

立法會

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Paper for the House Committee meeting on 28 April 2017

Report of the Subcommittee on Three Regulations to Effect Toll Payment through Electronic Payment Facility

Purpose

This paper reports on the deliberations of the Subcommittee on Three Regulations to Effect Toll Payment through Electronic Payment Facility ("the Subcommittee").

Background

2. According to the Legislative Council ("LegCo") Brief (File ref.: THB(T)CR 2/4651/83), at present a motorist using government tolled tunnels and roads may stop at a manual toll booth to pay the toll by means of cash or pre-paid toll tickets. Alternatively, a motorist who drives a vehicle with an Autotoll tag (which is an electronic toll collection system transponder) attached to the windscreen may drive through an Autotoll booth without stopping with the toll automatically paid by deducting from a pre-paid account.

3. To meet public expectation and for the convenience of motorists, the Administration will install "stop-and-go" electronic payment ("e-payment") facilities at manual toll booths of government tolled tunnels and roads so that motorists may pay tolls by contactless payment cards or devices ("e-payment means"). In May 2013, the LegCo Finance Committee approved the funding for the installation of "stop-and-go" e-payment facilities at five government tolled tunnels¹ and two government tolled roads.² Modification works for the existing toll collection systems and hardware for interfacing with new e-payment facilities have been completed. The Transport Department ("TD") has awarded, through open tender, the contracts for the design and construction of e-payment

¹ The five tunnels are Aberdeen Tunnel, Cross-Harbour Tunnel, Lion Rock Tunnel, Shing Mun Tunnels and Tseung Kwan O Tunnel.

² The two roads are Lantau Link and Tsing Sha Highway.

facilities. TD plans to implement the first phase of the "stop-and-go" e-payment project in mid-2017 covering the Shing Mun Tunnels, followed by the second phase from end 2017 to early 2018 covering all the other six government tolled tunnels and roads.

4. TD has, through open tender, selected two e-payment service providers. The two e-payment service providers, both awarded three-year contracts, will process four e-payment means between them, *viz.* Octopus, Visa payWave, MasterCard contactless and UnionPay QuickPass. Motorists may pay tolls by any of the four e-payment means at government tolled tunnels and roads after the e-payment facilities are installed.

The Amendment Regulations

5. The Chief Executive in Council made the Road Tunnels (Government) (Amendment) Regulation 2017, the Tsing Ma Control Area (Tolls, Fees and Charges) (Amendment) Regulation 2017 and the Tsing Sha Control Area (Tolls, Fees and Charges) (Amendment) Regulation 2017 (L.N. 34 to L.N. 36 of 2017 respectively) (collectively known as "the Amendment Regulations") to amend the respective regulations relating to tolls under the Road Tunnels (Government) Regulations (Cap. 368A), the Tsing Ma Control Area (Tolls, Fees and Charges) Regulation (Cap. 498A) and the Tsing Sha Control Area (Tolls, Fees and Charges) Regulation (Cap. 594B) respectively. The Amendment Regulations provide for payment of tolls through e-payment facilities (other than automatic toll collection facilities) for using government tolled tunnels³ and the two government tolled roads. The Amendment Regulations were tabled before LegCo at its meeting of 22 March 2017 and were subject to the negative vetting procedure.

6. L.N. 34 to L.N. 36 will come into operation on 2 June 2017.

The Subcommittee

7. At the House Committee meeting held on 17 March 2017, Members agreed that a subcommittee should be formed to study the Amendment Regulations. The membership list of the Subcommittee is in **Appendix**.

8. Under the chairmanship of Hon CHAN Hak-kan, the Subcommittee held two meetings, one of which was with the Administration.

³ Government tolled tunnels also includes the Eastern Harbour Crossing. The Eastern Harbour Crossing was not included in the proposal to the Finance Committee in May 2013 as it was still a Building-Operating-Transfer tunnel before the Government's take-over in August 2016. TD plans to install "stop-and-go" e-payment facilities at the Eastern Harbour Crossing no later than early 2019. The required capital cost of about \$8.8 million was approved under delegated authority in 2014, and the estimated recurrent cost is about \$7.4 million per year.

9. To allow more time for the Subcommittee to prepare its report for the House Committee, Hon CHAN Hak-kan, on behalf of the Subcommittee, was to move a motion at the Council meeting of 12 April 2017 to extend the scrutiny period of the Amendment Regulations to the Council meeting of 10 May 2017. However, as the motion was not dealt with at the Council meeting of 12 April 2017, the scrutiny period of the Amendment Regulations had expired at that Council meeting.

Deliberations of the Subcommittee

10. The Subcommittee does not object to the Amendment Regulations. The Subcommittee has deliberated on the use of automatic toll collection service in enhancing traffic flow at toll plazas and the ratio of manual toll booths to Autotoll booths at government tolled tunnels. Details of the deliberations are set out in the ensuing paragraphs.

Use of automatic toll collection service

11. In response to members' enquiry, the Administration has advised that in 2016, about 46% of motorists used Autotoll while about 54% paid at manual toll booths when using government tolled tunnels and roads. The percentage of motorists using Autotoll has remained at a stable level in the past few years. The aim of installing e-payment facilities at manual toll booths is to provide an additional and convenient means of payment for motorists who usually make toll payment in cash. The Administration does not foresee that provision of "stop-and-go" e-payment facilities would have a significant impact on the usage of Autotoll.

12. The Subcommittee has enquired how the transaction fees of using the e-payment facilities would be charged by the card issuing companies or clearing companies, for example, whether users of the e-payment facilities would be charged an extra cost for each transaction on top of the specified tolls.

13. The Administration has advised that motorists using "stop-and-go" e-payment facilities to pay tolls at government tolled tunnels and roads would only be charged the specified tolls. The relevant transaction fees would be regarded as recurrent operating costs for providing "stop-and-go" e-payment facilities, estimated at around \$16.7 million per year, and would be borne by the Administration. Such costs would be taken into account in setting toll charges in the future according to the Government's established mechanism.

14. Hon Charles Peter MOK and Hon Frankie YICK pointed out that the charging mechanism of e-payment facilities is somewhat different from that of Autotoll, the users of which would be charged a monthly administration fee.

Members have opined that since Autotoll is more effective in easing the traffic flow because motorists do not need to stop at the booth for making toll payment, more motorists would use Autotoll if they are exempted from paying the relevant administration fee. The Subcommittee has asked whether the Administration would consider aligning the two charging mechanisms.

15. The Administration has advised that the subscription of Autotoll service is solely an agreement between Autotoll Limited and its subscribers. The company charges its users the relevant administration fee to maintain the operation of the system. The Administration would consider members' views should an opportunity arise in the future.

16. The Administration has further advised that it is studying the feasibility of setting up an automatic toll collection system for Tseung Kwan O – Lam Tin Tunnel as its design does not include a toll plaza due to geographical constraints. If demonstrated to be feasible, the Administration believes that the experience would be conducive to implementing similar systems at other government tolled tunnels and roads. On a member's concern about the incompatibility of Autotoll with the new automatic toll collection system, which might cause confusion to motorists, the Administration has advised that it is still studying which system should be adopted at Tseung Kwan O – Lam Tin Tunnel, as various types of automatic toll collection systems are already technologically mature and being used in different overseas cities. In considering the options, the Administration would take on board the views of LegCo Members, professional bodies and motorists. The Administration has assured members that it is mindful of the incompatibility concern.

Autotoll lanes at Cross-Harbour Tunnel

17. Hon Frankie YICK has suggested that the Administration should review the number of Autotoll lanes and their location at Cross-Harbour Tunnel. Out of the existing three Autotoll lanes, the two lanes on the left are mainly used by franchised buses and all other vehicles with Autotoll tags could only use the remaining one lane, causing serious traffic congestion at the toll plaza.

18. The Administration has advised that TD would regularly review the ratio between manual toll booths and Autotoll booths at government tolled tunnels and roads, taking into account the traffic volume and other relevant factors. For example, one manual toll booth at Shing Mun Tunnels was converted into an Autotoll booth in May 2016 after a review. TD is currently reviewing the situation at Cross-Harbour Tunnel and would take follow-up actions if necessary.

Recommendation

19. The Subcommittee has no objection to the Amendment Regulations and will not propose any amendment.

Advice sought

20. Members are invited to note the deliberations of the Subcommittee.

Council Business Division 4
Legislative Council Secretariat
26 April 2017

**Subcommittee on Three Regulations to Effect Toll Payment
through Electronic Payment Facility**

Membership list

Chairman Hon CHAN Hak-kan, BBS, JP

Members Hon Frankie YICK Chi-ming, JP
Hon YIU Si-wing, BBS
Hon Charles Peter MOK, JP
Hon CHAN Han-pan, JP
Hon Alice MAK Mei-kuen, BBS, JP
Dr Hon KWOK Ka-ki
Hon Andrew WAN Siu-kin
Dr Hon Junius HO Kwan-yiu, JP
Hon HO Kai-ming
Hon LAU Kwok-fan, MH
Hon Jeremy TAM Man-ho
Dr Hon YIU Chung-yim

(Total : 13 members)

Clerk Mr Anthony CHU

Legal adviser Miss Winnie LO