

立法會 *Legislative Council*

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Panel on Transport and Panel on Security

**Minutes of joint meeting held on
Monday, 6 January 2003, at 8:30 am
in the Chamber of the Legislative Council Building**

Members present : Members of the Panel on Transport

Hon Miriam LAU Kin-yee, JP (Chairman)
Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, JP (Deputy Chairman)
Dr Hon David CHU Yu-lin, JP
Hon Albert HO Chun-yan
Ir Dr Hon Raymond HO Chung-tai, JP
Hon Mrs Selina CHOW LIANG Shuk-yee, GBS, JP
Hon Andrew CHENG Kar-foo
Hon TAM Yiu-chung, GBS, JP
Dr Hon TANG Siu-tong, JP
Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, JP
Hon Albert CHAN Wai-yip
Hon LEUNG Fu-wah, MH, JP
Hon WONG Sing-chi
Hon LAU Ping-cheung

Members of the Panel on Security

* Hon LAU Kong-wah (Chairman)
Hon James TO Kun-sun (Deputy Chairman)
Hon WONG Yung-kan
Hon Ambrose LAU Hon-chuen, GBS, JP
Hon IP Kwok-him, JP
Hon Audrey EU Yuet-mee, SC, JP

Non-Panel Members : Hon Cyd HO Sau-lan
attending Hon CHAN Kam-lam
Hon SIN Chung-kai

Members absent : Members of the Panel on Transport

Hon CHAN Kwok-keung
Hon Andrew WONG Wang-fat, JP
Hon LAU Chin-shek, JP

Members of the Panel on Security

Dr Hon LUI Ming-wah, JP
Hon Margaret NG
Hon CHEUNG Man-kwong
Hon Howard YOUNG, JP
Hon Michael MAK Kwok-fung

(* Also member(s) of the Panel on Transport
Also member(s) of the Panel on Security)

Public Officers : Environment, Transport and Works Bureau
attending

Mr Arthur HO
Deputy Secretary for the Environment, Transport and Works

Mr Patrick HO
Principal Assistant Secretary for the Environment, Transport
and Works

Security Bureau

Mr Michael WONG
Deputy Secretary for Security

Mrs Margaret CHAN
Principal Assistant Secretary for Security

Transport Department

Mr Peter LUK
Assistant Commissioner for Transport/New Territories

Hong Kong Police Force

Mr FUNG Kin-man
District Commander, Border District

Immigration Department

Mr LAW Yiu-tung
Commander, Border Division

Customs & Excise Department

Mr CHAN Hon-kit
Head of Control Points Command

Attendance by invitation : HK Public-Light Bus Owner & Driver Association

張漢華先生
主席

黎銘洪先生
秘書

The Hong Kong Taxi & Public Light Bus Association Limited

Mr TRAN Chau
Chairman

Mr NG Fong
President

Hong Kong and Kowloon Taxi Merchants' Joint Committee

Mr AU-YEUNG Kan
Chairman, United Friendship Taxi Owners Association

Taxi Dealers & Owners Association Limited

Mr CHENG Hak-wo
Permanent President

Mr TONG Yeuk-fung
Chairman

Public Light Bus General Association

Mr NG Mou-shing
Chairman

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

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

Miss Winnie CHENG
Legislative Assistant 5

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I Election of Chairman

Ms Miriam LAU was elected Chairman of the joint meeting.

II Round-the-clock boundary crossings at Lok Ma Chau-Huanggang checkpoint

2. The Chairman stated that the purpose of the joint meeting was to discuss with the Administration and the transport trades related arrangements for implementing 24-hour passenger clearance at the Lok Ma Chau (LMC)/Huanggang Control Point before the Chinese New Year. She also invited members to note the submissions from 新界的士十二聯會 and Hong Kong Public & Maxicab Light Bus United Associations (issued vide LC Paper Nos. CB(1)602/02-03(04) and CB(1)602/02-03(05) respectively) which were not available to attend the meeting.

3. The Chairman then invited the deputations to take turn and express their views.

Meeting with deputations/the Administration

HK Public-Light Bus Owner & Driver Association
[LC Paper Nos. CB(1)602/02-03(01) and (06)]

4. While expressing support for 24-hour passenger crossing at Lok Ma Chau Control Point (LMCCP), 張漢華先生 of HK Public-Light Bus Owner & Driver Association called on the Administration to allow access of red minibuses (RMBs) to the Control Point so as to facilitate choice of passengers.

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The Hong Kong Taxi and Public Light Bus Association Ltd.
[LC Paper No. CB(1)602/02-03(02)]

5. Both Mr TRAN Chau and Mr NG Fong of The Hong Kong Taxi & Public Light Bus Association Ltd. cited the present difficult operating environment of the taxi and public light bus (PLB) trades and considered that taxis and PLBs should be allowed to operate in the control point once the 24-hour passenger clearance was implemented at LMCCP. In this connection, they did not see any practical difficulties subject to minor modifications to be carried out by the Administration.

Hong Kong and Kowloon Taxi Merchants' Joint Committee
[LC Paper No. CB(1)602/02-03(03)]

6. Speaking on behalf of the three urban taxis associations under Hong Kong and Kowloon Taxi Merchants' Joint Committee, Mr AU-YEUNG Kan stated the Joint Committee's strong request that taxis should be allowed to operate in the Control Point during the extended hours to tie in with the introduction of 24-hour passenger crossing at LMCCP. In the long term, taxis should be allowed to access the control point at all times.

Taxi Dealers & Owners Association Limited
[LC Paper Nos. CB(1)602/02-03(07) and CB(1)619/02-03(01)]

7. Echoing other deputations' view that alternative public transport modes should be allowed access to LMCCP, Mr TONG Yeuk-fung of Taxi Dealers & Owners Association Limited suggested that a trial scheme should be implemented with a view to finalizing the detailed arrangements for permanent implementation. To this end, a working group could be formed by the Administration with representatives from various transport trades. Referring members to the suggestions made by the Association in its submission (LC Paper No. CB(1)619/02-03(01)), Mr TONG said that the trial scheme should be implemented concurrently with the introduction of 24-hour passenger crossing at LMCCP before Chinese New Year.

Public Light Bus General Association

8. Mr NG Mou-shing of Public Light Bus General Association suggested that the Administration could adopt an orderly approach to open up LMCCP to PLBs and taxis, initially during the extended hours and then gradually for 24-hour access after the on-going improvement works were completed. The same arrangement could then be further extended to other land boundary crossings.

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Meeting with the Administration

- (LC Paper No. CB(1)602/02-03(08) - Information paper provided by the Environment, Transport and Works Bureau; and
LC Paper No. CB(1)602/02-03(09) - Information paper provided by the Security Bureau)

9. At the invitation of the Chairman, the Deputy Secretary for the Environment, Transport and Works (DS for ETW) and the Assistant Commissioner for Transport/New Territories (AC for T/NT) briefed members on the proposed transport and other related arrangements to tie in with the introduction of 24-hour passenger crossing at LMCCP. Details of such arrangements were set out in the information paper provided by the Environment, Transport and Works Bureau (LC Paper No. CB(1)602/02-03(08)).

10. The Deputy Secretary for Security (DS(S)) also introduced the information paper provided by the Security Bureau (LC Paper No. CB(1)602/02-03(09)) which set out the security-related arrangements for implementing 24-hour passenger clearance at LMCCP.

Operation of other public transport services in LMCCP

11. Sharing the views of the deputations, members in general considered that with the introduction of 24-hour passenger crossing at LMCCP, the Administration should introduce suitable arrangements to facilitate the operation of other public transport modes to the Control Point. They also opined that as a matter of policy, similar provision should also be made at other land crossings, both existing and planned ones, so that the cross-boundary passengers could enjoy the additional convenience and choice offered by other public transport services. In this way, the economic and social ties between Hong Kong and the Mainland could be further enhanced.

12. In response, DS for ETW explained that at present, there were serious space constraints at LMCCP and the vehicular access facilities were limited. There was also a need to control access to the restricted areas at LMC to ensure the orderly operation of the immigration and custom facilities there. However, noting the aspiration from the public and the transport trades, the Administration was examining the feasibility of a trial scheme to allow regulated access of taxis/PLBs to LMCCP during the extended hours. In working out the details of the trial scheme, the Administration would need to explore ways to resolve the following practical issues:

- (a) provision of a suitable location within the limited space in the Control Point for designation as a passenger pick up/drop off point and to provide a safe pedestrian passageway for passengers to and from the immigration hall;

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- (b) provision of adequate and efficient shuttle bus services to carry the taxi and PLB passengers between LMCCP and Huanggang, the details of which would need to be discussed with the shuttle bus operator and the relevant Mainland authorities;
- (c) putting in place proper arrangements to ensure that any new public transport service arrangements to be introduced would not cause any delay to the improvement works currently underway at LMCCP;
- (d) assessment of passenger demand for public transport services upon implementation of 24-hour operation of LMCCP to facilitate proper planning and arrangements for the trial operation of taxis and PLBs in LMCCP; and
- (e) introducing proper and efficient taxi and PLB operational arrangements at LMCCP to ensure no obstruction to the smooth operation and security of the control point.

13. DS for ETW further said that given the presence of various land, traffic, environment and security constraints, the Administration would need to carefully plan for detailed arrangements of the scheme so as to ensure its smooth operation and success. In addition, certain modification works for the trial would have to take into account the progress of on-going improvement works at the Control Point. As such, it was envisaged that the trial scheme for taxi operation in LMCCP could only be ready before Easter in late March/early April. Similar trial scheme for PLB operation in the form of green minibuses (GMBs) would be planned at the next stage. The trial schemes were expected to last for a reasonable period to allow both the transport trades and passengers to get familiarized with the arrangements.

14. 黎銘洪先生 of HK Public-Light Bus Owner & Driver Association expressed strong opposition to the Administration's proposal to select GMBs instead of RMBs for the trial operation of PLBs in LMCCP.

15. Mr CHENG Hak-wo of Taxi Dealers & Owners Association Limited said that the Administration could make use of the operational carpark at LMCCP for the trial scheme with minor modification works. As such, the Association was not convinced that the proposed trial scheme for taxi operation in LMCCP could only be ready before Easter. He added that the taxi trade and its operators would be prepared to render assistance to the Police in ensuring the order of taxis waiting in the area.

16. Mr AU-YEUNG Kan of Hong Kong and Kowloon Taxi Merchants' Joint Committee also called on the early implementation of the trial scheme for taxi operation in LMCCP. For this purpose, he supported the call for the Administration to set up a working group with the transport trades.

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17. On behalf of Legislative Council Members from the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment of Hong Kong, Mr TAM Yiu-chung stated that different modes of public transport should be allowed to operate to the cross boundary control points to facilitate the choice for passengers. Notwithstanding the on-going and planned improvement works at LMCCP, the provision of public transport services there was clearly inadequate to meet the increasing demand of and expectation from the public. He suggested that the Administration could consider resuming the land nearby to enable better planning and provision for the necessary transport facilities.

18. Mr LAU Kong-wah pointed out that with the introduction of 24-hour passenger crossing at LMCCP, the provision of convenient public transport services for cross-boundary passengers travelling late at night was especially important. He considered that the practical issues cited by the Administration were not insurmountable and the Administration should carefully consider the views from the transport trades so that satisfactory transport and traffic arrangements for the trial schemes could be worked out. For this purpose, he asked whether the Administration would consider setting up a working group with the transport trades.

19. Mr IP Kwok-him welcomed the Administration's policy to permit different modes of public transport to operate at LMCCP. He considered that the Administration should aim at implementing the proposed trial schemes before Chinese New Year.

20. Mr CHAN Kam-lam expressed support for the early implementation of the trial schemes. He also asked whether private cars designated to use the land boundary crossings at Man Kam To (MKT) and Sha Tau Kok (STK) could be allowed to use LMCCP during the extended hours.

21. Mr WONG Sing-chi opined that in the long run, 24-hour passenger crossing should be implemented at other control points. However, he remarked that the Administration should consult the local District Councils and community groups on the necessary arrangements to be put in place to tie in with the introduction of 24-hour passenger crossing at LMCCP. While stating support for the provision of transport public transport services at LMCCP, Mr WONG expressed concern about the impact of additional traffic noise at late night on the residents nearby.

22. Citing the high fare charged by the LMC-Huanggang shuttle bus operator, Mr CHENG Kar-foo remarked that the provision of alternative public transport services at LMCCP could break the monopoly enjoyed by the shuttle bus service. He called on the Government to adopt an open policy with a view to allowing a real competition in the market and providing greater choice for cross-boundary passengers.

23. Mr Albert CHAN expressed dissatisfaction about the lack of adequate provision of public transport facilities at LMCCP as well as under the Administration's recent

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funding proposal for the essential public infrastructure work for the Sheung Shui to Lok Ma Chau Spur Line. He considered that the Administration must adopt a clear policy to ensure that such provision was made to facilitate the operation of other transport modes to the control points.

24. Both Mr WONG Yun-kan and Dr David CHU hoped that the Administration would seriously consider the deputations' call for the implementation of the trial schemes before Chinese New Year.

25. Mrs Selina CHOW considered that it was incumbent upon the Administration to provide all necessary arrangements to facilitate the operation of other public transport services upon the implementation of 24-hour passenger clearance at LMCCP. Echoing similar views, Mr Tommy CHEUNG said that unless strong justifications were given by the Administration, members would find it hard to accept that the proposed trial schemes would not be ready until Easter.

26. Responding to members' call for the early implementation of the trial schemes, DS(S) elaborated on the site constraints and other difficulties encountered by the Administration in planning for the provision of additional public transport services inside the Control Point. LMCCP was primarily intended to handle freight traffic and there were no facilities for vehicles to turn around. Hence, the Administration would need to work out a proper traffic management scheme to minimize vehicular conflict inside the Control Point whilst maintaining a safe pedestrian passageway for passengers.

27. Regarding the use of the operational carpark as a passenger pick up/drop off point, DS(S) explained that this option might be feasible and was being studied. In addition, the Emergency Vehicular Access (EVA) would be used to allow vehicles to turn around. The existing EVA would be closed soon and the permanent EVA to the south of the operational carpark would only be available in slower time. Given the need to ensure the scheduled completion of on-going improvement projects by September 2003, the trial schemes could not be put in place earlier. In the meantime, urgent discussions were also being held with the Architectural Services Department to examine whether the permanent EVA could be widened to facilitate the proposed trial schemes and minimize traffic conflict at the permanent EVA.

28. DS(S) called on members' understanding that a gradual approach should be adopted to help ensure the smooth operation of the trial schemes. As many new arrangements would have to be made, it would not be desirable for the trial schemes to be introduced at the same time as 24-hour passenger crossing at LMCCP was implemented before Chinese New Year.

29. DS for ETW also assured members that the Administration would make every effort to expedite the on-going improvement works at LMCCP so that the trial schemes could be implemented as soon as practicable. In addition, he said that at present, it was

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not possible to have a realistic assessment of passenger demand for taxis/GMBs at the Control Point during the extended hours. The Administration would have to make an assessment of the passenger travel pattern after the implementation of 24-hour operation at LMCCP. Based on the actual traffic situation, the Administration would review the planning and arrangements for taxis and GMBs to ensure an effective control and management system.

30. As regards the Government's transport policy on the provision of public transport services at the control points, DS for ETW said that where circumstances allowed, different modes of public transport would be permitted to operate at the control points as far as possible. Apart from shuttle bus service, railway, cross-boundary ferry and coach services, hire cars, etc. were also provided at different control points to allow choices for the passengers.

31. As far as LMCCP was concerned, DS for ETW stated that the scope for further expansion of public transport services was limited by site and space constraints. Therefore, shuttle buses and cross boundary coaches which had larger carrying capacity were relied upon as the main transport modes at LMC. This was to avoid congestion and more importantly to ensure the smooth operation of freight transportation through the limited access facilities. It had nothing to do with protecting the interest of the shuttle bus operator.

32. Responding to Mr WONG Sing-chi's concern about traffic noise, DS(S) explained that LMCCP was already operating around-the-clock for freight traffic. As such, the impact of additional traffic noise from the operation of taxis/PLBs during the extended hours was not expected to be substantial. This view was shared by some members. The Chairman advised that the joint Panels would keep this matter in view.

Admin 33. On Mr CHAN Kam-lam's suggestion about the arrangement for private cars during the extended hours, AC for T/NT advised that the matter would need to be carefully considered and the relevant Mainland authorities would need to be consulted on any proposed changes. The Administration would inform members of its deliberation in due course.

Maintenance of smooth traffic flow during the trial

34. Mr LAU Kong-wah said that the Administration would need to work out suitable arrangements so as to ensure the smooth flow of traffic in LMCCP during the trial. However, he did not agree that there should be a quota system to restrict the number of taxis allowed to access LMCCP. Mrs Selina CHOW also said that the introduction of a quota system was not a practical solution.

35. While noting the members' view, DS for ETW stressed that it was important that the access of taxis/GMBs would be properly regulated so as to avoid congestion in the

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Control Point or at San Sham Road. The Administration would examine options that could balance the interests of all stakeholders.

36. Stressing the need to maintain smooth traffic flow at LMCCP, DS for ETW said that since taxi operation was not subject to any regulation on service frequency, congestion would occur if there was a sudden increase in taxis entering into or waiting at the Control Point, causing obstruction to the smooth operation and security of the Control Point. To avoid this situation, the Administration would need to work out proper and efficient operational arrangements to regulate the taxi traffic. He assured members that the Administration would continue to hold active discussions with the trades concerned on the related issues. In this connection, Mr LAU Ping-cheung suggested that the Administration should also formulate contingency plans in consultation with the transport trades.

Co-location of clearance facilities

37. Addressing members' concern about the need to make better planning of public transport services at boundary control points, DS for ETW advised that the Administration would make suitable provision in the context of co-location of immigration and customs facilities at the Huanggang Control Point. On the timing of implementation, DS(S) advised that the Administration's intention was that the co-location of immigration and customs facilities would be implemented at Huanggang before that at the new control point at Shenzhen Western Corridor. The Chairman advised that the joint Panels would keep this matter in view.

24-hour passenger clearance at other control points

38. While noting the call from members and deputations to extend 24-hour passenger clearance to other control points, DS(S) said that the implementation of the same arrangement at MKT and STK had not been discussed by the Government and the Mainland authorities. The Administration had no plan at this stage to extend 24-hour passenger clearance to other control points. Major considerations would include the demand for such services and the efficient use of resources.

39. Summing up the discussion, the Chairman invited the Administration to note the clear stance conveyed by members that adequate provision of public transport services must be made to tie in with the 24-hour passenger crossing at LMCCP. For this purpose, the proposed trial schemes for taxi/PLB operation should be implemented as early as possible. The Administration should actively consult the transport trades on the detailed arrangements.

40. To facilitate members' understanding, members agreed that the joint Panels would conduct a site visit to LMCCP on 10 January 2003. The transport trade deputations were also invited to attend. The Panels would hold another joint meeting on 14 January 2003

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to continue discussion with the Administration.

III Any other business

41. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 10:50 am.

Council Business Division 1
Legislative Council Secretariat
24 February 2003