

## **Legislative Council Panel on Transport**

### **2007-08 Policy Agenda**

#### **Transport-related Policy Initiatives of the Transport and Housing Bureau**

#### **Introduction**

The 2007-08 Policy Agenda just issued sets out the new and on-going initiatives for the coming year. This paper elaborates those initiatives that are relevant to the land transport portfolio.

#### **2007-08 Policy Agenda - New Initiative**

##### ***Chapter 1 - Ten Major Infrastructures, Boosting Our Economy***

#### **Plan actively for the proposed Tuen Mun Western Bypass and Tuen Mun-Chek Lap Kok Link.**

##### **A descriptive account of the initiative**

2. We reported the latest progress of the Northwest New Territories Traffic and Infrastructure Review (Review) to the Panel on Transport in July 2007. Members noted the key findings of the engineering feasibility studies under the Review and were in general supportive of the proposed Tuen Mun Western Bypass (TMWB) and Tuen Mun – Chek Lap Kok Link (TM–CLKL), which will serve as an alternative land access to the Airport and significantly reduce the travelling distance between the Northwest New Territories and Lantau.

3. We also consulted the concerned District Councils, namely Tuen Mun District Council (DC), Islands DC and Yuen Long DC, on the Review findings in September 2007. The DCs supported the timely implementation of the proposed TMWB and TM-CLKL, while some council members called for early action on the other highways identified under the Review. We will submit the funding application for the detailed investigation and preliminary design of the proposed TMWB and TM-CLKL around end 2007, and will continue to follow up with the comments and suggestions received from the DCs.

## **2007-08 Policy Agenda - On-going Initiatives**

### ***Chapter 1 - Ten Major Infrastructures, Boosting Our Economy***

**(a) Continuing to press ahead with the preparatory work for the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge, including following up with the site selection study for the Hong Kong boundary-crossing facilities and the financing arrangements of the project, with a view to finalising and submitting the feasibility study report to the Central Government for approval, and commencing the construction work as soon as possible.**

#### **Progress Made/Present Position**

4. The Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge (HZMB) Advance Work Co-ordination Group set up by the governments of Hong Kong, Guangdong and Macao has already reached agreement on the alignment and landing points of the HZMB. More than twenty topical studies have been completed under the feasibility study for the project. One of the few remaining issues that we need to tackle is the financing arrangements. We aim to complete the financial study shortly, and the three governments will

then proceed to discuss this further.

5. As for the Boundary Crossing Facilities (BCF) arrangement, the three governments have agreed to adopt the mode of “separate locations of BCF”. We have accordingly commenced a site selection study for the Hong Kong BCF, and have started discussion with the Island DC and environmental concern groups. We would further develop the options and would consult the stakeholders again.

**(b) Examining rigorously the project proposals submitted by the Kowloon-Canton Railway Corporation on the Hong Kong section of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link (Dedicated Corridor Option), and on the Northern Link.**

Progress Made/Present Position

6. The Government has decided to adopt the Dedicated Corridor Option for the Hong Kong section of the Express Rail Link (ERL). This option will greatly shorten the traveling time between Hong Kong and Guangzhou, and greatly enhance the strategic status of Hong Kong as a regional transportation hub and a southern gateway to the Mainland. We are examining rigorously KCRC’s proposals for both projects. We are also exchanging views with the relevant Mainland authorities regarding the connection between the Hong Kong and Mainland sections of the ERL and on other technical issues. Our target is to complete the planning and design processes within next year, and to commence construction in 2009.

- (c) Finalising the detailed design of the widening of the town centre section and improvement of the expressway section of Tuen Mun Road in the light of comments received during consultation, with a view to commencing construction in 2008.**

Progress Made/Present Position

7. We gained the support of the Panel on Transport and the Tuen Mun DC in November 2006 on the proposed widening of the town centre section and improvement of the expressway section of Tuen Mun Road. Also we have been exchanging views with the local groups and the consultants on the detail design of the projects. Subject to smooth passage of the necessary statutory procedures, we plan to submit funding application for commencing construction in phases in 2008.

- (d) Implementing the merger of the Mass Transit Railway and the Kowloon-Canton Railway systems. If the merger proposal is approved by the independent shareholders of the MTR Corporation Limited, the MTR Corporation Limited and the Kowloon-Canton Railway Corporation will make final preparations for implementing the merger as soon as possible.**

Progress Made/Present Position

8. The Legislative Council (LegCo) passed the Rail Merger Bill in June and approved the amendments to the relevant subsidiary legislation in July this year, which provides the legal framework for implementing the rail merger. The rail merger package was subsequently approved by the minority shareholders of MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL) at the EGM held on 9 October in accordance with the Listing Rules. The two railway corporations are now making final preparations for implementing the rail merger. We hope the rail merger would be implemented around the end of

this year.

- (e) Continuing to actively pursue the planning of various proposed railway projects including the West Island Line, the Shatin to Central Link and the South Island Line.**

Progress Made/Present Position

*Shatin to Central Link (SCL)*

9. We have undertaken to come up with the detailed scheme and implementation timetable for the SCL within six months after the completion of the legislative process for the rail merger. We are working positively towards this target.

*West Island Line (WIL)*

10. We are now in the final stage of examining the MTRCL's Revised Project Proposal for the WIL. The railway scheme is expected to be gazetted under the Railways Ordinance later this year. We have been staying in close touch with the Central & Western DC and the local community.

*South Island Line (SIL)*

11. We are looking closely into the proposed project and hope to make a submission to the Executive Council shortly. We shall continue to stay in close touch with the LegCo, the Southern DC, local residents and transport trades.

- (f) Continuing to monitor the progress of the Kowloon Southern Link for timely commissioning in late 2009.**

Progress Made/Present Position

*Kowloon Southern Link (KSL)*

12. The construction of the KSL commenced in end 2005 and the progress so far is satisfactory.

*Chapter 2 -Quality City, Quality Life*

- (g) Promoting the use of environment-friendly buses by implementing the provision added in the new bus franchises on the adoption of the latest commercially available and proven environment-friendly technologies for acquiring new buses, encouraging bus companies to deploy cleaner vehicles along busy corridors, including the provision of environment-friendly measures as appropriate as a criterion in selecting operators for new bus route packages and enhancing bus service rationalisation to reduce roadside air pollution, noise nuisance, traffic congestion and energy consumption.**

Progress Made/Present Position

13. We have added a new provision in all the new bus franchises to require the franchised bus companies to adopt the latest commercially available and proven environmental protection technology in setting specifications for acquiring new buses.

14. We have been working with franchised bus operators to promote the deployment of more environment friendly buses on busy corridors. By August this year, all buses running on Yee Wo Street and over 80% of buses operating on Hennessy Road, Queensway, Des Voeux Road Central and Nathan Road are already of Euro II or above standards.

15. We will also continue to adopt the provision of environmentally friendly measures as one of the criteria in future exercises for selecting operators for new bus route packages.

16. We have been working out proposals with the franchised bus companies to re-structure and rationalise bus routes through route cancellation, amalgamation, truncation and frequency adjustment, with a view to reducing the number of bus trips, particularly those on the busy corridors, to help improve traffic and the environment.

**(h) Continuing to consider measures to regulate traffic, including fiscal and traffic management means, with a view to reducing congestion along major transport corridors and to consult the community on the proposals.**

#### Progress Made/Present Position

17. We will continue to explore all possible measures, including the idea of charging to tackle the traffic congestion issue, to improve the traffic flow along major transport corridors. We will refine our previous traffic models with more up-to-date traffic data, carry out sensitivity tests on various charging scenarios, keep in view the technological developments

and make reference to successful experiences in other places. We will consult the community before we make any decision.

### **2006-07 Policy Agenda**

18. The progress of most initiatives included in the 2006-07 Policy Agenda has been covered in the preceding paragraphs. The following initiatives included in the 2006-07 Policy Agenda have already been put in place:

i. **Voluntary registration scheme for vehicle mechanics**

The Government has put in place the scheme since January 2007.

ii. **Lok Ma Chau Spur Line**

The Lok Ma Chau Spur Line was opened on 15 August 2007.

iii. **Hong Kong-Shenzhen Western Corridor**

The Shenzhen Bay Bridge and Port were opened on 1 July 2007.

**Transport and Housing Bureau**

**October 2007**