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**Public Works Subcommittee of the Finance Committee  
of the Legislative Council**

**Minutes of the 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting  
held at the Legislative Council Chamber  
on Wednesday, 3 November 1999, at 9:00 am**

**Members present:**

Hon HO Sai-chu, SBS, JP (Chairman)  
Ir Dr Hon Raymond HO Chung-tai, JP (Deputy Chairman)  
Hon James TIEN Pei-chun, JP  
Hon Edward HO Sing-tin, SBS, JP  
Hon LEE Wing-tat  
Hon Eric LI Ka-cheung, JP  
Hon CHAN Kam-lam  
Hon Gary CHENG Kai-nam, JP  
Hon SIN Chung-kai  
Hon WONG Yung-kan  
Hon Mrs Miriam LAU Kin-yee, JP  
Hon Andrew CHENG Kar-foo  
Hon LAW Chi-kwong, JP  
Dr Hon TANG Siu-tong, JP

**Members absent:**

Hon Kenneth TING Woo-shou, JP  
Hon Cyd HO Sau-lan  
Hon Fred LI Wah-ming, JP  
Prof Hon NG Ching-fai  
Hon James TO Kun-sun  
Hon CHEUNG Man-kwong  
Hon Christine LOH  
Hon CHAN Yuen-han  
Dr Hon LEONG Che-hung, JP

Hon LAU Kong-wah  
Hon Emily LAU Wai-hing, JP  
Hon TAM Yiu-chung, GBS, JP

**Public officers attending:**

Miss Elizabeth TSE	Deputy Secretary for the Treasury
Mr Patrick LAU, JP	Deputy Secretary for Planning, Environment and Lands (Lands and Planning)
Mrs Stella HUNG, JP	Deputy Secretary for Works (Programmes & Resources)
Mr Augustine LEE	Principal Assistant Secretary for the Treasury (Works)
Mr Rob LAW, JP	Director of Environmental Protection
Mr Ivan K B LEE	Principal Assistant Secretary for Education and Manpower
Mr M F KO	Chief Technical Advisor/Subvented Projects, Architectural Services Department
Dr L H LEES	Deputy Executive Director (Academic), Vocational Training Council
Dr Frederick K W MAK	Deputy Executive Director (Training and Development), Vocational Training Council
Mr Y M MO	Principal Education Officer, Academic Secretariat, Vocational Training Council
Dr John K W CHAN	Estate Officer, Vocational Training Council
Mr LEUNG Kwok-sun, JP	Director of Highways
Mr Roy TANG	Principal Assistant Secretary for Transport (3)
Mr L T MA	Government Engineer/Railway Development, Highways Department
Ms Shirley LAM	Principal Assistant Secretary for Transport (5)
Mr John CHAI	Deputy Project Manager/Major Works, Highways Department
Mrs Joanna KWOK	Chief Engineer/Strategic Road, Transport Department
Mr H K WONG	Director of Territory Development

**Clerk in attendance:**

Miss Polly YEUNG	Chief Assistant Secretary (1)3
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**Staff in attendance:**

Ms Pauline NG  
Ms Anita SIT

Assistant Secretary General 1  
Senior Assistant Secretary (1)8

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**New commitment for a subvented project**

**HEAD 708 - CAPITAL SUBVENTIONS AND MAJOR SYSTEMS AND EQUIPMENT**

**PWSC(1999-2000)66      11EM      Annex Building at the Shatin Campus of the Hong Kong Institute of Vocational Education**

In reply to Dr Raymond HO's enquiry on whether the estimate of \$15.5 million for the item "building services works" had included the provision of air-conditioning for the proposed annex building, the Chief Technical Advisor/Subvented Projects, Architectural Services Department confirmed that the estimate had taken into account the provision of air-conditioning as well as other building services including lifts, electrical installations, fire safety facilities etc. for the building.

2. Mr SIN Chung-kai commented that there would be considerable increase in the demand for trained information technology (IT) personnel in the foreseeable future and suggested that the proposed annex building should primarily be used to provide purpose-built facilities for IT and computing programmes. In response, the Deputy Executive Director (Academic), Vocational Training Council (VTC) and the Principal Assistant Secretary for Education and Manpower (PAS/EM) confirmed that the proposed annex building would mainly cater for design and IT related programmes. The building would comprise one multi-purpose design studio and 13 laboratories for IT facilities. With the construction of this annex building, the Hong Kong Institute of Vocational Education (IVE) could rationalize the provision of courses in its nine campus with a view to achieving higher efficiency. This might eventually result in relocation of some programmes from one campus to another.

3. Mr SIN Chung-kai expressed concern that the planned increase of 180 building full-time equivalent student numbers (BFTEs) for Hotel Service and Tourism (Leisure) Studies by year 2002/03 might not be in line with the future demand for trained personnel in the hotel and tourism sector, bearing in mind that the unemployment rate in the sector was relatively high at present. Mrs Miriam LAU also expressed concern about the employment opportunities for graduates from IVE's Leisure Studies.

4. In response, PAS/EM and the Deputy Executive Director (Training and Development), VTC advised that the overall employment situation for graduates from courses relating to the hospitality industry had been satisfactory. For example, the employment rate for the Hotel Training Centre graduates was above 80% in 1998, and above 95% in 1999 so far. In view of the past satisfactory results and the projected demand for trained personnel in this sector, VTC's planned net increase of 180 BFTEs for Leisure Studies by 2002/03 was considered reasonable.

5. The item was voted on and endorsed.

## **PUBLIC WORKS PROGRAMME**

### **Upgrading of projects to Category A**

#### **HEAD 706 - HIGHWAYS**

**PWSC(1999-2000)68      41TR      MTR Tseung Kwan O Extension -  
Essential public infrastructure  
works at Po Lam**

6. In reply to Dr Raymond Ho's enquiry on whether landscape treatment would be provided on the gabion wall facing King Lam Estate, DHy advised that some climbing plants would be planted along the gabion wall. He took note of Dr HO's comment that for aesthetic purposes, landscape treatment to gabion walls should be provided as far as practicable, and plain cement-sprayed surface should be avoided.

7. Mrs Miriam LAU sought elaboration on the estimate of \$10.1 million for landscape treatment works as the provision was the most expensive item of the project. DHy advised that landscape treatment would be provided to the whole embankment encasing the at-grade railway tunnels between Po Lam Station and Po Shun Road. About 280 trees and 98 000 bushes and plants would be provided on the embankment covering some 18 000 square metres. The estimated unit landscaping cost of about \$900 per square metre for the project was lower than the unit cost of \$1000 and \$2000 respectively for the landscaping projects in Tseung Kwan O and Kwun Tong.

8. On the provision of amenities on the embankment, Mrs Miriam LAU suggested that apart from trees and plants, other amenities such as jogging trails might also be included for the benefits of the residents nearby. Mr CHAN Kam-lam pointed out that there was a lack of open space and recreational amenities in King Lam Estate and the planned Sandwich Class Housing Development in Area 24. He remarked that the embankment would do much to improve the environment of these housing developments and

should be put to good uses. He also considered that due emphasis should be given to the aesthetic design of the facilities to be provided on the embankment. Mr SIN Chung-kai opined that as a cycle track and a few pedestrian walkways had already been planned alongside the embankment, the remaining space should be used for landscaping as far as possible. He considered an embankment with simply landscaping not cluttered by man-made structures would be more desirable. At the Chairman's request, DHy took note of members' comments and suggestions for consideration at the detailed design stage. He however pointed out that the provision of certain facilities might be constrained by the elongated shape of the embankment.

9. The item was voted on and endorsed.

## **PUBLIC WORKS PROGRAMME**

### **Upgrading of projects to Category A**

#### **HEAD 706 - HIGHWAYS**

##### **PWSC(1999-2000)67      519TH      Route 10 - North Lantau to Yuen Long Highway**

10. Members questioned the proposed alignment of the southern section of Route 10 and considered it necessary to examine the feasibility of providing more convenient connections with the existing Tuen Mun Road (TMR), Castle Peak Road (CPR) and the North Lantau Highway (NLH). Mr CHAN Kam-lam opined that Route 10 could serve effectively as an alternative road link between Lantau and the rest of the territory in the event of a closure of the Lantau Link, and provide alternative routes to TMR and CPR to alleviate traffic congestion on these roads. Given the scale of and financial commitments for the project, the Administration should examine thoroughly various alignment options, in particular its connection with other major roads with a view to optimizing the cost-effectiveness of the strategic route. Mr SIN Chung-kai shared Mr CHAN's view and commented that as Route 10 would be a strategic road link, good interface/connection with other road networks would provide significant benefits in transport terms.

11. In reply, the Director of Highways (DHy) advised that the Administration had examined various connection options, including linking TMR and CPR at Tsing Lung Tau and linking NLH at Kwai Shek. The Administration had decided not to pursue with these interchange options for the following reasons-

- (a) According to the traffic demand assessment conducted by the Transport Department and the consultants for the project, there would be limited traffic demand for these interchanges;
- (b) Significant engineering difficulties would be incurred due to the difference in height between Route 10 and the major roads concerned. Tsing Lung Bridge (TLB) of Route 10 would be about 70 metres above sea while any slip roads to be constructed to join TMR/CPR and NLH at Tsing Lung Tau and Kwai Shek would have gradients in excess of 1:9 which would be too steep for normal traffic;
- (c) The additional cost required for providing two slip roads with TMR at Tsing Lung Tau would be in the region of \$700 million which was considerably high;
- (d) Constructing these slip roads would require relocating the towers of TLB at sea. This had been objected by the Marine Department as the towers would encroach on the Ma Wan marine navigation channel; and
- (e) Route 10 would be a tolled road link and providing an interchange with NLH at Kwai Shek would require the construction of an additional toll plaza at Kwai Shek, which was technically not feasible.

DHy however advised that Route 10 would have connections with NLH at Yam O by a future Chok Ko Wan Link Road, and with TMR by the proposed So Kwun Wat Interchange and Siu Lam Link Road.

12. As regards possible engineering difficulties, Dr TANG Siu-tong enquired whether the experience gained in the existing link road constructed between Tsing Ma Bridge and Ma Wan could serve as a useful reference for link roads from TLB. In reply, DHy advised that when planning for the Lantau Link, a link road from Tsing Ma Bridge to Ma Wan, though found technically feasible, had not been included in the Lantau Link project on account of low traffic demand. The existing link road between Tsing Ma Bridge and Ma Wan was constructed by a private property developer at its own initiative and expense. The loading of the link road was entirely separated from that of Tsing Ma Bridge.

13. Members were not convinced and maintained that connection options with other strategic roads should be further examined in the proposed consultancy. Mr CHAN Kam-lam disputed the argument on the problem relating to collection of tolls. He pointed out that an additional toll plaza would not be necessary as the existing toll plaza at NLH for the Tsing Ma

Control Area could be used for the purpose. DHy advised that there were technical difficulties in connecting Route 10 to the existing toll plaza.

14. Mr SIN Chung-kai referred to the Government's assessment of a low demand for the interchanges at Tsing Lung Tau and requested detailed information on the forecast traffic demand and the technical options previously considered for members' assessment of the cost-effectiveness of various interchange options. He considered that if there was a need for the interchanges, the Administration would be required to explore means to resolve technical problems associated with the interchanges. He suggested that the proposed alignment of Route 10, in particular its connections with existing road networks, should be further discussed. He also remarked that he could not support the proposal in its present form.

15. In response, DHy advised that the option of constructing a slip road at Tsing Lung Tau to connect with TMR would require substantial slope cutting works along TMR and this would have an impact on the safety of the road during construction. He reiterated that technical difficulties and low traffic demand were the main reasons for not pursuing the interchange options at Tsing Lung Tau and Kwai Shek. Moreover, effective connections with TMR and NLH would be facilitated by the proposed So Kwun Wat Interchange/Siu Lam Link Road and Chok Ko Wan Link Road respectively.

16. On the traffic demand forecast for interchanges at Tsing Lung Tau, the Chief Engineer/Strategic Road, Transport Department (CE(SR)/TD) advised that even if Hong Kong's population were to grow to its highest forecast of nine million by year 2016, the forecast traffic volume on TMR at Tsing Lung Tau during peak hours would only be around 500 to 600 passenger car units per hour. She pointed out that given the design speed of 100 kilometres per hour for Route 10, it would only take two more minutes to drive from Route 10 to NLH through the future Chok Ko Wan Link Road, when compared with using a direct link to NLH.

17. Mr LEE Wing-tat expressed strong reservation on the traffic demand forecast, pointing out that the traffic on TMR remained heavy since the commissioning of Route 3. In the absence of proper connections with TMR and CPR at Tsing Lung Tau and with NLH at Kwai Shek, he cast serious doubt on whether Route 10 could be effectively utilized to serve the various transport objectives, such as servicing the projected 1.4 million population in North West New Territories (NWNT) and providing an alternative road link between Lantau and the rest of the territory as stated in the discussion paper. He echoed Mr SIN Chung-kai's view that detailed information on the interchange options should be provided to members. He could not accept that the interchange options would not be further examined in the proposed consultancy.

18. On the function of Route 10 to serve as a second road link to ensure access to/from Lantau, DHy advised that comprehensive operational arrangements were already in place to ensure that traffic flow on Lantau Link could be maintained at times of traffic accidents, inclement weather and other emergency scenarios. Even in the unlikely event of an entire closure of the Lantau Link, Route 10 could serve as a fallback road link to/from the airport as traffic on NLH could be diverted to Route 10 via the future Cho Ko Wan Link Road and similarly, the traffic on TMR and CPR could be diverted to Route 10 via the proposed So Kwun Wat Interchange and Siu Lam Link Road.

19. As regards the construction time-table, members noted that works for the southern and northern sections of Route 10 were scheduled for completion in mid 2007 and late 2007 respectively. Mrs Miriam LAU expressed concern about the time gap between the commissioning of Route 10 and the opening of the Disney Theme Park at Penny's Bay and the Shenzhen-Hong Kong Western Corridor in 2005. She was particularly concerned that in the event of a closure of the Lantau Link, no alternative road access to the Disney Theme Park would be available during this period. She urged that the construction of Route 10 be expedited.

20. Whilst agreeing that it was desirable to complete Route 10 by 2005, DHy nevertheless pointed out that the actual construction time was in fact only five years. Construction could only commence in 2002 at the earliest owing to the need to complete all the necessary procedures prior to commencement of construction. As such, the earliest commissioning time for Route 10 would be year 2007.

21. In this respect, Dr Raymond HO asked whether it was feasible to advance the detailed design of the northern section and to shorten the tendering exercise for TLB which took about one year to complete under the present schedule. In reply, DHy advised that as the works for the northern section were less complicated and would require only about three years, advancing its detailed design and construction would not help advancing completion of the whole project. He nevertheless assured members that the tendering exercise for TLB would be carried out as soon as practicable.

22. Mrs Miriam LAU also questioned why the project could not be expedited bearing in mind that the Tsing Ma Bridge project, the first of its kind in Hong Kong, had only taken seven years from inception to completion. She considered that given the experience gained in the Tsing Ma Bridge project, it should be possible to advance the completion of TLB.

23. In response, DHy clarified that some preparatory work for the Tsing Ma Bridge project had in fact been completed well before 1989 but the project had been held in abeyance for some years until 1989. He remarked that while experience and technological advancement might help shorten the construction

of TLB, there was a wider range of requisite pre-construction procedures which would take longer time to complete. For example, longer time had to be allowed for consultation, gazetting and resolving objections, land resumption and following environmental procedures. He stressed that the schedule for these procedures was already very tight for the present project.

24. As regards road access to the future Disney Theme Park, DHy informed members that an access road to the theme park would be provided at Yam O for traffic from NLH. Although the Lantau Link would be the only road access to the theme park before the commissioning of Route 10 in 2007, the Lantau Link had been designed to cater for traffic flow under different emergency scenarios. Moreover, access to the theme park would also be facilitated by the Airport Railway and ferry services. Regarding road links between Shenzhen and New Territories West, DHy advised that the future Deep Bay Link scheduled for completion in 2005 would serve as the major link road for traffic between Shenzhen and the New Territories and the urban areas via the Route 3 tunnels. The Deep Bay Link would be connected with Yuen Long Highway, the widening of which from dual 2-lane to dual 3-lane would be completed before 2005. The Administration envisaged that the aforesaid road network should be able to cope with the cross-boundary traffic to/from Shenzhen and New Territories West and the urban areas before the commissioning of Route 10.

25. Dr Raymond Ho considered the estimate of \$35 million for site investigation relatively high. He also enquired whether the wind tunnel tests for TLB would be conducted by local experts. In reply, DHy advised that as the southern section of Route 10, with which the present proposal was concerned, comprised complicated structures, including a long suspension bridge, a tunnel and elevated highways, the site investigation works involved would be relatively complicated and hence a higher estimate had been provided for the item. As regards the wind tunnel tests, he advised that tenders would be invited for the testing work. In the past, most of these tests had been conducted in the United Kingdom while the tests for a recent project were conducted in Canada. Appointment of local, Mainland or overseas institutes to conduct these tests would depend, inter alia, on whether these institutes possessed the necessary expertise.

26. Mrs Miriam LAU expressed grave reservation on the need for the estimated 355 man-months of professional staff and 336 man-months of technical staff for preparation of contract documents and assessment of tenders. In response, DHy explained that Route 10 was a very complicated and large scale project, which included the construction of TLB with a longer span than the existing Tsing Ma Bridge and involving similar structural complexity. He added that the total estimate of \$454.5 million for the proposed consultancy accounted for about 2.6% of the total project cost and this percentage was not exceptionally high for such a large scale and complicated project.

27. Dr TANG Siu-tong enquired whether Route 10 would serve as a major

route for cross-border freight traffic and if so, he was concerned that such freight traffic might be incompatible with the planned recreational facilities in Penny's Bay. In reply, CE(SR)/TD advised that the overall land-use plan for northeast Lantau would be re-examined having regard to the recent decision to build a Disney Theme Park at Penny's Bay. DHy added that the future Chok Ko Wan Link Road would be quite far away from the frontage road of the Disney Theme Park, and the traffic on the link road would not impact on the environment of the theme park.

Admin

28. Noting members' queries and concerns about the present proposal, the Chairman suggested and members agreed that the Administration should brief the relevant Panel(s) on the project at greater detail. The Deputy Secretary for the Treasury (DS/Tsy) agreed to withdraw the item for further discussion by the relevant Panel(s) with a view to re-submitting it for members' consideration at the next meeting on 17 November 1999.

Admin

29. Members further raised the following questions and the Chairman advised that the Administration should provide members with the relevant information at the Panel meeting -

- (a) Mr CHAN Kam-lam's enquiry about the respective projected traffic volume at the proposed Lam Tei Interchange, So Kwun Wat Interchange and Siu Lam Link Road, and the assessment of the traffic impact of Route 10 on the existing road network in NWNT;
- (b) Mr Edward HO's enquiry on whether other approaches such as the "design-and-build" approach or the "build-operate-transfer" arrangement had been considered for the project;
- (c) Dr Raymond HO's enquiry about the feasibility of simplifying/streamlining some of the pre-construction procedures so as to expedite the project;
- (d) Mr CHENG Kar-foo's request for information on the estimated cost implications of the interchange options at Tsing Lung Tau; and
- (e) Mr LEE Wing-tat's enquiry about the waste reduction strategy for this and future public works project.

Admin

30. Regarding Mr LEE Wing-tat's concern about the waste reduction strategy for future public works projects, DS/Tsy advised that relevant information on this aspect would be included in submissions to the Subcommittee from 1 December 1999 onwards.

31. The item was withdrawn by the Administration.

## **HEAD 707 - NEW TOWNS AND URBAN AREA DEVELOPMENT**

### **PWSC(1999-2000)69      696TH      Construction of roads and drains to serve the housing development in area 56, Tuen Mun**

32. Pointing out that many farmland sites in Area 56, Tuen Mun were currently used for open storage and parking, Mr LEE Wing-tat enquired whether the design of the proposed roads would take this development into account. The Director of Territory Development (DTD) confirmed that the design of the proposed roads had taken into account the container truck traffic already. DTD further added that the planned land use in the long term for many sites in the subject area would be for housing development. As such, many of these sites had already been zoned Comprehensive Development Areas (CDAs). The proposed roads and drainage facilities and the planned Private Sector Participation Scheme in the area might also induce more private housing development in the CDAs.

33. As to whether the expenditure on the proposed infrastructure facilities would be factored into the future land premium for the CDAs, DTD advised that the permissible use of most sites in the area was farmland under existing land leases. Changing the land use to residential or other uses would be subject to modification of lease conditions and, in some cases, the payment of a land premium.

34. Regarding the adequacy of the proposed roads to cope with the future development in the area, DTD confirmed that the designed capacity of the proposed roads had taken into account the projected traffic demand of the area upon full development.

35. In reply to Mr Edward HO's enquiry about archaeological survey, DTD advised that preliminary investigation at a site within the project area had indicated that the project area might contain remains of archaeological value which could be salvaged. An archaeological survey prior to the construction works would be conducted. DTD further clarified that while an archeological investigation had been conducted in the project area north of Tuen Mun Road, investigation for area south of Tuen Mun Road could only be carried out after completion of the land acquisition procedures. Hence, a provision had been included in this project for carrying out an archeological survey in the area. The survey and the associated rescue excavation works would take a few months to complete.

36. The item was voted on and endorsed.

Action

37. The Subcommittee was adjourned at 10:45 am.

Legislative Council Secretariat

24 November 1999