Confirmed Minutes of the 91st Meeting of the Environmental Impact Assessment Subcommittee of the Advisory Council on the Environment held on 21 February 2005 at 4:00 pm

Present:

Dr. NG Cho-nam, BBS (Chairman)
Prof. Paul LAM
Mrs. Mei NG, BBS
Prof. POON Chi-sun
Mr. TSANG Kam-lam
Ms. Josephine CHEUNG (Secretary)

Absent with Apology:

Prof. HO Kin-chung, BBS (Deputy Chairman)
Mr. Peter Y C LEE

In Attendance:

Mr. Elvis AU	Assistant Director (Environmental Assessment & Noise), Environmental Protection Department (EPD)
Miss Sarah NG	Executive Officer (E), Environment, Transport and Works Bureau

In Attendance for Agenda Item 3:

Mr. Joseph CHOI	General Manager, Construction (ERE & KSL), KCRC
Mr. Richard KWAN	Environmental Manager, KCRC
Mr. Samuel KWONG	Environmental Specialist, KCRC
Ms Mabel WAN	Public Affairs Manager - Capital Projects, KCRC
Mr. Sam TSOI	Associate Director, Ove Arup & Partners HK Ltd.
Mr. Franki CHIU	Associate, Ove Arup & Partners HK Ltd.
Mrs. Shirley LEE	Principal Environmental Protection Officer (Urban Assessment), EPD
Mr. David COX	Senior Environmental Protection Officer (Urban Assessment)1, EPD
Mr. LIN Chun Keung	Acting Chief Engineer/Railway Planning 1, Railway Development Office, Highways Department

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The Chairman welcomed Prof. Paul Lam and Mr. Tsang Kam-lam who joined the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)

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Subcommittee in the new term.

Agenda Item 1: Confirmation of Minutes of the 90th Meeting held on 22 November 2004

2. The draft minutes were confirmed without amendment.

Agenda Item 2: Matters Arising

Para. 17 Uploading the strategic environmental assessment (SEA) report on "Territory-wide Implementation Study for Water-cooled Air Conditioning Systems in Hong Kong" onto EMSD and EPD Websites

3. The Chairman reported that EMSD was preparing an executive summary for the SEA report. It would be uploaded onto the EMSD and EPD websites by March 2005.

Para. 20. Monthly Updates of Applications under EIA Ordinance

4. The Chairman informed Members that EPD had updated the name of government departments in the lists as appropriate.

Agenda Item 3: EIA Report on Kowloon Southern Link
(ACE-EIA Paper 1/2005)

Internal discussion

5. Members noted that the project of Kowloon Southern Link (KSL) would be carried out in a densely developed area and a tourist centre. They also noted through mass media that the local community had raised concerns on the potential environmental and visual impacts of the project. The meeting agreed to focus the discussion mainly on construction methodologies in tunneling, noise impact, waste control, dust control, landscape and visual impact, monitoring work and scope of public consultation.

Presentation

6. Mr. Joseph Choi introduced the scope of the project and proposed construction methods for the selected route alignment. Mr. Richard Kwan briefed Members on the findings of the EIA study.

Construction methodologies in tunneling

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7. On the construction methodologies in tunneling, a Member queried why the cut and cover tunneling technique, which was considered a less environmental friendly technique than the others, was selected for most part of the tunnel sections. Mr. Joseph Choi explained that the cut and cover tunneling technique would be unavoidable for the tunnel sections concerned due to various physical constraints. To cater for future plan of a through train from West Rail to Hung Hom Station, the use of tunneling techniques was constrained by existing structures, like the Nam Cheong Station and box culvert at Cherry Street with fixed vertical alignments; the need to take into account the future huge interchange at Yau Mei Tei area; and gradient capacity of the proposed alignment. In response to the Member's suggestion for building the Nam Cheong Station as a two-level interchange station to enable the use of other tunneling techniques, Mr. Richard Kwan explained that this might defeat the objective of having KSL as a direct rail link for residents from Northwest New Territories to Tsim Sha Tsui area by using West Rail without the need to interchange.

8. In response to the Chairman's enquiry on the scheduling of tunneling work at Salisbury Road, Mr. Joseph Choi explained that while the tunneling work of the whole project would take about two and a half years' time, the duration of road work for each section would be limited to a few months.

Noise impact

9. On the noise impact, Members noted that the predicted noise level at two schools, namely Lai Chack Middle School and Canton Road Government School, and Man King Building would exceed the criteria. In response to the Chairman's question on the estimated duration of exceedance, Mr. Richard Kwan explained that the anticipated level of exceedance was about 4dB(A) for about two months for the schools and 2dB(A) for about four months for Man King Building. Mr. Kwan pointed out that the assessment of the noise level was taken outside the facades under open window condition. The impact for the schools was expected to be much reduced under closed window condition and with the provision of air-conditioning which had been installed under the requirement of the Road Traffic Noise Abatement Scheme. With regard to the extent of noise impact on residents of Man King Building asked by the Chairman, Mr. Franki Chiu said that the noise would mainly affect the residents at the lower and middle level directly facing the tunnel construction.

10. Members were pleased to note that a continuous onsite noise monitoring mechanism throughout the entire construction period would be implemented at one of the schools and Man King Building. In response to the Chairman's question on the dissemination of the results to the public, Mr. Richard Kwan explained that the monitoring results, in table and graph

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formats, would be uploaded to a designated website which would largely enhance the transparency in monitoring the noise level. Ms. Mabel Wan added that the updated information could also be conveyed to the sensitive receivers through regular updates in community liaison group meetings. Mrs. Shirley Lee pointed out that, based on KCRC's past experience of a similar monitoring program under the Tsim Sha Tsui East Rail extension, the results could, under normal circumstances, be uploaded to the website about 29 hours after data-capturing, which should reflect close to real time noise level by noise receivers installed at selected sites of sensitive receivers. The lead time was required for validating the data collected before releasing them in the website. Mr. Kwan stressed that KCRC had been trying very hard to shorten the time gap for uploading the data but there were practical difficulties. They also encountered some difficulties in soliciting the assistance of sensitive receivers to install the noise receivers at their houses/sites. While appreciating that assessment and prediction of noise level were based on hard data collected, a Member hoped the project proponent could also address the feelings of the sensitive receivers and how they perceived the noise impact on them.

Waste Control

11. On the waste control, a Member urged the project proponent to maximize the beneficial reuse of construction and demolition materials and minimizing disposal at public fill. Mr. Sam Tsoi explained that efforts had been exerted to identify means to minimize waste generation and maximize reuse of construction and demolition materials at the outset during the design stage. As to the possibility of maximizing the reuse of rock during the construction phase, Mr. Joseph Choi pointed out that there would be technical limitations as the rock cutting from TBM operation would be fairly flat and small which would not be suitable for use as aggregates. Nonetheless, they would monitor the generation of waste closely with a view to maximizing reuse.

12. Regarding a Member's concern on waste water discharge, Mr. Joseph Choi agreed to review the content of potential waste water generated during the operational phase to ensure proper disposal method would be adopted.

Dust control

13. A Member asked about the use of USEPA standard on dust impact assessment and the reasons for having some variances in the frequency of watering in different sites. Mr. Sam Tsoi explained that the reference to USEPA standard mainly referred to dust emission factor from soil, i.e. to determine the amount of dust emission from the ground in the construction site under wind condition. The target and objectives of dust

control were governed by air quality objectives used in Hong Kong. As regards variances in the frequency of watering in different sites, Mr. Tsoi explained that the projected frequency of watering was based on a number of factors such as wind direction. Mr. David Cox pointed out that during the Environmental Monitoring and Auditing (EM&A) process, the project proponent had to identify suitable measures such as increasing the frequency of watering to reduce the dust impact where necessary.

14. A Member enquired about the possibility of further enhancing dust barrier and reducing footprint. Mr. Sam Tsoi explained that stockpiles of soil would be covered by impervious membrane and water would be sprayed on open surface, which were considered the most effective methods to minimize dust dispersion. Regarding the issue of footprint, Mr. Richard Kwan pointed out that the footprint in the current proposal had already been much reduced in some areas as compared with that in the gazettal in March 2004.

15. In response to a Member's question on dust impact assessment, Mr. Sam Tsoi confirmed that cumulative dust impacts together with the background level had been taken into account. He said that the purpose of the assessment was to predict the potential dust impacts and propose mitigation measures to address them. Mr. David Cox pointed out that a background Total Suspended Particulates (TSP) concentration in accordance with the "urban" category in EPD's Guidelines on Assessing "Total" Air Quality Impacts had been adopted by the project proponent. Such background TSP averaged the data from relevant "urban" category monitoring stations. Mr. Cox added that as part of the EIA study, the dust impact assessment had also taken into account the potential construction projects that would be going on at the same time. Mr. Tsoi furthered that a baseline measurement would be conducted before the construction started under the requirement of EM&A program as a reference for future dust monitoring.

Landscape and Visual impact

16. The Chairman highlighted that Members expressed grave concern that the project would take place in a densely developed area and an important tourist centre. Members also noted through mass media that the local community had raised concerns on the potential environmental and visual impacts of the project. He urged the project proponent to carefully consider the reaction of the local community and try their best to minimize potential visual impact. Mr. Joseph Choi responded that with a view to minimizing the degree of visual impact during the construction phase, mitigation measures such as enhanced hoardings and screening walls would be used to make the project more visually acceptable. The project proponent was also seeking the advice from the major sensitive receivers like hotels on

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the use of site hoardings with graphics on the upper portion to beautify the area.

17. In response to the Chairman's question on whether there would be any residential and/or commercial development above/near the West Kowloon Station, Mr. Joseph Choi confirmed that the current scale of development in the project only covered the station. Any subsequent changes would be dealt with separately. Mr. LIN Chun Keung advised that decision had not yet been made on the development plan of the residential and/or commercial development above/near the West Kowloon Station.

18. Members also noted that a public comment had been received by the Director of Environmental Protection expressing their disagreement that the visual impact on the Former Marine Police Headquarters (FMPHQ) redevelopment was insubstantial after mitigation. In response, Mr. Joseph Choi explained that they were discussing with the developer of the FMPHQ site to explore the possibility of integrating the emergency egress point structure with the FMPHQ redevelopment. Mr. David Cox said that EPD had also consulted relevant authorities which reconfirmed that the commentator's concern was not substantiated but welcomed further negotiation between the developer and project proponent.

19. A Member considered that the design and visual impact of the project after construction should be in line with the local characteristics of the region as well as the world-class image of a tourist center.

20. A Member enquired about the possibility of further minimizing tree loss. Mr. Richard Kwan said that they noted Members' concern and had made concerted efforts to minimize the loss of tree. Given the construction line of 3.7 km long and constraints faced, the number of tree loss had been kept to the minimal. Moreover, a minimum of 80% of the affected trees of high amenity value would be transplanted. They agreed to consider Mrs. Ng's suggestion to display potted plants along the affected sites during the construction phase.

Monitoring work

21. In response to the Chairman's concern on the monitoring work of the project, Mr. Joseph Choi stressed that KCRC would deploy in-house resident site staff to supervise the contractor directly so as to ensure close monitoring and immediate action could be taken as soon as possible where necessary.

22. A Member enquired how the project proponent could monitor the contractor's performance and whether there would be mechanism to be put in place to avoid and tackle exceedances of the acceptable standards.

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Mr. Joseph Choi explained that as the project would be a design and built contract, the potential contractors would have to submit technical specifications and construction method statements in their tenders. Construction could not be commenced without KCRC's endorsement and construction method statements would be specified in the contract. Mr. Sam Tsoi supplemented that in the EM&A Manual, there would be action plans to indicate measures to be taken if the acceptable levels were exceeded.

23. In reply to the Chairman's enquiry on the role of environmental checkers, Mr. Richard Kwan said that there would be multiple levels of scrutiny on environmental issues. While the contractor would have its own environmental team, some of the KCRC in-house resident site staff with engineering capacity would be dedicated to environmental tasks. On top of the above, there would be independent environmental checkers employed by KCRC under a separate contract to ensure the independence of the monitoring and auditing work.

Scope of public consultation

24. The Chairman stressed the importance of community involvement so as to enhance the acceptability of the project by the local community. In response to the Chairman's question on the scope of public consultation, Ms. Mabel Wan said that Members' concern on the importance of community involvement was noted. She explained that, like the projects in Tsim Sha Tsui extension and Ma On Shan rail, KCRC would set up community liaison groups with representatives of the affected buildings, like Chairpersons of Owners' Incorporations and District Council members, as well as task forces with hotels and business operators. Regular meetings would be held to update them with the progress of the project and to address their concerns.

Other Issues

25. A Member suggested the project proponent to promote the use of renewable energy and recycling/green materials, such as recycled fences, tiles and glasses in buildings and concourse areas, during both the construction and operational phases, to show their support to the recycling industry and products. Mr. Joseph Choi agreed to consider the suggestion.

Conclusion

26. The Chairman concluded that having regard to the findings and recommendations of the EIA report, Members agreed to recommend the report to the full Council for endorsement without condition. Members were pleased to note that the environmental checker would work directly under the project proponent to enhance independent monitoring and

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auditing; community liaison groups would be set up to address concerns of sensitive receivers; and continuous onsite noise monitoring mechanism would be adopted to enhance transparency in monitoring. These would set good examples for future project proponents. The Chairman summarized Members' overall recommendations and suggestions as follows -

(a) the project proponent should make concerted effort to minimize environmental and visual impacts having regard that the site was a densely developed area and a tourist center;

(b) the project proponent should make effort to further reduce waste and disposal at public fill;

(c) the project proponent should review the content of waste water generated during the operational phase to ensure proper disposal approach;

(d) the design and visual impact of the project after construction should be in line with the local characteristics of the region as well as the world-class image of a tourist center;

(e) considerations should be made to further enhance community involvement; and

(f) considerations should be made to the use of renewable energy and recycling/green materials during the construction and operational phases.

Agenda Item 4: Monthly Updates of Applications under Environmental Impact Assessment Ordinance

27. Members noted the updates.

Agenda Item 5: Any Other Business

Meeting Schedule for 2005

28. The tentative meeting schedule for EIA Subcommittee in 2005 had been circulated to Members before the meeting. The Chairman proposed and Members agreed to endorse the meeting schedule with the amendment of replacing 20 September by 22 September.

Tentative items for discussion at the 92nd meeting

29. The Chairman informed Members that according to the tentative schedule provided by EPD, there was no EIA report scheduled for the next meeting to be held on 21 March 2005. The Secretariat would liaise with EPD nearer the time and notify Members in due course.

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Permanent Aviation Fuel Facility – Selection of a Bubble Jacket to Attenuate Noise from Underwater Percussive Piling
(ACE-EIA Paper 2/2005)

30. The Chairman drew Members' attention to the ACE-EIA Paper 2/2005 submitted by the Airport Authority to report on the test results and proposed way forward concerning the Permanent Aviation Fuel Facility. The paper had been sent to Members separately. Members were requested to complete the reply slip and return it to the Secretariat by 28 February 2005.

Agenda Item 6: Date of Next Meeting

31. The next meeting was scheduled for 21 March 2005.

(Post-meeting note: The meeting was cancelled as no EIA reports were received and there were no urgent items for discussion.)

EIA Subcommittee Secretariat
April 2005