

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(1)2072/99-00

(These minutes have been seen
by the Administration and
cleared with the Chairman)

Ref : CB1/PL/TP/1

**Legislative Council
Panel on Transport**

**Minutes of Meeting held on
Friday, 26 May 2000, at 10:45 am
in Conference Room A of the Legislative Council Building**

Members present : Hon Mrs Miriam LAU Kin-ye, JP (Chairman)
Hon Albert HO Chun-yan
Hon LEE Wing-tat
Hon LEE Kai-ming, SBS, JP
Hon Mrs Selina CHOW LIANG Shuk-ye, JP
Hon CHAN Wing-chan
Hon CHAN Kam-lam
Hon Andrew CHENG Kar-foo
Hon TAM Yiu-chung, GBS, JP
Hon FUNG Chi-kin

Non-Panel member attending : Hon WONG Yung-kan

Members absent : Hon LAU Kong-wah (Deputy Chairman)
Hon Edward HO Sing-tin, SBS, JP
Ir Dr Hon Raymond HO Chung-tai, JP
Hon Andrew WONG Wang-fat, JP
Hon LAU Chin-shek, JP
Dr Hon TANG Siu-tong, JP

**Public officers
attending**

: Agenda Item IV

Transport Bureau

Mr Kevin HO
Secretary for Transport (Atg.)

Ms Shirley LAM
Principal Assistant Secretary for Transport (5)

Transport Department

Mr Robert FOOTMAN
Commissioner for Transport

Mr LEE Yan-ming
Chief Traffic Engineer (NT West)

Highways Department

Mr K S LEUNG
Director of Highways

Mr LI Wai
Senior Engineer

Agenda Item V

Transport Bureau

Mr Kevin HO
Secretary for Transport (Atg.)

Ms Linda LAI
Deputy Secretary for Transport

Transport Department

Mr Robert FOOTMAN
Commissioner for Transport

Mr S M LI
Assistant Commissioner for Transport

Miss LAW Fung-ping

Principal Transport Officer/Bus Development

Agenda Item VI

Transport Bureau

Mr Kevin HO
Secretary for Transport (Atg.)

Ms Linda LAI
Deputy Secretary for Transport

Mr Davey CHUNG
Principal Assistant Secretary for Transport (4)

Attendance by invitation : Agenda Item VI

Kowloon-Canton Railway Corporation

Mr Y T LI
Deputy Director, East Rail

Clerk in attendance : Mr Andy LAU
Chief Assistant Secretary (1)2

Staff in attendance : Ms Alice AU
Senior Assistant Secretary (1)5

Action

I Confirmation of minutes and matters arising

- (LC Paper No. CB(1)1663/99-00 - Minutes of meeting held on 28 April 2000; and
LC Paper No. CB(1)1664/99-00 - Draft Panel report to be presented to Council)

The minutes of meeting held on 28 April 2000 were confirmed.

2. Members endorsed the draft Panel report to be presented to the Legislative Council meeting on 21 June 2000.

II Information papers issued since last meeting

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| (LC Paper No. CB(1)1528/99-00 | - 643TH - Trunk Road T7 in Ma On Shan; |
| LC Paper No. CB(1)1625/99-00 | - Route 5 between Shek Wai Kok and Chai Wan Kok; and |
| LC Paper No. CB(1)1656/99-00 | - Passenger Opinion Survey on Outlying Island Ferry Services) |

3. Members noted the information papers issued since last meeting.

III Items for discussion at the next meeting scheduled for 16 June 2000

- (LC Paper No. CB(1)1665/99-00(01) - List of outstanding items; and
LC Paper No. CB(1)1665/99-00(02) - List of follow-up actions)

4. The Chairman reminded members that the next meeting of the Panel would be held on Friday, 16 June 2000 at 10:45 am. At the suggestion of the Chairman, members went through the list of outstanding items. Members noted that as the review on the bus fare determination mechanism had yet to be completed by the Administration, the related item on "Bus fare determination mechanism" would not be ready for discussion within this term. Members also agreed to delete the items on "Development of infrastructures to tie in with housing projects", "Exempted accessory under the Motor Vehicles (First Registration Tax) Ordinance (Cap. 330)" and "Airport Express and Tung Chung Line" from the list of outstanding items. As regards the item on "Traffic noise from roads", members noted that the matter of noise pollution would be discussed at the meeting of the Panel on Environmental Affairs to be held on 2 June 2000 and they agreed that interested members of the Transport Panel could attend the meeting to raise their concerns. Thus the item would also be deleted from the list of outstanding items. Members also agreed to request the Administration to provide information papers regarding the latest position about the items on "Safety measures for pedestrians" and "Multi-storey public car park at Stanley Market".

(Post-meeting note: Progress reports provided by the Administration on the construction of the multi-storey public carpark in Stanley and the measures to enhance pedestrian safety were circulated to members vide LC Paper Nos. CB(1)1865/99-00 and CB(1)1866/99-00 respectively.)

5. Members agreed to discuss the following items at the next meeting:
- (a) Revision of Government fees and charges on transport-related items;
 - (b) Operation of non-franchised bus services; and
 - (c) Regulatory of traffic movements during road openings.

(Post-meeting note: An additional item on "Fire incident at the Cross Harbour Tunnel on 29 May 2000" had subsequently been included in the agenda for the meeting on 16 June 2000. Due to the heavy agenda, the meeting was advanced to start at 10:30 am.)

6. At the Chairman's further suggestion, members agreed that the Panel should keep in view the Report of the Second Railway Development Study (RDS-2) to be provided by the Administration. The Chairman recapitulated that at the special meeting held on the previous day to discuss the Railway Development Strategy 2000, she had expressed serious concern on behalf of the Panel about the ways in which the Administration handled the subject matter and she pointed out that the Administration should consult the Panel well in advance before they formulated the 2000 Strategy. Mr CHENG Kar-foo said that the Chairman had his support in this matter and she should also relay the concern of the Panel to the Finance Committee when the funding proposal on the Ma On Shan to Tai Wai Rail Link and the extension of the Kowloon-Canton Railway from Hung Hom to Tsim Sha Tsui was discussed.

(Post-meeting note: The Executive Summary of the RDS-2 Study Report was subsequently circulated to members vide LC Paper Nos. CB(1)1827/99-00 and CB(1)1828/99-00.)

IV Lantau North-South Link Road between Tai Ho Wan and Mui Wo

(LC Paper No. CB(1)1665/99-00(03) - Joint submission from the Deputy Chairman of the Islands District Council and other local organizations (in Chinese version only); and

LC Paper No. CB(1)1665/99-00(04) - Information paper provided by the Administration)

7. The Chairman drew members' attention to the joint submission from the Deputy Chairman of the Islands District Council and other local organizations (LC Paper No. CB(1)1665/99-00(03)) urging for the early provision of a new North-South Link Road between Tai Ho Wan and Mui Wo (the project).

8. At the invitation of the Chairman, the Principal Assistant Secretary for Transport (5) (PAS for T(5)) briefed members on the latest position of the project as set out in the paper provided by the Administration (LC Paper No. CB(1)1665/99-00(04)).

9. Given the safety and capacity problems associated with the operation of Tung Chung Road, members were generally in support of the early construction of the proposed project, considering particularly the potential danger to be caused by landslides in rainy seasons. However, they were also aware that the final Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Report submitted by the Highways Department (HyD) in November 1999 was rejected by the Director of Environmental Protection (DEP) on the grounds

that many potentially serious adverse environmental issues had not been resolved. They pointed out that there was a need to strike a proper balance between the need to ensure timely provision of transport infrastructure to cope with the transport needs of local residents and the overall development of Lantau on one hand and to preserve the last natural scenery of Hong Kong on the other. Worrying that a further delay on the project might result in additional expenses and serious safety implications, members urged the Administration to allocate more resources on the project with a view to resolving the environmental concerns raised by DEP, thereby bringing the statutory EIA procedures to a satisfactory conclusion. Ensuing discussion between members and the Administration was summarized in the following paragraphs.

10. Given the Administration's assessment that the Mui Wo - Tai Ho Wan alignment was the best option, the Chairman asked about the measures to be taken by the Administration in case the revised EIA report was rejected by DEP again. Mr TAM Yiu-chung opined that given the relatively undeveloped state of Lantau Island, an ecological price would invariably be involved for each development project, no matter where it was situated in Lantau. While stressing that every effort should be made by the Administration to minimize potential environmental impact, Mr TAM said that the safety of the residents and their urgent transport needs should take precedence.

11. In response, the Secretary for Transport (Atg.) (S for T(Atg.)) assured members that the Administration was also concerned about the unsatisfactory condition of Tung Chung Road and that public safety would be the most important consideration. Both the Transport Bureau (TB) and HyD would make the greatest effort to resolve all environmental concerns detected and they were confident that the revised EIA report would cover all the concerns of DEP.

12. Mr LEE Wing-tat further enquired about the resources to be put in by the Administration for winning over the support of DEP and the Advisory Council on the Environment (ACE). In reply, S for T(Atg.) stressed that the same stance was in fact taken by TB and the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) in ensuring that potential impact and disturbance on the environment and ecology would be kept to an absolute minimum. He further said that the TB was committed to taking the project forward and expertise from both within and outside the Government had been called on to come up with the necessary mitigation measures. The Director of Highways (D of Hy) supplemented that HyD had been closely liaising with EPD on the preparation of the revised EIA report. Satisfied that sufficient explanation had been given to all relevant concerns raised by DEP, HyD planned to resubmit the EIA report in June 2000.

13. In view of the strong stance taken by EPD on the project, Mr Albert HO queried whether the Administration's assessment on the environmental impact of various options was correct, particularly in respect of the adverse impacts to be caused by the option of building a tunnel underneath Tung Chung Road.

14. S for T(Atg.) explained that if the option of constructing a single tube 2-lane 2-way tunnel was to be adopted, the tunnel would need to be about 4 km long and such a long length of single tube 2-lane 2-way tunnel would be very undesirable from the traffic safety point of view. If a twin tunnel was to be built instead, the project cost would be about \$5 billion. Given the enormous cost involved, it would not be justifiable from the transport point of view to restrict the use of the tunnel. However, excessive traffic volumes would then be attracted from outside areas, which would in turn have far-reaching consequences on South Lantau area by altering its village and natural landscape setting. As for the North-South Road Link option, it was intended that the current Closed Road Permit system would apply to restrict access. In supplement, D of Hy presented the following information on the off-line widening of the existing Tung Chung Road and North-South Road Link options for members' consideration:

	Off-line Widening of Existing Tung Chung Road	North-South Road Link
Area of Country Park affected	20 hectares	2.2 hectares
Area of natural woodland affected	13 hectares	3 hectares
Impact on water quality	Tung Chung Stream - High impact risk	Tai Ho Stream - at least 120 m away from road link

In this connection, PAS for T(5) said that consideration would also have to be given to the views expressed by the Country and Marine Parks Board against the off-line widening option for its encroachment on the Country Park upon previous consultation.

15. In reply to Mr CHAN Wing-chan's enquiry about new mitigation measures to be proposed, D of Hy said that specially designed drainage systems would be provided to divert the site and road runoff away from the sensitive streams and Tai Ho Bay. In addition, 1.9 hectares of marshland would be re-provided to make up for the same amount of marshland affected by the project and 15 hectares of new woodland would be planted to replace the 3 hectares of natural woodland felt.

16. Mr CHAN Kam-lam opined that as the Tai Ho Wan- Mui Wo alignment was the shortest route among the various options, its environmental impact would be relatively small. However, as a policy issue, he suggested that the Administration should review its overall planning and development strategy for Lantau by identifying key areas which had to be preserved and other areas which could be used for development. S for T(Atg.) responded that major developments in Lantau would be concentrated in the northern part while conservation would remain the main theme for South Lantau. In view of the high ecological and scenic value of South Lantau, any development there should be environmentally sustainable and in harmony with the village and natural landscape setting.

17. Summing up the discussion, the Chairman advised that while every hope was for the revised EIA report to be accepted by DEP, alternative solutions should also be formulated by the Administration.

V Measures to enhance the efficiency of bus service

(LC Paper No. CB(1)1665/99-00(05) - Information paper provided by the Administration)

18. The Commissioner for Transport (C for T) briefly introduced the paper provided by the Administration (LC Paper No. CB(1)1665/99-00(05)), which set out the various measures taken by the Administration to enhance the efficiency of bus service, with an update on the latest position of the bus-bus interchange (BBI) schemes and the inter-district bus-only lane scheme.

19. Members, in general, supported the Administration's on-going efforts to enhance the efficiency of bus services to ensure a more efficient use of limited road space and bus terminal facilities, in particular the BBI schemes which could improve the bus network coverage to the benefit of bus passengers, while at the same time make better use of bus resources which helped to reduce the pressure for new long distance and "point-to-point" bus routes. In view of improvements on traffic conditions achieved by previous schemes, members urged the Administration to speed up the introduction of new BBI schemes, as well as to formulate comprehensive policies and strategies in this respect. Some members also raised their concerns about the participation of and co-ordination between the franchised bus operators. Members' discussion with the Administration was summarized in the following paragraphs.

20. Responding to Mr LEE Wing-tat's enquiry about the future planning for the introduction of BBI schemes and the Chairman's question about the anticipated improvement with the introduction of BBI schemes outlined in paragraph 8 of the Administration's paper, the Principal Transport Officer/Bus Development (PTO/BD) said that six new schemes would be implemented in 2000 in Western Harbour Tunnel (WHT) Toll Plaza, Wan Chai, Causeway Bay, Admiralty, Tate's Cairn Tunnel Toll Plaza and Tin Shui Wai town centre. An additional scheme at Eastern Harbour Crossing Toll Plaza was being studied for implementation next year. As the objectives of the new BBI schemes were to offer better network coverage and to reduce the pressure for new direct bus routes, no existing bus routes would be cancelled under the present proposal. In that case, both Mr LEE and the Chairman had queries about the effectiveness of such schemes and they suggested that the Administration should consider whether existing routes could be rationalized to achieve maximum results. At the request of the Chairman, the Administration agreed to provide details of the BBI targeted to be implemented in 2000 for members' information.

(Post-meeting note: The requested information was subsequently circulated to members vide LC Paper No. CB(1)1867/99-00 on 19 June 2000.)

21. Mr LEE also queried whether the decision that no existing routes were to be cancelled was taken because the Administration had yet to reach an agreement with the franchised bus companies. The Deputy Secretary for Transport (DS for T) replied that on-going discussions were held with the franchised bus operators to work out the details such as route selection, fare discount arrangements and necessary modification to the Octopus system design for these planned schemes. In this connection, Mr TAM Yiu-chung asked when the new system could be available for use. DS for T advised that work on software modification was being undertaken by Creative Star and it was hoped that all technical problems involved could be resolved by the end of the year.

22. Taking the interchange at WHC Toll Plaza as an example, Mr Albert HO pointed out that no additional capacity might be available on buses to take up the interchange passengers. He suggested that consideration could be given to providing shuttle services to ply between the Toll Plaza and Central so as to reduce the demand for new routes and make the BBI schemes more viable. His view was shared by Mr CHAN Kam-lam who opined that passengers from different areas could be funnelled through the interchanges before taking shuttle buses into the busiest road sections. He further suggested that interchanges might also be used to disperse passengers out from the congested areas. In response, PTO/BD said that further consideration would be given to the views and suggestions expressed by members.

23. While thanking members for their useful comments, C for T highlighted that BBI was only one measure in dealing with the problem. Other measures such as the truncation or even cancellation of routes, diversion of buses from the most congested areas were being used to target particular aspects, in realizing the overall objective of making the best use of buses as efficient as possible. As it was still early days for the BBI programme, the Administration would keep its progress under constant review and examine ways to spread the schemes further by getting the franchised bus operators to work together. In terms of implementation of the programme, the concern raised by Mr HO about the additional capacity on buses to take up interchange passengers was particularly valid as the buses which came through were mostly full in the peak periods. It would not be productive to interchange passengers just for sake of interchanging them. Thus other means would also have to be considered to complement the BBI programme.

24. As a matter of policy, Mr CHENG Kar-foo said that he had grave concern about the selection criteria adopted by the Administration in restricting access of certain bus routes to Central. He opined that by selecting routes for which no parallel public transport services were provided, the Administration was not only being unfair to residents who lived in far-away new towns, it was also being prejudiced against franchised bus operations. Given that franchised buses were mass carriers which was the most efficient mode of road transport, Mr CHENG strongly suggested that consideration should be given to restricting access of other transport modes such as private cars to Central.

25. In response, C for T said that there was no question of being prejudiced against buses. While he agreed that franchised buses were an efficient mode of road transport, it was also undeniable that buses were large vehicles and they could create problems when they congested in a corridor. Hence, the Government was concentrating on areas with problems and the biggest problem was in Central, Wan Chai and Causeway Bay. He further explained that the issue involved was that many people saw relatively empty buses travelling and that was the reason why particular efforts were focused on buses. The objective was to better manage the operation of buses for achieving efficiency. In supplement, PTO/BD advised that when considering route truncation proposal, the Government would consider all relevant data such as bus frequency and passenger loading profile.

26. Mrs Selina CHOW remarked that the Government had taken too much time to resolve this problem and the general public was finding the situation increasingly unacceptable. While encouraging the Government to take bold measures and brace the criticisms that might follow, she opined that when results were seen by the people, they would no doubt turn to support the Government's actions. Her views were shared by Mr LEE Wing-tat who considered that given the limited road resources available, the Administration should adopt a tougher stance to tackle the problem at root. Other measures such as time restriction for access to Central by different types of vehicles should be pursued so as to even out the extent of inconvenience caused to certain groups of people. He suggested that wide consultation should be conducted to ensure that such measures were accepted by the public. Taking note of the members' views, S for T(Atg.) said that consultation would be conducted to gauge the public's views on strategies formulated by the Government.

VI Legislative proposals relating to Kowloon-Canton Railway Corporation

- (LC Paper No. CB(1)1665/99-00(06) - Legislative Council Brief on the Kowloon-Canton Railway Corporation (Permitted Activities) (Consolidation) (Amendment) Order 2000; and
- LC Paper No. CB(1)1686/99-00(01) - Information paper on Kowloon-Canton Railway Corporation (Amendment) Bylaw 2000 and North-West Railway (Amendment) Bylaw 2000)

27. At the invitation of the Chairman, S for T(Atg.) briefly introduced the background to the legislative proposals to amend the subsidiary legislation made under the Kowloon-Canton Railway Corporation Ordinance (Cap. 372). The proposed amendments were primarily aimed at enabling the Kowloon-Canton Railway Corporation (KCRC) to carry out comprehensive two-way freight forwarding activities and giving the Corporation the flexibility to increase the surcharge on East Rail passengers to a maximum of fifty times of the highest standard class single fare in line with that of other railway transport provider in Hong Kong. Details of the proposals

were set out in LC Paper Nos. CB(1)1665/99-00(06) and CB(1)1686/99-00(01) respectively.

KCRC's freight activities

28. Mr LEE Wing-tat was concerned about the competitive advantage enjoyed by KCRC after the extension of its freight services. In this connection, he asked whether the Shippers Association of Hong Kong had been consulted on the proposal. S for T(Atg.) replied that it was not envisaged that any competition between KCRC and local consignors would occur as a result because only rail-borne freight service was provided by KCRC while the business scope of the latter was mainly on local arrangements and KCRC's services in this area had remained unchanged. He further explained that under the existing KCRC Ordinance, the Corporation was only allowed to consign goods from Hong Kong to any other place (but not vice versa), and it was also confined to storing the goods which had been or were to be carried by KCRC within (but not outside) Hong Kong. As such, the proposal was aimed at removing the barriers faced by KCRC in view of increasing competition from local and international freight carriers. In fact, the growth of KCRC's freight business had declined in recent years.

29. In supplement, the Deputy Director, East Rail (DD/ER) said that KCRC had been making co-operative arrangements with different shipping agents and forwarders to provide freight forwarding services, depending on the destinations. This, however, did not fully meet the needs of customers nowadays for one-stop, comprehensive freight and logistics services. Reliance on agents or other third parties not only prevented KCRC from offering more competitive prices, but also inhibited its ability to manage effectively its freight business in an appropriate customer-oriented manner. In order to optimize its existing infrastructure and establishment, KCRC had developed a freight strategy which comprised the establishment of two-way freight forwarding services and the development of freight storage, consolidation and distribution centre in the Mainland.

30. While stating his support for the proposal, Mr LEE Kai-ming said that he was also concerned about whether adequate consultation had been conducted by KCRC, particularly the existing agents of the Corporation. In reply, DD/ER advised that KCRC had held discussions with some of its agents on ways for future co-operation.

31. Given the boost on the development of freight transport in Hong Kong, Ir Dr Raymond HO said that he was in support of the proposal. However, recalling that a much higher projection on rail-borne container traffic between the Mainland and Hong Kong was given by the Government a few years ago in the context of the Northwest railway development project, he sought clarification from the Administration about the much lower figure quoted in paragraph 2 of the paper and asked whether such findings obtained from a study commissioned by KCRC tallied with the assessment done by the Government in relation to RDS-2. S for T(Atg.) admitted that the projection made by the Government previously was erroneous as there was insufficient data on the development of the Mainland and the competition from neighbouring ports had been underestimated.

However, KCRC had adopted a very pragmatic approach in arriving at the present figures and a Mainland university commissioned to conduct the study had collected planning data on future developments from all over the Mainland. On its comparison with the Government's assessment for RDS-2, he said that the projections made were roughly the same in terms of growth rates and future trends. S for T(Atg.) further advised that notwithstanding the more realistic projections made on rail-borne container traffic between the Mainland and Hong Kong, there might be fluctuations and thus KCRC was encouraged to further investigate the viability and timing of the port rail link connecting Lo Wu to the Container Port which had been examined under RDS-2.

Surcharge on East Rail passengers

32. Mr TAM Yiu-chung enquired about the existing extent of fare evasion on the East Rail and how it compared with the Light Rail. DD/ER replied that in 1999, the percentage of passengers travelling without a valid ticket was 1.2 in 1 000 for the East Rail, whereas it was 4.5 in 1 000 for the Light Rail. Although the percentage of fare evasion was relatively lower for the East Rail, it would add up to a large number of offenders due to the large carrying capacity of the East Rail. In supplement, S for T(Atg.) said that apart from providing an effective deterrent on fare evasion, the increase in surcharge would also ensure effective operation of the Lo Wu quota system which was an important contingent measure to manage congestion and crowd control at Lo Wu during festive periods.

33. In this connection, both Mrs Selina CHOW and Mr LEE Kai-ming were concerned about the measures to be taken by KCRC to reduce the occurrence of fare evasion and help minimize the need for passengers to travel to Lo Wu without a valid ticket. DD/ER replied that in order to reduce congestion at Lo Wu, KCRC would closely liaise with all units responsible for border control to expedite the immigration clearance procedures. In addition, publicity had been stepped up warning passengers against fare evasion.

34. Responding to a further question from Mr TAM Yiu-chung, DD/ER said that if an offender was not able to pay the surcharge on the spot, he would be allowed to pay up within 14 days. However, if the surcharge was left outstanding after the due date, a reminder letter would be issued. If the letter was ignored, a summons would then be served. In 1999, a total of 285 summons were issued. DD/ER further said that as false addresses might be provided by offenders, it was necessary to empower KCRC staff to obtain the telephone number, in addition of name and address, of those passengers for more effective follow-up action.

35. As a follow-up question, Mrs Selina CHOW asked about the measures to be taken by KCRC if a false telephone number was given by an offender. DD/ER replied that if a passenger failed to provide correct information, penalty could be imposed by KCRC under another By-law of the Corporation.

36. Mr CHENG Kar-foo sought clarification from the Administration as to the exact amount of surcharges to be levied by KCRC after the passage of the revised By-law. DD/ER explained that the surcharge was determined on the basis of the standard single adult fare between Lo Wu and Hung Hom i.e. \$33. After the revised By-law came into effect, KCRC would determine the amount of surcharge by making reference to the comparable levels of surcharges on the Light Rail and the Mass Transit Railway. The initial thinking of KCRC was that the surcharge would be about \$500. Future revisions on the level of surcharge would be made according to the principle of gradual and progressive adjustments while taking into account the prevailing extent of fare evasion at the East Rail. DD/ER assured members that the increase of surcharge at the East Rail would be widely publicized through different media and a grace period would also apply.

37. Concluding discussion on the item, the Chairman said that given the tremendous amount of increase, greater publicity efforts should be made by KCRC to draw the passengers' attention to the new level of surcharge levied.

VII Any other business

38. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 1:05 pm.

Legislative Council Secretariat
27 September 2000