

## **Legislative Council Panel on Transport**

### **2011-12 Policy Agenda**

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

##### **Introduction**

The 2011-12 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.

##### **2011-12 Policy Agenda – On-going Initiatives**

###### ***Chapter 1 - Developing the Infrastructure for Economic Growth***

**(a) Pressing full steam ahead with the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge (HZMB) project for the completion and commissioning of the Bridge by 2016.**

2. For the Judicial Review of the Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) Report of the HZMB local projects, the Court of Appeal handed down its judgment on 27 September 2011, unanimously allowing the appeal of the Director of Environmental Protection (DEP) and confirming the validity of the Environmental Permits of the HZMB local projects issued by DEP. We have immediately resumed the statutory procedures and funding

application which were not finished because of the legal proceedings and will seek authorization of the relevant projects from Chief Executive in Council. We will also submit funding application to the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council (FC) as soon as possible. Our aim is to commence the project before the end of this year (i.e. 2011), so as to endeavor the commissioning of the HZMB in 2016 as scheduled. We will make every effort to strengthen the manpower for the construction works and adjust the engineering and construction methods so as to compress the works programme for on-schedule completion of works. If we can start works before end 2011, compared with our original programme which we aimed to commence works before end 2010, there has been about one-year programme delay and we estimate that there will be a 6.5 billion cost increase, including price escalation and the additional cost arising from adopting different construction methods to compress the works programme. If the works are not commenced as soon as possible, we predict that the cost will continue to rise significantly.

3. Regarding the actual progress of the works, the construction works of the Main Bridge in the Mainland waters, including the Macao-Zhuhai Boundary Crossing Facilities, was commenced in end 2009 as scheduled, and is expected to be completed in 2016 as planned. The advance works of the HZMB local projects in Hong Kong, including design, investigation and tendering, are ready. If funding approval from FC is obtained, works will commence immediately. We will endeavour to complete the works in Hong Kong as soon as possible, so as to tie in with the commissioning of the Bridge.

4. Guangdong and Hong Kong have decided to launch Phase I of the ad hoc quota trial scheme (the Scheme) for cross-boundary private cars in

March 2012. Qualified owners of Hong Kong private cars with five seats or less may apply for ad hoc quotas under the scheme to drive their private cars into Guangdong Province via Shenzhen Bay Port. The Scheme, if proven successful, can be implemented at the HZMB, thereby increasing utilization of the Bridge and further facilitating cross-boundary travel.

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

5. The construction of the Hong Kong section of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link (XRL) commenced in January 2010. The progress of the construction has been satisfactory. The foundation works of the West Kowloon Terminus are substantially completed. The preparatory works of the tunnel sections are progressing as planned, and those of some sections are even completed. The Hong Kong section of the XRL will be completed in 2015 as scheduled.

6. Our another focal task is the operational arrangements of the XRL to ensure the safety and efficiency of the train services. Relevant authorities of Hong Kong and the Mainland have established various task forces to study various important operational issues in accordance with the project timetable, including ticketing system, scheduling, operating procedures and guidelines under different conditions, incident coordination, staff training, drill exercises, maintenance etc.

**(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.**

7. The study on the Review and Update of the Railway Development Strategy 2000 (RDS 2U), which covers the WEL, commenced in March 2011 and will formulate a territory-wide railway development blueprint. Currently, the development of Qianhai New District, Shenzhen is included in the National 12th Five-Year Plan, with a view to developing by 2020 into an important production service centre in the Asia Pacific region and a Hong Kong-Guangdong modern service industry innovation and co-operation exemplary zone. The Hung Shui Kiu (HSK) New Development Area (NDA) Planning and Engineering Study has been launched which will assist in formulating development proposals for the HSK NDA. In view of the latest updates in the above planning parameters, we will further the planning of the WEL in the study on the RDS 2U, including matters such as alignment options, railway functionality and connectivity with the Hong Kong and Shenzhen railway networks etc.

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

8. The West Island Line (WIL) is an extension of the Island Line from Sheung Wan to Kennedy Town. The construction works of the WIL 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) Monitoring the progress of the works of the South Island Line (East) and the Kwun Tong Line Extension for timely commissioning in 2015.**

9. The South Island Line (East) (SIL(E)) is a new rail corridor from South to North of Hong Kong Island. It starts from South Horizons on Ap Lei Chau to Admiralty via Lei Tung, Wong Chuk Hang and Ocean Park. The Kwun Tong Line Extension (KTE) is an extension of the Kwun Tong Line from Yau Ma Tei to Whampoa. The construction works of the SIL(E) and KTE commenced in May 2011. We will continue to stay in touch with the District Councils and the local community for exchanging views on the construction issues. The construction progress of both railways has been satisfactory and we expect that the railways will be commissioned in 2015 as scheduled.

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

10. Since the gazetting of the Shatin to Central Link (SCL) scheme in November 2010, we have been striving to optimize the design of the SCL project and studying the feasibility of making appropriate amendments in response to the public concerns and views. We have arranged the first stage gazette of the proposed amendments on the railway scheme in July this year. We envisage that the consultation on SCL and study of the railways design will be completed within this year, and all proposed amendments will be announced before the end of 2011.

11. The EIA Reports for SCL were originally completed and MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL) submitted the concerned EIA Reports to Environmental Protection Department as early as in February this year. However, in view of the the Judicial Review on the EIA Reports for the HZMB local projects, MTRCL withdrew the concerned reports in April this year. Taking into account the judgment of the Court of Appeal on 27 September 2011 that the appeal of the Director of Environmental Protection (DEP) was unanimously allowed, MTRCL has re-submitted the concerned EIA Reports to EPD for approval. Compared with the original submission timeframe of the EIA Reports which was in February this year, it has been delayed for eight months. We plan to expedite the delayed EIA and statutory procedures, and will strive to compress the concerned procedures as far as possible. We endeavour to complete the statutory procedures and EIA processes for the SCL project before mid 2012. Although we have a very tight timeframe, our target is to submit funding application to FC in Q2 2012 for this item, and strive to commence construction in 2012.

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

12. The study on RDS 2U commenced in March this year includes railway development of the New Territories region. The consultant will study the future overall planning, population and economic development of the New Territories, and will assess 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, in particular the integration of the Northern Link and these new developments.

**(h) Continuing with the investigation and design of the proposed Tuen Mun-Chek Lap Kok Link and Tuen Mun Western Bypass.**

13. The Tuen Mun-Chek Lap Kok Link and Tuen Mun Western Bypass will provide an alternative access to the Airport and can reduce the travelling distance between Northwest New Territories and Lantau. The projects, together with the HZMB, the Kong Sham Western Highway, etc., will form a strategic highway network, which will not only satisfy traffic demand, but also facilitate the economic development of Hong Kong. The detailed design of the advance reclamation works of Tuen Mun-Chek Lap Kok Link was completed and works will be taken forward along with the Hong Kong Boundary Crossing Facilities reclamation works. As regards the Tuen Mun Western Bypass, we are also taking forward the investigation and design. The alignment of the Bypass, supported by relevant District Councils and Rural Committees, was carefully selected from ten options obtained in a series of public consultations.

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

14. We are continuing to take forward the works of the reconstruction and improvement of the expressway section of Tuen Mun Road (from Tsuen Wan to Sam Shing Hui) to improve the standard of the expressway. Construction works commenced in October 2008. Slopeworks and construction works of retaining walls, bridge widening, road reconstruction works and erection of noise barriers are in progress. Works are tentatively scheduled for completion by phases within 2014.

15. For the traffic improvement works of Tuen Mun Road town centre section, compensatory planting commenced in December 2009 while the design and build contract also commenced in February 2010. The works are progressing well and should be completed in end 2013 as scheduled.

## *Chapter 2 -Quality City, Quality Life*

**(j) Continuing with the exercise to amend the Road Traffic Ordinance and implement the measures upon enactment to vigorously combat drug driving.**

16. In view of the rising trend of drug driving cases, the Government is determined to introduce measures as soon as possible to vigorously combat drug driving behaviors to enhance road safety. To this end, we formulated a package of legislative proposals to provide for stricter controls and corresponding enforcement powers for the Police, and conducted a public consultation on the proposed measures. The outcome of the public consultation showed that the proposed measures were supported by the community. We introduced the Road Traffic (Amendment) Bill 2011, which embodies the various proposed measures to combat drug driving, into the Legislative Council in May this year. The Bills Committee is scrutinizing the Bill. We hope that the Bill can be enacted as soon as practicable so that the measures can be implemented as early as possible.

**(k) 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.**

17. We have already 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. When the current bus franchises expire in the coming few years, we will impose additional requirements in the franchises for the bus companies to switch to zero emission buses or the most environment-friendly buses when replacing existing ones, taking into account the feasibility and affordability for bus operators and passengers.

18. We have been working with the franchised bus operators to promote the deployment of more environment-friendly buses on busy corridors. As at end July this year, all buses running on Yee Wo Street; about 96% of buses operating on Hennessy Road and Nathan Road; about 93% on Des Voeux Road Central; and about 90% on Queensway are of Euro II or above standards.

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

20. We have been working 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.

- (l) Continuing to consider measures to regulate traffic, including fiscal and traffic management means, with a view to reducing congestion along major transport corridors.**

21. 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 continue to keep in view the technological developments and successful experience in other places.

- (m) Continuing to take forward feasibility studies for the proposed pedestrian subway system in Causeway Bay and footbridge system in Mong Kok so as to create space for pedestrian movements, minimise vehicle-pedestrian conflicts and improve roadside air quality; and proceeding with the detailed feasibility study for major improvement schemes and implementing the other improvement schemes under the pedestrian environment scheme for Yuen Long Town.**

22. We have completed the preliminary investigation into the feasibility of constructing the new pedestrian walkway systems in Causeway Bay and Mong Kok as well as the relevant consultancy studies. For the pedestrian subway system in Causeway Bay, the Highways Department (HyD) has engaged consultants to conduct feasibility studies on the proposed

alignment, and sought views from relevant stakeholders through various public engagement activities from June to August 2011. The feasibility studies of the pedestrian footbridge system in Mong Kok are also underway. The Department will plan for the preliminary design and public consultation exercise upon completion of the studies.

23. For the pedestrian environment improvement scheme in Yuen Long, the HyD completed the public engagement exercise in 2010 and suggested a series of measures to improve the pedestrian environment in Yuen Long Town. The Department engaged a consultant to conduct feasibility studies on the improvement measures of a larger scale in September 2011. For other measures of a smaller scale, they are being implemented and arranged for commencement, and will be completed by phases.

**(n) Continuing with the assessment of possible measures to improve traffic distribution among the three road harbour crossings.**

24. We have completed in the first quarter of this year a public consultation on the findings and recommendations of a consultancy study to improve the traffic distribution among the three road harbour crossings (RHCs). We are carefully considering the views received and assessing possible measures that could improve the traffic distribution among the RHCs and would not place an undue burden on public finance or Government expenditure. We will present the outcome of our assessment to the Legislative Council as soon as we are in a position to do so.

### *Chapter 3 –Investing for a Caring Society*

- (o) Continuing to take forward feasibility studies for the higher-ranking proposals under the assessment system for the provision of hillside escalator links and elevator systems, and proceeding with the preliminary design of those proposals which are found technically feasible.**

25. We have started to take forward the feasibility studies in phases for the proposals ranked top ten in the assessment, and will proceed with the preliminary design of those proposals which are confirmed technically feasible and to study the suitable physical locations of landings, alignment and related facilities to meet the needs of the local community. We will report to and consult the District Councils concerned on the findings of the feasibility studies, and will also explain the arrangement for further implementation of the proposals.

**Transport and Housing Bureau**

**October 2011**