

立法會

Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(1)772/02-03

(These minutes have been seen
by the Administration)

Ref : CB1/PL/TP/1

Panel on Transport

Minutes of meeting held on Friday, 20 December 2002, at 10:30 am in Conference Room A of the Legislative Council Building

Members present : Hon Miriam LAU Kin-yee, JP (Chairman)
Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, JP (Deputy Chairman)
Hon Albert HO Chun-yan
Ir Dr Hon Raymond HO Chung-tai, JP
Hon Mrs Selina CHOW LIANG Shuk-yee, GBS, JP
Hon Andrew WONG Wang-fat, JP
Hon LAU Kong-wah
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 absent : Dr Hon David CHU Yu-lin, JP
Hon CHAN Kwok-keung
Hon LAU Chin-shek, JP

**Public Officers
attending** : **Agenda item IV**

Environment, Transport and Works Bureau

Mrs Rita LAU

Permanent Secretary for the Environment, Transport and Works

Mr Arthur HO
Deputy Secretary for the Environment, Transport and Works (T)2

Agenda Item V

Environment, Transport and Works Bureau

Mrs Rita LAU
Permanent Secretary for the Environment, Transport and Works

Mr Paul TANG
Deputy Secretary for the Environment, Transport and Works (T)1

Ms Ernestina WONG
Principal Assistant Secretary for the Environment, Transport and
Works (T)5

Transport Department

Mr CHENG Hung-leung
Chief Engineer/New Territories East

Territory Development Department

Mr John CHAI
Project Manager (New Territories East)

Mr D J CLIMAS
Deputy Project Manager (New Territories East)

Mr TING Ki-leung
Senior Engineer/Shia Tin (2)

Agenda Item VI

Environment, Transport and Works Bureau

Mrs Rita LAU
Permanent Secretary for the Environment, Transport and Works

Mr Paul TANG
Deputy Secretary for the Environment, Transport and Works (T)1

Ms Ernestina WONG
Principal Assistant Secretary for the Environment, Transport and
Works (T)5

Transport Department

Mr LEE Yan-ming
Chief Traffic Engineer/New Territories West

Highways Department

Mr C K MAK
Director of Highways

Mr Adrian NG
Deputy Project Manager/MW(3)

Agenda Item VII

Environment, Transport and Works Bureau

Mrs Rita LAU
Permanent Secretary for the Environment, Transport and Works

Mr Paul TANG
Deputy Secretary for the Environment, Transport and Works (T)1

Ms Ernestina WONG
Principal Assistant Secretary for the Environment, Transport and
Works (T)5

Transport Department

Mr TO Kam-biu
Chief Engineer/Transport Planning

Highways Department

Mr C K MAK
Director of Highways

Mr Adrian NG
Deputy Project Manager/MW(3)

Lands Department

Mr R C BARAM
Assistant Director of Lands

Attendance by invitation : **Agenda item IV**

Kowloon-Canton Railway Corporation

Mr Michael TIEN
Chairman

Mrs Irene YAU
General Manager, Corporate Affairs

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 Confirmation of minutes and matters arising

(LC Paper No. CB(1)462/02-03 - Minutes of meeting held on 17 October 2002)

The minutes of meeting held on 17 October 2002 were confirmed.

II Information papers issued since last meeting

(LC Paper No. CB(1)353/02-03(01) - Information paper provided by the Administration on Excessive railway noise inside MTR Tseung Kwan O Line trains;

LC Paper No. CB(1)372/02-03(01) - Information paper provided by the Administration on Proposal to occupy and use the Tuen Mun Pier for the operation of cross boundary passenger

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- LC Paper No. CB(1)517/02-03(01) - ferry services;
- Submission from HK Public-Light Bus Owner & Driver Association on operation of public light buses; and
- LC Paper No. CB(1)517/02-03(02) - The Administration's reply to the submission from HK Public-Light Bus Owner & Driver Association on operation of public light buses)

2. Members noted the above information papers issued since last meeting.

III Items for discussion at the next meeting scheduled for 24 January 2003

- (LC Paper No. CB(1)527/02-03(01) - List of outstanding items for discussion; and
- LC Paper No. CB(1)527/02-03(02) - List of follow-up actions)

3. Members went through the Panel's lists of outstanding items for discussion and follow-up actions (LC Paper Nos. CB(1)527/02-03(01) and (02) respectively) and agreed to leave the discussion items for the regular meeting scheduled for 24 January 2003 open in case the Panel decided to receive a briefing by the Secretary for Environment, Transport and Works on transport-related initiatives to be announced by the Chief Executive in his Policy Address.

4. The Chairman reminded members that two special meetings had been scheduled for 6 January 2003 and 14 January 2003 to discuss transport arrangements in relation to the 24-hour operation of the Lok Ma Chau boundary crossing, and the widening of Tolo Highway and provision of associated noise barriers respectively. Another joint meeting with the Environmental Affairs Panel had been scheduled for 23 January 2003 to continue discussion with the Administration on measures to abate traffic noise.

(Post-meeting note: The Panel's special meeting scheduled for 6 January 2003 had subsequently been cancelled and instead, a joint meeting with the Security Panel would be held to discuss the item on "Round-the-clock boundary crossings at Lok Ma Chau-Huanggang checkpoint". The item on "Widening of Tolo Highway and the provision of associated noise barriers" originally scheduled for discussion at the special meeting on 14 January 2003 would be discussed at the regular meeting on 24 January 2003. The special meeting on 14 January 2003 was cancelled.)

5. In response to Mr TAM Yiu-chung, the Chairman advised that the Light Rail vehicle derailing incident which happened on 18 December 2002 would fall under the purview of the Subcommittee on matters relating to railways. Members could decide at the Subcommittee's meeting to be held later in the afternoon on how to follow up on the

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investigation to be conducted by the Kowloon-Canton Railway Corporation (KCRC) on the incident.

IV Appointments to the Managing Board of the Kowloon-Canton Railway Corporation

- (LC Paper No. CB(1)351/02-03(01) - Further information paper provided by the Administration on Appointments to the Managing Board of the Kowloon-Canton Railway Corporation; and
- LC Paper No. CB(1)247/02-03(01) - Information paper provided by the Administration on Appointments to the Managing Board of the Kowloon-Canton Railway Corporation)

6. The Chairman welcomed the representatives of the Administration and KCRC to the meeting. The Administration had provided two information papers on the matter vide LC Paper No. CB(1)247/02-03(01) and CB(1)351/02-03(01) respectively.

Considerations in respect of appointments to the Board

7. Referring to the appointments to the KCRC Managing Board set out in LC Paper No. CB(1)247/02-03(01), Mr LAU Kong-wah expressed regret that the Administration had failed to honour its undertaking given during the course of deliberation of the Bills Committee on KCRC (Amendment) Bill 2001 that it would review the size and composition of the KCRC Managing Board and consider appointing individuals from green groups and grass root organizations, as well as Members of the Legislative Council (LegCo) so that the Board would give due regard to the views and aspirations of the community in its decision making. For this purpose, Mr LAU maintained his view that the Government should consider this suggestion when considering any future appointments to the KCRC Managing Board.

8. Mr CHENG Kar-foo criticized the Administration for failing to maintain an equitable balance between the considerations of public interest and commercial operations of the Corporation when making appointments to the Managing Board as its new membership was even more business-oriented than before. Citing the lack of representatives from grass-root organizations, the academia and transport professionals on the Board, he considered it highly unsatisfactory that the Administration had disregarded the important role of KCRC as a public transport service provider. He was worried that with such a Board composition, the Corporation would develop into an independent empire and disregard the strong request from the public that its fares should be reduced. He was gravely disappointed that the Administration had not taken the opportunity to tackle this problem through a more balanced composition of the Managing Board.

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9. In response, the Permanent Secretary for the Environment, Transport and Works (PS for ETW) stated that in considering appointments to the Board, the Administration had taken into account the views expressed by the Bills Committee members carefully. The Administration agreed that it was important for the KCRC Managing Board to have a balanced and appropriate composition so that it could perform its functions effectively. For this purpose, the Administration had carefully assessed the suitability of prospective candidates having regard to relevant factors such as personal capabilities, leadership, expertise, experience, integrity and commitments to public service. Taking these factors into account, the Chief Executive had decided to appoint four new members and re-appoint two serving members to the KCRC Managing Board. These members possessed the necessary knowledge and experience in such areas as banking, accounting, legal profession, business management, property development and large-scale development projects. All these were required to meet the functional needs of the Board.

10. Responding to the concern about potential conflict of interests of some new members, PS for ETW advised that integrity and commitments to public services were two very important factors in considering the appointments. Furthermore, there were specific provisions under the Kowloon-Canton Railway Ordinance (Cap. 372) on disclosure of interest by Board members in relation to any matters to be considered by the Board.

11. PS for ETW further said that the successful operation of the Corporation would rely on the concerted efforts by the Board, its Committees and the senior management. As a regulator, the Administration would ensure that an efficient and safe service was provided by the Corporation to meet the transport needs and aspiration of the public. She also assured members that with the Secretary for the Environment, Transport and Works and the Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury sitting as members of the Board, the wider public interest vis-à-vis the commercial operations of the Corporation would be given careful and balanced considerations.

12. Mr Albert CHAN however was worried that the Secretaries would also have to consider the interest of the Government, and they might not be able to represent public interests unequivocally in the Managing Board at all times. Given the predominance of members with strong business background and ties, the interests of the grass-roots would not be adequately represented in the Board. He considered that public interest would only be safeguarded if the composition of the Board was reviewed to include representatives from different sectors of the society.

13. Subject to the outcome of the on-going study on the proposed merger of KCRC and the MTR Corporation Limited, the Chairman asked whether there would be any changes to the size and composition of the Managing Board. PS for ETW replied that if the Administration decided that a merger should proceed, there would be scope for further review.

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Support from Committees of the Board

14. Mr Michael TIEN, the Chairman of KCRC, stated that while appointments to the KCRC Managing Board were made by the Chief Executive, he as the Chairman of the Corporation was equally concerned that the Board could perform its functions effectively. Given the size and complexity of the issues which the Board was required to consider for KCRC as a whole, it would be necessary to identify ways in which the work of the Board could be facilitated. At present, there were five Committees under the Board, viz. Property Committee, Pay and Conditions Committee, Capital Projects Committee, Finance Committee and Audit Committee. With delegated authority from the Board, these Committees would serve as a forum at which the issues and alternative courses of actions presented by the senior management could be considered in more detail. In this way, appropriate solutions could be identified and recommended for the approval by the Board. The Board could then concentrate on critical issues as reported by the Committees.

15. While acknowledging the importance for the Corporation to take into account the views of green groups and grass-root organizations, the Chairman of KCRC said that the Board might not be an appropriate forum at which their expertise and advice were put to optimum use because the main businesses of the Board were related to finance, capital projects, property development, etc. Given the greater involvement of the Committees, he advised that the Corporation was planning to appoint individuals, who were not members of the Corporation, to the various Committees. With different background and coming from a wide cross-section of the community, the Board would be able to benefit from the advice of the Committee members in its decision making. For example, the Corporation was considering appointing specialists from green groups or with specific knowledge and experience of major projects to the Capital Projects Committee. When the details were finalized, a decision on such appointments could hopefully be made in January 2003.

16. The Chairman of KCRC further said that the Corporation was also planning to establish a new Public Consultation Group under the Board for obtaining advice, suggestions and feedback on various matters in relation to service performance and safety, integration between railway/property development and local land use planning, provision of station and feeder services, as well as other issues of concern to the passengers such as fare. It was envisaged that this Group would be chaired by a Board Member and met on a quarterly basis. The Corporation intended to invite the Chairmen of Transport and Traffic Committees of the ten District Councils which were served by the KCR rail and bus network to this Group. As the meetings of this Group would be attended by the Chief Executive of KCRC and his senior management, the Corporation would be able to access the views and advice from a wide selection of the community. Also, as the Chairman of the Corporation, he would ensure that the views expressed by

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this Group on major issues would be suitably reflected to the Board for information/consideration.

17. Welcoming the suggestion, Mr LAU Kong-wah opined that for this Group to discharge its functions effectively, it should be given adequate access about the Corporation's business and financial information. Moreover, the Corporation should also consider inviting representatives of grass-root organizations and LegCo Members to this Group and other Committees of the Board. Taking note of the member's view, the Chairman of KCRC said that the Corporation would consider appointing individuals with suitable professional background to the Committees of the Board.

18. Mr LAU Ping-cheung also welcomed the Corporation's move to appoint outside members to the Committees of the Board and suggested that the Corporation could consider appointing professional surveyors to the relevant Committees so that the Board might benefit from their independent advice on cost control for the Corporation's construction projects. The Chairman of KCRC responded that any such views would always be welcomed by the Corporation.

19. Reiterating his disappointment that the Administration had failed to seriously review the size and composition of the Managing Board, Mr CHENG Kar-foo opined that given the large scale of KCRC's operation, he was unconvinced by the Administration's explanation that the present size of the Board was adequate for its functions and that the number of Board members was fairly large already. He was strongly of the view that as the Board was the governing body of the Corporation vested with final decision-making power on major issues such as the level of fare, it should have members who could truly reflect and represent the views of the community. He was concerned that the arrangement to appoint outside members to the Committees was just window-dressing and could not serve the purpose at all.

20. In response, the Chairman of KCRC did not agree that the Committees of the Board had no real power. Elaborating on the division of responsibility between the Board and its Committees as well as the Board's delegation of authority to the Committees, he assured members that all proposals put to the Board must first be considered and endorsed by the Committees. As such, it made no real difference whether the issues were considered at the Board or the Committee level.

21. On Mr CHENG Kar-foo's concern about the level of fares, the Chairman of KCRC stressed that when considering any fare adjustments, the Corporation would try to maintain a balance between commercial and public interests. He called on members' understanding that the new railway projects to be undertaken by the Corporation would have to be financed in large measure by debt. As such, the Corporation would need to maintain its fare levels so as to demonstrate to the investors that the Corporation could generate the necessary stable revenue stream to service its debts. On the other hand, the Corporation would actively explore ways in which fare concessions could be offered to

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alleviate the burden of the passengers.

22. PS for ETW also stressed that the Board was not the only forum where the views of the community would be heard and considered. The improvements to the Committee system as outlined by the Chairman of KCRC would enable the Board to have access to the views and advice from a wide section of the community. In addition, KCRC had both regular and ad hoc channels for obtaining advice, suggestions and feedback from stakeholders on its service and performance. The Administration believed that the Board with the new membership and strengthened Committees would continue to successfully lead KCRC to meet the challenges ahead.

23. Highlighting the importance of a harmonious labour relationship on the effective operation of the Corporation, Mr LEUNG Fu-wah considered that representatives of the Corporation's trade unions should be invited to sit on the relevant Committees of the Board so as to advise on matters relating to the remuneration and benefits of the staff. The Chairman of KCRC replied that the Corporation was considering appointing human resources professionals to sit on the Pay and Conditions Committee. As sensitive information on personal emoluments would be considered, it might not be appropriate for representatives of the trade unions to sit on this Committee. However, the Corporation would ensure that adequate channels were available for the Board and this Committee to maintain regular dialogue with the staff side on matters relating to their conditions of service.

V Shatin New Town Stage II - Construction of Road T3

(LC Paper No. CB(1)527/02-03(03) - Information paper provided by the Administration)

24. Members noted the Administration's proposal as set out in LC Paper No. CB(1)527/02-03(03) to upgrade 458CL, Sha Tin New Town, Stage II - Construction of Road T3, to Category A for the construction of Road T3 connecting the future Route 9 - section between Cheung Sha Wan and Sha Tin and the existing Tai Po Road - Sha Tin section. The estimated cost of Road T3 was \$2,120.2 million in money-of-the-day (MOD) prices.

25. Members also noted that the Administration planned to seek the funding support of the Public Works Sub-Committee (PWSC) on 15 January 2003. Subject to funding approval, construction of the project would start in March 2003 for completion in April 2007.

Provision of noise barriers

26. Mr LAU Kong-wah sought elaboration about the number of dwellings to be benefitted from the provision of noise barriers under the project. He also enquired about

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the provision of noise barriers in front of Mei Lam Estate.

27. In reply, PS for ETW said that as Road T3 was a designated project under the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Ordinance (Cap. 499), the Administration was required to provide direct mitigation measures for noise sensitive receivers (NSRs), both existing and planned, along the road. About 3 500 existing and some 2 000 planned dwellings would benefit directly from the proposed noise barriers. The timing of provision of the barriers to protect the planned developments would generally phase in with the developments. The Administration would further consult local views before installing the noise barriers for planned developments.

Admin

28. On the provision of noise barriers in front of Mei Lam Estate, the Project Manager (New Territories East) (PM/NTE) advised that all dwellings, if it was envisaged that their noise level would exceed the statutory limit of 70dB(A), had been included. At Mr LAU Kong-wah's request, PM/NTE agreed to provide supplementary information on the number of dwellings in Mei Lam Estate that would benefit from the provision of noise barriers.

(Post-meeting note: A supplementary information paper provided by the Administration on the project was circulated to members vide LC Paper No. CB(1)629/02-03(01).)

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29. Concerned that an adequate level of protection should be provided to all the affected dwellings, Mr CHENG Kar-foo enquired about the criteria for selecting different types of noise barriers and enclosures at different sections of the proposed road. In response, PM/NTE explained that noise impacts arising from Road T3 had been thoroughly assessed in the EIA study. A package of vertical/cantilever noise barriers as well as semi- and full noise enclosures were proposed for the project so that the level of traffic noise experienced by the NSRs would be kept within the statutory limit. To facilitate members' understanding, he agreed to provide supplementary information on the results of the EIA study on the projected noise level of NSRs at locations where only vertical noise barriers were proposed.

(Post-meeting note: A supplementary information paper provided by the Administration on the project was circulated to members vide LC Paper No. CB(1)629/02-03(01).)

30. Referring to possible re-development of the low-rise buildings in Tai Wai, Mr WONG Sing-chi asked whether provisions would be made for the noise barrier structures to support the installation of taller panels in future. In response, PS for ETW advised that the Administration's aim was to provide mitigation for excessive traffic noise caused by the proposed road to existing dwellings as well as planned developments that were already known. Any provision in excess of the statutory requirement would not be cost-effective.

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31. The Chairman concluded that the Panel took note of the Administration's plan to submit the relevant funding proposal to PWSC for consideration.

VI Widening of Yuen Long Highway

(LC Paper No. CB(1)527/02-03(04) - Information paper provided by the Administration)

32. Members noted the Administration's proposal as set out in LC Paper No. CB(1)527/02-03(04) to upgrade 721TH - Widening of Yuen Long Highway between Lam Tei to Shap Pat Heung Interchange to Category A for the widening works at Yuen Long Highway between Lam Tei and Shap Pat Heung (LTSPH). The estimated cost of the project was \$944.5 million in MOD prices.

33. Members also noted that the Administration intended to seek the funding support of PWSC on 15 January 2003 to upgrade the project to Category A for construction. Subject to funding approval, construction works would commence in August 2003 for completion in December 2005.

34. At the invitation of the Chairman, PS for ETW highlighted the need for the timely construction of the project to cope with the increasing traffic demand generated from the population growth in the North West New Territories (NWNT), as well as the increasing cross-boundary traffic brought by the commissioning of the Shenzhen Western Corridor (SWC) and Deep Bay Link (DBL) in end 2005.

35. Calling on members' support for the present item and the following item, PS for ETW stressed that it was the stated commitment of both the Shenzhen Government and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government to strive to complete SWC by 2005 in view of its economic significance to both Shenzhen and Hong Kong. SWC, together with DBL, would facilitate the flow of people and cargo between Hong Kong and Southern China. They would enhance the status of Hong Kong as a business-cum-trade-cum-logistics hub in the Pearl River Delta, and would also bring substantial benefits to Hong Kong. As such, she called for members' support for the Administration's funding proposals on the widening of Yuen Long Highway - LTSPH and the construction of SWC/DBL.

36. PS for ETW added that the Administration was aware of the concerns raised by members and local residents about the traffic impact from SWC/DBL on NWNT, including that on Tuen Mun Road (TMR). The proposal to widen Yuen Long Highway - LTSPH would be able to relieve the additional traffic coming from SWC/DBL. In addition, the Administration had initiated discussions with Route 3 (CPS) Company on ways to attract traffic to use Route 3, possibly by offering toll concessions to motorists. The impending opening of West Rail in 2003, the planned improvements to TMR and

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the widening of Castle Peak Road which was currently underway and would be completed in early 2006 would all help to improve traffic condition in NWNT. The Administration was also conducting an overall review on the transport infrastructure in North West New Territories (NWNT) to assess the long term transport needs in the NWNT, covering projects which might need to be advanced to link up with the proposed Hong Kong - Pearl River West Link, i.e. the Tuen Mun Western Bypass (TMWB) and the Tuen Mun - Chek Lap Kok Link (TM-CLKL). The review was expected to be completed by mid-2003. Before submitting the funding proposals on the three projects to PWSC, the Administration would consult further the views of Tuen Mun District Council and Yuen Long District Council on 7 January and 8 January 2003 respectively on these latest developments.

37. While expressing support for the widening of Yuen Long Highway - LTSPH to cater for the cross-boundary traffic generated by SWC/DBL, Dr TANG Siu-tong conveyed the serious concern of the local communities about possible impact of the new roads on the traffic conditions in Yuen Long. In order to meet the additional traffic demand, Shap Pat Heung Rural Committee had requested for the construction of a slip road connecting Yuen Long Highway and Tai Tong Road between Shap Pat Heung Interchange and Tong Yan San Tsuen Interchange as a further safeguard to Road L2 which was under construction. Without this slip road, the proposed widening of Yuen Long Highway could meet with strong opposition from the local residents.

38. In response, the Chief Traffic Engineer/New Territories West (CTE/NTW) reported that the suggestion had in fact been considered. However, the provision of such a connection was considered not feasible due to various technical constraints and safety considerations. He further advised that according to traffic forecast, the provision of a package of new Roads L1, L2, L3, L4 and L5 could cope with the traffic generated by the development in Yuen Long South (Areas 13 and 14) for the Shap Pat Heung Interchange. To provide earlier relief, the completion of Road L2 would be advanced to end-2004. As regards the section of Yuen Long Highway between Shap Pat Heung Interchange and Pok Oi Interchange, traffic data indicated that there was adequate reserve capacity to cope with morning peak traffic. Notwithstanding, Transport Department would closely monitor the situation and plan for necessary improvement works to meet the increased traffic generated by further developments in Yuen Long Town South.

39. Citing the existing congestion at Yuen Long Highway, Mr TAM Yiu-chung supported the proposed widening works. In anticipation of the opening of SWC/DBL in 2005, he asked whether the section of Yuen Long Highway from Shap Pat Heung Interchange to the Toll Plaza of Route 3 (CPS) would be able to cope with the additional traffic.

40. Sharing Mr TAM's concern, Mr LAU Kong-wah opined that road works should not be planned in a piecemeal approach without having due regard to the impact on

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related road sections. He pointed out that after the proposed widening of Yuen Long Highway - LTSPH, a bottleneck would be created between this section and Route 3 (CPS) thereby creating congestion.

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41. In reply, the Deputy Project Manager/MW(3) said that with the completion of the Shap Pat Heung vehicular underpass in mid-2002, the section from Shap Pat Heung Interchange to Au Tau would be able to cope with the additional traffic arising from the proposed widening of Yuen Long Highway - LTSPH from a dual two-lane to a dual three-lane configuration. At Mr TAM's request, he agreed to provide the volume to capacity (v/c) ratios to members for information after the meeting.

(Post-meeting note: A supplementary information paper provided by the Administration on the project was circulated to members vide LC Paper No. CB(1)632/02-03(01).)

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42. To supplement, the Director of Highways (D of Hy) explained that the section of Yuen Long Highway presently comprised eight lanes, four lanes along the recently completed Shap Pat Heung vehicular underpass and the Pok Oi Flyover at the two interchanges respectively, and another four lanes with two on each side of the underpass/flyover. At members' request, he agreed to provide supplementary information on the road network between Shap Pat Heung Interchange and Route 3 (CPS) to members for information after the meeting.

(Post-meeting note: A supplementary information paper provided by the Administration on the project was circulated to members vide LC Paper No. CB(1)632/02-03(01).)

43. As the road network was inextricably linked, Mr Albert CHAN opined that the overall impact of any road projects should be considered. The widening of Yuen Long Highway together with the construction of SWC/DBL under this item and the following item would aggravate the existing congestion at the Town Centre section of TMR. He also suggested that to avoid possible congestion, the Administration should consider whether the interchanges and access roads proposed under the project had adequate design capacity to cope with the high speed traffic coming off from SWC/DBL.

44. PS for ETW responded that the situation at TMR would be substantially improved with its planned reconstruction programme. As currently planned, the reconstruction works would commence in 2005 for completion in phases. Furthermore, the Administration would explore ways in which the traffic at TMR could be diverted off to Route 3. The Deputy Secretary for the Environment, Transport and Works (T)1 supplemented that the traffic pressure from SWC/DBL would in fact be greater on Yuen Long Highway than TMR because not all the traffic coming from SWC/DBL would go to TMR. Traffic forecasts indicated that the situation at TMR would still be manageable in 2006. While the congestion at TMR might worsen after 2011, alternative routes

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would be available by then to achieve traffic diversion.

45. Mr Albert CHAN however was unconvinced by the Administration's reply. Notwithstanding the importance of SWC, he said that it was incumbent upon the Administration to ensure that the interests of local residents in Tuen Mun and Yuen Long would not be adversely affected by the provision of cross-boundary infrastructure. If the congestion at TMR was not satisfactorily resolved, members would find it hard to support the proposed projects

Provision of noise barriers

46. Noting that about 11.6 kilometres (km) long noise barriers would be provided under this project at a cost of \$301 million, Mr CHENG Kar-foo pointed out that these noise barriers would be at odd with the surrounding village environment and asked whether other alternative mitigation measures, such as the use of low noise road surfacing and the planting of trees, had been considered by the Administration. Referring to the five guiding principles stated by SETW on measures to address traffic noise, he saw the need to re-consider the provision of noise barriers under this project both in terms of their cost-effectiveness and visual impact.

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47. Echoing Mr CHENG Kar-foo's concern, Mr LAU Kong-wah requested the Administration to review the feasibility of planting trees to achieve the required noise attenuation for this project instead of installing noise barriers. The Administration agreed to provide further information to the Panel in this regard.

(Post-meeting note: A supplementary information paper provided by the Administration on the project was circulated to members vide LC Paper No. CB(1)632/02-03(01).)

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48. While expressing support for the provision of noise barriers to provide relief to the affected residents, Mr Albert CHAN was also concerned about the substantial funding sought for the purpose under the project. In this connection, he requested for supplementary information on the anticipated noise benefits to be achieved at individual sections of the widened highway.

(Post-meeting note: A supplementary information paper provided by the Administration on the project was circulated to members vide LC Paper No. CB(1)632/02-03(01).)

49. In reply, PS for ETW reiterated that the Administration was required by law to provide direct mitigation for excessive traffic noise arising from the widened highway. Referring members to Enclosure 2 to the Administration's paper for detailed locations of the proposed noise barriers, D of Hy supplemented that 11.6 km was the total length of noise barriers to be installed on both sides of the highway corridor. Pursuant to the

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guiding principles announced by SETW, the Administration would review the need and timing for the noise barriers for planned developments. Additional information would be provided to members for consideration in the submission to PWSC. Addressing Mr CHENG's concern about visual impact, D of Hy said that after careful consideration on the need for aesthetic design, transparent noise barriers would be used for the project. The design concept was presented in Enclosure 3 to the paper. To ensure acceptance by the local community, the Administration would further consult the views of the relevant District Councils.

Admin 50. Notwithstanding, Mr CHENG Kar-foo opined that as the Panel would hold a joint meeting with the Environmental Affairs Panel on 23 January 2003 to further discuss the guiding principles with SETW, the Administration should put the funding sought for the provision of noise barriers under this project on hold in case there was any policy changes. This would be a responsible approach for the Administration to take in view of the need to ensure the prudent use of public funds. In this connection, the Chairman invited members to note the view expressed by Mrs Selina CHOW that funding provision requested for the installation of noise barriers under this project should be withheld. To avoid adverse visual impact, other noise mitigation measures should be adopted. The Chairman also pointed out that the provision of tall noise barriers/enclosures would make the drivers felt compartmentalized. As such, she considered that new technology might be available for lower noise barriers/enclosures to achieve the same attenuation effect. She requested the Administration to provide written information to members for consideration.

51. In response, PS for ETW said that the relevant EIA study had recommended a package of mitigation measures including the installation of the proposed noise barriers to be adopted for the project. The EIA Report was subsequently approved by the Director of Environmental Protection. On tree planting, she advised that this option might not be feasible for this project as a large number of trees would be required to achieve the necessary noise mitigation effect.

Admin 52. Responding to members' suggestion that the funding of \$301 million sought for the provision of noise barriers should be withheld, PS for ETW said that the noise barriers were part and parcel of the project. That said, the Administration would provide members with supplementary information as requested on the proposed noise barriers before the funding request was put to PWSC for consideration.

(Post-meeting note: A supplementary information paper provided by the Administration on the project was circulated to members vide LC Paper No. CB(1)632/02-03(01).)

53. The Chairman concluded that while members agreed that residents affected by excessive traffic noise from the widened highway should be given adequate protection, they were in general gravely concerned about the cost-effectiveness and visual impact of

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the proposed noise barriers. Some members had also expressed serious concern about the traffic impact of the widened highway on local roads. Subject to the supplementary information to be provided by the Administration, members would decide whether to give their support when the funding proposal was put to PWSC for consideration.

VII Shenzhen Western Corridor and Deep Bay Link

(LC Paper No. CB(1)527/02-03(05) - Information paper provided by the Administration; and

LC Paper No. CB(1)399/02-03(01) - Submission from the Action Group against Route 10 and Deep Bay Link)

54. Members noted the Administration's proposal as set out in LC Paper No. CB(1)527/02-03(05) to upgrade the two projects 759TH - Shenzhen Western Corridor and 736TH - Deep Bay Link to Category A for the construction of SWC and DBL. The estimated cost of the section of SWC to be funded by the HKSAR Government was HK\$3,188 million in MOD prices while that of DBL was HK\$4,594.6 million in MOD prices.

55. Members also noted the Administration's intention to submit the funding proposal to PWSC on 15 January 2003. Subject to funding approval, construction of DBL and SWC would commence in June and August 2003 respectively. The Administration would strive to complete both projects by end-2005.

56. Members noted the submission from the Action Group against Route 10 and Deep Bay Link (LC Paper No. CB(1)399/02-03(01)).

Members' stance on SWC/DBL

57. As the additional traffic from SWC/DBL would most certainly overload TMR, Mr CHENG Kar-foo said that without a definite way forward for Route 10 or alternative road networks to connect DBL with the local traffic network, LegCo Members of the Democratic Party (DP) would find it hard to give their support to DBL as currently planned. To facilitate members' consideration, he sought information from the Administration on the following:

- (a) implementation timetable of the proposed Hong Kong - Pearl River West Link (HK-PRW Link) and its transport link, i.e. TMWB and TM-CLKL;
- (b) assessment criteria for taking forward the Route 10 Northern Section; and
- (c) negotiation with Route 3 (CPS) Company for the purpose of achieving traffic diversion from TMR.

Mr CHENG also stated that although the funding proposal for the detailed design of

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Route 10 Northern Section had been voted down by FC at its meeting on 8 March 2002, DP still saw the need for Route 10 Southern Section to proceed. In this connection, he enquired about the Administration's proposed timing for seeking funding approval for its construction.

58. Highlighting the existing unsatisfactory condition at TMR, in particular the Town Centre section, Mr Albert HO stressed that SWC/DBL, once opened, would create unacceptable traffic pressure at TMR and serious congestion for the local residents. As such, he could not support the Administration's proposal if there was no transport arrangements to provide relief to TMR.

59. Sharing other members' concern about overloading of TMR, Mr Tommy CHEUNG considered that the Administration should proceed with negotiations with Route 3 (CPS) Company expeditiously. He was worried that if no favourable outcome was achieved after funding approval was given, the local residents would be the ones who suffer eventually. LegCo Members of the Liberal Party would only support the project if there was adequate connection to cope with the additional traffic flow from SWC/DBL.

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60. Mr Albert CHAN however considered that if a time limit was set for the negotiations with Route 3 (CPS) Company, the Administration's bargaining power might be undermined. Worrying about the worsening congestion at TMR, he pointed out that the improvements to cross-boundary traffic in the form of SWC/DBL were made at the expenses of the interests of local residents. He requested that supplementary information on the proposed measures to improve the traffic conditions in Tuen Mun and Yuen Long, in particular the Town Centre section of TMR and the bottleneck at Yuen Long Highway between Shap Pat Heung Interchange and Route 3 (CPS), and their implementation timetable be provided in the Administration's submission to PWSC. Mr CHAN remarked that he would not support the funding proposal unless adequate traffic connections would be made to cater for the additional traffic generated by SWC/DBL.

(Post-meeting note: A supplementary information paper provided by the Administration on the project was circulated to members vide LC Paper No. CB(1)632/02-03(01).)

61. Mr TAM Yiu-chung reiterated the grave concerns expressed by the residents in Tuen Mun area that the additional traffic from SWC/DBL would overload TMR. In this connection, he requested that when seeking funding approval from Finance Committee, the Administration should give an undertaking that it would make all efforts to ensure that no unacceptable congestion would be caused to TMR. Provisions should be made to connect DBL to link up either Route 10 or TM-CLKL. Given the time gap between the completion of SWC/DBL and such a connection, the Administration should expedite the reconstruction of TMR and to actively identify ways to achieve traffic diversion to Route 3 (CPS).

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62. Echoing Mr TAM Yiu-chung's view, Mr LAU Kong-wah stressed that in order to prevent the situation where TMR was overloaded by additional traffic generated from SWC/DBL, the Administration's priority should be to achieve traffic diversion from TMR to Route 3 (CPS). In fact, various options had been proposed by different parties, such as buying out the ownership of Route 3 (CPS), granting subsidies to the motorists or extending the Company's franchise in exchange for lower tolls. The Administration should give a clear indication to members the option being pursued.

63. Dr TANG Siu-tong supported the construction of DBL to complement SWC. Referring to the objections raised by the residents at Lam Tei, he called on the Administration to ensure that their concerns were properly addressed. He also conveyed the request from Yuen Long District Council that a local road should be constructed to link up Tin Shui Wai North and Route 3 (CPS). Without this road, he might not be able to support the present proposal.

64. Concerned about congestion at TMR, Mr Abraham SHEK expressed reservation about supporting the present proposal if no easterly link road (ELR) was provided to serve as an additional access road connecting SWC/DBL with Route 3 (CPS).

65. Mr Andrew WONG also said that his support for the present proposal would depend on the Administration's stance on the proposed ELR as he saw the need for the provision of such an access road from DBL.

The Administration's response

66. Acknowledging members' concern about the overall planning for these strategic transport infrastructure, PS for ETW said that the on-going review of the transport infrastructure in NWNT would enable a more comprehensive look at the need and relative priorities of planned road projects such as Route 10, and new road links such as TM-CLKL and TMWB in the light of limited financial resources. The review was expected to be completed in April 2003.

67. Responding to Mr CHENG's enquiry about the progress of the proposed HK-PRW Link and its transport link, PS for ETW advised that joint technical study with the State Planning and Development Administration would commence shortly. The Administration would need to plan the related supporting transport infrastructure. The Administration would brief the Panel of the progress in due course. In order not to lose time, she said that the Administration had already conducted preliminary environmental impact assessment on possible locations identified for the landing point of HK-PRW Link on the Hong Kong side.

68. PS for ETW further said that while the Administration would actively pursue the matter, there was time for the Administration to work out ways with Route 3 (CPS)

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Company for achieving traffic diversion from TMR as SWC/DBL was scheduled to be completed by end-2005. She undertook to revert to the Panel on the outcome of such discussions in due course. On the traffic conditions at TMR, she said that the Administration would closely monitor the situation and continue to seek improvements where possible.

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69. While noting the explanation given, Mr CHENG Kar-foo requested that the Administration to provide the following information to members before the funding proposal for SWC/DBL was put to PWSC, or the latest when put to FC for approval:

- (a) projections about the volume of both freight and passenger traffic coming from SWC/DBL to be diverted off Route 3 (CPS) to TM-CLKL; and
- (b) timetable for negotiations with Route 3 (CPS) Company.

ELR

70. Members noted that the Administration had conducted a study and identified initially 13 possible alignments for the ELR. Six options were shortlisted for further study. Having regard to engineering, land, planning, environmental and transport considerations, the Administration considered that alignment option 6A was the most preferred.

71. Mr Albert CHAN stated his opposition to the provision of ELR.

72. Mr Andrew WONG indicated his preference for alignment option 8 as it was the most direct connection heading towards Route 3 (CPS), and enquired about its cost estimates.

73. In view of the substantial environmental impact on the residents in Tin Shui Wai, Mr TAM Yiu-chung did not support alignment option 6A. He also considered option 8 more viable.

74. Referring to paragraph 17 of the Administration's paper, Mr Abraham SHEK did not agree that limited transport benefits would be achieved by an ELR. He stressed that the objective of constructing an ELR was to achieve diversion to Route 3 and not saving in travelling time. He was not convinced that the Administration had presented a fair and impartial analysis on the ELR options for members to make an informed decision.

75. The Chairman also pointed out that the Administration's analysis did not contain any information on the projected diversion effect to be achieved by various alignment options. If the Administration had failed to consider the options from this perspective, the whole study was a complete waste of time and resources.

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76. PS for ETW responded that all the 13 possible alignments had been carefully studied by the Administration. An analysis on the six shortlisted options was set out in detail in Enclosure 4 to the paper for members' information. She stressed that for the ELR, while traffic diversion was an important consideration, the Administration would also have to ensure the cost-effectiveness of the proposal in the light of limited financial resources. After all, Route 3 (CPS) was a tolled road while TMR was toll-free. The purpose of the Administration's discussions with Route 3 (CPS) Company was to explore ways to achieve traffic diversion. Acknowledging members' concern about the congestion at TMR, she said that after the proposed widening of Yuen Long Highway - LTSPH was completed, it would also serve to divert traffic away from TMR.

77. Summing up the discussion, the Chairman invited the Administration to note the grave concerns expressed by members that the additional traffic from SWC/DBL would overload TMR. As such, the Administration should concentrate on resolving this fundamental issue. The Administration would need to assure members that traffic diversion away from TMR would indeed be achieved. Otherwise, it would be very difficult for members to give their support for the funding request.

VIII Any other business

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

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