

Legislative Council Panel on Transport

2010-11 Policy Agenda

Transport-related Policy Initiatives of the Transport and Housing Bureau

Introduction

The 2010-11 Policy Agenda sets out the Government's initiatives in the coming year. This paper elaborates on those initiatives that are relevant to the land transport portfolio.

2009-10 Policy Agenda – New Initiative

(a) Propose amendments to the Road Traffic Ordinance to combat drug driving with a view to enhancing road safety.

2. The Government is very concerned about traffic accidents caused by driving under the influence of drugs, particularly illicit drugs. We are determined to introduce measures as soon as possible to vigorously combat these behaviors to enhance road safety. Earlier this year we formulated a package of initial proposals to combat drug driving. The proposed measures include the introduction of a zero-tolerance offence for driving with the most commonly drugs of abuse and some preliminary drug tests so as to ensure that the Police would be able to effectively combat drug driving. We consulted the Panel on Transport in July on the Administration's initial proposals, and completed the public consultation in September. We plan to report to the Panel next month the results of the public consultation and our proposed legislative proposal, and will aim at submitting the Amendment Bill for consideration of LegCo within this legislative session.

2009-10 Policy Agenda – On-going Initiatives

Chapter 1 - Developing the Infrastructure for Economic Growth

(a) **Continuing with the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge project for the completion and commissioning of the Bridge by 2016. For this, the three governments concerned will seek to finalise the financing arrangement with the lead bank in respect of the main bridge, while the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government will complete the detailed design of the boundary crossing facilities and the link road between them and the main bridge.**

3. The construction works of the Main Bridge commenced in December 2009. The three governments had also established the legal framework for the construction and operation of the Main Bridge, and would seek to finalise the financing arrangement with the lead bank of the syndicated loan by the end of 2010. For the local projects, the reclamation works of the Hong Kong Boundary Crossing Facilities is currently undergoing investigation and detailed design, while Hong Kong Link Road has just started the preparatory work for design and build contracts. Our aim is to match the completion and commissioning with that of the Main Bridge by 2016.

(b) **Constructing the Hong Kong section of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link with target completion in 2015.**

4. Upon approval by the Finance Committee to the funding application, the construction of the Hong Kong section of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link commenced in January 2010. The Progress of the construction has been satisfactory. Our aim is to complete construction in 2015.

- (c) **Continuing to foster closer co-operation between the Hong Kong International Airport and Shenzhen Airport, including further planning of the Hong Kong-Shenzhen Western Express Line as a multi-purpose cross-boundary railway which complements the planning and development of Qianhai, Shenzhen and northwestern part of the New Territories and exploits the synergy from the complementary strengths of the two airports.**

5. The preliminary feasibility study on the Hong Kong-Shenzhen Western Express Line (WEL) has confirmed the technical feasibility of its alignment. Apart from enhancing the cooperation between the two airports in Hong Kong and Shenzhen, one of the major functions of the WEL is to promote the development of Qianhai and Northwest New Territories (NWNT). It is important for the design of the WEL to take into consideration the planning of these two areas. With the development of Qianhai and NWNT being pushed ahead, more planning parameters for these areas will be available. This will enable us to conduct more in-depth studies on the WEL, and investigate various alignment options and their respective patronage forecasts, the functionality of the railway, its technical standards, operational and service requirements, etc.

- (d) **Monitoring the progress of the works of the West Island Line for timely commissioning in 2014**

6. The West Island Line is an extension of the Island Line from Sheung Wan to Kennedy Town. The construction works of the WIL have commenced in July 2009. We will continue to stay in touch with the Central and Western District Council and the local community for exchanging views on the construction issues. The construction progress has been satisfactory and our estimate is that the railway will be commissioned in 2014 as scheduled.

(e) Continuing with the planning and design of the South Island Line (East) and the Kwun Tong Line Extension with a view to commencing construction in 2011.

7. The Amendments to the railway scheme of the South Island Line (East) and the Kwun Tong Line Extension were gazetted in June 2010 under the Railways Ordinance. We are now handling the objecting views. In view of the present progress, we aim at commencing construction of the two railways in 2011 for commissioning in 2015.

(f) Continuing with the planning and design of the Shatin to Central Link with a view to commencing construction as soon as practicable.

8. Design and site investigation of the Shatin to Central Link are being carried out in parallel with public consultation. It is anticipated that the consultation exercise will be completed this year. We will try to reach a general consensus on various issues based on which we will finalize the details of the railway scheme. We plan to gazette the railway scheme by the end of 2010 and draw up the implementation programme by then, so that the works will commence as soon as possible.

(g) Continuing to pursue the planning of the Northern Link in conjunction with the planned developments in the New Territories.

9. We are now assessing the planning of the Northern Link in the light of the planning and engineering study of the New Development Areas in the Northeast New Territories, so that the Northern Link can be properly integrated with these new developments.

(h) Continuing with the investigation and design of the proposed Tuen Mun-Chek Lap Kok Link and with the evaluation of the alignment options for the Tuen Mun Western Bypass for further public consultation.

10. The Tuen Mun-Chek Lap Kok Link and Tuen Mun Western Bypass will provide an alternative access to the Airport and reduce the travelling distance between the Northwest New Territories and Lantau. The two projects together with the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge, the Kong Sham Western Highway, etc. will form a strategic highway network which will facilitate the economic development of Hong Kong. The investigation and preliminary design of Tuen Mun-Chek Lap Kok Link will be completed in early 2011, while the alignment options of Tuen Mun Western Bypass are under review with a view to conducting another round of public consultation shortly. We aim to synchronize the completion of these two projects with that of the Main Bridge within roughly the same time frame.

(i) Overseeing the implementation of the improvement of the expressway section and the widening of the town centre section of Tuen Mun Road.

11. In April 2008, the Finance Committee approved the funding for the improvement of the expressway section of Tuen Mun Road (from Tsuen Wan to Sam Shing Hui) to meet current expressway standards. Construction works have commenced in October 2008 and are tentatively scheduled for completion in phases by 2014.

12. For the widening of the town centre section of Tuen Mun Road, compensatory planting commenced in December 2009 while the design and build contract also commenced in February 2010, with target completion in end 2013.

Chapter 2 -Quality City, Quality Life

(j) Promoting the use of environment-friendly buses by implementing the provision in the 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 as appropriate the adoption of environment-friendly measures 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.

13. We have included a 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; over 94% of buses operating on Hennessy Road and Nathan Road; and over 86% on Queensway and Des Voeux Road Central 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 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.

(k) 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.

17. We will continue to explore all possible measures to improve the traffic flow along major transport corridors. As regards the idea of charging to tackle the traffic congestion issue, we will keep in view the technological developments and make reference to successful experience in other places. We will consult the community before we make any decision.

- (I) Taking forward feasibility studies for the proposed pedestrian link schemes in Causeway Bay and Mong Kok so as to create space for pedestrian movements, minimise vehicle-pedestrian conflicts and improve roadside air quality, and continuing with public consultation on the proposed schemes for improving the pedestrian environment in Yuen Long town centre.**

18. The consultants appointed by the Transport Department has worked out some preliminary conceptual alignment plans for the pedestrian environment improvement projects for Causeway Bay and Mong Kok. For the plan for Causeway Bay, it is envisaged that there will be a pedestrian subway system running from Victoria Park through the central commercial and shopping areas of Causeway Bay to the vicinity of Happy Valley. For the plan in Mong Kok, the existing footbridge system will be extended to join the Mong Kok and Mong Kok East MTR stations as well as the heart of the district with the vicinity of Tai Kok Tsui. The feasibility studies on the plans are currently underway, and we will consider such aspects as the traffic, environment and engineering feasibility, as well as further consult the relevant District Councils and the public.

19. For the pedestrian environment improvement scheme in Yuen Long, Highways Department has commissioned consultants which conducted a number of site inspections, street interviews, focus group meetings, and also held two public forums in 2010 respectively to engage the public in formulating the proposed improvement measures. Highways Department also consulted the Yuen Long District Council in September 2010 on the preliminary improvement measures. Taking into account the comments received from the District Council and the public, Highways Department will continue to refine the improvement measures and work out the way forward.

- (m) Continuing with the assessment of options that are feasible in transport, financial and legal terms to improve traffic distribution among the three road harbour crossings in the light of the recommendations of the consultancy study. We will also consult the public on the matter.**

20. We commissioned a consultancy study in November 2008 to identify measures to improve traffic distribution among the three road harbour crossings, with a view to identifying options that are feasible in transport, financial and legal terms, taking into account the capacity of the connecting road network of each crossing. The consultants have submitted the consultancy report to the Government in end September 2010. We are considering carefully from different perspectives the findings of the study and feasibility of the recommendations, and will consult the public.

Chapter 3 – Investing for a Caring Society

- (n) Taking forward feasibility studies for the higher-ranking proposals under the assessment system for the provision of hillside escalator links and elevator systems.**

21. We reported to the Panel on Transport in February 2010 the assessment results on the 20 proposals for the provision of hillside escalator links and elevator systems using the proposed assessment system. We have started to take forward the feasibility studies in phases for the proposals ranked top 10 in the assessment. Proposals not selected for feasibility studies in the first stage will remain on the waiting list for consideration in the next assessment exercise together with other proposals on the list.

**Transport and Housing Bureau
October 2010**