

SLMP 17.11

\$85b plan to ease border congestion

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Two huge cross-border links and a series of expressways costing more than \$85 billion are being planned as checkpoint congestion worsens.

They would include an eastern highway from east Kowloon, bypassing existing border links to the Guangdong port city of Yantian.

The link could include a bridge or partial reclamation of Tolo Harbour.

But Transport Secretary Gordon Siu Kwing-chue says the cross-border priority is a bridge to the port city of Shekou.

He said the scheme was more important than the proposed Lingding Yang Bridge link with Zhuhai, which he saw as a longer-term project.

"We have four border crossings, three of which are already very congested, so a Shekou bridge is top priority over the next five years," Mr Siu said.

The bridge may connect with the proposed Route 10 or western highway, linking reclamation on Green Island to the northern tip of Lantau Island, and the northwest New Territories.

An eastern crossing to Yantian might

be needed in the longer term, Mr Siu said.

Route One, including the Tolo Highway, is expected to reach saturation point in the next 10 to 20 years.

The highway to Yantian would link east Kowloon with the port city via Ma On Shan, a Tolo Harbour crossing or reclamation, through the northeast New Territories and on new reclamation bypassing Shataukok.

Mr Siu said the route may require an east-west link between the two highways.

"This project is still conceptual and maybe another design will be more suitable, but there will be pressure on Route One and more demand from northeast New Territories and northeast Hong Kong Island," he said.

The 120 kilometres of new roads, including a proposed Route 14 between west Kowloon and Sha Tin, would cost at least US\$11 billion (HK\$85.1 billion).

Acting Transport Commissioner Dorothy Chan Yuen Tak-fai said congestion at Lok Ma Chau had prompted studies into opening the crossing 24 hours a day. Shataukok and Man Kam To crossings will also be investigated.

