

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

**Minutes of the 2nd meeting
held in the Chamber of Legislative Council Building
on Wednesday, 29 October 2003, at 10:45 am**

Members present:

Ir Dr Hon Raymond HO Chung-tai, JP (Chairman)
Hon Albert CHAN Wai-yip (Deputy Chairman)
Hon Kenneth TING Woo-shou, JP
Hon Cyd HO Sau-lan
Dr Hon Eric LI Ka-cheung, GBS, JP
Hon Fred LI Wah-ming, JP
Hon James TO Kun-sun
Hon CHAN Yuen-han, JP
Hon CHAN Kam-lam, JP
Hon SIN Chung-kai
Hon WONG Yung-kan
Hon YEUNG Yiu-chung, BBS
Hon LAU Kong-wah, JP
Hon Miriam LAU Kin-yee, JP
Hon Emily LAU Wai-hing, JP
Hon Andrew CHENG Kar-foo
Dr Hon LAW Chi-kwong, JP
Hon TAM Yiu-chung, GBS, JP
Dr Hon TANG Siu-tong, JP
Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, JP
Hon WONG Sing-chi
Hon IP Kwok-him, JP

Members absent:

Dr Hon David CHU Yu-lin, JP
Hon Andrew WONG Wang-fat, JP
Hon CHOY So-yuk
Hon Henry WU King-cheong, BBS, JP
Hon LAU Ping-cheung

Public officers attending:

Miss Amy TSE	Deputy Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury (Treasury) ³
Mr Y C LO, JP	Permanent Secretary for the Environment, Transport and Works (Transport and Works) W1
Mr Thomas TSO, JP	Acting Permanent Secretary for Housing, Planning and Lands (Planning and Lands) 1
Mr Rob LAW, JP	Director of Environmental Protection
Miss Janice TSE	Principal Assistant Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury (Treasury) (Works)
Mr David WONG	Principal Assistant Secretary for Education and Manpower (Infrastructure and Research Support)
Mr C H YUE, JP	Director of Architectural Services
Ms Ernestina WONG	Principal Assistant Secretary for the Environment, Transport and Works (Transport) ⁵
Mr MAK Chai-kwong, JP	Director of Highways
Mr NG Tak-wing	Regional Highway Engineer/Hong Kong Highways Department
Mr Lawrence KWAN	Chief Traffic Engineer/Hong Kong Transport Department
Dr Sarah LIAO, JP	Secretary for the Environment, Transport and Works
Mr Paul TANG, JP	Acting Permanent Secretary for the Environment, Transport and Works (Environment and Transport)
Ms Ava CHIU	Principal Assistant Secretary for the Environment, Transport and Works (Transport) ³
Mr WAN Man-leung	Deputy Project Manager/Major Works (2) Highways Department

Clerk in attendance:

Ms Anita SIT	Chief Assistant Secretary (1) ⁶
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Staff in attendance:

Ms Pauline NG	Assistant Secretary General 1
Mr Matthew LOO	Senior Assistant Secretary (1)3
Ms Caris CHAN	Senior Legislative Assistant 1
Mr Frankie WOO	Legislative Assistant 2

HEAD 703 - BUILDINGS

PWSC(2003-04)50	245ES	Secondary school in Area 31, Sheung Shui
	302EP	Primary school in Area 31, Sheung Shui

Mr WONG Sing-chi said that he would support the proposed construction of a primary school in Sheung Shui in order to expedite the implementation of whole-day primary schooling in Hong Kong. Nevertheless, he had reservation about the need to build a new secondary school in Sheung Shui, as he gathered from some secondary school principals in the district that there was already excessive supply of secondary school places in the district at present. Mr WONG pointed out that many public housing projects in the North District had already been put on hold and thus there should be no drastic increase in population in the district in the next few years. He expressed doubt on the accuracy of the Administration's projection on the demand for secondary school places, and cautioned that it would be a waste of public money to build a new secondary school if there was no demand for such school places. Mr WONG suggested that the two school projects be considered and voted on separately.

2. On Mr WONG Sing-chi's suggestion, the Director of Architectural Services (D Arch S) said that as the two school sites in question were co-located and were smaller than the respective standard provisions, the plan was to tender out the construction works for both school projects in one single contract so as to save costs and to provide some facilities straddling the two school sites for the shared use of the schools. While it was technically feasible to construct the two schools separately, the construction costs would nevertheless be higher and some shared facilities might not be provided under this scenario.

3. The Principal Assistant Secretary for Education and Manpower (Infrastructure and Research Support) (PAS(I&RS)) said that the Education and Manpower Bureau (EMB) had an established and effective methodology to project the demand for school places for the school building programme. The projections were derived based on census statistics and were reviewed and updated annually taking into account different factors such as population movements. Both territory-wide projections and projections by districts were available. According to EMB's projection, additional secondary school classes were required in the territory to meet

the increase in demand for new school places up to the 2007/08 school year. The demand for secondary school places in the North District would amount to 637 classes in 2004 but only some 590 classes would be provided. In 2007/08, the demand was projected to be 626 secondary school classes and there would still be a shortfall of 20 classes. PAS(I&RS) stressed that there was a need to provide sufficient secondary school places for students in the coming years although there might be a decline in student population in the longer term.

4. PAS(I&RS) also informed members that the proposed secondary school was planned to be one of the few new senior secondary school (SSS) to be constructed in the next few years, and the proposed school would be the only SSS in the North and Tai Po Districts. The school was expected to offer innovative and diversified curricula at senior secondary levels to cater to the diverse talents and needs of students and to allow for flexible progression pathways for students. PAS(I&RS) also pointed out that there were about 300 school premises in the territory the site areas of which were smaller than the standard provision (6 000 m² to 7 000 m²). On another count, some 300 school premises had already been used for over 30 years. To improve the teaching and learning environment, the Administration was considering plans to redevelop or re-provision these schools for which improvement works were limited or found non-feasible and/or not cost-effective. The construction of new secondary school premises would allow more room for the Administration to take forward the redevelopment and re-provisioning plans for such sub-standard schools .

5. Mr WONG Sing-chi maintained his concern about the discrepancy between the EMB's projection and the observation of school principals. He also commented that the Administration had underestimated the complexity of moving an operating school to a new school building.

6. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong echoed Mr WONG's concern. He referred to a table entitled "Projected School Age Population Aged 6-11 by District, 2002-2010" (*the Appendix to the paper LC Paper No. CB(2)2401/02-03(01) on "Implementation of Whole-day Primary Schooling" provided by the Administration for the Education Panel in June 2003*), and pointed out that a drop of primary students by 16.7% in the years from 2002 to 2010 was projected. Declines in primary student population in different districts, including North District (-22.5%), Sha Tin District (-17.9%), Tai Po District (-39.9%) and Yuen Long District (-21.8%) were also projected. Mr CHEUNG said that he was aware that the demand for secondary school places would reach a peak in the coming few years, but he was not convinced of the need to construct a new secondary school in view of the declining primary student population. He requested the Administration to critically review its projections on the demand for secondary school places and to provide the full details up to year 2010. Mr CHEUNG added that he would support the construction of more primary schools for the implementation of whole-day primary schooling in Hong Kong.

7. In response, PAS(I&RS) reiterated that there would be an overall shortfall of secondary school classes in the years up to 2007/08 and there was a need to meet this

shortfall. The demand of secondary school places in Hong Kong would be 12 130classes in 2004 but only 12 004 classes would be provided. In 2007/08, the projected demand was 12 533 classes and 423 additional classes would be required to meet the shortfall.

8. As regards SSSs, Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong pointed out that many existing SSSs were under-enrolled and some SSSs had already opened classes for junior secondary school students. In response, PAS(I&RS) said that the Administration would flexibly allow SSSs to recruit junior secondary school students having regard to the circumstances of each school.

9. Ms Emily LAU noted that the Administration had not consulted the LegCo Panel on Education (Education Panel) on the present proposal. She considered that the demand and supply of school places was a policy issue and the Administration should consult the Education Panel before they submitted proposed school projects to PWSC for consideration. Noting that the proposed secondary school had yet to be allocated to a school sponsoring body, Ms LAU suggested that the Administration should withdraw the present proposal and thereafter consult the Education Panel to convince members that there was no mismatch between the Administration's school building programme and the projected demand for school places.

10. PAS(I&RS) emphasized that there would be a shortfall of 20 secondary school classes in the North District in 2007/08 and a new secondary school was required to meet the demand for secondary school places. He also pointed out that the school premises of four out of 20 operating secondary schools in the North District had been used for over 30 years. A new secondary school in the District would provide in the longer term a buffer for the Administration to improve the learning environment of these schools. PAS(I&RS) further advised that the Administration would invite eligible school sponsoring bodies to apply for the proposed new schools under the School Allocation Exercise. In past exercises, new schools premises open for allocation were generally over-subscribed by school sponsoring bodies. PAS(I&RS) also said that the Administration had consulted the Panel on Education in early 2003 on reservation of school sites for building schools to meet various policy objectives including provision of adequate school places to meet population demand and to enable whole-day primary schooling.

11. In response to Ms Emily LAU's enquiry about the consultation with the North District Council (NDC), PAS(I&RS) said that the Administration would consult the relevant District Council on each school project. The proposed construction of two schools in Sheung Shui was supported by members of NDC. Mr WONG Sing-chi supplemented that when NDC was consulted on the projects, no detailed information about the new schools and the demand and supply of school places had been provided.

12. Mr TAM Yiu-chung shared the concern about the accuracy of the Administration's projection on the demand for secondary school places. Noting that

many rural schools needed to be closed down in the North District due to under-enrollment, he considered that the information provided by the Administration was quite confusing. He suggested that the Administration should clarify the matter and provide more information to convince members that there was a genuine need to provide an additional secondary school in the North District.

13. Miss Cyd HO said that she would support the construction of more schools for the implementation of small class teaching in Hong Kong. Nevertheless, she did not believe that an existing school operating in “sub-standard” school premises might simply move into new school premises to improve its teaching environment, as moving a school to new premises was a very complicated matter.

14. Taking note of D Arch S’s confirmation that it was technically feasible to construct the proposed two schools separately, the Chairman invited members’ views on Mr WONG Sing-chi’s suggestion that the two school projects be voted on separately. At the same time, the Chairman asked the representatives of the Administration to discuss among themselves as to whether the Administration would withdraw the proposal.

15. Mr Abraham SHEK expressed his concern about the possible impact on the shortfall of secondary school places in the North District if the construction of the proposed schools were postponed.

16. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong expressed support for Mr WONG Sing-chi’s suggestion. He reiterated that he supported the construction of a new primary school but the construction of a new secondary school would require further deliberation.

17. Noting that constructing the two schools separately would affect the shared facilities of the schools, Mr IP Kowk-him suggested that the Administration should withdraw the entire proposal and provide further information in respect of the projected demand for school places to support the proposal.

18. Ms Miriam LAU and Ms Emily LAU commented that the Administration should withdraw the entire proposal and then consult the Education Panel to clarify the related policy issues. Ms Emily LAU also requested the LegCo Secretariat to prepare a background brief to facilitate the discussion at the Education Panel.

LegCo
Secretariat

19. The Deputy Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury (Treasury)³ said that having regard to members’ concerns, the Administration would withdraw the entire proposal. The Administration would consolidate relevant information to address members’ concerns raised at the meeting and consult the Education Panel before the proposal was resubmitted to PWSC. Mr WONG Sing-chi said that the Administration should consult the Education Panel as soon as possible so that construction of the proposed primary school would not be unduly delayed.

Admin

20. The item was withdrawn by the Administration.

HEAD 708 - CAPITAL SUBVENTIONS AND MAJOR SYSTEMS AND EQUIPMENT**PWSC(2003-04)51 30EC Construction works for schools in the final phase of the School Improvement Programme**

21. Mr IP Kwok-him expressed support for the proposed improvement works for five aided schools in the final phase of the School Improvement Programme (SIP). He however raised concern that some unpopular schools included in the SIP might be closed down in the near future due to under-enrollment. He asked the Administration to critically review the scope of SIP works for these schools, having regard to the remaining life span of these schools. PAS(I&RS) advised that the Administration had reviewed the SIP in light of the recommendations in Report No. 39 of the Director of Audit regarding "Primary Education - Planning and Provision of Primary School Places". He assured members that the improvement works for the five aided schools under the present proposal were justified.

22. Mr Abraham SHEK shared Mr IP Kwok-him's concern but commented that even if a school was planned to be closed down in the near future, the Administration should carry out the essential improvement works to ensure that existing students in the school were provided with a reasonable and safe learning environment.

23. Noting that there were 91 schools which were initially included but subsequently withdrawn from the final phase of SIP, Ms Emily LAU was concerned about the reasons for their withdrawal from SIP, the present conditions of and the future plans for these schools. PAS(I&RS) advised that most of the 91 schools were rural schools which were withdrawn from SIP pending the results of the policy review on rural schools. Ms Emily LAU requested the Administration to provide information on the reasons for withdrawal, the present conditions and the future plans in respect of all the 91 schools, preferably presented in a table.

Admin

24. Mr TAM Yiu-chung said that recently, there had been cases of contractors of SIP works defaulting on payment of wages to workers. He urged the Administration to tighten up the monitoring of contractors. In response, D Arch S said that the Administration was very concerned about all cases of non-payment of wages to workers of Government's projects. He pointed out that these defaulting cases arose from disputes between main contractors and their subcontractors, and that the workers involved were usually employed by subcontractors who did not have direct contractual relationship with the Government. Nevertheless, the Administration would still help resolve any such defaulting cases through the main contractors. To deter contractors from defaulting on payment of wages, the Administration maintained a record of labour disputes involving Government's contractors which would be taken into account in the future selection of contractors for Government's projects.

25. The item was put to vote and endorsed.

HEAD 706 - HIGHWAYS

PWSC(2003-04)48 323TH Reconstruction of Causeway Bay Flyover and associated widening of Victoria Park Road

26. Members noted that the Administration had provided an information paper on this proposal to the LegCo Panel on Transport (Transport Panel) in October 2003. Mr LAU Kong-wah, Chairman of Transport Panel, reported that the Panel had considered the proposal at its meeting on 24 October 2004. Panel members generally supported the proposed reconstruction of Causeway Bay Flyover (CBF) and the associated widening of Victoria Park Road (VPR). Some members had expressed concern about the temporary traffic arrangements during the construction works. At the Panel's request, the Administration had provided relevant supplementary information, which was circulated to members on 27 October 2003.

27. Ms Miriam LAU expressed support for the project but expressed grave concern about the traffic impact of the construction works, having regard that VPR was an important urban trunk road linking Causeway Bay with the Cross Harbour Tunnel, Aberdeen Tunnel and the Central and Wan Chai Districts. Ms LAU enquired whether the Administration had conducted traffic impact assessments for the proposed works. She was also concerned about the temporary arrangements for traffic from the Cross Harbour Tunnel to the Eastern District and Eastern Harbour Crossing. Ms Emily LAU also expressed concern about the traffic from the Central District and Happy Valley to the Cross Harbour Tunnel during the construction works.

28. In response, the Director of Highways (DHy) advised that while the Contractor of the project would finalize the details of the temporary traffic arrangements, the Administration would specify in the tender documents the requirements to maintain existing traffic movement. DHy then briefed members on the respective temporary traffic arrangement at the eight stages of construction as set out in the supplementary information paper provided to Transport Panel. He pointed out that the estimated 40-month construction period was already a very tight schedule. Nevertheless, the Administration would closely monitor the works with a view to shortening the construction period further.

29. Regarding the major temporary traffic arrangements, DHy and the Chief Traffic Engineer/Hong Kong explained that the existing traffic movement at CBF would be maintained by providing a temporary ramp within the Victoria Park. At Stage 3 of construction, the Administration had planned to shift the affected traffic lanes of VPR eastbound onto the existing Causeway Bay Promenade so as to maintain

the existing three traffic lanes. This arrangement would ensure that the capacity of VPR would not be reduced. VPR eastbound would be realigned under Stage 8 of construction, and hence the shifting of three traffic lanes onto the Causeway Bay Promenade was only a temporary arrangement.

30. In response to Mr Kenneth TING's enquiry on whether the traffic arrangement under Stage 3 would affect the traffic destined to the Causeway Bay Typhoon Shelter (CBTS), DHy confirmed that the existing road to CBTS would be maintained and hence the traffic to CBTS would not be affected. DHy also replied to Mr IP Kwok-him that the existing building structures at the Causeway Bay Promenade would not be affected by the proposed temporary traffic arrangements and no reclamation was required for proposed shifting of traffic lanes.

31. Mr IP Kwok-him requested the Administration to provide more information on the trees affected by the project. In reply, DHy advised that the proposed works would involve transplanting 53 trees within the project site to the Victoria Park and no tree would be hewed down under the project. All these trees were not important trees. The Administration would also incorporate planting proposals as part of the project, including some 100 trees, 200 shrubs and 3500m² of grassed area.

32. The proposal was put to vote and endorsed.

PWSC(2003-04)49

787TH

**Hong Kong – Zhuhai – Macao Bridge
Hong Kong Section and North Lantau
Highway Connection – investigation and
preliminary design**

33. Members noted that the Administration had briefed the Transport Panel on this project on 29 September and 24 October 2003. Mr LAU Kong-wah, Chairman of the Transport Panel, reported that Panel members had expressed concern about the proposed landing point of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge (the Bridge) in Hong Kong, the traffic impact of the Bridge on the existing local road network and the timely provision of adequate connecting transport infrastructure for the Bridge. Some members were also concerned about the impact of the project on Chinese White Dolphins. Supplementary information provided by the Administration on the location of the landing point of the Bridge and projected traffic impact on the existing roads had been circulated to all Members (vide LC Paper No. CB(1)128/03-04 on 21 October 2003 and LC Paper No. CB(1)192/03-04 on 28 October 2003).

34. Members also noted that the Administration had provided members with supplementary information (LC Paper No. PWSC10/03-04) on the consultation with the environmental sector on the project.

35. In response to Mr Albert CHAN's enquiry about the landing point of the Bridge in Hong Kong, the Secretary for the Environment, Transport and Works

(SETW) advised that the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge Advance Work Coordination Group (the Coordination Group) had not yet decided on the landing point of the Bridge, but three possible locations of landfalls had been identified. The landing location should facilitate effective transport network radiation and co-location of boundary-crossing facilities. The proposed investigation study would further examine the location options for the landing point.

36. Mr Albert CHAN opined that local companies and workforce should be able to benefit from the project, which involved substantial Hong Kong public funds. He pointed out that the relatively higher salary rates and construction costs in Hong Kong placed local companies and workforce in a disadvantageous position in competing with those of Zhuhai and Macao for works contracts. Mr CHAN strongly urged the Administration to contend for more job opportunities arising from the project for local companies and workforce.

37. In response, SETW said that the Administration was inclined to invite the private sector to participate in the construction and operation of the Bridge. Construction works for the local connecting infrastructure would be offered to Hong Kong companies. Nevertheless, the Government would not impose restrictions on the use of prefabrication for the construction works and the prefabrication yards might not be located in Hong Kong. SETW assured members that she would not forget the interests of local workforce.

38. Mr TAM Yiu-chung enquired how SETW would accomplish her undertaking to safeguard the interests of local workforce. In response, SETW reiterated that the Administration would ensure that all construction works in Hong Kong, except for a small section of the Bridge, would be taken up by Hong Kong companies. The proposed investigation study, conceptual and preliminary design works for the project would also be conducted by Hong Kong companies.

39. Miss CHAN Yuen-han pointed out that as Hong Kong was a signatory to the Government Procurement Agreement of the World Trade Organization (WTO GPA), it would be in breach of the WTO GPA if Hong Kong accorded favourable treatment to Hong Kong companies for procurement of construction services of values exceeding HK\$50 million. In response, SETW advised that the Commerce, Industry and Technology Bureau was studying how the interests of local workforce in the Bridge project could be safeguarded without contravening the WTO GPA.

40. Ms Emily LAU referred to the supplementary information paper (LC Paper No. PWSC10/03-04) provided by the Administration, and enquired why it was not indicated in the Annex of the paper the corresponding green groups or interested parties providing the comments set out in the Annex. She also requested the Administration to elaborate the scope of the sustainability assessment for the Bridge and its connecting infrastructure.

41. SETW explained that the paper served as a consolidated summary of the views from green groups and interested parties together with the Administration's response. The names of the green groups consulted and those of the interested parties having provided views were mentioned in the paper, although they were not specifically named to correspond to the comments set out in the Annex of the paper.

Admin

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42. As regards the sustainability assessment for the Bridge project, SETW advised that the sustainability assessment covered the economic, social and environmental impacts of the Bridge on the Pearl River Delta Region. In previous studies for the Bridge, assessment had been made on how the Bridge would help reinforce Hong Kong's status as the transport hub of the Region and how the employment situation and disparity between the rich and the poor etc. would be affected. Upon Ms LAU's request, SETW agreed to provide the details of the assessment, including those that had been covered in previous studies for the Bridge and those which would be included in the proposed investigation and preliminary design study. SETW also agreed to follow up Ms Emily LAU's suggestion of using the term "可持續發展" instead of "持續發展" consistently as the Chinese version of "sustainability" in its future papers provide by the Administration.

43. In reply to Ms Emily LAU's enquiry on how the cumulative environment impact of the Bridge would be assessed, SETW advised that the Administration maintained close liaison with the Mainland and Macao authorities for assessing the cumulative environmental impact of the Bridge. The three governments would exchange relevant technologies and data and assess the cumulative effect under the environmental impact assessment (EIA) of each side. A similar approach had been found successful in the EIA process for the Shenzhen River Regulation Project. SETW shared Ms LAU's concern that it would be a very difficult task as the standards adopted by each side were varied. However, past experience proved that the above approach was practical although it might take a longer time to complete the EIA process. The project profile for the EIA of the Bridge and the subsequent findings would be available for public inspection. SETW also explained that Hong Kong, the Mainland and Macao were required to go through the required legal procedures prescribed in their respective laws, and hence it was not feasible to use a unified set of standards for the EIAs of the three sides.

44. Ms Emily LAU enquired how green groups would be involved in the planning of the Bridge. SETW said that the Administration had consulted the major green groups in Hong Kong on measures to minimize the environmental impact of the Bridge, and their views and suggestions would be taken into account in the EIA.

45. In response to Miss CHAN Yuen-han's suggestion of inviting representatives of green groups to participate in the planning of the Bridge, SETW said that the Administration would continue to consult the environmental sector during the EIA process for the Bridge project. The report of the EIA would be submitted to the Advisory Council on the Environment, the membership of which

included members of the major green groups in Hong Kong. SETW however pointed out that it would be inappropriate to invite members of green groups to join the Coordination Group as unofficial members, as the objective of the Coordination Group was to coordinate the work of the three governments on the Bridge.

46. In reply to Ms Emily LAU's enquiry about the compensation for the possible impact of the Bridge project on Chinese White Dolphins, SETW advised that the possible impact on the dolphins and any necessary mitigation such as compensation would be examined in the EIA for the Bridge project. In this connection, she advised that the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) had successfully established a new home in Hong Kong waters off Tuen Mun for Chinese White Dolphins to compensate the loss of their feeding habitats arising from the reclamation of the New Airport at Chek Lap Kok. The population of Chinese White Dolphins in Hong Kong waters had increased in recent years and was estimated to range from 800 to 1 200 at present. This demonstrated that compensation could be an effective measure in mitigating the impact on the feeding habitats of Chinese White Dolphins.

47. Mr TAM Yiu-chung expressed support for the construction of the Bridge but raised concern about the timely provision of adequate local road infrastructure. SETW said that the Administration was fully aware of the need of timely provision of adequate local connecting infrastructure. Upon confirmation of the landing point of the Bridge, the Administration would proceed with the detailed planning for the development of the local connecting road network in conjunction with the Administration's transport studies, such as the Northwest New Territories Traffic and Infrastructure Review.

48. Mr LAU Kong-wah noted from the Administration's supplementary information paper (LC Paper No. CB(1)192/03-04(01)) that the estimated peak hour traffic volume on the North Lantau Highway and Lantau Link would increase to 4 700 vehicles/bound in 2011 with a volume/capacity (v/c) ratio of 1.0. He anticipated that more cargo trucks would use these roads after the Bridge's opening, and thus was concerned that the Administration might have over-estimated the capacity of the two roads in absorbing the increased traffic from the Bridge. Mr LAU pointed out that there were only about six years before the above two roads reached their full capacity, and hence the need of constructing new connecting roads to meet the traffic demand from the Bridge was imminent.

49. In response, DHy advised that the proposed North Lantau Highway Connection (NLHC) would help relieve the traffic demand generated from the Bridge. He pointed out that v/c ratio of 1.0 only indicated the onset of congestion during peak hours and thus the North Lantau Highway and Lantau Link could be regarded as having adequate capacity to handle the additional traffic demand from the Bridge in 2011. Therefore, the Administration would still have sufficient time to plan for the required improvements to the road network before the v/c ratio reached 1.2 which indicated more serious congestion with further increase in traffic. DHy assured

members that the Administration would closely monitor the changes in traffic demand and report the progress to the Transport Panel.

50. Mr LAU Kong-wah was not convinced of the Administration's response and stressed that the Administration should plan early to cope with the increased traffic generated from the Bridge. SETW advised that the Administration accorded high priority to the provision of connecting infrastructure for the Bridge and this would be considered under the Northwest New Territories Traffic and Infrastructure Review. The Administration would further discuss the review with the Transport Panel by the end of this year. The Permanent Secretary for Environment, Transport and Works (Environment and Transport) (Acting) also supplemented that the proposed investigation study of the Bridge included a traffic impact assessment. The result of the assessment together with the data collected from the Mainland and Macao would be used for further study and planning of the connecting road infrastructure for the Bridge.

51. Mr WONG Sing-chi agreed that further traffic impact assessment for the Bridge was required, but he considered that the Administration should provide more information to Members, including the forecasts of passenger and freight traffic flows made by the three governments, in order to ensure that there was no mismatch of traffic demand and the provision of connecting infrastructure. SETW said that she appreciated members' concern about the traffic impact of the Bridge but appealed for members' understanding that the Bridge was a joint project of the three governments. The practice of the other governments should be respected and it would be inappropriate to disclose certain information without their prior consent. SETW advised that in response to the request of the Transport Panel, the Administration had provided some supplementary information after having obtained the agreement of the other two governments. If there was a genuine need to disclose more data and findings of studies relating to the Bridge, the Administration would liaise with the other two governments on such disclosure.

52. Ms Miriam LAU recapitulated the discussion at the Transport Panel meeting on 29 September 2003 and pointed out that the provision of Tuen Mun-Chek Lap Kok Link was just as important as NLHC in terms of connecting the Bridge to the road network in the territory. She urged the Administration to brief the Transport Panel on the progress of the Link as soon as possible.

53. In reply to Ms Miriam LAU's enquiries, SETW affirmed that if the construction of the Bridge was to be financed and implemented by a private corporation, in principle, the private corporation would be required to reimburse the cost incurred for the proposed investigation study and conceptual design of the Hong Kong Section (HKS) of the Bridge. Correspondingly, the findings of the study and other relevant information would be released to the private corporation.

54. Ms Cyd HO said that some green groups did not support the two alignment options for the HKS of the Bridge currently proposed, as they were concerned about

the impact of the Bridge on the future development of the Lantau Island. She therefore requested the Administration to provide an overview of the development plans for Lantau for the next 20 years. The Chairman said that Ms HO's concern was a policy issue and requested Ms HO to follow up the issue at the relevant Panel.

55. Ms Cyd HO said that many issues arising from the dissimilarities between the legal systems of the Mainland and Hong Kong needed to be conciliated prior to the completion of the Bridge project. She was particularly concerned about the boundary-crossing arrangements and the procedures for handling traffic accidents and other incidents occurring on the Bridge. In reply, SETW said that the Security Bureau had set up a working group to follow up this area of issues with the authorities of the Mainland and Macao. SETW also advised that the Coordination Group had in principle agreed to locate the boundary-crossing facilities in either Zhuhai or Macao.

56. The proposal was put to vote and endorsed.

57. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 12:50 pm.