

9 March 1989

FINANCE COMMITTEE**\$25m for third tunnel study**

FUNDS were allocated by the Finance Committee for a \$25 million feasibility study on a third harbour crossing in Western.

Plans to study the Western Harbour Crossing (WHC) were put forward following the initial results of the second Comprehensive Transport Study (CTS2) which confirmed that a third crossing would be needed by 1996 to meet the forecast growth in cross harbour movements.

This has been projected despite the opening of the second tunnel, the Eastern Harbour Crossing, next September.

The eastern crossing is expected to relieve some of the flow from the already heavily congested Cross Harbour Tunnel by handling 40,000 vehicles per day. But the flow is expected to increase further with the completion of the Tate's Cairn Tunnel and Kwun Tong Bypass in 1991.

Consultants will be appointed to study the feasibility of building the western crossing, estimated to cost \$5 billion. A final report will be completed by the end of next year.

The study is needed if a site is to be identified and the tunnel built by 1996. Construction is expected to

take at least three years.

A preliminary site at Sai Ying Pun on the western reclamation and the Yau Ma Tei side of the proposed western reclamation had to be studied more carefully because of engineering difficulties. Other alternatives needed to be looked at include the proposed Green Island Reclamation.

The consultancy study will be carried out in conjunction with studies on the airport and port development.

The study is expected to be divided into two stages.

The first will examine various alignment options and traffic requirements. The second will involve detailed engineering, financial and economic studies and recommend a viable site which could involve private sector participation.

● Also approved yesterday was \$3 million to engage an adviser on telecommunications to review the existing regulatory framework of the Hongkong Telephone Company and whether its 20-year franchise should be renewed when it expires in 1995.

Last July, the Executive Council approved the setting up of a team of experts to negotiate with Telco on renewing its franchise.