

**Legislative Council Motion Debate on
“Optimising the Use of the Hong Kong-Shenzhen Western Corridor”
on 30 January 2008**

Progress Report

Introduction

At the Legislative Council (LegCo) meeting on 30 January 2008, the motion on “Optimising the use of the Hong Kong-Shenzhen Western Corridor” moved by Hon Jeffrey LAM Kin-fung and amended by Hon CHEUNG Hok-ming and Hon Andrew CHENG Kar-foo was carried. This paper provides Members with an update since the passing of the motion.

Vehicular flow at Shenzhen Bay Port

2. In April 2008, the average daily two-way vehicular traffic at the Shenzhen Bay Port (SBP) was around 6,100 trips, representing a more than three-fold increase when compared with July 2007 when SBP was commissioned. During the same period, the vehicular flow at the Lok Ma Chau (LMC) and Man Kam To (MKT) control points decreased by 8.3% and 14.1% respectively, while that at Sha Tau Kok (STK) had little change. It is apparent that SBP has been effective in diverting cross-boundary traffic.

Expediently discuss with the Mainland authorities to improve ancillary facilities in the vicinity of the port area and expedite the construction of the Guangshen Yanjiang Expressway

3. The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) continues to reflect to the Mainland authorities the views of our local freight trade on ancillary facilities and road networks, and maintains close liaison with our Mainland counterparts with a view to improving the user-friendliness of SBP. We understand that the Shenzhen side is constructing a temporary office building in the Shenzhen port area to accommodate offices of freight companies for providing logistics support to cargo declaration and clearance. The Shenzhen side expects that the construction work can be completed within this year.

Expedite the works on the Tuen Mun Western Bypass and Tuen Mun – Chek Lap Kok Link, which are connected to the Corridor

4. As regards the road network in Hong Kong, we have been actively upgrading our ancillary facilities serving SBP. A series of improvement works has been drawn up to improve the traffic flow in Tuen Mun and Yuen Long, with some projects already implemented and others in the pipeline. Completed major works include widening of Yuen Long Highway to dual 3-lane and widening of Castle Peak Road to dual 2-lane. In April 2008, funding was approved by LegCo's Finance Committee for the implementation of two improvement works on Tuen Mun Road (TMR), namely, improvement of TMR expressway section and widening of TMR at Tsing Tin Interchange. We are now proceeding with one remaining TMR improvement project (i.e. widening of TMR Town Centre Section). The Transport Department (TD) will monitor closely the traffic on TMR and also the traffic in Tuen Mun and Yuen Long.

5. In the long run, to cater for the traffic need of Northwest New Territories and Lantau beyond 2016, we have secured funding from the LegCo for the investigation and preliminary design for Tuen Mun Western Bypass and Tuen Mun – Chek Lap Kok Link, so as to provide a new access in 2016 connecting SBP, West Tuen Mun, the proposed Lantau Logistics Park, the Hong Kong International Airport and the planned Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge.

Explore incentives on various fronts to attract more cross-boundary vehicles to use the Corridor, including total relaxation of the restrictions on the use of cross-boundary vehicular permits to allow vehicles with LMC, STK and MKT cross-boundary vehicular permits to use the Corridor

6. Since the commissioning of SBP, the Guangdong and HKSAR governments have implemented a number of measures to encourage different types of cross-boundary vehicles to use SBP, so as to alleviate the traffic flow at other control points. The two governments have agreed to extend the trial period for cross-boundary private cars to 30 September this year and to postpone accordingly the deadline of application for switching to the new crossing, so that all private car quota holders of LMC, MKT and STK can use SBP without going through any formalities during the trial period and then apply for switching to SBP with their original quotas for other control points. We informed all existing quota holders of such arrangements on 26 March.

7. Furthermore, both the Guangdong and HKSAR governments have

agreed that, from 26 May 2008 onwards, cross-boundary private cars with SBP quotas are allowed to use the LMC control point during the non-operation hours of SBP, i.e. from midnight to 6:30am, to facilitate their crossing of the boundary during the overnight period. We believe that this arrangement will help encourage car owners to apply for using or switching to use SBP.

8. To further encourage goods vehicles to cross the boundary via SBP, the TD has responded to the freight trade's request of permitting container trucks to travel to and from SBP via the link road of Ha Tsuen Interchange through Ha Tsuen Road. A pilot scheme will be implemented after the completion of road improvement works.

9. As regards relaxation of access restrictions at different control points, both the Guangdong and HKSAR governments consider that the traffic volume should commensurate with the handling capacity of the control points to ensure a smooth traffic flow. To this end, both sides have agreed that the well-established quota system for cross-boundary vehicles should be maintained after the commissioning of SBP. To encourage quota holders of existing control points to switch to SBP for alleviating traffic pressure at other control points, we allow private car quota holders of other existing control points to use SBP during the trial period. However, to allow quota holders of existing control points to use SBP on a long-term basis may not help relieve the traffic at other existing control points.

Negotiate with the Mainland authorities on additional cross-boundary and franchised bus routes and improvement to public transport services between West New Territories and SBP

10. The Guangdong and HKSAR governments issued in March this year 100 SBP cross-boundary coach quotas to operators for providing cross-boundary coach services between Hong Kong and the Mainland via SBP. Currently, more than 250 round-trips are operated daily by cross-boundary coaches between the Mainland and major locations in Hong Kong such as the Kowloon Station, Sham Shui Po, Kowloon Tong, Sai Wan Ho, the Airport, etc. The existing services can generally meet passengers' demand.

11. Pick-up/drop-off points and the routes of cross-boundary coach services in Hong Kong are decided by the operators taking into account commercial factors and passengers' need, subject to the approval of the TD. Some operators have plans to provide new cross-boundary coach services for

passengers from Tung Chung and Kwai Tsing. The operators are currently examining the service details.

12. As regards public transport services, we note that on the Shenzhen side, three additional public bus routes commenced operation earlier this year to provide services between SBP and other destinations in Shenzhen. Due to the small increase in cross-boundary patronage via SBP and the adequate capacity of the public transport services on the Hong Kong side in meeting the demand of cross-boundary passengers, and in view of the need to ensure the proper use of transport resources, we have no plan to increase the number of franchised bus routes at the moment. Given the limited size of the public transport interchange (PTI) in the Hong Kong Port Area of SBP, we can only allow limited access of public transport vehicles to the PTI. Notwithstanding this, we will from time to time review the service level and the routes of bus services to better meet the passenger demand. The TD has recently put forward a number of route improvement proposals to facilitate more residents from the Northwest New Territories to travel between Hong Kong and the Mainland via SBP. The TD consulted the Traffic and Transport Committee (TTC) of the Yuen Long District Council on 27 March 2008 and the Working Group on Bus Route Development Programme for the Yuen Long District on 15 April 2008 on the proposals. Members generally supported the proposals. The TD will discuss the detailed arrangements with the TTC and the relevant bus companies and green minibus operators for implementation.

Opening of SBP for entry by school buses

13. To cater for the education need and ensure the safety of cross-boundary students when travelling to schools, we consider the use of cross-boundary school bus service is a desirable long-term solution. Since March this year, a cross-boundary coach operator has been providing cross-boundary school bus service between the schools in Tuen Mun and the Mainland via SBP. We understand the concerned operator is exploring the feasibility of service enhancement in the next school year. We will continue to monitor the vehicular flow and operation of the PTI to examine if limited access of school buses into the PTI could be allowed for the transport of cross-boundary students.