

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 2002-2003 legislative session. It will be tabled at the meeting of the Legislative Council on 9 July 2003 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-ye 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

Cross boundary traffic

4. The last few years had seen significant growth in the cross-boundary passenger and freight traffic and the trend was forecast to continue for the years ahead as Hong Kong's economy became even more closely interconnected with that of the Mainland, particularly the adjoining Guangdong Province. In order to meet the increasing cross-boundary traffic, the Panel continued to monitor the implementation programme of cross-boundary transport infrastructure in the territory. The Panel noted that the Administration was pressing ahead with the implementation of a new boundary crossing, namely the Shenzhen Western Corridor, which would connect Shekou with Northwest New Territories (NWNT). The target completion date was 2005. The Administration also

agreed with the Mainland authorities on the provision of a second rail boundary crossing at Huanggang/Lok Ma Chau. The Huanggang/Lok Ma Chau crossing would be connected to the Sheung Shui to Lok Ma Chau Spur Line on the Hong Kong side and the Shenzhen Metro on the Mainland side. The Administration was also conducting joint studies with Mainland authorities on a transport link between Hong Kong and the West Bank of Pearl River, and an express rail link between Hung Hom and Guangzhou. The Panel also reviewed with the Administration on various measures to increase the capacity and efficiency at the existing cross-boundary control points.

Shenzhen Western Corridor and its supporting infrastructure

5. The Panel noted that the capacities of the three existing vehicular boundary crossings at Lok Ma Chau, Man Kam To and Sha Tau Kok were near saturation. The average total daily vehicular traffic using the three crossings in 2002 was about 33 900, representing a 31% growth over the past five years and an average annual growth of 5%. The Panel therefore supported the early implementation of the fourth vehicular land boundary crossing, namely the Shenzhen Western Corridor (SWC) to cater for the increasing traffic demand.

6. Despite the support for SWC, the Panel was concerned about the possible overloading of Tuen Mun Road upon the commissioning of SWC and Deep Bay Link (DBL), a link road between SWC and Yuen Long Highway. The Panel took the opportunity to review the transport infrastructure development plan for NWNT and urged the Administration to put in place adequate supporting transport infrastructure to cater for the additional demand generated by SWC. The Panel reviewed the proposed widening of Yuen Long Highway, the proposed construction of Route 10 vis-à-vis other alternative transport link proposals, the feasibility of providing an Easterly Link Road as an additional access road connecting SWC/DBL to the existing road system to facilitate traffic heading east from DBL after landing at Ngau Hom Shek, and other measures to attract traffic to Route 3 to relieve congestion at Tuen Mun Road.

7. There were divergent views among members over the need, alignment and timing for Route 10. 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 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 and the implementation of the Hong Kong - Pearl River West Link had yet to be finalized. As such, the planning and implementation of transport infrastructure in NWNT should be reviewed, taking into account the latest changes to the economy, port development, population growth and cost-effectiveness of alternative transport link proposals. The Panel would further review the transport planning strategies for NWNT.

Measures to increase efficiency at the existing control points

8. The Panel had reviewed the current passenger and vehicular traffic conditions at Lok Ma Chau, Man Kam To and Sha Tau Kok and measures being implemented or planned by the Administration to smoothen passenger and vehicular flows at the control points. To achieve diversion of cross-boundary passenger traffic, the Panel urged the Administration to improve the unsatisfactory condition at these control points with a view to maximizing their utilization to relieve the congestion at Lo Wu Control Point.

9. The Panel welcomed the Administration's proposal to construct a new boundary bridge linking the Lok Ma Chau Control Point and Huanggang Control Point, alongside the existing boundary bridge to facilitate the flow of passengers and cargoes.

10. The Panel held two joint meetings with the Panel on Security, together with the transport trades and the Administration, to review the transport and security-related arrangements associated with the introduction of 24-hour passenger crossing at Lok Ma Chau Control Point. The Panels were of the view that different modes of public transport should be permitted to operate at the cross-boundary control points as far as possible. To ensure the early implementation of a trial scheme to allow regulated access of taxis and public light buses to the Lok Ma Chau Control Point during the extended hours (i.e. between midnight and 6:30 am) of passenger crossing, the Panels paid a site visit to the Control Point to review the planning of terminal facilities there and associated modification works. The Panels also paid another visit to the Control Point to observe the commencement of the trial scheme at 0000 hours on 20 March 2003.

Cross-boundary passenger ferry services

11. The Panel was pleased to note that the Government had accepted the Panel's suggestion and would invite tenders for the occupation, modification and use of part of the Tuen Mun Ferry Pier (TMP) as a new Cross-boundary Ferry Terminal for the operation of cross-boundary passenger ferry services. Assuming that all preparatory work and the actual pier modification works could be completed smoothly, the Administration envisaged that the relevant part of the TMP could be ready for the operation of cross-boundary passenger ferry services in mid 2005.

Policy on the provision and operation of tunnels

12. In the light of the current fiscal deficits, the Panel agreed that the Government should, as far as practicable, encourage participation of the private sector through the Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT) mode to take forward transport infrastructure projects. However, the Administration should consider reviewing the application of the BOT mode so that private investment could be better safeguarded with a view to attracting private funding in the construction of major transport infrastructure projects.

13. The Panel noted with concern that the franchisee of Western Harbour Crossing (WHC) had decided to reduce the toll concession for private car, private/public light bus, single and double decked bus from 16 February 2003. The Panel urged the Administration to request the franchisee to consider deferring its toll adjustments during the extant economic climate and give due consideration to the interest of the commuting public in devising its tolling strategy.

14. The Panel also urged the New Hong Kong Tunnel Company Limited to reconsider the need and timing for applying an increase in the tolls of the Eastern Harbour Crossing (EHC) under the current economic situation. Given that the Company had consistently enjoyed a healthy financial position with an estimated internal rate of return of about 13.7%, members called on the company to give due consideration to the interest of the community at large in devising its tolling strategy.

15. Members were also concerned that EHC and WHC's toll increase would inevitably aggravate the existing congestion at the Cross Harbour Tunnel. The Panel discussed ways to improve the distribution of traffic amongst the three road harbour crossings in Hong Kong and urged the Administration to formulate a clear policy and measures to maximize the use of precious tunnel resources to meet the transport needs of the travelling public whilst maintaining the interest of the BOT companies. Members made a number of suggestions to improve utilization of the BOT tunnels, including the establishment of a Tunnels and Bridges Authority, redistribution of tunnel traffic by way of toll alignment, extending the franchise period of the BOT franchises in return for a toll reduction, the possibility of a "common owner" approach for existing tunnels, etc.

Route 7

16. The Panel had reviewed the implementation programme for Route 7 (section between Kennedy Town and Aberdeen) vis-à-vis the South Hong Kong Island Line (SIL) in terms of financial and economic cost and benefit, transport performance and environmental impacts. Some members preferred SIL to Route 7 as the SIL had a higher economic internal rate of return and should be more environmentally friendly. In addition, financial commitment for

Government would be much less. Some other members however were of the view that Route 7 should take precedence over SIL as Route 7 would be more effective in relieving road traffic congestion and would enhance accessibility of the tourists attractions in the Southern District. The Panel called on the Administration to speed up the review process and come up with a concrete programme for improving the traffic and transport arrangements in the Southern District.

Public transport

Fare adjustment mechanism

17. The Panel was very concerned about the burden of transport costs on the travelling public, particularly in light of the present economic situation. Apart from urging the Administration to liaise with public transport operators to lower their fares and offer inter-modal fare discounts, members also called on the Administration to establish a reasonable and objective fare adjustment mechanism which could strike a right balance between commercial interests and passengers' interests. The Panel also urged the Administration to consider proposals and applications for fare reduction and provision of concessions by public transport operators in an active and fair manner.

Taxi

18. The Panel discussed the application made by the 10 New Territories (NT) taxi associations for temporary taxi fare concession for a period of six months. The temporary fare concession was a trial scheme which aimed at offering incentive to passengers to encourage them to make more frequent use of NT taxi services, in particular, long haul taxi trips. This, in turn, could help improve the business for NT taxis. Some members however held the view that as the proposal might have adverse impact on the income of NT taxi drivers, the Administration should conduct a survey to gauge the views of all NT taxi drivers before implementation. The Panel noted the Administration's view that since the proposed temporary fare concession was supported by the majority of the trade and was beneficial to the general public, the temporary fare concession should be implemented as soon as possible. Whilst most members agreed that the Administration could proceed with the fare concession, they requested the Administration to consider arrangements to promote the fare concession scheme and monitor the impact of the concession on the trade closely.

19. The Panel noted that on 6 June 2003, some NT taxi drivers who objected to the fare concession staged a slow drive protest action. After deliberation, the Administration secured the agreement of the taxi trade and the front-line taxi drivers associations to implement the fare concession on 8 June 2003 as scheduled. However, the Administration would conduct a questionnaire survey two weeks after implementation to gauge the views of all NT taxi

operators on whether the fare concession should continue. If the survey indicated negative support for the scheme, the trial would only continue for one month instead of six months. The relevant subsidiary legislation to effect the NT taxi fare concession was being examined by a Subcommittee formed under the House Committee.

20. The Panel welcomed the Administration's proposal to revise the entry requirements of taxi drivers and the scope of the written test for taxi driving licence with a view of improving the quality of taxi services. The Panel asked the Administration to review the course content having regard to the need of taxi drivers. It should also examine the possibility of reducing the cost of the mandatory training programme.

Franchised bus services

21. In reviewing the progress on implementation of bus-bus interchange (BBI) schemes in the territory with the franchised bus companies and the Administration, the Panel asked the parties concerned to consider extending the scope of BBI schemes, including those implemented by the same operator or different operators, to cover all bus routes in the territory so that the travelling public could be provided with a wider choice of services at concessionary fares.

22. Upon the announcement of the change of shareholder of the holding company of Citybus Ltd. in June 2003, the Panel held a joint meeting with the Panel on Economic Services to discuss the implications of a possible joint venture between Citybus and New World First Bus Services Ltd (NWFB). Members were of the view that if any proposal for a joint venture between Citybus and NWFB was received, the Administration should evaluate the impact of the proposal on competition and assess its impact on the staff of the companies. Any proposed change of bus franchises should also benefit the travelling public at large.

Non-franchised bus services

23. In reviewing the policy on non-franchised buses, the Panel took note of the difficulties encountered by the trade. The Panel had requested the Administration to review the assessment criteria for approval of non-franchised bus services, taking into account the transport needs of commuters, and the commercial viability of the trade.

Ferry services

24. Recognizing the role of ferry in the overall transport hierarchy, the Panel had requested the Administration to optimize the use of Hong Kong's harbour resources to meet the transport needs of commuters on one hand whilst reducing traffic congestion on the other.

Railway development

25. The Panel continued to monitor the planning and implementation programme of railway development projects in Hong Kong. The terms of reference of the Subcommittee formed under the Panel for the purpose was expanded to cover existing railways in operation.

West Rail

26. The Subcommittee closely monitored the progress of the implementation of West Rail, which would be commissioned later this year. Apart from urging the Administration and Kowloon-Canton Railway Corporation (KCRC) to ensure the proper testing and commissioning of the railway system, the Subcommittee also reminded them to implement service changes in respect of the Light Rail Transit System and other public transport modes in a progressive manner, taking into account the views expressed by local bodies, the transport needs of residents and the call for maintaining healthy competition in the transport market. Members also requested KCRC to formulate an attractive pricing strategy to boost the utilization of West Rail. They also reviewed the interchanging arrangements, the contingency plan and pedestrian facilities for the West Rail system.

Spur Line

27. In discussing the essential infrastructure for the Sheung Shui to Lok Ma Chau Spur Line, the Subcommittee had reviewed the design and provision of the Lok Ma Chau Terminus and the Passenger Bridge Link to improve crowd control and passenger safety. Members urged the Administration to ensure the provision of alternative transport services to the Lok Ma Chau Terminus to allow wider choice for the passengers.

Kowloon Southern Link

28. The Subcommittee was very concerned about the possible disruption caused by the proposed implementation of the Kowloon Southern Link. Members called on the Administration to review the compensation mechanism for affected shop operators. It should also invite expert advice to ascertain the noise and vibration impacts caused by the construction and operation of the railway system on cultural and performance facilities in Tsim Sha Tsui. Members also urged the Administration to conduct traffic impact assessment study and review the planning of stations and interchange facilities for the railway system.

Shatin to Central Link

29. Members noted with concern that the Administration had decided not to allow for any railway station or tunnel, or other public transport facilities directly underneath the new Central Government Complex and the Legislative Council Complex at Tamar. The Subcommittee would follow up on the design and interchanging arrangements for the Shatin to Central Link.

Northern Link

30. Following up the motion on "Expediting the implementation of the Northern Link" passed by the Legislative Council on 9 October 2002, members discussed with the Administration the progress of the project. Members called on the Administration to consider expediting the project as the Northern Link would relieve congestion at Lo Wu and also provide a more direct rail link for residents in the north-western part of the territory to the boundary.

North Hong Kong Island Line

31. Members noted that with a reduction in forecast employment of about 70 000 to 90 000 due to changes in land use assumptions since the Second Railway Development Study including a much lesser scale of reclamation at Western District and reduced office development along the northern coast of Sai Ying Pun and Central reclamation, and the opening of the Shatin to Central Link in 2008/09 sharing some of the cross-harbour trips and relieving the Nathan Road section of Tsuen Wan Line, the Administration would defer the implementation of the North Hong Kong Island Line to beyond 2016.

West Hong Kong Island Line

32. Members also received a briefing on the latest planning of the West Hong Kong Island Line. Members noted that MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL) should be asked to proceed with further planning on the West Hong Kong Island Line Phase 1 from Sheung Wan to Belcher of the Island Line Extensions including a possible link with the South Hong Kong Island Line. Planning for West Hong Kong Island Line Phase 2 from Belcher to Kennedy Town should be held in abeyance until the way forward for the Western District Development reclamation was clear. Members called on the Administration to keep a close watch on the implementation of the railway project.

Railway incidents

33. The Panel was very concerned about the spate of incidents involving MTR train service which happened during the initial commissioning of Tseung Kwan O Line in August and September 2003. The Panel reviewed with the Administration and MTRCL on a number of matters, including the testing and commissioning of MTR trains, the maintenance, assets replacement and train

modernization programme, the overall MTR train service performance, and the handling of service disruptions. The Panel urged the Administration and MTRCL to monitor the service levels of MTR to the highest safety standard, and put in place remedial and improvement measures to avoid the recurrence of similar incidents. A site visit to the MTR depots was organized to observe the maintenance work of the MTR system.

34. The derailment incident of the Light Rail Service occurred on 18 December 2002 was of great concern to members. Members reviewed the causes of the incident, the maintenance and inspection procedures for the system, the incident handling procedures and contingency plans. Members called on KCRC and the Administration to address the problems identified so as to improve the safety of the system and prevent the recurrence of similar incidents in future.

Corporate governance

35. In following up the appointments to the KCRC Managing Board, the Panel urged the Administration to maintain a balanced composition in the Board which could strike an equitable balance between the considerations of public interest and commercial operations of the Corporation. The Panel was pleased to note that a new Public Consultation Group, comprising the Chairmen of Transport and Traffic Committees of the ten District Councils which were served by the KCR rail and bus network, would be formed under the Managing Board for obtaining advice, suggestions and feedback on various matters in relation to the planning and operation of railway services.

Environmental-related issues

Noise mitigation measures and erection of noise barriers

36. In view of wide public concern about the visual intrusion caused by the opaque noise barrier panels erected along Tolo Highway, the Panel had reviewed, among other things, the guiding principles on the provision of noise barriers in the territory, the cost-effectiveness of various mitigation measures to abate traffic noise and the design of noise barriers in Tolo Highway, including the choice of material and colour. The Panel had also received views from local District Councils and paid a site visit to Tolo Highway to ascertain the need for providing noise barriers in certain sections of the Highway. Taking into account members' views and the implementation timetable for planned developments in the area, the Administration agreed to remove 1 920 metres of barriers and trim down 1 460 metres leaving the total length of the noise barriers built in Tolo Highway to about 5 000 metres. To avoid recurrence of similar incidents, the Panel urged the Administration to review the implementation of the Environmental Impact Assessment Ordinance (Cap. 499) to ensure that the installation of noise barriers would be synchronized with the completion time of future developments. There was also a need to examine

the cost-effectiveness of various mitigation measures and to solicit views from local bodies and residents on the design and installation of noise barriers before commencement of works.

37. The Panel had held several meetings with the Administration on the proposed trial scheme of banning traffic on flyover during the mid-night hours to relieve the surrounding residents of the nuisance of traffic noise. A joint site visit with the Panel on Environmental Affairs was made to observe the effect of traffic noise on the residents. There were however divergent views on the use of traffic management schemes, including the trial at Texaco Road Flyover (TRF), to tackle the noise problem. Some members pointed out that the traffic restriction at TRF ran contrary to the implementation of 24-hour boundary crossing which was aimed at relieving traffic congestion through encouraging freight transport after midnight. Given that TRF was one of the main access to the Kwai Chung Container Terminal, any restriction on its use would have serious impact on the operation of the transport trade. The situation would be further aggravated if traffic restriction was extended to other roads and flyovers after the trial scheme. Other members however supported the ban given the severe impact of traffic noise on the neighbouring community, and on the understanding that vehicles could be diverted to at-grade roads. They however emphasized the need for clear and objective assessment criteria to ascertain the efficacy or otherwise of the trial before deciding on whether it should be further extended to other roads.

38. The Panel also held two joint meetings with the Panel on Environmental Affairs to discuss measures to address traffic noise impact of existing roads. While supporting in principle the five guiding principles for erecting noise barriers, some members remained of the view that noise barriers were not the best solution, and that other engineering and non-engineering measures should be mapped out to abate road traffic noise. The Administration should also keep abreast of the development of new noise reduction technologies.

39. Members expressed grave disappointment at the Administration's decision to shelve the introduction of liquefied petroleum gas light vans and light goods vehicles into Hong Kong, which in their view was a policy change in contrary to the Chief Executive's pledge in his earlier policy address to improve air quality through the introduction of more environmentally friendly vehicles.

Intelligent transport systems

40. The Panel considered it necessary to provide more accurate traffic information to public transport users and motorists for the planning of their routes in advance according to their own needs, and to transport operators and other service providers for further enhancement of their services. It called on the Administration to monitor the progress of the development of Intelligent Transport Systems in Hong Kong.

41. During the period from October 2002 to June 2003, the Panel held a total of 24 meetings, four of which were joint meetings with the Panel on Environmental Affairs, three were joint meetings with the Panel on Security and one was joint meeting with the Panel on Economic Services. The Subcommittee also held a total of six meetings to follow up on railway-related matters.

Legislative Council Secretariat

28 June 2003

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-ye, 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, JP Hon Andrew WONG Wang-fat, JP Hon LAU Chin-shek, JP Hon LAU Kong-wah, JP 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	2 July 2003