

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(1)2080/03-04
(These minutes have been seen
by the Administration)

Ref: CB1/PS/2/00/1

Panel on Transport

Subcommittee on matters relating to railways

**Minutes of meeting on
Friday, 7 May 2004, at 10:45 am
in Conference Room A of the Legislative Council Building**

Members present : Hon Miriam LAU Kin-yee, JP (Chairman)
Ir Dr Hon Raymond HO Chung-tai, JP
Hon Andrew CHENG Kar-foo
Hon TAM Yiu-chung, GBS, JP
Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, JP
Hon Albert CHAN Wai-yip
Hon LEUNG Fu-wah, MH, JP

Non-Subcommittee : Hon CHAN Yuen-han, JP
Member attending

Members absent : Dr Hon David CHU Yu-lin, JP
Hon Albert HO Chun-yan
Hon CHAN Kwok-keung, JP
Hon LAU Kong-wah, JP
Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, JP
Hon WONG Sing-chi
Hon LAU Ping-cheung

Public Officers : **Agenda item III**
attending
Ms Annie CHOI
Deputy Secretary for the Environment, Transport and
Works T3

Mr Raymond HO
Principal Assistant Secretary for the Environment,
Transport and Works T7

Mr Patrick CHAN
Principal Assistant Secretary for the Environment,
Transport and Works T6

Mr Vic YAU
Assistant Secretary for the Environment, Transport and
Works T6A

Mr WAN Man-lung
Principal Government Engineer/Railway Development
Highways Department

Mrs KWONG LAU Po-yuk
Government Engineer/Railway Development 2
Highways Department

Mr CHAN Pun-kei
Chief Engineer/Railway 2
Railway Development Office, Highways Department

Mr CHO Ping-chung
Chief Engineer/Priority Railway
Planning Branch, Transport Department

Agenda item IV

Ms Annie CHOI
Deputy Secretary for the Environment, Transport and
Works T3

Mr Patrick CHAN
Principal Assistant Secretary for the Environment,
Transport and Works T6

Mr Vic YAU
Assistant Secretary for the Environment, Transport and
Works T6A

Mrs KWONG LAU Po-yuk
Government Engineer/Railway Development 2
Highways Department

Mr CHAN Pun-kei
Chief Engineer/Railway 2
Railway Development Office, Highways Department

Mr CHO Ping-chung
Chief Engineer/Priority Railway
Planning Branch, Transport Department

**Attendance by
invitation**

: Agenda item III

HK Public-Light Bus Owner & Driver Association

Mr LAI Ming-hung
Secretary

蔣世昌先生
顧問

Taxi & PLB Concern Group

梁黎波先生
總務

宋國明先生
司庫

The Kowloon PLB Chiu Chow Traders & Workers
Friendly Association

廖松明先生
Chairman

United Friendship Taxi Owners & Drivers Association Ltd.

Mr AU-YEUNG Kan
Chairman

The Association of N.T. Radio Taxicabs Ltd.

Mr LAM Kwai-keung
Chairman

Wai Fat Taxi Owners Association Ltd.

Mr TONG Yeuk-fung

New Territories Taxi Merchants Association Limited

Ms CHAN Oi-lin
Directorate

The Taxi Operators Association Limited

Mr LEUNG Shiu-cheong
Chairman

NT Taxi Operations Union

Mr CHAN Shu-sang
Chairman

N.W. Area Taxi Drivers & Operators Association

Mr WONG Wing-chung
Chairman

Sai Kung Taxi Operators Association Ltd.

Mr LAU Hak-kai
Chairman

Taxi Dealers & Owners Association Limited

Mr CHENG Hak-wo
Chairman

Mr WONG Ho
President

Hong Kong Kowloon Taxi & Lorry Owners' Association Ltd.

Mr TSE Ming-chue
Vice President

Mr MING Wah-loi
Vice President

Tang's Taxi Companies Association Ltd.

Mr TANG Pak-wing
Chairman

Hong Kong Taxi & Public Light Bus Association Limited

Mr TRAN Chau
Chairman

Mr William LAM Hong-chung
Director

The Environmental Light Bus Alliance

Mr TSE Kin-wai
Representative

運輸業界關注鐵路發展大聯盟

Mr LI Wing-sang
Speaker

Mr LEUNG Hung
Member

Whampoa Garden Section Owners Committee

Mr MAK Leung-kwong
Chairman, Site 10 Whampoa Garden Section Owners
Committee

Mr CHAN Kam-ying
Treasurer, Whampoa Garden Section Owners Committee

San Tin Rural Committee

Mr MAN Fu-wan
Chairman

Mr MAN Chung-hing
Member

Public Omnibus Operators Association Ltd.

Mr MOK Wah-fun
Committee Member

Mr LEE Yin-ching
Committee Member

Clerk in attendance : Mr Andy LAU
Chief Council Secretary (1)2

Staff in attendance : Ms Alice AU
Senior Council Secretary (1)5

Miss Winnie CHENG
Legislative Assistant 5

Action

I Confirmation of minutes of meeting and matters arising

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| (LC Paper No. CB(1)1546/03-04 | - Minutes of special meeting held on 16 February 2004; |
| LC Paper No. CB(1)1680/03-04 | - Minutes of meeting held on 5 March 2004; and |
| LC Paper No. CB(1)1676/03-04(01) | - List of railways and projects) |

The minutes of meetings held on 16 February and 5 March 2004 were confirmed.

2. Members went through the Subcommittee's list of railways and projects (LC Paper No. CB(1)1676/03-04(01)). The Chairman advised that pursuant to members' decision at the meeting on 8 January 2004, the Subcommittee would hold a meeting on Wednesday, 30 June 2004, at 10:45 am to review with the Administration its Railway Development Strategy 2000. Members also agreed that an item on "Progress update on Ma On Shan Rail and Tsim Sha Tsui Extension and better co-ordination of public transport services arising from the commissioning of the two railways" would also be discussed at the meeting.

II Information papers issued since last meeting

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| (LC Paper No. CB(1)1418/03-04(01) | - Submission from the Environmental Light Bus Alliance on Shatin to Central Link; and |
| LC Paper No. CB(1)1464/03-04(01) | - Administration's response to the submission from the Environmental Light Bus Alliance (LC Paper No. CB(1)1418/03-04(01)) |

3. Members noted the above information papers issued since last meeting.

Action

III Meeting with the Administration/deputations to receive views on the Shatin to Central Link project and the Public transport interchange at Lok Ma Chau Terminus of the Sheung Shui to Lok Ma Chau Spur Line

4. The Chairman advised that in order to allow sufficient time for the large number of attending deputations to express their views on the Shatin to Central Link project and the public transport interchange (PTI) at Lok Ma Chau Terminus of the Sheung Shui to Lok Ma Chau Spur Line (Spur Line), the item originally scheduled for discussion at the present meeting on "Update on the Shatin to Central Link project" would be deferred to a special meeting to be scheduled. The Administration would respond to the views and concerns expressed by the deputations at a special meeting.

(Post-meeting note: The special meeting was subsequently scheduled to be held on Thursday, 3 June 2004, at 10:45 am.)

5. The Chairman welcomed the deputations and representatives of the Administration to the meeting. She also invited the meeting to note the written responses provided by the Administration to those submissions received before the meeting as follows:

- (a) the Administration's response circulated vide LC Paper No. CB(1)1464/03-04(01) to the submission from the Environmental Light Bus Alliance; and
- (b) the Administration's consolidated response (which was tabled at the meeting and subsequently issued vide LC Paper No. CB(1)1784/03-04(01)) to the submissions from the United Friendship Taxi Owners & Drivers Association Ltd, NT Taxi Operations Union and Taxi Dealers & Owners Association Limited.

HK Public-Light Bus Owner & Driver Association

6. HK Public-Light Bus Owner & Driver Association pointed out that instead of providing trunk railway services as originally intended, SCL with the proposed Tsz Wan Shan and Whampoa people mover systems would be taking up the supplementary role played by public light buses (PLBs) and taxis. Citing other cases such as the feeder services provided by Light Rail (LR), as well as free feeder bus service of East Rail (ER) and West Rail (WR), the Association considered that with the railway corporations providing more and more of such services, the PLB and taxi trades could no longer maintain viable operation as their "living space" was gradually undermined.

7. The Association stressed that it was the Administration's responsibility to maintain the co-ordination of public transport services in Hong Kong. One important element must be to ensure the viable operation of different modes of public transport. While the Association did not oppose to the Government's policy of using railways as the backbone of Hong Kong's transport system, it was strongly against railways being

Action

developed indiscriminately even in areas with inadequate catchment population such as the South Hong Kong Island Line (SIL) currently under planning.

8. As regards the proposed PTI at the Lok Ma Chau Terminus of the Spur Line, the Association called on the Administration to allow red minibuses (RMBs) to operate there.

(Post-meeting note: The Association's submission was tabled at the meeting and subsequently issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(1)1784/03-04(02).)

Taxi & PLB Concern Group

9. Taxi & PLB Concern Group called on members and the Administration to give due regard to the adverse impact of further railway development on the employment situation of the taxi and PLB trades.

The Kowloon PLB Chiu Chow Traders & Workers Friendly Association

10. The Kowloon PLB Chiu Chow Traders & Workers Friendly Association opined that under the Government's transport policy, PLBs were already confined to a supplementary role. But with the continuous development of railways, it had become increasingly difficult for PLBs to maintain that role. He thus stressed the need for the Administration to ensure that railways were only developed to serve major corridors with high travel demand and not to provide supplementary transport service in areas already well-served by other public transport modes.

United Friendship Taxi Owners & Drivers Association Ltd (LC Paper No. CB(1)1732/03-04(01))

11. United Friendship Taxi Owners & Drivers Association Ltd was dissatisfied that the feeder services provided by the proposed Tsz Wan Shan and Whampoa people mover systems of SCL would seriously affect the existing operation of taxis. The Association took the view that railways should only be developed when there was adequate passenger demand. Citing the case of WR whose patronage was much lower than projected, the Association strongly requested the Administration to review its railway development strategy taking into account factors such as the economic downturn and slower population growth. It would be a great waste of public resource to develop railways indiscriminately without considering the actual need of the community. Instead of solely protecting the interest of railway corporations, the Administration should ensure that there was reasonable "living space" for other public transport operators.

12. Regarding the proposed PTI at the Lok Ma Chau Terminus of the Spur Line, the Association called on the Administration to make adequate provision of taxi drop-off/pick-up area in the PTI.

Action

The Association of N.T. Radio Taxicabs Ltd

13. The Association of N.T. Radio Taxicabs Ltd was gravely concerned about the social repercussions particularly in terms of worsening unemployment caused by the continuous expansion of the railway network in Hong Kong. Given the current economic situation and the rate of population growth, the Administration should reconsider Hong Kong's need and affordability of massive spending on railway infrastructure. A case in point was WR whose patronage still fell far short of expectation, and the public was left to foot the bill for WR's losses. Moreover, the Administration must give due regard to the possible job losses in the taxi trade caused by further development of railways in Hong Kong.

(Post-meeting note: The Association's submission was tabled at the meeting and subsequently issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(1)1784/03-04(03).)

Wai Fat Taxi Owners Association Ltd

14. Wai Fat Taxi Owners Association Ltd called on members' understanding that the taxi trade was hard hit by the economic downturn in recent years. It would have great difficulty in shouldering the adverse impact caused by the development of new railways such as SCL.

New Territories Taxi Merchants Association Limited

15. New Territories Taxi Merchants Association Limited pointed out that with the feeder bus services operated by KCRC, WR and ER were in fact threatening the supplementary role played by taxis in the public transport system. This had in turn created serious livelihood problems for the taxi drivers and operators who could no longer maintain financially viable operation.

The Taxi Operators Association Limited

16. Citing the poor business prospects of the taxi trade especially the night-shift taxis, the Taxi Operators Association Limited called on the Administration to defer any plans for the construction of SCL and SIL until adequate passenger demand was generated by sustained population growth in Hong Kong. The Association was also dissatisfied that the Administration was only focusing on the interests of railway corporations and had failed to critically review the implementation timetable of new railway projects as well as the adverse impact of such on the employment situation of the taxi trade.

NT Taxi Operations Union

(LC Paper No. CB(1)1732/03-04(02))

17. Referring to the recurrent losses of LR and the much lower than projected patronage of WR, NT Taxi Operations Union was strongly of the view that the Administration should shelve the SCL and SIL projects as it was quite clear that these

Action

projects were unjustified on the ground of passenger demand. As KCRC was still owned by the Government, it was unfair to require the public to foot the bill for its loss-making railway operation. Hence, the Union called on the Administration to critically review the need and financial viability of the proposed railway projects taking into account the changing circumstances and the latest changes in planning parameters including population growth. The Administration should aim at maintaining the right balance among various public transport modes so that each mode could have a viable role to play in the public transport system. If the business of the taxi trade was affected further, the resulting unemployment could create more unrest in the community.

N.W. Area Taxi Drivers & Operators Association

18. N.W. Area Taxi Drivers & Operators Association expressed dissatisfaction with the Administration's decision to press ahead with railway development projects without giving due regard to the adverse impact of such on the livelihood of the other public transport operators. Referring to the free feeder services of WR which had taken away many businesses of the taxi trade, the Association strongly requested the Administration to critically review the justification of railway corporations providing supplementary transport services as it had seriously affected the roles of various modes in the public transport system and their respective operating environment.

Sai Kung Taxi Operators Association Ltd

19. Sai Kung Taxi Operators Association Ltd requested the Administration to consider allowing taxis to operate at all boundary control points to ensure commuters' choice.

Taxi Dealers & Owners Association Limited
(LC Paper No. CB(1)1732/03-04(03))

20. Taxi Dealers & Owners Association Limited stressed that the opening of new railways would invariably impact on the taxi trade. In order to maintain commuters' choice and ensure reasonable "living space" of the taxi trade, the Association called on the Administration to review its transport policy so that individual transport modes could have a clear role to play. As taxi operators were required to pay a premium for taxi licences, the Government should consider providing suitable compensation to those taxi operators who were adversely affected by the opening of new railways, such as buying back their taxi licences.

Hong Kong Kowloon Taxi & Lorry Owners' Association Ltd

21. Hong Kong Kowloon Taxi & Lorry Owners' Association Ltd was strongly of the view that further railway development should be deferred in view of the slower than projected population growth and the economic downturn. Citing WR as example, the Government should no longer allow the implementation of railway projects which were planned according to out-dated planning parameters.

Action

Tang's Taxi Companies Association Ltd

22. Tang's Taxi Companies Association Ltd opined that the taxi trade should be given a reasonable "living space" under the Government's transport policy. The Government should avoid creating further adverse impact on the employment situation of the taxi trade.

Hong Kong Taxi & Public Light Bus Association Limited

23. Hong Kong Taxi & Public Light Bus Association Limited had no further views to supplement to those expressed by other transport trade deputations.

The Environmental Light Bus Alliance
(LC Paper No. CB(1)1418/03-04(01))

24. The Environmental Light Bus Alliance shared the general views and concerns expressed by other transport trade deputations on the need for the Administration to critically review the need for further railway development in Hong Kong, and emphasized that while the Alliance was supportive of the Government's transport policy of relying on railways as the backbone of the public transport system, it was strongly of the view that railway extensions which only intended to provide feeder services should no longer be built. Given the current population growth and economic conditions, the people of Hong Kong could no longer afford making the same mistakes as LR and WR.

25. The Alliance also considered that the proposed Tsz Wan Shan and Whampoa people mover systems of SCL, which were not financially viable, should not be built. Under the Government's transport policy, feeder services to railways should be provided by franchised buses and PLBs, and not by railway extensions.

運輸業界關注鐵路發展大聯盟 (The Alliance of Transport Trades Concerned about Railway Development)

26. While expressing support for the Government's transport policy of relying on railways as the backbone of the transport system with franchised bus as an important major carrier and other public transport modes taking on a supplementary role, 運輸業界關注鐵路發展大聯盟 (The Alliance of Transport Trades Concerned about Railway Development) was gravely concerned about the proliferation of railway development in the territory to the extent that the order of the public transport market was disturbed. In view of such, the Alliance called on the Administration to review its railway development strategy plan taking into account the following:

- (a) A balance must be achieved between the supply and demand for public transport services. As a result of the lower than projected population growth over the years, the size of Hong Kong's public transport market

Action

had been increasing slowly. This had resulted in unhealthy competition among different public transport modes.

- (b) As evident in the case of WR, the lack of co-ordination between the services provided by the two railway corporations had led to a tremendous waste of public resources. The Administration should avoid making the same mistake.
- (c) Excessive railway development had severely impacted the employment situation of other public transport trades.
- (d) Feeder bus services provided by railway corporations had taken away the businesses of the taxi and PLB trades, and this was in violation of the Government's proclaimed transport policy.
- (e) Taking into account the rapid growth of cross boundary demand, the Administration should accord priority to the development of the Regional Express Line to facilitate assimilation with the Pearl River Delta Region.

27. As regards the SCL project, the Alliance did not agree that SCL should cross the harbour as there was still spare capacity available on the existing MTR lines. Moreover, the proposed temporary traffic arrangements to be put in place in Causeway Bay during the construction works would create much disruption to traffic flow as well as the business of shop operators. The Alliance was particularly opposed to the construction of the Tsz Wan Shan and Whampoa people mover systems as extensions of SCL because this would directly impact on the livelihood of existing taxi and PLB operators.

(Post-meeting note: The Alliance's submission was tabled at the meeting and subsequently issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(1)1784/03-04(04).)

Whampoa Garden Section Owners Committee
(LC Paper No. CB(1)1732/03-04(04))

28. Whampoa Garden Section Owners Committee referred to the long-standing request of local residents for the provision of railway service in the area, and expressed support for the proposed extension of MTR Kwun Tong Line from Yaumati to Whampoa via Homantin on account of the perceived environmental and transport benefits as it would be easily accessible by local residents for seamless connection with the MTR network.

San Tin Rural Committee
(LC Paper No. CB(1)1732/03-04(05))

29. While expressing support for the proposed construction of a PTI at the Lok Ma Chau Terminus of the Spur Line, San Tin Rural Committee put forward the following

Action

views for members and the Administration to consider:

- (a) In view of the rapid growth of cross boundary traffic, the Administration should make provision for a larger PTI at this stage. As proposed, the PTI was surrounded on all sides which could present difficulties in future expansion. A better location for the proposed PTI would be at the southern side of the Lok Ma Chau Terminus.
- (b) As proposed, the PTI would be connected with Castle Peak Road via Lok Ma Chau which was a circuitous road passing through a number of villages. This would create unacceptable noise impact to the villagers. A better alternative was to make use of 惇裕路 which was a service road along the eastern main drainage channel at San Tin as vehicular access to the PTI.
- (c) Local bus services must be allowed to operate at the PTI to service the local residents.

Public Omnibus Operators Association Ltd

30. Public Omnibus Operators Association Ltd was concerned that the proliferation of railway development in Hong Kong had severely affected the viable operation of the non-franchised bus (NFB) services, in particular Residents' Services, Employees' Services and School Services. The Association called on the Administration to give due regard to the livelihood problems faced by the trade members when considering the development of new railways.

31. The Association also requested that the same arrangement as the existing Lok Ma Chau PTI be made for the proposed PTI at the Lok Ma Chau Terminus of the Spur Line to allow NFBs to operate there.

(Post-meeting note: The Association's submission was tabled at the meeting and subsequently issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(1)1784/03-04(05).)

32. Responding to Mr LEUNG Fu-wah's enquiry about the deputations' stance on further railway development in Hong Kong, representatives of the HK Public-Light Bus Owner & Driver Association, United Friendship Taxi Owners & Drivers Association Ltd, N.W. Area Taxi Drivers & Operators Association and Hong Kong Taxi & Public Light Bus Association Limited stated the following views for members' consideration:

- (a) These associations were not against the Government's policy of relying on railways as the backbone of Hong Kong's public transport system. However, the Administration should critically review the need, cost-effectiveness and financial viability of individual railway projects under planning taking into account the latest changes in planning parameters

Action

including population growth. The proliferation of railway development in the territory had already seriously affected the businesses of the PLB and taxi trades.

- (b) These associations strongly called on the Administration to ensure the orderly operation of the public transport market so that the PLB and taxi trades could maintain viable operation by providing supplementary transport services to the public. As such, the Administration should rationalize the feeder bus services provided by the railway corporations, and shelf any proposals for new railway extensions in areas that were already well-served by existing public transport operators.
- (c) The Administration should properly consult the transport trades before deciding on whether further railway development should be undertaken.

33. The Chairman thanked the deputations for sharing their views and concerns with members. She informed the deputations that the Administration would respond to the same at a later meeting to be scheduled, and invited interested parties to attend the meeting as observers.

IV Public transport interchange at Lok Ma Chau Terminus of the Sheung Shui to Lok Ma Chau Spur Line

(LC Paper No. CB(1)1676/03-04(03) - Information paper provided by the Administration)

34. The Chairman invited members to note the information paper provided by the Administration on the subject (LC Paper No. CB(1)1676/03-04(03)). The Administration intended to submit the relevant funding proposal to the Public Works Subcommittee (PWSC) for consideration at its meeting to be held on 9 June 2004.

35. Referring to the views and suggestions presented by San Tin Rural Committee (STRC) during the preceding agenda item, Ms CHAN Yuen-han expressed grave dissatisfaction that the Administration had not properly consulted local views during the planning stage of the Sheung Shui to Lok Ma Chau Spur Line (Spur Line) project. She stressed that as the Spur Line and its supporting facilities were provided in close proximity to the local villages, their operation would invariably impact on the livelihood of the local residents and hence, their concerns must be addressed properly. In particular, she sought the Administration's confirmation that pedestrian facilities would be provided to allow local residents to walk to the Lok Ma Chau (LMC) Terminus.

36. In response, the Deputy Secretary for the Environment, Transport and Works T3 (DS for ETW(T3)) said that in response to members' suggestion that a public transport interchange (PTI) should be provided at the LMC Terminus, the Administration proceeded with the relevant planning work in late 2002. The Administration had consulted the Yuen Long District Council and STRC on the

Action

proposal in 2003 and 2004. Because of practical difficulties and environmental implications, the Administration considered that STRC's suggestions could not be incorporated in the present design of the PTI. She assured members that the views of the local community had been taken seriously. Addressing the local residents' concern about facilitating access to the LMC Terminus, she confirmed that local residents would be allowed to access the LMC Terminus on foot or by bicycles.

37. Mr Albert CHAN welcomed the Administration's decision to respond to members' suggestion and provide the proposed PTI at the LMC Terminus of the Spur Line. However, he considered that given the rapid growth of cross boundary transport demand, the Administration should make early provision for a larger PTI at the LMC Terminus to obviate the need for further expansion within a short time after its commissioning. In this respect, he sought confirmation from the Administration that land was available nearby for future expansion of the PTI if required.

38. Mr LEUNG Fu-wah expressed concern that the proposed PTI might not have adequate capacity to accommodate the sudden influx of taxis. He suggested that extra provision should be made in relation to the building foundations to allow for the construction of multi-storey structures on top in future.

39. The Chairman said that she was gravely concerned about the under-provision of public transport arrangements at the proposed PTI to cater for the demand of passengers who might choose to access the new control point by non-rail public transport. Moreover, the confined space at the proposed PTI could also present problem in respect of orderly operation if too many taxis were waiting to enter the PTI. Referring to the ticketing system currently in operation for unoccupied taxis waiting in the holding area to enter the Lok Ma Chau Control Point to pick up passengers during the extended period, she considered that the Administration should learn from that experience and ensure that better arrangement was put in place for the proposed PTI. In this connection, the Chairman considered it necessary to widen the access road to the PTI so that traffic throughput could be increased in future if necessary.

40. Ir Dr Raymond HO said that the proposed PTI should be timely provided and located near to the LMC Terminus so as to facilitate use by non-rail passengers. Moreover, its provision should not impact adversely on the nearby conservation area. Given these considerations, he supported the Administration's present proposal. But he also shared other members' concern that the Administration should ensure that the PTI could be expanded in future to cater for additional demand.

41. DS for ETW(T3) explained that the originally proposed PTI had an area of only 3 500 square metres (m²). Taking into account members' views, the size of the PTI had been enlarged to 6 200 m² as presently proposed. The revised size had been determined having regard to the need for efficient and effective operation of the public transport services at the LMC Terminus on the one hand and the need to protect the adjacent environment on the other. For this purpose, the Administration had undertaken additional environmental assessment for the past year. She hoped that members would understand that any proposal to further expand or change the design

Action

of the PTI at this stage would invariably impact adversely on the implementation timetable, which could mean that the PTI might not be ready for use by the time the Spur Line began operation in mid-2007.

42. Addressing members' concern about future expansion of the proposed PTI, DS for ETW(T3) said that the proposed PTI was located in a conservation area. Generally speaking, future expansion of the PTI should be possible subject to careful design and implementation of suitable environmental mitigation measures to keep the environmental impact to an acceptable level. The associated traffic impact would also have to be examined. The Administration would closely monitor the situation after the PTI went into operation.

43. DS for ETW(T3) further said that since rail was the most efficient and environmentally friendly transport mode, the Spur Line should be the major transport service serving the new boundary crossing. However, taking into account members' earlier suggestion, the Administration agreed to provide a PTI despite the environmental, access and space constraints to facilitate the operation of a limited extent of other public transport modes to the LMC Terminus to cater for the demands of the public.

44. Responding to Mr Albert CHAN's enquiry about the proposed public transport arrangements at the PTI, DS for ETW(T3) advised that the details would be worked out in due course. The initial thinking was that as a rough estimate, the PTI could accommodate six franchised buses, nine PLBs and 40 to 50 urban and New Territories taxis.

45. Notwithstanding the Administration's explanation, Mr Albert CHAN opined that instead of railway, many passengers might choose other public transport modes to access the new boundary control point. As such, the Administration should make early provision for additional public transport arrangements at the PTI, as well as the associated passenger connection facilities to cope with sharp peaks of passenger demand during weekends and festive periods. In this respect, he enquired about the designed capacity of the passenger connection facilities between the LMC Terminus Building and the PTI, and considered that a passenger waiting area near the vicinity of the passenger connection facilities should be provided.

46. DS for ETW(T3) stated that the cross-boundary facilities at the LMC Terminus could cater for a daily two-way passenger flow of 150 000 and greater passenger volume during weekends and festive periods. She added that the commissioning of new boundary facilities at the Shenzhen Western Corridor and the new Boundary Bridge between Lok Ma Chau and Huanggang would bring about much relief to the existing congestion at various boundary control points. The Administration would provide supplementary information on the design capacity of the PTI and the passenger connection facilities when the item was submitted to PWSC for consideration.

Action

(Post-meeting note: The Administration advised that the requested information had been incorporated in its submission to PWSC.)

47. Summing up the discussion, the Chairman invited the Administration to note the concerns raised generally by members about the need to provide a larger PTI to cater for the demand of non-rail passengers. Moreover, the Administration should ensure better planning for the relevant public transport arrangements, particularly in respect of the control of traffic flow to maintain the smooth and orderly operation of the proposed PTI.

V Any other business

48. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 1:00 pm.

Council Business Division 1
Legislative Council Secretariat
8 June 2004