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Legislative Council

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Panel on Transport
Meeting on 27 February 2009

Background brief on Central Kowloon Route

Purpose

This paper provides background information on the Central Kowloon Route (CKR) and summarizes the discussions held by Legislative Council (LegCo) Members in recent years on CKR at meetings of the Panel on Transport (the Panel), the Public Works Subcommittee (PWSC) and the Finance Committee (FC).

CKR

2. The proposed 4.7 km long dual three-lane CKR will connect the existing Yau Ma Tei (YMT) Interchange in West Kowloon with the proposed Kai Tak Development and the road network in Kowloon Bay. It will provide a new strategic road link across central Kowloon and relieve the traffic congestion at peak hours on the existing east-west corridors, including Lung Cheung Road, Boundary Street, Prince Edward Road West, Argyle Street, Waterloo Road, Gascoigne Road Flyover and Chatham Road North. The Administration estimates that a journey from West Kowloon to Kowloon Bay through the proposed CKR will take only about five minutes.

Background

3. In April 1998, FC approved the upgrading of 582TH "CKR – consultants' design fees and site investigations" to Category A at an estimated cost of \$99.0 million in money-of-the-day (MOD) prices.

4. The Administration started the engineering review of the CKR project in its original alignment and dual two-lane configuration in June 1998. The review was completed in September 1999.

5. In September 1998, when the engineering review of CKR was underway, the Administration gazetted the original scheme for South East

Kowloon Development (SEKD) (now known as Kai Tak Development) under the Town Planning Ordinance (Cap. 131). In response to public views, the Administration prepared an outline concept plan in June 1999 for the revised scheme of SEKD reducing the extent of reclamation from 299 to 161 hectares. In the light of this revised scheme, the Administration started studying an alternative alignment for CKR in August 1999 and identified the option which passed through the bus terminus at Kowloon City Ferry Pier to match with the revised SEKD scheme. This revised alignment allows the tunnel to run at a greater depth within the bedrock stratum, thus substantially reducing the effects of tunnel construction on existing buildings, roads and services in the To Kwa Wan area.

6. In April 2002, the Transport Department conducted a traffic review on the original dual two-lane CKR option. The results indicated that the dual two-lane CKR would be operating above capacity during peak periods immediately after its opening. The Panel was consulted on the revised alignment and dual three-lane configuration of CKR on 26 April 2002. Members supported the revised alignment and dual three-lane configuration of CKR. The need for a dual three-lane CKR was confirmed in September 2006.

7. Subsequent to the judgment of the Court of Final Appeal (CFA) in January 2004 regarding the Protection of Harbour Ordinance (Cap. 531)¹, the Kai Tak Planning Review was commissioned in July 2004 to ensure that the development would be in full compliance with the CFA requirements. In order to avoid reclamation, the Administration proposed to build underneath the seabed the portion of CKR in Kowloon Bay between Kowloon City Ferry Pier and Kai Tak Runway in the form of an immersed tube tunnel.

Discussions held by LegCo Members on a funding proposal to increase approved project estimate (APE) for CKR

8. Following the above changes to SEKD, the Administration consulted the Panel on 24 November 2006 on a funding proposal to increase APE for CKR from \$99.0 million by \$93.3 million to \$192.3 million in MOD prices to cover the additional cost arising from the expansion from dual two-lane configuration to a longer dual three-lane configuration for CKR and use of immersed tube tunnel for the portion across the water of Kowloon Bay.

¹ CFA clarified that the presumption against reclamation in section 3 of the Protection of Harbour Ordinance could only be rebutted if a single test, that was, "the overriding public need test", could be satisfied. Public needs are community needs and include the economic, environmental and social needs of the community. A need should only be regarded as overriding if it is a compelling and present need and there is no reasonable alternative to reclamation.

Design of the CKR tunnel

9. At the Panel meeting on 24 November 2006, a member expressed concern that a major part of CKR would be built in the form of tunnel with an approximate length of 3.8 km, which might be the longest tunnel in Hong Kong, and the associated safety issues such as adequacy of traffic diversion facilities and emergency exits provided inside the tunnel for evacuation in the event of fire or traffic accidents.

10. The Administration assured members that inter-departmental efforts would be made to ensure that the design of the tunnel would meet the prevailing fire safety requirements. Works departments would examine in detail the design and provision of evacuation exits inside the tunnel. For twin-tube tunnels, cross connections for emergency services would be provided at least every 100 to 500 metres. The ventilation system would be so designed that smoke could be extracted within minutes. A traffic control and surveillance system would also be put in place to monitor the traffic in CKR round the clock to facilitate immediate response to emergencies.

Preservation of built heritage/sites with local characteristics and reprovisioning of community facilities affected by the CKR project

11. During discussion of PWSC on the funding proposal seeking increase in APE for 582TH on 19 December 2006, members, though supportive of the development of transport infrastructure, expressed grave concern about the alignment of CKR and its implications on the preservation of the YMT Police Station (YMTPS), which was a grade III historical building, as well as the YMT Jade Hawkers' Bazaar. A member also criticized the Administration for failing to propose any measure to protect the local "Yung Shu Tau" culture in the proposed development. Members in general considered that the current proposal fell short of public's high sentiment towards heritage conservation.

12. Members also expressed concern about how the existing community facilities in the vicinity would be affected by the project. A member pointed out that the proposed location at Hoi Ting Road for reprovisioning the YMT Jockey Club Polyclinic was far from the centre of YMT district and would cause inconvenience to patients. He urged the Administration to adopt a people-oriented approach in making the reprovisioning arrangements.

13. Some members requested that the consultancy study for CKR should be taken forward with the preservation of YMTPS as the starting point, having full regard to concern about conservation of built heritage in examining feasible options for the alignment of CKR. These members also requested that the Administration should involve the community at large in addition to the relevant District Councils (DCs), local residents, and stakeholders in the

consultation process. At the PWSC meeting on 19 December 2006, the funding proposal seeking increase in APE for 582TH was put to vote and was negatived.

Revised scope of proposed consultancy study

14. The Administration re-submitted its funding proposal to PWSC for consideration on 7 February 2007. To address members' concerns, the Administration provided additional information on the scope of the proposed consultancy study and public consultation to be launched with an aim to collect views on a preferred alignment scheme for CKR. In summary, the scope of the proposed consultancy study was expanded to develop new alignment options for CKR, which had to include an option which allowed the preservation of YMTPS, to examine the impacts of the various alignment options, paying due regard to the need for the preservation or reprovisioning of the affected community facilities, to conduct comprehensive consultation with the respective DCs, local communities, representatives of hawkers, professional bodies and academics, and to commence the detailed design for CKR upon the acceptance of a final alignment scheme by the community at large.

15. The funding proposal with expanded scope of the consultancy study was recommended by PWSC and approved by FC at its meeting on 20 April 2007. While approving the increase in funding for the consultancy study and site investigations, members requested and the Administration agreed to continue to consult the public on the alignment and report back to the Panel on the preferred option.

Development of a preferred alignment scheme for CKR

16. At its meeting on 16 May 2008, the Panel was briefed on the progress of the consultancy study for the investigation and preliminary design of CKR. The consultancy study was started in August 2007. Members' views were sought on a preferred alignment scheme for CKR which was a dual 3-lane trunk road of about 4.7 km connecting West Kowloon with the proposed Kai Tak Development. It would also connect the road network in Kowloon Bay. About 3.9 km of CKR would be in tunnel with its starting point from West Kowloon reclamation area at the west end. It ran along Kansu Street, across Nathan Road, and through King's Park, Ho Man Tin, To Kwa Wan and Kowloon City Ferry Pier to Kowloon Bay. In view of the topography and geology of King's Park, Ho Man Tin and To Kwa Wan areas, the central section of CKR was proposed to be a deep bored tunnel in the bedrock to avoid affecting the buildings at the ground level. The portion across the waters in Kowloon Bay would be in the form of an immersed tube tunnel underneath the seabed to avoid reclamation.

Heritage conservation and reprovisioning of community facilities

17. According to the Administration, the consultancy study had paid due regard to the views of the public. The preservation of YMTPS was a major theme in developing the alignment options at the western end. The Administration had also revised the reprovisioning proposal taking into consideration the views gathered in public consultation. In the revised proposal, the YMT Jockey Club Polyclinic building would continue to be in operation. Moreover, the Post Office and the Library would be reprovisioned temporarily in YMT during construction, and moved to a permanent accommodation in the same area after construction. The Jade Hawkers' Bazaar would also be reprovisioned temporarily in YMT during construction, and would be moved back to the original location thereafter. In response to members' concerns, the Administration undertook to explore possible options to make way for the operation of the Temple Street night market during the CKR construction. The Administration indicated that the Yau Tsim Mong DC and the public generally supported the above relocation proposals.

Environmental impact of CKR on nearby residents

18. Panel members also noted concerns expressed by YMT residents (including residents of Prosperous Garden) about CKR's likely traffic, air and noise impacts, and their objection to implementation of the CKR project. The Panel urged the Administration to address the residents' concerns. In response to members' requests, the Administration proposed measures including the construction of a landscaped deck at the western tunnel portal so that the vehicular entrance and exit would be moved farther away from existing residential buildings, implementation of additional greening measures in the vicinity, and the relocation of a ventilation building to a new location to allow a better dispersion of tunnel exhaust to reduce air quality impact on existing dwellings. The Administration advised that these measures would be included for detailed study in the relevant Environmental Impact Assessment and in the design of CKR. The Panel expressed support for the Administration to proceed with the preliminary design of CKR and impact studies.

Latest developments

19. The Administration has proposed to brief the Panel on the latest progress of the consultancy study for CKR at the next Panel meeting on 27 February 2009.

Relevant papers

20. A list of relevant papers is in the **Appendix**.

Council Business Division 1
Legislative Council Secretariat
23 February 2009

Central Kowloon Route

List of relevant papers

Date of meeting	Committee	Minutes/Paper	LC Paper No.
17.2.1998	Public Works Subcommittee (PWSC)	Administration's paper on 582TH - Central Kowloon Route - consultants' design fees and site investigations	PWSC(97-98)133 http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr97-98/english/fc/pwsc/papers/p1702133.htm
		Minutes of meeting	PWSC 79/07-09 http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr97-98/english/fc/pwsc/minutes/pwmn1702.htm
13.3.1998	Panel on Transport and Panel on Planning, Lands and Works	Administration's paper on Central Kowloon Route	CB(1)1103/97-98(01) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr97-98/english/panels/tp/papers/t13032aj.htm
		Minutes of meeting	CB(1)1290/97-98 http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr97-98/english/panels/tp/minutes/tj130398.htm
25.3.1998	PWSC	Administration's paper on 582TH - Central Kowloon Route - consultants' design fees and site investigations	PWSC(97-98)143 http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr97-98/english/fc/pwsc/papers/p2503143.htm
		Minutes of meeting	PWSC 86/97-98 http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr97-98/english/fc/pwsc/minutes/pwmn2503.htm

Date of meeting	Committee	Minutes/Paper	LC Paper No.
7.2001	Panel on Transport (TP)	Administration's paper on Central Kowloon Route	CB(1)1688/00-01(03) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr00-01/english/panels/tp/papers/a1688e03.pdf
26.4.2002	TP	Administration's paper on Central Kowloon Route Administration's supplementary information paper on Central Kowloon Route	CB(1)1558/01-02(03) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr01-02/english/panels/tp/papers/tp0426cb1-1558-3e.pdf CB(1)2130/01-02(06) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr01-02/english/panels/tp/papers/tp0426cb1-2130-6e.pdf
		Minutes of the meeting	CB(1)2200/01-02 http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr01-02/english/panels/tp/minutes/tp020426.pdf
24.11.2006	TP	Administration's paper on Central Kowloon Route and improvement to Tuen Mun Road Administration's supplementary information paper on Central to Kowloon Route	CB(1)296/06-07(04) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr06-07/english/panels/tp/papers/tp1124cb1-296-4-e.pdf CB(1)515/06-07(01) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr06-07/english/panels/tp/papers/tp1124cb1-515-1-e.pdf
		Minutes of the meeting	CB(1)527/06-07 http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr06-07/english/panels/tp/minutes/tp061124.pdf

Date of meeting	Committee	Minutes/Paper	LC Paper No.
19.12.2006	PWSC	Administration's paper on Central Kowloon Route - consultants' design fees and site investigations	PWSC(2006-07)51 http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr06-07/english/fc/pwsc/papers/p06-51e.pdf
		Minutes of meeting	PWSC 33/06-07 http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr06-07/english/fc/pwsc/minutes/pw061219.pdf
7.2.2007	PWSC	Administration's paper on Central Kowloon Route - consultants' design fees and site investigations	PWSC(2006-07)74 http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr06-07/english/fc/pwsc/papers/p06-74e.pdf
		Minutes of meeting	PWSC 57/06-07 http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr06-07/english/fc/pwsc/minutes/pw070207.pdf
20.4.2007	Finance Committee (FC)	Minutes of meeting	FC 100/06-07 http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr06-07/english/fc/fc/minutes/fc070420.pdf
16.5.2008	TP	Administration's paper on Central Kowloon Route progress report	CB(1)1494/07-08(02) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr07-08/english/panels/tp/papers/tp0516cb1-1494-2-e.pdf
		Minutes of meeting	CB(1)2205/07-08 http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr07-08/english/panels/tp/minutes/tp080516.pdf