

**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 4 July 2004 and the various traffic management measures implemented to enhance the accessibility of WHC.

**Background**

2. According to the WHC Ordinance, the Western Harbour Tunnel Company Limited may effect toll increases on certain specified dates (1 January of 2001, 2005, 2009, 2013, 2017 and 2021). However, if the actual net revenue in any year falls short of the minimum estimated net revenue specified for that year in Schedule 5 to the Ordinance, the franchisee may advance the toll increase. Since the operation of WHC in April 1997, the Company's net revenue has consistently fallen short of the specified levels. Hence, under the law, the WHC may have advanced six rounds of toll increase by now. So far, WHC has exercised the right three times and gazetted toll increases in 2000, 2002 and February 2004. However, concessionary tolls were offered to all or most of the vehicles classes on all three occasions. The concessions have essentially maintained most of the tolls below the 2000 statutory levels.

3. The last toll increase of WHC was made on the basis of its 2000/01 Net Revenue Statement. The Net Revenue Statement indicated that the franchisee's net revenue of \$172 million was lower than the minimum net revenue of \$506 million for the year specified under Schedule 5 to the Ordinance. The franchisee has complied with the requirements under the WHC 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 13 February 2004 and took effect on 24 February 2004. The Company offered concessionary tolls for all vehicles from the same date so that the then prevailing toll levels were maintained. A summary of the historical changes of WHC's toll levels is at **Annex A**.

**Latest Position**

4. 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. Despite our continued persuasion, the franchisee has decided to reduce some of the concessions with effect from 4 July 2004. A table showing the statutory and new concessionary tolls of WHC is as follows –

Vehicle Type	Statutory	Current toll	New Toll	Actual Increase
Motorcycles	\$30	\$20	\$22	\$2
Private Cars	\$60	\$37	\$40	\$3
Taxis	\$60	\$35	\$35	\$0
Public & Private Light Buses	\$70	\$47	\$50	\$3
Light Goods Vehicles	\$90	\$50	\$55	\$5
Medium Goods Vehicles	\$125	\$70	\$80	\$10
Heavy Goods Vehicles	\$185	\$100	\$110	\$10
Single-decked Buses	\$70	\$60	\$70	\$10
Double-decked Buses	\$100	\$85	\$100	\$15
Each extra axle (goods vehicles only)	\$60	\$30	\$30	\$0

### Traffic Measures to Enhance the Accessibility of WHC

5. The average daily throughput of the WHC for the year 2003 is 37 260, a 6.9% decrease as compared to the throughput of 40,040 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**.

6. 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. In the past three years, a series of improvement measures have been implemented. These include construction of new road links leading to the tunnel approaches, traffic management measures to smoothen traffic flow at road junctions leading to WHC and provision of road markings and additional directional signs to guide motorists etc. We will continue to explore with WHC to see if there are further measures in this regard.

**Historical Toll Levels of the Western Harbour Crossing**

	30 Apr 1997 Statutory ( <i>Effective</i> )	3 Dec 2000 Statutory ( <i>Effective</i> )	31 Jul 2002 Statutory ( <i>Effective</i> )	16 Feb 2003 Statutory ( <i>Effective</i> )	24 Feb 2004 Statutory ( <i>Effective</i> )
Motorcycles	\$15(\$15)	\$20(\$20)	\$25(\$20)	no change	\$30(\$20)
Private cars	\$30(\$30)	\$40(\$35)	\$50(\$35)	\$50(\$37)	\$60(\$37)
Taxis	\$30(\$30)	\$40(\$35)	\$50(\$35)	no change	\$60(\$35)
Public and private light buses	\$40(\$40)	\$50(\$45)	\$60(\$45)	\$60(\$47)	\$70(\$47)
Light goods vehicles	\$45(\$45)	\$60(\$50)	\$75(\$50)	no change	\$90(\$50)
Medium goods vehicles	\$65(\$65)	\$85(\$70)	\$105(\$70)	no change	\$125(\$70)
Heavy goods vehicles	\$95(\$95)	\$125(\$100)	\$155(\$100)	no change	\$185(\$100)
Public and private single decked buses	\$40(\$40)	\$50(\$50)	\$60(\$50)	\$60(\$60)	\$70(\$60)
Public and private double decked buses	\$55(\$55)	\$70(\$70)	\$85(\$70)	\$85(\$85)	\$100(\$85)
Each additional axle in excess of two	\$30(\$30)	\$40(\$30)	\$50(\$30)	no change	\$60(\$30)

### Traffic Management Measures to Improve the Accessibility to WHC

	Improvement Works	Target Completion Date
<b>General</b>		
(1)	Connection of WHC with higher capacity trunk roads (i.e. Western Kowloon Highway and Connaught Road West) and erection of some 400 direction signs at both ends of WHC.	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
<b>Hong Kong Approach</b>		
(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 mainline carriageway of Connaught Road West westbound to facilitate buses going to WHC.	Completed
(5)	Widening the road outside City Hall to reduce congestion on Connaught Road Central eastbound.	Completed
(6)	Erection of 50 additional traffic signs to further enhance the accessibility to WHC. Additional signs were installed in Wanchai, the mid levels and Central.	Completed
(7)	Provision of an additional route for traffic going to WHC via Centre Street in Western District.	Completed
(8)	Reducing traffic on CRC eastbound by providing a U-turn movement at Airport Railway HK Station drop-off layby on Man Cheung Street to Road P2 eastbound.	Completed

Improvement Works		Target Completion Date
(9)	Provision of an additional traffic lane on Connaught Road Central westbound near Gilman Street footbridge to facilitate access to WHC.	Aug 2004
(10)	Construction of Central – Wan Chai Bypass.	2012
<b>Kowloon Approach</b>		
(11)	Allowing traffic to turn right from Lai Chi Kok Road southbound to Tonkin Street westbound to facilitate access to WHC.	Completed
(12)	Allowing traffic to turn right into Argyle Street westbound and Waterloo Road southbound to facilitate access to WHC.	Completed
(13)	Erection of 16 additional traffic signs to further enhance the accessibility to WHC. Additional signs were installed at Lai Chi Kok Road, Waterloo Road, Hung Hom Road, Princess Margaret Link Road, Hung Hom Bypass and Gascoigne Road.	Completed
(14)	Construction of a road connection between the existing slip road off West Kowloon Highway southbound and Lai Cheung Road.	Completed
(15)	Completion of the remaining part of Lin Cheung Road in the vicinity of Tonkin Street Interchange to provide an additional access to WHC.	Completed
(16)	Construction of an one-way westbound road between the junction of Canton Road/Austin Road and Lin Cheung Road/Austin Road West.	Completed
(17)	Implementation of new standard signage and road markings for autotoll lanes	End 2004
(18)	Completion of Central Kowloon Route will facilitate direct access from the southeast Kowloon area to WHC.	2010