

**For Discussion
on 25 June 2004**

Legislative Council Panel on Transport

**Hong Kong–Zhuhai–Macao Bridge
and the Northwest New Territories Traffic and Infrastructure Review**

PURPOSE

This paper updates Members on the latest progress of the advance work for the Hong Kong–Zhuhai–Macao Bridge (HZMB) and the Northwest New Territories Traffic and Infrastructure Review (NWNT Review).

BACKGROUND

Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge

2. At the meeting of the Legislative Council (LegCo) Panel on Transport (the Panel) held on 29 September 2003, we briefed Members on the arrangement for taking forward the advance work for the HZMB. Members were informed that the HZMB Advance Work Co-ordination Group (AWCG), which was set up by the governments of Guangdong Province, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) and Macao Special Administrative Region (Macao SAR), had agreed to proceed with the advance work for HZMB as quickly as possible, and to commission studies on various subjects, including economic benefits, alignment, environmental impact and hydrology. We also informed Members that the HKSAR would need to conduct an investigation and preliminary design (I&PD) study for the section of the HZMB within Hong Kong territory as well as the link for connection to our local transport network, and sought Members' support for a funding application to be made to the Public Works Subcommittee and the Finance Committee of the LegCo for the I&PD study. On 24 October 2003, we briefed Members further on the justification for the HZMB and the possible locations of its landing point in Northwest Lantau.

NWNT Review

3. At the same meeting of the Panel held on 29 September 2003, Members discussed LC Paper No. CB(1)2291/02-03(04) and were briefed on the preliminary outcome of the NWNT Review which aimed to develop a long term strategy for the development of highway infrastructure in the NWNT and North Lantau region. Members noted the four proposed packages of highway projects to meet the future demands on highway infrastructure. Members requested the Administration to report progress on the Review within the 2003-04 legislative session.

LATEST DEVELOPMENT

Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge (HZMB)

Feasibility Study

4. In February 2004, the AWCG commissioned the China Highway Planning and Design Institute (HPDI) to conduct a study for the HZMB. In line with its consensus to proceed with the advance work for HZMB as soon as possible, the AWCG agreed that HPDI should launch directly into a full engineering feasibility study, instead of a preliminary study. The study would examine areas including the hydrology, environment, landscape, marine, ship impact protection, traffic, wind speed assessment and financial viability. To ensure that the feasibility study is conducted in a way that will satisfy the requirements of the Central Government for the purpose of project creation, and at the same time provide adequate and relevant information as input into the studies to be conducted by the different governments on a local level, the AWCG has set up a Project Office in Guangzhou to monitor HPDI's study and co-ordinate the information exchange involved.

5. In April 2004, HPDI's study team, together with the AWCG Project Office, visited Macao, Zhuhai and Hong Kong to conduct in-depth research for the feasibility study. They met with 17 government departments/bureaux and academics and professional institutions in HKSAR to obtain information and exchange views on a wide range of subjects including planning, transport, boundary control, infrastructure financing etc.

6. The various topical studies under the umbrella of the feasibility study are underway. Based on the findings of the feasibility study, HPDI will recommend the optimal landing points and alignment of the HZMB.

7. The feasibility study will be completed by end 2004. On completion, the study report will be submitted to the National Development and Reform Commission for approval to create a project item for the HZMB.

Investigation and Preliminary Design (I&PD) Study on the Hong Kong Section of HZMB and Connection with North Lantau Highway

8. After securing funding approval from LegCo, we commissioned the I&PD study in March 2004. The study is scheduled for completion by the end of this year.

9. The objective of the I&PD study is to determine the preferred alignment for the Hong Kong Section of the HZMB and its connections with North Lantau Highway (NLH). We will assess the various schemes by reference to their implementation programme, cost-effectiveness, implication on sustainability, environmental and traffic impact, engineering feasibility, land, planning and development issues.

10. We will carry out site investigation work to obtain the necessary geotechnical and geological information for the design work and carry out various impact assessments including traffic, environmental, marine and drainage. We will also recommend mitigation measures for any adverse impacts identified.

11. One of the key tasks of the I&PD study is to carry out a Traffic Impact Assessment (TIA) to determine the configuration of the Hong Kong Section of the HZMB and the connections with NLH in the initial and long term.

12. We have also commenced an ecological baseline survey for the Hong Kong Section of the HZMB and the connections with NLH since September 2003. The results of the survey would be used to assess the ecological impact of the projects in the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) study under the I&PD study.

13. We will brief the Panel on the preferred alignment before we proceed with the detailed design.

NWNT Review

14. In planning the transport infrastructure for NWNT, we have to have regard to a number of major strategic developments in Lantau which are under planning. Paragraphs 15 to 17 set out these developments. The timing and scale of these development would impact on the programme for the provision of new highway infrastructure in the area.

Lantau Development Task Force

15. The Lantau Development Task Force was set up in February 2004 under the chairmanship of the Financial Secretary to provide a high-level policy steer on the economic and infrastructural development of Lantau and to ensure the timely delivery of the planned projects. Taking into account changes in development parameters and the changing demands for logistics and additional tourism facilities, a revised development concept plan for Lantau is being mapped out, with a view to formulating a new plan for public consultation in late 2004. The relative priority and implementation timeframe of the highway projects set out in the NWNT Review will need to be assessed in the light of the public views on the planning concept for Lantau, the timing of development of the various proposals as well as growth in cross-boundary traffic.

Value Added Logistics Park (VALP) at Tai Ho

16. A VALP Working Group was set up in March 2004 to expedite the development of a VALP at Tai Ho in Lantau. A scoping study to define the nature and operational characteristics of the VALP and to identify key planning and engineering parameters has been commissioned. As part of the VALP development, a traffic impact assessment (TIA) will be undertaken. The TIA will recommend transport infrastructure required for the operation of the VALP and is tentatively scheduled for completion in the first half of 2006.

Study on Hong Kong Port – Master Plan 2020

17. Economic Development and Labour Bureau (EDLB) commissioned a Study on Hong Kong Port – Master Plan 2020 in July 2002 with a view to formulating a competitive and sustainable strategy and master plan for port development over a 20-year planning frame. The study shortlisted two possible sites for future port development viz southwest Tsing Yi and northwest Lantau. EDLB will further consult the industry on the outcome of the study when the report is ready.

Developments to be Monitored

18. Apart from the above projects/developments which are in the pipeline, we will continue to monitor developments on the following fronts which are contributing factors to the overall development of highway infrastructure in the NWNT and Lantau region.

(a) Commissioning of HK-SWC and DBL

Our assessment is that the existing highway network in NWNT has adequate capacity to cope with the traffic demand arising from the commissioning of the HK-SWC and DBL. We will monitor closely the impact of the commissioning of this fourth road boundary crossing on the traffic situation in the NWNT to assess the need of and timing for new highways in the area.

(b) Cross-boundary movements

At a territorial level, the Mainland and Hong Kong Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement (CEPA) came into full operation on 1 January 2004 and the Mainland Individual Visit Scheme, which was launched in July 2003, has been extended to cover more Mainland cities. We need to observe the effect of these initiatives and incorporate the relevant data in our planning for the proposed highway projects in the NWNT and Lantau region.

19. We expect that by early 2005, there will be a clearer picture on the traffic demand arising from HZMB. We will work out a proposed programme for the necessary infrastructure support for NWNT and Lantau and will brief the Panel on our working plan. When the development programme for other major proposals on Lantau becomes available, we will refine our working plan to cater for the traffic demand.

ADVICE SOUGHT

20. Members are invited to note the content of this paper.

Environment, Transport and Works Bureau
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