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

**Minutes of the 7th meeting
held at the Legislative Council Chamber
on Wednesday, 5 January 2000, at 10:45 am**

Members present:

Hon HO Sai-chu, SBS, JP (Chairman)
Ir Dr Hon Raymond HO Chung-tai, JP (Deputy Chairman)
Hon Kenneth TING Woo-shou, JP
Hon James TIEN Pei-chun, JP
Hon Cyd HO Sau-lan
Hon Edward HO Sing-tin, SBS, JP
Hon LEE Wing-tat
Hon Fred LI Wah-ming, JP
Hon James TO Kun-sun
Hon CHEUNG Man-kwong
Hon Christine LOH
Hon CHAN Yuen-han
Hon CHAN Kam-lam
Hon Gary CHENG Kai-nam, JP
Hon SIN Chung-kai
Hon LAU Kong-wah
Hon Mrs Miriam LAU Kin-yee, JP
Hon Emily LAU Wai-hing, JP
Hon LAW Chi-kwong, JP
Hon TAM Yiu-chung, GBS, JP

Members absent:

Hon Eric LI Ka-cheung, JP
Prof Hon NG Ching-fai
Dr Hon LEONG Che-hung, JP
Hon WONG Yung-kan
Hon Andrew CHENG Kar-foo
Dr Hon TANG Siu-tong, JP

Public officers attending:

Miss Elizabeth TSE	Deputy Secretary for the Treasury
Mr James HERD	Principal Assistant Secretary for the Treasury (Works)
Mr S S LEE, JP	Secretary for Works
Mr Gary YEUNG	Deputy Secretary for Planning and Lands
Mr Rob LAW, JP	Director of Environmental Protection
Ms Michelle LI	Principal Assistant Secretary for Education and Manpower
Mr Jack CHAN	Deputy Secretary-General, University Grants Committee
Mr M F KO	Chief Technical Advisor/Subvented Projects, Architectural Services Department
Mr Davey CHUNG	Principal Assistant Secretary for Transport
Mr LEUNG Kwok-sun, JP	Director of Highways
Mr L T MA	Government Engineer/Railway Development, Highways Department
Mr H W TIN	Principal Assistant Secretary for Housing (Project Management)
Mr H K WONG, JP	Director of Territory Development
Mr TSUI Wai	Chief Engineer (Sha Tin/Sai Kung), New Territories East Development Office, Territory Development Department
Mr Steve BARCLAY	Principal Assistant Secretary for Environment and Food
Mr K C NG	Chief Engineer (Tseung Kwan O), New Territories East Development Office, Territory Development Department
Mr David ENGLISH	Deputy Project Manager (Major Works), Highways Department
Mr C W KWAN	Chief Traffic Engineer/Hong Kong, Transport Department

Clerk in attendance:

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

Ms Pauline NG	Assistant Secretary General 1
Ms Anita SIT	Senior Assistant Secretary (1)8

PUBLIC WORKS PROGRAMME

New commitment for a subvented project

Head 708 - Capital Subventions and Major Systems and Equipment

PWSC(1999-2000)81 40EF Stabilization of slopes within the university campus, phase 6

On the scope of the slope stabilization works to be undertaken under the present proposal, the Chief Technical Advisor/Subvented Projects, Architectural Services Department (CTA/ArchSD) advised that stabilization works would be carried out at those areas marked red on the layout plans enclosed to the discussion paper. He explained that there were over 250 slopes within the campus of the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) and the present proposal covered 21 slopes which had been identified as sub-standard slopes by the Geotechnical Engineering Office (GEO) of the Civil Engineering Department in its preliminary studies for all pre-1977 man-made slopes in the territory. As regards the remaining slopes in CUHK, CTA/ArchSD advised that they were either natural slopes or man-made slopes the condition of which satisfied the slope safety requirements of GEO.

2. Mrs Miriam LAU asked why 1 000 cubic metres of construction and demolition material (C&DM) generated by the proposed works would have to be disposed of at landfills instead of being delivered to public filling areas. CTA/ArchSD explained that some 14 500 cubic metres of the C&DM generated by the proposed slope stabilization works would be delivered to public filling areas and used as fill material for reclamation. However, a small proportion of the C&DM, such as form works for retaining wall works, generated by the proposed works would not be suitable for use as fill material for reclamation and thus had to be disposed of at landfills. He however remarked that some of this C&DM might be reused in the subsequent phases of the slope stabilization works or in other construction sites within CUHK where practicable.

3. The item was voted on and endorsed.

Upgrading of projects to Category A

Head 706 - Highways

PWSC(1999-2000)82 37TR West Rail (phase 1) - essential public infrastructure works for Yuen Long section - remaining works

4. Mr Edward HO enquired about the main source of noise impact on the residential dwellings of Sun Yuen Long Centre (SYLC). He also enquired

whether other dwellings apart from Block 5 of SYLC would also be subject to excessive noise arising from the proposed facilities. In reply, the Director of Highways (DHy) explained that the excessive noise would come from the additional traffic on the widened section of Long Yat Road (LYR) east of SYLC. The two proposed public transport interchanges (PTIs), one under the Yuen Long Station of West Rail (phase 1) and the other south of SYLC, would generate increased traffic on this section of LYR. On the traffic noise impact of the section of LYR north of SYLC and the proposed PTI south of SYLC, the Government Engineer/Railway Development, Highways Department (GE/HyD) advised that this section of LYR would be closed and would only be used as an emergency access for the Yuen Long Station upon completion of the construction of Road L2. He also confirmed that according to the noise impact assessment of the Environment Protection Department, only those dwellings in Block 5 of SYLC facing the widened section of LYR and Castle Peak Road would be subject to noise above the prescribed limit.

5. Mr TAM Yiu-chung enquired about the level of traffic noise received at the affected dwellings of Block 5 of SYLC after the widening of LYR and the extent to which the provision of air-conditioning with window insulation could mitigate the noise impact. In reply, DHy advised that the noise level at those dwellings would be in the range of 76 to 78 decibels. As a result of the mitigation measures, the noise level would be reduced to about 70 decibels. Mr TAM remained concerned that the affected dwellings would still be subject to a high noise impact of 70 decibels after the provision of window insulation.

6. In reply to Mrs Miriam LAU's enquiry about the feasibility of providing direct mitigation measures such as noise barriers at the section of LYR proposed to be widened, GE/HyD explained that as Block 5 of SYLC was very close to the said section of LYR and the building was high-rise, installation of full enclosure on the road would be necessary if the noise impact was to be effectively abated. However, it would not be feasible to fully enclose the road as this would hinder direct emergency vehicle access to the dwellings facing the road.

7. In response to Mrs Miriam LAU's concern on whether affected residents of SYLC had been consulted on the proposed project works, GE/HyD said that although residents of Block 5 of SYLC had not been consulted directly, other relevant district organizations including the Yuen Long Provisional District Board, the relevant rural committees and area committees had been consulted on the proposed works and the provision of indirect noise mitigation measures. He pointed out that in accordance with the statutory environment impact assessment (EIA) procedures, the relevant EIA report had been displayed at various locations including the Yuen Long District Office and uploaded onto the Internet for public inspection. No written view on the EIA report had been received from the public.

8. Mrs Miriam LAU opined that the Administration should initiate direct consultation with the affected residents of SYLC on the proposed works and environmental mitigation measures as these residents were directly affected but might not be aware of the proposed works and the effects on them notwithstanding the consultation undertaken with various district organizations. Mr Edward HO and Miss Emily LAU further echoed Mrs LAU's view. Miss Emily LAU further requested the Administration to report on the consultation with the affected residents to the Subcommittee in due course. She also urged the Administration to consider making it a standard practice to initiate early direct consultation during the planning stage with those people who were directly affected by public works projects, and include information on the consultation results in the relevant funding submissions.

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9. In response, the Secretary for Works (S for W) advised that there were already comprehensive guidelines on public consultation in connection with public works projects. In brief, the Government would consult the public through various district organizations including the relevant district council(s), rural committee(s) and area committee(s). Besides, the proposed project works would be gazetted under the relevant ordinance(s), and the relevant EIA report would be displayed at various locations for public inspection. He agreed in principle that if a fairly large number of people within a locality were directly affected by a project, the Administration should, as far as practicable, initiate direct consultation with these people. He agreed that where such consultation had been undertaken, the consultation results would be included in the relevant funding submissions. He also agreed to follow up on members' request for consultation with the affected residents for the present proposal.

10. As regards consultation with the residents of SYLC directly affected by the proposed roadworks, DHy emphasized that under the relevant policy guidelines, the Project Engineer was required to exhaust all possible direct measures to mitigate operational traffic noise impact; provision of air-conditioning with window insulation as a mitigation measure was the last resort and had to be approved by Exco when no direct mitigation measure was found feasible. He therefore pointed out that while the Administration was prepared to consult the affected residents and note their views, it should also be noted that provision of air-conditioning with window insulation was the only feasible mitigation measure in this case.

11. In this connection, the Chairman commented that it might be in the interest of the community at large to pursue a certain project, but as a matter of principle, affected residents should be given early notice of the proposed works and mitigation measures and should also be given an opportunity to raise objection, if any. Miss Emily LAU reiterated her view that direct consultation with people affected by public works was of paramount importance in an open society where members of the public should have the rights to know and make known their views when their well-being was directly affected. While she appreciated the practical difficulties which might be encountered by the

executive departments, she maintained her view that the Administration should initiate direct consultation with affected persons at an early planning stage so that they had early opportunities to raise objections and make suggestions on mitigation measures and compensation matters.

12. As far as the present proposal was concerned, Mr TAM Yiu-chung said that he had already informed the owners' committee of SYLC of the proposed works and the proposed installation of window insulation and air-conditioners to abate traffic noise impact. However, the residents were not yet aware of the estimated traffic noise level with and without window insulation. Mr TAM opined that for future projects which would affect a number of dwellings in a locality, it would be useful to also consult the relevant owners' committee(s) or mutual aid committee(s) in addition to the usual consultation with district organizations. The results of the consultation with affected dwellings should be reported in the relevant funding submissions.

13. Miss Cyd HO also expressed concern about the existing consultation arrangements. She conveyed the discontent recently expressed by some members of Sha Tin District Council that district council members had been given only two weeks to collect views from residents on a public works project, and the district council members had found it difficult to make the necessary consultation arrangements within such a short period. Miss HO shared the view that as a standard practice, the Administration should initiate direct consultation with those people who were directly affected by public works projects.

14. Taking note of members' comments and suggestions, S for W suggested that as the extent of public consultation on public works projects involved policy issues, the subject should best be pursued at the relevant Panel(s) if members so wished. While he concurred that in principle, direct consultation with the affected people was warranted when quite a large number of people might be affected by a project, he stressed that it would not be practicable to mandate consultation with all affected people for every project, and that in some cases, it would not be feasible to alter the proposed design or implement alternative mitigation measures in connection with the project concerned.

15. In view of members' concern and the Administration's explanation, the Chairman advised that the subject of consultation mechanism should be referred to the relevant Panel(s) for further discussion. He also requested the Administration to take note of Miss Cyd HO's comment about the short consultation period allowed for district council members to consult their constituencies.

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16. Mr LAW Chi-kwong enquired whether the Administration had considered providing financial incentives to encourage contractors to minimize the generation of construction and demolition waste (C&DW) or imposing penalties for excessive production of C&DW. In reply, DHy said that under the construction contract in question, the contractor would be required to

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submit a waste management plan with appropriate measures to reduce C&DW to the Project Engineer for approval. He pointed out that it would be difficult to prescribe a quantity threshold of C&DW in construction contracts and there was no plan at present to use incentives or penalties to control the generation of C&DW in public works projects. Mr LAW opined that for effective implementation of waste reduction measures in public works projects, the Administration should consider incorporating appropriate award or penalty terms in the relevant construction contracts.

Admin 17. Miss Emily LAU expressed concern about tree planting and landscaping in connection with the proposed works and other public works projects. She requested the Administration to include information, preferably with cost implications, on tree planting and landscaping in future submissions. In response, S for W advised that under the existing policy, tree-planting and landscaping would be considered for all major development and road projects. He agreed to consider Miss LAU's suggestion in conjunction with the Finance Bureau.

Admin 18. Mr TAM Yiu-chung conveyed the concern of some residents of SYLC about the future access to the carpark in SYLC upon the closure of the section of LYR north of SYLC. He relayed the residents' suggestion that in future, use of the said section of LYR by residents of SYLC be maintained or appropriate traffic signages/markings be provided on Road L2 to facilitate unimpeded access to SYLC. In response, GE/HyD advised that under the present design, residents of SYLC would need to travel a slightly longer distance to reach the carpark of SYLC. He would take up with the Transport Department and the Kowloon Canton Railway Corporation in the detailed design to provide appropriate traffic signages/markings to ensure unimpeded access to SYLC.

19. On Mr LEE Wing-tat's concern about the availability of pedestrian access facilities in the locality in question, GE/HyD advised that at present, there were already a footbridge linking SYLC with the proposed PTI to the south of SYLC and a station link bridge connecting the Yuen Long Station with SYLC. Furthermore, there would be a footbridge across Road L2 to connect the station with Yuen Long Kau Hui. As regards pedestrian access between the site "CDA 15" and Yuen Long Station/SYLC, GE/HyD advised that the layout plan for "CDA 15" had not yet been confirmed as negotiation on the land lease was still underway.

20. The item was voted on and endorsed.

PWSC(1999-2000)83 177CL Sha Tin New Town – remaining engineering works

21. Miss Cyd HO and Mr LAU Kong-wah expressed concern about further development in Sha Tin and the traffic and environmental impacts such development would bring about. Noting from the discussion paper that the project sites in question had been designated for residential development as early as 1978, Miss Cyd HO enquired whether there were other plans for residential development in Sha Tin in the pipeline but which had not been revealed.

22. Mr LAU Kong-wah commented that as a result of quite a number of new housing developments in Sha Tin over the past few years, some areas in the district were now characterized by dense high-rise residential blocks. He specifically pointed out that the housing development underway in the Yuen Chau Kok area was of very high density and had significantly affected the overall environment of the area. In this connection, he requested the Administration to provide further information on the development plans for the Sha Tin district.

23. In response, the Director of Territory Development (DTD) advised that the overall development of Sha Tin had reached a mature stage. In planning for new housing developments, the Administration must first ensure that the basic infrastructure facilities including traffic, sewage treatment and water supplies facilities etc. in the area(s) concerned could support the additional population intake. He said that a recent territorial development study had confirmed the feasibility of the two proposed developments in Shui Chuen O and Kau To which would accommodate a population of 17 000 and 4 750 respectively.

24. As regards further development in Sha Tin, DTD advised that all development plans for the district were based on the approved Sha Tin Outline Zoning Plan (OZP), according to which there would be no further large scale housing development. As far as he knew, there was no plan to introduce major changes to the approved OZP. He however cautioned that changes to the approved OZP could not be ruled out in view of the projected population growth in Hong Kong in the foreseeable future.

25. At the requests of Mr LAU Kong-wah and Miss Cyd HO, DTD agreed to provide information on the plot ratios of the housing developments in Yuen Chow Kok area, as well as information on other planned housing developments in Sha Tin.

26. In response to Mr LAU Kong-wah's enquiry about the density of the proposed developments in Areas 52 and 56A, DTD advised that the plot ratios of the developments would be lower than the average plot ratio of 5 of the existing housing developments in Sha Tin. The public housing development in Area 52 would achieve a plot ratio not exceeding 5, while the plot ratios of

the private housing developments in the area would be in the range of 0.75 to 4 and the average would be 2.5. The plot ratios of the developments in Area 56A would be between 0.9 and 1.5. DTD concluded that given the relatively low planned plot ratios for these areas, a pleasant and spacious environment could be achieved.

27. Referring to the concern of the Provisional Sha Tin District Board on whether the existing transport infrastructure in Sha Tin could accommodate the additional population of the proposed developments, Miss Emily LAU sought elaboration on the Administration's claim that the proposed developments would not generate any adverse traffic demand. In response, DTD advised that according to the preliminary traffic assessment, certain roads and road junctions in the vicinity of the proposed developments would require improvements. Detail design of the improvements would be drawn up under the proposed consultancy. Upon implementation of these traffic improvements, the overall traffic network of the district would be able to cope with the additional traffic demand.

28. On Miss Emily LAU's concern about tree-planting and landscaping in the proposed developments, DTD advised that the subject sites had been used as quarries and were rather barren at present. As in the case of other new development areas, landscaping would be a major aspect of the detailed design for the site formation and infrastructural works under the present proposal. He assured members that upon full development, the areas would be much greener than at present. In reply to Miss Cyd HO's enquiry about restoration of woodland and shrubland as mentioned in the discussion paper, DTD clarified that there had been some woodland and shrubland in the subject sites before they were used as quarries. The current plan was to restore the previous woodland and shrubland by replanting on the barren hill slopes at the sites.

29. The item was voted on and endorsed.

Head 707 - New Towns and Urban Area Development

PWSC(1999-2000)84 324CL Tseung Kwan O development, phase 3 - remaining engineering works

30. Noting that 20 hectares of land would be reclaimed for housing and related purposes, Miss Cyd HO enquired about the measures to control soil settlement and whether there was a mechanism to ensure that soil settlement of a reclamation site had reached a level suitable for construction thereon when the site was delivered for development purposes. In response, DTD advised that in order to expedite soil settlement at the proposed reclamation, vertical drains would be installed into the seabed and surcharge mounds would be constructed in the course of the reclamation works. He remarked that given the current knowledge and technologies in relation to reclamation, possible

problems associated with soil settlement could be effectively tackled. He explained that so long as buildings on reclamation sites were constructed on piles founded on the bedrock level and the residual soil settlement had been duly taken into account in the design and construction process, soil settlement per se would not cause structural problems to buildings or to underground utilities. He also confirmed that it was acceptable to deliver a reclamation site for development purposes after one year's completion of the reclamation works concerned, as in the case of the present proposal. As regards the mechanism for land delivery, DTD advised that upon completion of reclamation works, the reclaimed land would be handed to the Lands Department for development purposes in accordance with established procedures.

31. Dr Raymond HO pointed out that for most housing developments of the Housing Authority and for some private developments, the piling foundations of buildings might not reach the bedrock level. He suggested that the Administration should provide detailed information on the soil settlement situation to the developer concerned when the reclaimed site was delivered. DTD confirmed that the Administration was prepared to provide such information upon request by developers.

32. Pointing out that unusual soil settlement at several housing estates in Tseung Kwan O (TKO) had already aroused grave public concern and given the close proximity of the proposed reclamation to the Mass Transit Railway TKO Extension, Miss Emily LAU questioned whether the Administration was in a position to gauge the possible effects of the railway extension works on the soil settlement situation at the proposed reclamation. In response, DTD reaffirmed the Administration's view that soil settlement would not pose insurmountable problems to the planned developments in TKO. The Administration maintained close liaison with the Mass Transit Railway Corporation regarding railway construction works in TKO and so far, there were no signs that the works would affect the existing and planned developments in the vicinity. As regards the problems associated with unusual soil settlement found in a few housing developments in TKO, he informed members that the Administration would complete the relevant investigation report within the next few months.

33. Mr LAU Kong-wah considered that the results of the investigation into the unusual soil settlement situation in TKO would have important bearing on the present proposal. He requested the Administration to present the investigation report to the Sai Kung District Council (SKDC) and solicit the council's views on the present proposal in the light of the investigation results. In response, DTD confirmed that the Administration would present the investigation report to the relevant LegCo Panel and SKDC.

34. In reply to Dr Raymond HO's enquiry about the use of public fill, DTD confirmed that only public fill would be used for the proposed 20 hectares of reclamation.

35. Noting that the environmental impact assessment (EIA) for the proposed works had been completed in 1990 in connection with the overall TKO New Town reclamation before the enactment of the EIA Ordinance (EIAO), Mr Edward HO sought confirmation from the Administration that the EIA work undertaken for the proposed works was in compliance with the relevant requirements currently in force under the EIAO. In reply, DEP advised that under the EIAO, projects that had been gazetted and authorized under a number of ordinances in force prior to the implementation of the EIAO would be exempted from the EIA procedures prescribed in the EIAO. As the proposed works had been authorized under the Foreshore and Seabed (Reclamation) Ordinance in February 1998, it was exempted under the EIAO. He pointed out that notwithstanding the exemption, the Environmental Protection Department had completed two environmental reviews in February 1997 and in July 1999 which reconfirmed the previous findings that the proposed works would not have long-term adverse environmental impacts.

36. On Mr Edward HO's concern about possible adverse impact of the future discharge from the proposed box culverts on seawater quality, DTD confirmed that the box culverts would be used for carrying stormwater and therefore the discharge would not cause adverse impact on seawater.

37. In reply to Miss Emily LAU's enquiry on whether landscape treatment would be provided in connection with the proposed works, DTD advised that provision of landscape treatment to the infrastructure facilities including roads to be constructed on the subject site would be based on the existing planning standards for new towns. Landscaped areas would also be provided in the future developments on the site.

38. Noting from the Administration that the plot ratios of the future developments on the subject site would be between 6 to 6.5, in line with the plot ratio range applicable to the existing housing developments in TKO, Miss Emily LAU expressed concern that the relatively high plot ratios of the developments in TKO might give an impression that different planning standards were applied for different districts and TKO was being unfairly treated in comparison with other new towns in the territory.

39. In response, DTD said that given the strong housing demand, lowering the plot ratios of the housing developments in TKO would necessitate the formation or allocation of land for housing purposes in other areas to make up for the reduced production of housing flats. He added that the relevant studies had confirmed that the existing and planned infrastructure facilities of the new town could support the proposed development in TKO. Indeed, the Administration was considering further reclamation at the TKO Bay to provide more land for development purposes. He stressed that any further development in TKO must satisfy the premise that the development could be accommodated by the existing or planned infrastructure facilities and the resultant living environment could satisfy the prevailing planning standards and requirements.

40. Notwithstanding the Administration's explanation, Miss Emily LAU urged the Administration to critically review the development plans for TKO in the light of the need for sustainable development and a quality living environment. Despite the presence of dense concrete high-rise buildings, she stressed that the Administration should explore ways to provide more green areas and amenities to improve the environment of the new town.

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41. In response, the Deputy Secretary for Planning Lands (DS/PL) advised that in territorial development planning, it was necessary to strike a balance between development and a quality living environment. He confirmed that the long-term development of the territory would be geared towards sustainable development. He nevertheless remarked that the living environment should not be judged only on the plot ratio aspect; other aspects such as the adequacy of infrastructure facilities should also be taken into account. DTD added that TKO was under rapid development currently and many planned amenity projects had not been fully implemented. Upon completion of these projects, the overall environment of TKO would be significantly improved despite its population density. At Miss Emily LAU's request, DTD agreed that where appropriate, information on tree planting and landscaping be included in future submissions.

42. The item was voted on and endorsed.

Head 711 - Housing

PWSC(1999-2000)85 642TH Improvement to Island Eastern Corridor section between North Point Interchange and Sai Wan Ho

43. Mr Gary CHENG Kai-nam enquired whether there was a comprehensive transport plan for the northern part of Hong Kong Island and how the proposed improvements to the section of Island Eastern Corridor (IEC) between North Point Interchange and Sai Wan Ho under the present proposal would tie in with such a plan. He was particularly concerned that while the proposed improvements might solve the traffic congestion problem on IEC, the increased traffic brought about by the improvements would cause bottlenecks in other areas on northern Hong Kong Island.

44. The Chief Traffic Engineer/Hong Kong, Transport Department (CTE/TD) advised that the Third Comprehensive Transport Study (CTS-3) which sought to formulate transport strategies for the whole territory up to 2016 had recently been completed. In the study, the traffic demand in northern Hong Kong Island had been examined and there were recommendations on improvements to the existing road networks and a new railway to meet the projected traffic demand. The road improvements under the present proposal had been planned at an earlier stage to relieve projected

traffic congestion and address the long-standing traffic safety problem caused by heavy weaving and merging activities on the section of IEC between North Point and Sai Wan Ho. He confirmed that according to the relevant traffic assessment, the existing road networks between Central and Wanchai had adequate capacity to cater for the traffic to and from IEC upon completion of the proposed improvement works in late 2003. He also remarked that the proposed improvements on IEC per se would not necessarily bring about more road traffic onto northern Hong Kong Island, but it was estimated the traffic flows on the IEC would increase significantly upon completion of the Central-Wan Chai Bypass and Island Eastern Corridor Link, which were under planning and were scheduled for completion in year 2010.

45. Noting that the projected volume to capacity ratios in year 2011 at critical sections of IEC with improvements would be as high as 0.92 and 0.88 for westbound and eastbound traffic respectively, Mrs Miriam LAU enquired whether the traffic projection had taken into account the scheduled completion of the Central-Wan Chai Bypass in year 2010 and whether there were further plans to increase the capacity of IEC to cope with further traffic increase beyond 2011.

46. In reply, CTE/TD confirmed that the commissioning of the Central-Wan Chai Bypass in year 2010 had been assumed in projecting the traffic flows on IEC. As regards the need for further improvements to IEC, he advised that a fourth cross harbour tunnel had been recommended in the CTS-3. If the tunnel project was implemented, further increase in traffic flows on IEC after completion of the tunnel would be limited. Hence, other than the proposed improvements, there was no further plan at this stage to increase the capacity of IEC between North Point and Sai Wan Ho.

47. On whether any traffic lanes on IEC would be closed during the construction works, CTE/TD confirmed that the existing number of traffic lanes on IEC would be maintained throughout the construction period, but the width of the traffic lanes at the section where works were underway would be reduced to provide some space for the construction works. To ensure traffic safety, a lower speed limit would be applied to the section concerned during the construction period.

48. Referring to the section plans in Enclosure 1 to the discussion paper, Mr Edward HO enquired about the reasons for installing 5-metre inverted-L shaped noise barriers at the section along Taikoo Shing, whereas semi-enclosure was proposed for installation at the section adjacent to the Quarry Bay Park. In reply, DHy advised that according to the relevant noise impact assessment, installation of a 5-metre inverted-L shaped noise barrier would be sufficient to reduce the traffic noise impact on the residential dwellings of Taikoo Shing to an acceptable level. As regards the proposed semi-enclosure, he explained that its main purpose was to mitigate air pollution rather than traffic noise of the IEC on the adjacent recreational facilities at Quarry Bay Park.

49. Mr Edward HO observed that the section of IEC along Taikoo Shing was quite close to the residential buildings of Taikoo Shing and he expressed doubt on the effectiveness of the proposed 5-metre inverted-L shaped noise barrier in abating the traffic noise impact on the upper storeys of the buildings given the large traffic volume on IEC. He also questioned whether the proposed noise barrier was intended to abate only the additional traffic noise impact on Taikoo Shing brought about by the proposed improvements, and if the answer was affirmative, whether this was a standard arrangement for improvement projects.

50. In reply, DEP advised that the existing policy on mitigating excessive traffic noise, as laid down by the Executive Council, was to provide direct technical remedies in the form of barriers or enclosures when undertaking new road projects or making major alterations to existing roads. He confirmed that the proposed noise barrier was designed to deal with the additional noise impact generated from the proposed improvements. He also informed members that the issue of retrofitting noise barriers at existing roads which were causing excessive noise impact was under consideration within the Administration.

51. On the justification for the proposed provision of air-conditioning with window insulation for the staff quarters in the North Point Fire Services Compound, DHy explained that upon completion of the proposed improvements, the traffic volume on the section of IEC adjacent to the staff quarters would increase by 80% to 85% as compared to some 40% increase on the section along Taikoo Shing. Based on this traffic projection, it was estimated that nine dwellings of the staff quarters would be subject to excessive noise impact. Installation of noise barrier on the section of IEC adjacent to the staff quarters was not feasible as the existing IEC did not have sufficient loading capacity, whereas erecting a noise barrier at the new carriageway was also not feasible as the new carriageway would be connected with the existing carriageway to provide five consecutive eastbound lanes.

52. Noting that the proposed roadworks would require permanent alienation of 7 198 square metres of land at the existing Quarry Bay Park and the plan was to re-provision recreational facilities along the existing promenade at the nearby Aldrich Bay Reclamation, Mr Gary CHENG Kai-nam and Miss Emily LAU expressed concern that the re-provisioning would not serve the compensatory purpose effectively as the re-provisioned area was quite far away from the existing Quarry Bay Park.

53. In response, DHy advised that the proposed addition of one westbound lane on IEC would require alienation of 7198 square metres of land at the existing Quarry Bay Park. As a compensatory measure, some 17 000 square metres of land at the Aldrich Bay Reclamation would be allocated for recreational purposes. He further advised that all the existing facilities and ball courts at Quarry Bay Park would remain, although about 280 trees grown on the portion of land to be alienated would be removed and there would be

less open space. As regards the facility provision at the Aldrich Bay Reclamation, DHy advised that there would be two basketball courts, children playgrounds, a Tai Chi garden and a very long promenade along the coast. About 660 trees would be planted in this area. Miss Emily LAU commented that as the Aldrich Bay Reclamation would be quite far away from the existing Quarry Bay Park, it was not appropriate to regard the provision of recreational facilities at Aldrich Bay Reclamation as a compensation for the loss of recreation facilities at the existing Quarry Bay Park.

54. Miss Emily LAU expressed concern on whether the proposed roadworks under the present proposal had taken into account the concept of sustainable development. In response, DS/PL pointed out that the proposed improvements mainly sought to address the traffic problems on a certain section of the IEC, and thus were localized in scope and subject to various constraints of the existing developments in the locality. He further advised that the Administration was undertaking public consultation on the strategies on sustainable development and he believed that the concept of sustainable development would be manifested in due course in territorial planning and public works projects.

55. Miss Emily LAU stated her view that the concept of sustainable development should be seriously applied to public works projects as far as possible. She suggested that similar to the existing presentation on "environmental implications", an analysis of the impacts of a project and the proposed mitigation measures in terms of sustainable development should be included in future submissions on public works. The Chairman requested the Administration to take note of Miss LAU's concern and suggestion for consideration.

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56. The item was voted on and endorsed. Miss Emily LAU stated her reservation on the proposal on account that the proposed works had not addressed the needs for sustainable development.

57. The Subcommittee was adjourned at 12:38 pm.