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\$10b tab for third harbour crossing

HONGKONG'S third harbour crossing is likely to cost between \$8 billion and \$10 billion, Director of Highways Harold Beaton revealed yesterday.

But the Government's financial commitment to the Western Harbour Crossing project was likely to be much less because several sections could be privatised, he said.

The first phase of a feasibility study of the project, originally known as Route X and now known as Route Three, was completed in June.

A proposed road that will link up with the harbour crossing runs from Lok Ma Chau down the New Territories circular road, branching off before Au Tau and proceeding south to a point near Ting Kau before joining Tsing Yi Island by a bridge.

The road would then cut across the island to Kowloon at Cheung Sha Wan by either a bridge or a tunnel along the proposed reclamation along the west of the peninsula and link up with a proposed third harbour crossing.

Mr Beaton said the second phase of the study, which would determine where and when to build the Western Harbour Crossing and Route Three, would begin next month.

Detailed investigations would be made on possible routes and sites, including the positioning of bridges and roads.

Mr Beaton said other studies such as the Port and Airport Development Study (PADS), Metroplan, and the Western Port and Harbour development plans would be consulted in the study to make allowances for navigational operations and the second airport.