

立法會

Legislative Council

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Report of the Panel on Transport for submission to the Legislative Council

Purpose

This report gives an account of the work of the Panel on Transport during the 2001-2002 legislative session. It will be tabled at the meeting of the Legislative Council on 10 July 2002 in accordance with Rule 77(14) of the Rules of Procedure of the Council.

The Panel

2. The Panel was formed by a resolution passed by the Council on 8 July 1998 and as amended on 20 December 2000 for the purpose of monitoring and examining Government policies and issues of public concern relating to transport matters. The terms of reference of the Panel are at **Appendix I**.

3. The Panel comprises 18 members, with Hon Miriam LAU Kin-yea and Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him elected as Chairman and Deputy Chairman respectively. The membership list of the Panel is at **Appendix II**.

Major Work

Transport infrastructure

4. The Panel continued with its vigorous efforts in overseeing the planning and development of transport infrastructure. During the session, the Panel had reviewed the implementation programme of a number of strategic infrastructural projects, taking into account the transport needs of the community, growth in cross-boundary traffic, changes to the economy, population growth, land use planning, and the overall sustainability of our transport infrastructure.

Shenzhen Western Corridor, Deep Bay Link and Route 10

5. The Panel had reviewed with the Administration the need, alignment and implementation timetable for the Shenzhen Western Corridor (SWC), Deep Bay Link (DBL) and Route 10. It also invited views from various bodies and members of the public, and organized a series of public hearings together with the concerned parties to discuss the three projects.

6. The Panel recognized the need for constructing the SWC, a carriageway spanning across Deep Bay linking Ngau Hom Shek and Shenzhen, together with the necessary connecting roads. The project would alleviate the nearly saturated land boundary crossings at Lok Ma Chau, Man Kam To and Sha Tau Kok, facilitate further economic development particularly in areas of logistics and tourism, and strengthen the position of Hong Kong as the hub of the Pearl River Delta area. The Panel had therefore called on the Administration to expedite the implementation of the SWC.

7. The Panel had also examined the need and alignment for the DBL, which would link the SWC with the Yuen Long Highway. Having considered the views expressed by members and deputations, the Administration agreed to examine further an additional easterly link road to the existing road network in the detailed design of the SWC/DBL, taking into account traffic, environmental, drainage and land impact assessments.

8. There were divergent views in the community over the need, alignment and timing for Route 10, particularly the Northern Section (section between Yuen Long Highway and So Kwun Wat). Some members were concerned that the SWC and DBL traffic, upon opening, would cause unacceptable congestion at Tuen Mun town centre and Tuen Mun Road, and considered that the planning of the supporting infrastructure, especially the Northern Section of Route 10, should be co-ordinated with the SWC and DBL programme. Other members however were worried that it might be premature to construct Route 10 at the present stage because the future development of port facilities had not been finalized and the increase in freight throughput after China's accession to the World Trade Organization had yet to be assessed. As the project would have impact on the logistics industry, it was necessary to take into account the views of the Steering Committee on Logistics Development and the Hong Kong Logistics Development Council on the Route 10 project. The Panel had also examined, inter alia, the basis of traffic projections provided by both the Administration and the Route 3 (CPS) Company, the suggestion to "subsidize" certain road users of Route 3 to maximize its utilization to meet the additional traffic demand and the provision of other alternative road links.

Route 7

9. The Panel had met with various groups to exchange views on Route 7. The concerned District Councils and some local organizations 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. To address the Panel's concern, the Administration undertook to investigate various possible alignments linking Kennedy Town to Aberdeen and the extent to which the project could be in tunnel. On the suggestion to replace Route 7 with a railway, the Panel agreed that roads and railway were complementary to each other and were not mutually exclusive.

Central Kowloon Route

10. The Central Kowloon Route would connect the West Kowloon reclamation and the future South East Kowloon Development and on to Tseung Kwan O via Road T2 and Western Coast Road. Whilst endorsing the planning intent of a dual 3-lane tunnel configuration to cope with the long term traffic demand, the Panel called on the Administration to explore the feasibility of providing additional exit points along the alignment to facilitate road users. Concern had also been raised over the reprovisioning arrangement for Government & Institutional facilities in the area.

Tung Chung Road

11. Mindful of the serious safety risks caused by the substandard conditions of Tung Chung Road, the Panel called on the Administration to take all possible measure to expedite the project so that early improvement could be provided to address the dire transport needs of the Lantau residents. As much time was needed to complete all the necessary administrative, land resumption and environmental impact assessment procedures, it would be most important for the Administration to ensure that a better consultation and liaison mechanism was in place to solicit and address as early as possible the concerns of all interested parties. The Panel also reviewed with the Administration the short term improvement measures on Tung Chung Road and contingency measures in case of traffic accidents.

Railway

12. The Panel continued to monitor the planning and implementation programme of railway development projects in Hong Kong. A subcommittee was also formed under the Panel to monitor the related issues in this respect.

13. The Kowloon-Canton Railway Corporation's (KCRC) agreement to pay Siemens the sum of \$100 million for variations, settlement of claims and recovery of time lost for the West Rail contract DB-1500 - Telecommunications

Systems had aroused wide public concern. The Subcommittee held a series of meetings to review with the Administration and KCRC the tender evaluation system and contractual performance monitoring in respect of the DB-1500 contract with Siemens. Members had expressed grave concern that under the Supplemental Agreement approved by the Managing Board, additional payment was required as compensation for the contractor's own fault. They had made various suggestions to KCRC on ways to improve the tender evaluation system and contractual performance monitoring. Following the release of the investigation report on the Review of Payments to Contractors for the West Rail Project conducted by Ernst & Young, the Subcommittee also held meetings to follow up on the investigation report. It also passed a motion urging the Corporation to implement the recommendations in the investigation report as soon as possible and provide regular progress report to the Panel.

14. The Subcommittee had closely monitored the bidding programme of the Sha Tin to Central Link and reviewed the assessment criteria used in the comparison of the bidding proposals from the two railway corporations. The Subcommittee also urged the Administration to speed up the delivery of the project and explore the feasibility of providing additional stations at Hin Keng, Tsz Wan Shan and Whampoa to meet the transport needs of commuters.

15. Following the dismissal of the appeal lodged by KCRC against the decision of the Director of Environmental Protection not to approve the Environmental Impact Assessment report and not to issue an Environmental Permit for the Lok Ma Chau Spur Line project, the Panel had reviewed with the Administration and KCRC the alternatives for implementing the project. The Panel was concerned whether the proposed bored tunnel option for the Spur Line was practicable from both the engineering and environmental points of view, bearing in mind it would incur an additional cost of about \$2 billion at 2001 prices. To ensure that the additional monies spent on the project for preserving the wetlands in Long Valley would be worth spending, the Panel took the opportunity to review the Government's nature conservation policy and protection of wetlands in Long Valley in light of the latest development of the Spur Line project together with the Environmental Affairs Panel and the Planning, Lands and Works Panel. With concerted effort from parties concerned, the Environmental Permit for the Lok Ma Chau Spur Line was issued in April 2002. Works on the Spur Line were expected to commence in the third quarter this year for completion by mid-2007.

16. Phase I of the MTR Tseung Kwan O Extension (TKE) targeted to open in mid-August 2002 was one of the railway projects monitored by the Panel. The Panel had examined the implications of the opening of TKE and the proposed public transport service plan, and called on the Administration to maintain a healthy competition among different modes of public transport services to ensure commuters' choice. Local views should be solicited and examined carefully. There was also a need to closely monitor the

implementation of the service changes after opening of the TKE. Service adjustments should be implemented in phases as appropriate.

17. On existing railway service, the Panel welcomed the two railway corporations' decision to postpone the increase in fares originally scheduled for 1 April 2002.

18. Following the suspension of the Airport Express Line and Tung Chung Line train services to the west of Tsing Yi for three hours on 6 November 2001, the Panel had reviewed the circumstances leading to the incident and the remedial measures taken by the MTR Corporation Limited to avoid recurrence of similar incidents in future. The Panel also examined whether there was a need to introduce new performance requirement on train services disruption so as to enable the Chief Executive in Council to impose penalty for serious service failure if and when necessary.

Transport services

19. The Panel recognized the importance of ferries as an essential transport links to outlying islands where no land transport alternatives were available, and an alternative of road service to the inner harbour and other areas in Hong Kong. In reviewing the future development of domestic passenger ferry services in Hong Kong, the Panel had emphasized the need to optimize the use of Hong Kong's harbour resources to meet the transport needs of the people and to promote tourism development. There was also a need to enhance the attractiveness of ferry services by putting in place better interchange with other connecting public transport modes.

20. The Panel had examined the proposal to convert Tuen Mun Pier to operate cross boundary passenger ferry services to Macau and other cities in the Pearl River Delta Region. The Panel urged the Administration to speed up the decision process so as to provide relief to existing congestion at major cross-boundary land crossings and to meet the demand of local residents.

21. The Panel had met with the public light bus (PLB) trade and the Administration to review the existing policy on PLBs. Recognizing the importance of PLB which carried about 1.63 million passenger trips per day, the Panel called on the Administration to review the role and operation of PLBs and the need to retain the existing restrictions on red minibus operation. Suitable measures should be introduced to promote green minibus services and improve PLB operation.

22. When consulted on the proposed renewal of the existing franchises for the Citybus Limited (Airport and North Lantau routes), the Long Win Bus Company Limited, and the New World First Bus Services Limited, the Panel had made various suggestions to refine the proposed terms of the franchises

with a view to further enhancing the interest of bus passengers.

Traffic management

23. The review on Government policy on provision and operation of tunnels remained a concern of the Panel. The Panel had examined the views put forward by Professor Richard WONG and others on the use of pecuniary measures to "subsidize" certain classes of vehicles so as to maximize the utilization of existing tunnel and road resources. The Panel considered that there was a need for the Administration to introduce measures to improve utilization of Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT) tunnels and to conduct an overall review on building tunnels through BOT arrangement.

24. The Panel had reviewed with the Administration the mechanism for regulation of road openings and the various measures for regulating traffic movement during road openings. The Panel was concerned about the non-compliance of temporary traffic light signals by motorists which might have safety implications. It called on the Administration to search for suitable automatic enforcement equipment to ensure compliance and examine other measures to improve the situation.

25. Following an oil leakage incident at the Cross Harbour Tunnel on 26 November 2001 which had led to serious traffic congestion in the territory, the Panel had reviewed with the Administration the contingency arrangements for handling major traffic and transport incidents with a view to improving the alert system and co-ordination among various departments and agencies in handling transport emergencies in future.

26. In view of the growing role of the tourism industry in the local economy, the Panel called on the Administration to designate sufficient parking spaces, together with coach picking-ups/setting-down bays in proximity to tourist attractions. The Panel was also concerned about the serious shortfalls of goods vehicle parking spaces. It urged the Administration to put in place remedial measures to address the problem. Concern had also been raised over the surplus of parking spaces for private car. To avoid wastage of public resources, the Panel saw the need for the Administration to review the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines, setting out, inter alia, the standards for the provision of parking and loading/unloading spaces in the new developments and re-developments.

Road safety

27. Whilst noting the generally satisfactory safety record of school transport vehicles, the Panel saw merit in exploring measures to further enhance the safety of school transport services considering that the passengers of school transport vehicles were mostly young children. In order to ensure a proper balance between the need to enhance safety and the implications of the various proposed improvement measures on the school transport trade, the Panel called on the Administration to consult the trade and the parents/guardians associations before finalizing the detailed proposals for consideration by the Council.

28. As a means to facilitate the visually impaired in crossing the roads, the Panel welcomed 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 device. The Panel called on the Administration to speed up the delivery of the project within the environmental constraints. Suitable measures should be introduced to minimize the nuisance caused by the ATS sound to near-by residents.

29. The Panel welcomed the Administration's initiative to provide escalator links/elevator systems to improve pedestrian accessibility to the uphill areas and allow grade separation to minimize potential conflicts between vehicular and pedestrian traffic, thus enhance the safety, convenience and comfort of pedestrians. The Panel called on the Administration to draw up an implementation programme on a territory-wide basis, taking into account the social and economic benefits of the proposed scheme, and the cost effectiveness of individual projects. The Panel had also reviewed the preliminary design of the two proposed systems on Hong Kong Island and made various suggestions to improve the design of the systems.

Environmental initiatives

30. The Panel also held a series of meetings with the Environmental Affairs Panel and the transport trade to examine the proposed incentive scheme for light buses owners to replace their diesel vehicles with liquefied petroleum gas or electric ones. Whilst welcoming the Administration's initiative to improve the air quality of Hong Kong, the Panels called on the Administration to ensure the timely provision of supporting infrastructure to facilitate the implementation of the scheme. There was also a need to ensure wider choice of vehicles by light bus owners. Adequate financial incentives should be provided to encourage conversion to cleaner alternative fuel.

31. The Panel continued to monitor the implementation of the retrofitting

and resurfacing programme and other traffic management measures such as speed control, traffic diversion and restricting use by heavy vehicles, etc to address noise impact of existing roads. It also reviewed the existing traffic noise standard of 70dB(A) L¹⁰ (1 hour) for domestic premises on road development projects and land use planning together with the Environmental Affairs Panel.

32. The Panel was consulted on a number of financial proposals before their introduction into the Council. These included the proposal to implement a programme to retrofit pre-Euro diesel heavy vehicles with catalysts or other installations, the proposal to replace existing meters with reloadable card operated parking meters. The Panel had also examined the proposal to tighten the noise emission standards for motor vehicles under the Noise Control (Motor Vehicles) Regulation.

33. During the period from October 2001 to June 2002, the Panel held a total of 26 meetings, eight of which were joint meetings with the Panel on Environmental Affairs and two were joint meetings with the Environmental Affairs Panel and Planning, Lands and Works Panel. The Subcommittee also held a total of eight meetings to follow up on railway-related matters.

Legislative Council Secretariat

3 July 2002

Legislative Council

Panel on Transport

Terms of Reference

1. To monitor and examine Government policies and issues of public concern relating to transport matters.
2. To provide a forum for the exchange and dissemination of views on the above policy matters.
3. To receive briefings and to formulate views on any major legislative or financial proposals in respect of the above policy area prior to their formal introduction to the Council or Finance Committee.
4. To monitor and examine, to the extent it considers necessary, the above policy matters referred to it by a member of the Panel or by the House Committee.
5. To make reports to the Council or to the House Committee as required by the Rules of Procedure.

**Legislative Council
Panel on Transport**

Membership list

Chairman	Hon Miriam LAU Kin-yee, JP
Deputy Chairman	Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, JP
Members	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, GBS, 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 WONG Sing-chi Hon LAU Ping-cheung
	(Total: 18 Members)
Clerk	Mr Andy LAU
Legal Adviser	Miss Connie FUNG
Date	1 July 2002