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for information

Transport Infrastructure Development

Purpose

Members asked for information on the Government's plans in the coming few years to expand Hong Kong's transport infrastructure. This paper briefs Members on the road and railway projects under planning and implementation.

Background

2. A good transport infrastructure network is crucial to maintain Hong Kong's position as an economic and financial centre, and to meet the transportation needs of the community. In the past few years, we have made massive investment in the new airport and the associated transport links. After the completion of the Airport Core Programme projects, our focus will be moved to other railway and road projects.

Railways

3. Railways currently carry about 30% of total public transport in Hong Kong. Rail transport will assume an increasingly important role in the long run given its carrying capacity, fast, reliable and comfortable service. Properly designed and maintained railways will avoid the environmental problems associated with road traffic. There is scope to expand Hong Kong's rail network to cope with the anticipated increase in demand, and to better serve new towns outside the urban areas.

Priority Railway Projects

4. The 1994 Railway Development Study identified three priority railway projects, namely the West Rail (Phase I), the Mass Transit Railway Tseung Kwan O Extension, and the Ma On Shan Railway together with the Extension of the Kowloon-Canton Railway from Hung Hom to Tsim Sha Tsui. Members have been briefed on the environmental implications of the West Rail (Phase I) and the Tseung Kwan O Extension. Construction of the two projects will commence in late 1998 for completion in 2003/2002. We have briefed Members on the preliminary environmental assessment of the Ma On Shan Railway and the KCR Extension to Tsim Sha Tsui. The Kowloon and Canton Railway Corporation (KCRC) will submit detailed proposals on the implementation of the project in the middle of this year. We would be able to brief Members in more details on the environmental implications of the project after we have the opportunity to consider KCRC's proposals. We expect that the Ma On Shan Railway can be completed in 2004, and the KCR Extension to Tsim Sha Tsui in 2003.

5. The total investment in the three priority projects is about \$110 billion. The completion of these three rail projects will greatly improve the access to and facilitate the further development of the northwestern and northeastern parts of the New Territories and the Tseung Kwan O new town.

Further Expansion of Railway Network

6. Side-by-side with the implementation of the priority railway projects, we are also actively planning for the further expansion of Hong Kong's railway network. The Second Railway Development Study has already commenced to examine the feasibility of new railways projects including the West Rail (Phase II), the East Kowloon Line, the fourth cross harbour rail link, etc. The Study will be completed in late 1999, but the Study consultants are required to make interim recommendations on the more urgently required rail projects.

Roads

7. On the road network, the Ting Kau Bridge and the Tai Lam Tunnel and Yuen Long Approach Road sections of Route 3 will be completed in May and June this year. Other projects under construction include the Hung Hom Bypass and the Princess Margaret Road Link and the widening of Lung Cheung

Road and Ching Cheung Road. Projects on the pipeline include the widening of Tolo Highway (section between Ma Liu Shui and Yuen Chau Tsai), the Tsing Yi North Coastal Road, and the improvement of the Tai Lam section of the Tuen Mun Road. We have assessed the environmental impact of these projects according to normal procedures.

8. We will also concentrate our efforts on the preliminary design of a number of strategic road projects, including Route 10 which will connect the Hong Kong Island, north Lantau and Yuen Long; Route 9 which will connect Tsing Yi and Cheung Sha Wan; the Central Kowloon Route which will provide a linkage between the eastern and western parts of Kowloon; Route 16 which will connect Shatin and west Kowloon; and Route 7 which will connect Kennedy Town and Aberdeen etc. The total cost of these projects is estimated to be over \$50 billion. We will also conduct the Third Comprehensive Transport Study soon to look into the need for other road projects. These road projects are still at a very preliminary stage in the planning procedures. Their environmental implications can only be established when planning has reached a more advanced stage.

Linkage with the Mainland

9. Apart from improving the internal transport network of Hong Kong, we will also study how to improve transport links with the Mainland. Cross-boundary traffic has increased significantly in recent years. We are discussing with relevant Mainland Authorities the possibility of opening new crossings to meet the increasing demand for cross-boundary travel. Projects under study include the East Rail Extension to Lok Ma Chau, the connection points in Hong Kong to link up with the Lingdingyang Bridge and the Shenzhen-Hong Kong Western Corridor. Environmental implications of these projects can only be established when planning of these projects has reached a more advanced stage.

Transport Bureau
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