

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL PANEL ON TRANSPORT

Western Harbour Crossing (WHC) Tolls

Purpose

This paper informs Members of the new concessionary toll levels of WHC with effect from 16 February 2003 and the various traffic management measures implemented to enhance the accessibility of WHC.

Background on WHC Tolls

2. The Western Harbour Crossing Ordinance (Cap. 436) provides for a specified toll adjustment mechanism in respect of the WHC. Under the Ordinance, the franchisee may effect toll increases on certain specified dates spread over the 30-year franchise period. If the actual net revenue in respect of any year that is not a year ending immediately before the specified dates is less than the minimum estimated net revenue for that particular year as specified in Schedule 5 to the Ordinance, the franchisee may advance the toll increase. The maximum levels of increase in respect of different categories of vehicles are specified in the schedule to the Ordinance.

3. The franchisee of WHC indicated in August 2000 its intention to increase tolls. As required under the specified toll adjustment mechanism, we carefully examined the 1999/00 Net Revenue Statement (NRS) of WHC and noted that the franchisee's actual net revenue of \$58.8 million in 1999/00 was below the minimum estimated net revenue of \$253 million for the year specified in Schedule 5 of the Ordinance. While the franchisee may effect a toll increase under the law, we brought to the franchisee's attention our concern about the proposed toll increase during the extant economic climate, stressing that the franchisee should strike a balance between commercial considerations and the interest of the public at large. The franchisee subsequently decided not to effect a toll increase in 2001 but to keep the matter under review.

4. In June 2002, the franchisee notified the Administration that financial considerations demanded that the tolls be increased from 31 July 2002. In response to our repeated urging and having regard to the then prevailing economic conditions, the franchisee decided to offer concessionary tolls for all vehicles from the same date so that the then prevailing toll levels were maintained. The franchisee has complied with the requirements under the Ordinance to effect a toll increase and the Administration published the new tolls in the gazette as required under the law. The new tolls for WHC were gazetted on 26 July 2002 and took effect from 31 July 2002.

Lastest Position on WHC Tolls

5. We have repeatedly urged the franchisee to defer consideration of any toll adjustment and reminded them of the need to take into account public affordability and acceptability in devising its tolling strategy. Due to financial considerations, the franchisee has decided to reduce the concession for private car, private/public light bus, single and double decked bus from 16 February 2003. The tolls for private car will be adjusted from \$35 to \$37; public/private light bus from \$45 to \$47; single-decked bus from \$50 to \$60 and double-decked bus from \$70 to \$85. After the adjustment, motorcycle, private car, taxi, public/private light bus and all goods vehicles continue to enjoy concessionary tolls. A table showing the statutory and new concessionary tolls of WHC is at **Annex A**. We will continue to urge the franchisee to give due consideration to the interest of the commuting public in devising its tolling strategy.

Traffic Measures to Enhance the Accessibility of WHC

6. The average daily throughput of the WHC for the year 2002 is 40,040, a 0.86% increase as compared to the throughput of 39,700 for the previous year. The Administration has been implementing various traffic measures to further enhance access to as well as the utilisation of WHC. The specific measures implemented/to be implemented are at **Annex B**.

7. Since late 1999, a Traffic and Transport Improvement Committee for WHC has been established whereby the tunnel company and the Transport Department meet on a quarterly basis to exchange views on measures that could help enhance tunnel traffic. The last meeting (13th meeting) was held in November 2002 and the next meeting (14th meeting) will be held in late February 2003. Measures considered by the Committee covered a wide range of proposals. In the past three years, numerous items of improvements measures were agreed for

implementation including construction of new road links leading to the tunnel approaches, traffic management measures to smoothen traffic flow at road junctions leading to WHC, provision of road markings and additional directional signs to guide motorists, provision of cross-harbour taxi stands for WHC, etc.

Environment, Transport and Works Bureau
February 2003

(ETWB(T)CR 1/4651/99)

Annex A

Existing Tolls and New Tolls of Western Harbour Crossing

Vehicle Type	Gazetted Tolls with effect from 31 July 2002	Current Concessionary Tolls	New Tolls with effect from 16 February 2003
Motorcycle *	\$25	\$20	\$20
Private Car *	\$50	\$35	\$37
Taxi *	\$50	\$35	\$35
Light Bus *	\$60	\$45	\$47
Light Goods Vehicle *	\$75	\$50	\$50
Medium Goods Vehicle *	\$105	\$70	\$70
Heavy Goods Vehicle *	\$155	\$100	\$100
Single-Deck Bus	\$60	\$50	\$60
Double-Deck Bus	\$85	\$70	\$85
Additional Axle *	\$50	\$30	\$30

*** Concessionary Tolls**

Annex B

<u>Traffic Improvement Measures</u>		Target Completion Date
Hong Kong Approach		
1	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
2	Connection of Morrison Street with the main carriageway of Connaught Road West westbound to facilitate buses heading towards WHC.	Completed
3	Widening of the road outside City Hall to reduce congestion on Connaught Road Central eastbound.	Completed
4	Provision of an additional route for traffic going to WHC via Centre Street in Western District.	Completed
5	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
6	Introduction of 2-way routing of the section of Ice House Street between Connaught Road Central and Chater Road.	Completed
7	Introduction of right turning movement from Queensway eastbound to Cotton Tree Drive.	Completed
8	Provision of an additional traffic lane on Connaught Road Central westbound near Gilman Street footbridge to facilitate access to WHC.	2003
9	Construction of Central – Wan Chai Bypass subsequent to completion of Central Reclamation Phase III.	2011
Kowloon Approach		
10	Allowing traffic to turn right from Lai Chi Kok Road southbound to Tonkin Street westbound to facilitate access to WHC.	Completed

11	Allowing traffic to turn right into Argyle Street westbound and Waterloo Road southbound to facilitate access to WHC.	Completed
12	Widening of Lin Cheung Road southbound north of the junction with Jordan Road.	Completed
13	Improving the traffic control of signals at junction of Lin Cheung Road/Jordan Road and Lin Cheung Road/Wui Cheung Road.	Completed
14	Allowing traffic to turn left from Yuet Lun Street into Sham Mong Road southbound.	Completed
15	Cancellation of "Bus Only Lane" in Princess Margaret Road southbound junction with Argyle Street.	Completed
16	Banning traffic to turn right from Jordan Road westbound into Canton Road northbound.	Completed
17	Cancellation of "Bus Only Lane" in Jordan Road eastbound junction with Nathan Road.	Completed
18	Modification of "Bus Only Lane" in Cherry Street eastbound to allow all vehicles turning left into Tong Mi Road.	Completed
19	Provision of free flow traffic lane in Salisbury Road westbound to facilitate unobstructed traffic flow to Star Ferry.	Completed
20	Imposing loading/unloading restriction in Canton Road southbound near Canton Road Government Primary School.	Works request issued
21	Construction of a road connection between existing slip road off West Kowloon Highway southbound and Lai Cheung Road.	Early 2003
22	Construction of an one-way westbound road between junction of Canton Road/Austin Road and Lin Cheung Road/Austin Road West.	Late 2003
23	Completion of the remaining part of Lin Cheung Road in the vicinity of Tonkin Street Interchange to provide an additional route to access WHC.	Late 2003

24	Completion of Route 9 between Cheung Sha Wan and Tsing Yi, and between Cheung Sha Wan and Shatin to provide direct linkage from the New Territories to WHC.	2007
25	Completion of Central Kowloon Route to facilitate direct access from southeast Kowloon to WHC.	2011

Directional Signs

We have installed additional and modified existing directional signs to guide traffic towards WHC. About 200, 150 and 25 signs were added/modified in Hong Kong, Kowloon and the New Territories respectively.

WHC Taxi Stands

Eight taxi stands have been installed serving taxis using WHC, five in Hong Kong and three in Kowloon. The locations of the taxi stands are as follows :-

Locations of WHC Taxi Stands	
Hong Kong	
1	Cadogan Street near Forbes Street
2	First Street near Centre Street
3	Outside 188 Connaught Road West outside Hong Kong Plaza
4	Outside Central Ferry Piers
5	Shun Tak Centre
Kowloon	
6	Canton Road southbound junction with Peking Road
7	Cherry Street westbound outside Park Avenue
8	Hoi Fan Road southbound outside Island Harbourview