly to avoid any undue impact on the surrounding buildings and facilities.

44. Citing the West Rail project, Mr Albert CHAN opined that a better mechanism should be put in place by the Administration to monitor the impact caused by the construction of CKR on the buildings nearby. Moreover, the complaints and claims lodged by the affected residents and owners should be dealt with in a fair manner. In this connection, he requested the Administration to provide further information on this point before funding approval for the construction of CKR was sought. In response, PAS for T(5) advised that for new major road projects, consultative committees would be set up to gauge the views of local residents both during the planning and construction stages. With this arrangement, any complaints from the affected parties would be handled efficiently.

Admin

Implementation programme

45. Notwithstanding the technical difficulty involved, Ir Dr Raymond HO called on the Administration to take all possible steps to advance the programme of the project. In particular, he pointed out that the time taken for the administrative and statutory procedures, detailed design and construction was all unnecessarily long. Moreover, the reprovisioning arrangements should also commence as early as practicable.

46. Noting the member's concerns and suggestions, PAS for T(5) said that the Administration would further review whether the programme could be fast-tracked in any way. She advised that subject to the number of objections received during public consultation, the Administration might be able to complete the gazettal procedures ahead of the nine-month schedule. If other procedures such as detailed design and reprovisioning could also have an early start, she hoped that the project might be completed 12 months earlier. She assured members that every effort would be made to ensure the timely provision of CKR, taking into account the progress of the reclamation works under SEKD.

VI Any other business

47. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 1:00 pm.

Legislative Council Secretariat

11 July 2002