

**For discussion
on 26 October 2001**

**Panel on Transport
Legislative Council**

Route 7

Purpose

This paper seeks Members' views on the proposed way forward for the Route 7 project.

Background

2. In July 2001, we put forward a proposal to proceed with an engineering review on a link between Kennedy Town and Pok Fu Lam and the remaining part of Route 7 between Pok Fu Lam and Aberdeen to be reviewed in the light of further development in Southern District. Members strongly requested for early implementation of the project and passed the following motion –

“This Panel strongly requests the Administration to construct Route 7 from Kennedy Town to Aberdeen mainly in tunnel form as soon as possible”

3. At the special meeting held on 21 September 2001, various groups were invited to express their views on Route 7. The concerned District Councils and some local organisations strongly requested for the construction of Route 7 from Kennedy Town to Aberdeen. Other groups objected to the project and suggested that it should be replaced by a rail link.

Proposed Way Forward

4. Having regard to the motion passed by Members and the views expressed at the Panel meeting on 21 September 2001, we intend to conduct an engineering review for the entire section of Route 7 from

Kennedy Town to Aberdeen. In this review, we will investigate various possible alignments linking Kennedy Town to Pok Fu Lam and from Pok Fu Lam to Aberdeen. We will investigate the extent to which the project can be in tunnel and the costs and environmental impacts involved. Consideration would also be given to whether construction could be undertaken in phases with the section between Kennedy Town and Pok Fu Lam completed first as traffic forecasts indicate that there is a more urgent need for the section between Kennedy Town and Pok Fu Lam by 2010. The volume/capacity (v/c)¹ ratios of the relevant road sections and the reserve capacity² of the critical junctions under the two scenarios, namely building Route 7 from Kennedy Town to Pok Fu Lam and building Route 7 all the way from Kennedy Town to Aberdeen is at Annex A.

5. We will review the traffic projection figures in the light of the latest population projections and tourism initiatives for Aberdeen with a view to refining the timetable for the project in particular the section between Pok Fu Lam and Aberdeen. Although traffic forecast indicates that a dual 2-lane Route 7 could be able to meet the forecast demand and could comfortably cope with the traffic flow in 2016 (figures at Annex B), we would further examine the need and cost implications for dual 3-lane in the review. The engineering review will start shortly for completion in 2002.

6. On the suggestion to replace Route 7 with a railway, we see that roads and railway are complementary to each other and one cannot always replace the other. Roads are essential for supporting other public transport services (including feeders to railways), commercial and emergency vehicles and door to door transport by private cars.

7. While railways are ideal as mass carriers, they are not suitable for areas where population is scattered such as Pok Fu Lam. Both the Third Comprehensive Transport Strategy (CTS-3) and the

¹ A volume/capacity (v/c) ratio equals to or less than 1.0 means that the road has sufficient capacity to cope with the volume of vehicular traffic under consideration and the resultant traffic will flow smoothly. A v/c ratio above 1.0 indicates the onset of congestion: above 1.2 indicates more serious congestion with traffic speeds progressively deteriorating with further increases in traffic.

² "Reserve Capacity" (RC) is an indicator which reflects a junction's performance. A negative RC indicates that the junction is overloaded, thus resulting in traffic queues and longer delay time.

Second Railway Development Study (RDS-2) have not identified a railway that follows the alignment of Route 7, i.e. running from Kennedy Town to Aberdeen, as a serious option. First of all, this will be a very indirect link between the main population centres in the Southern District (i.e. Wah Fu and Ap Lei Chau) and Central/Wanchai which are the main destinations and may not be able to compete with other forms of public transport. Secondly, the population concentrations in Pok Fu Lam like Cyberport and the Chi Fu area only have a population of about 10 000 each and cannot justify an underground railway station which normally serves a catchment population of 50 000.

8. RDS-2 and CTS-3 have however considered a more practical railway option, i.e. the South Hong Kong Island Line (SIL) which is a longer term project that runs directly between Admiralty, Wah Fu and Ap Lei Chau. RDS-2 has estimated that the revenue of SIL can cover the operating cost with the planned population of 310 000 in the south Hong Kong Island catchment in 2016. To make this railway line viable, an additional 170 000 population and 43 000 jobs within the south Hong Kong Island catchment would be required. The SIL remains on our drawing board but commands a lower priority than the 6 rail projects recommended by RDS-2.

9. Even if the SIL is built, it does not displace much of the anticipated increase in road utilisation in Pok Fu Lam, in particular the section from Kennedy Town to Pok Fu Lam. The provision of the SIL will only reduce about 3% of the private cars and taxis during peak hours from the roads in the Southern District.

Advice sought

10. Members are invited to comment on this paper.

**V/c ratios of the relevant road sections and
the reserve capacity of the critical junctions**

AM Northbound V/c ratios	without Route 7	with Route 7 (from Kennedy Town to Pok Fu Lam)	with Route 7 (whole Section)
2011			
Aberdeen Tunnel	1.1	1.1	1.0
Critical section of Pok Fu Lam Road	1.4	1.1	1.0
2016			
Aberdeen Tunnel	1.2	1.1	1.0
Critical section of Pok Fu Lam Road	1.4	1.1	1.0

	with Route 7	Without Route 7
2011		
Junction of Pok Fu Lam Road/Pokfield Road	-5%	-40%
Junction of Pok Fu Lam Road/Mt. Davis Road	-5%	-30%
2016		
Junction of Pok Fu Lam Road/Pokfield Road	-5%	-30%
Junction of Pok Fu Lam Road/Mt. Davis Road	-5%	-40%

V/c ratios of Route 7 assuming a dual two-lane capacity

	2011	2016
AM North Bound	0.5	0.6
PM South Bound	0.5	0.5