

Legislative Council Panel on Transport

Supplementary Information on Government Policy on the Provision and Operation of Tunnels

Background

When the paper on “Government Policy on Provision and Operation of Tunnels ” (LC Paper No. CB (1) 1085/01-02(04)) was discussed at the meeting of the Legislative Council Panel on Transport held on 22 February 2002, the Administration was asked to provide:

- a. the original set of traffic forecasts used by the Administration when planning for Western Harbour Crossing (WHC) and Tai Lam Tunnel (TLT); and
 - b. details about the improvement measures taken by the Administration to facilitate utilisation of under-utilised tunnels including WHC, and those measures proposed by tunnel operators but subsequently rejected by the Administration.
2. This paper provides Members with the supplementary information.

Traffic Forecasts

3. The original traffic forecasts for the planning of WHC and TLT were set out in the Project Brief for WHC and Project Outline for TLT issued in February 1992 and March 1993 respectively by the Administration. They were based on a number of assumptions including those concerning land use, airport and port development, economic growth forecasts, future transport infrastructure development, tolling of tunnels and road crossings and traffic restraint measures. These input assumptions were drawn up on the basis of the best available data then. The Administration clearly stated in the documents that the traffic projections were for reference purpose and that any variation to the assumptions would affect the traffic projections.

4. When bidders put in submissions for the tunnel franchises, they produced their own forecasts of the traffic throughput based on their own input assumptions. The traffic forecasts of the Administration and those adopted by the two tunnel companies during the planning of the WHC and TLT tunnel projects are at Annex A. In the case of WHC, the traffic forecast was made before 1997 when the economy was thriving. It was therefore based on a higher growth assumption. The unforeseen economic downturn in recent years and the slower than expected pace of development in West Kowloon had

dampened demand. Both the Administration and the tunnel company's traffic forecasts were higher than the actual throughput to date. As for TLT, the actual tunnel throughput to date falls within the low and the high projections of the Administration. The traffic projections of the TLT company were, however, significantly more optimistic than that of the Administration.

Traffic Improvement Measures for WHC and TLT

5. The Administration has been implementing various measures to further enhance access to as well as the utilisation of the tunnels in the territory. Specific traffic measures implemented to facilitate utilisation of WHC and TLT are at Annex B.

6. Since late 1999, a Traffic and Transport Improvement Committee for WHC has been established whereby the tunnel management and the Transport Department meet on a regular basis to exchange views on measures that could help enhance tunnel traffic. Measures considered by the Committee covered a wide range of proposals. In the past two years, some 18 items of improvement measures were agreed for implementation including construction of new road links leading to the tunnel approaches, deletion of certain turning movements or pedestrian crossings to smoothen traffic flow at road junctions leading to WHC, provision of road markings and directional signs to guide motorists, etc. Another four items involving the provision of additional cross-harbour taxi stands in Wan Chai, Central and Western District, modification of existing traffic movements in Central, Yau Ma Tei and Tsim Sha Tsui, provision of additional traffic lanes in Wan Chai, Sham Shui Po and Yau Ma Tei, and banning of pedestrian crossings at major junctions were found not feasible mainly because there was insufficient capacity on the relevant roads or at junctions, or there were site constraints to accommodate the proposed facilities. The reasons for not implementing those measures were thoroughly discussed at the aforesaid forum and were accepted by the tunnel management.

7. As for TLT, all traffic measures proposed by the tunnel company were accepted by the Administration and implemented accordingly.

Advice Sought

8. Members are requested to note the paper.

Transport Bureau
April 2002

Forecast Traffic Throughput of WHC and TLT
(No. of vehicles per day)

Western Harbour Crossing

Year	Administration's Forecast	Tunnel Company's Forecast
1997	85,000	70,034
1998	-	72,895
1999	-	77,131
2000	-	81,605
2001	120,000	86,330

Tai Lam Tunnel

Year	Administration's Forecast		Tunnel Company's Forecast
	High Range	Low Range	
1998	-	-	59,562
1999	49,277	32,837	67,130
2000	-	-	73,433
2001	57,551	40,158	81,720

Traffic Measures to Improve Accessibility**Western Harbour Crossing**

Improvement Works		Target Completion Date
General		
1	Connection of WHC with high capacity trunk roads (i.e. Western Kowloon Expressway and Route 7 Viaduct) and erection of some 400 directional signs at both ends of WHC since the commencement of its operation.	Completed
2	Traffic management and road improvement schemes for smoothening traffic flow in the vicinity of both ends of WHC. Examples include traffic management measures along Connaught Road Central on the Hong Kong side and improvement of traffic signal control systems and road widening works near Jordan Road in Kowloon.	Completed
Hong Kong Approach		
3	Improvement of road markings on both directions of Connaught Road Central and Harcourt Road to reduce weaving and provide an express traffic lane to and from WHC.	Completed
4	Connection of Morrison Street with the main carriageway of Connaught Road West westbound to facilitate buses heading towards WHC.	Completed
5	Widening of the road outside City Hall to reduce congestion on Connaught Road Central eastbound.	Completed
6	Erection of 50 additional road signs to further enhance the accessibility to WHC.	Completed
7	Provision of an additional route for traffic going to WHC via Centre Street in Western District.	Completed

8	Reducing traffic on Connaught Road Central eastbound by providing a U-turn movement at Airport Railway HK Station drop-off layby on Man Cheung Street to Road P2 eastbound.	Completed
9	Installation of additional signs in Wanchai, the mid levels and Central to facilitate access to WHC.	2003
10	Provision of an additional traffic lane on Connaught Road Central westbound near Gilman Street footbridge to facilitate access to WHC.	2003
11	Construction of Central – Wan Chai Bypass.	2011
Kowloon Approach		
12	Allowing traffic to turn right from Lai Chi Kok Road southbound to Tonkin Street westbound to facilitate access to WHC.	Completed
13	Allowing traffic to turn right into Argyle Street westbound and Waterloo Road southbound to facilitate access to WHC.	Completed
14	Erection of 16 additional road signs to further enhance the accessibility to WHC.	Completed
15	Installation of additional signs at Lai Chi Kok Road, Waterloo Road, Hung Hom Road, Prince's Margaret Link Road, Hung Hom Bypass and Gascoigne Road to facilitate access to WHC.	2003
16	Completion of the remaining part of Lin Cheung Road in the vicinity of Tonkin Street Interchange will provide an additional route to gain access to WHC.	2003
17	Completion of Route 9 between Cheung Sha Wan and Tsing Yi, and between Cheung Sha Wan and Shatin will provide direct linkage from the New Territories to WHC.	2007
18	Completion of Central Kowloon Route will facilitate direct access from southeast Kowloon area to WHC.	2010

Tai Lam Tunnel

Improvement Works		Target Completion Date
1	Erection of about 180 directional signs along the approach roads to Tai Lam Tunnel in Kwai Tsing, Tsuen Wan, Yuen Long, Tuen Mun and North District to guide motorists towards Tai Lam Tunnel.	Completed
2	Erection of 10 directional signs on Long Tin Road, Hung Tin Road and Castle Peak Road in Yuen Long to guide motorists towards Tai Lam Tunnel.	June 2002