

Second public consultation Forum on Hiram's Highway improvement works

Organised by Highways Dept.

12 July 2008 – Sai Kung

Minutes

Attendees:

~100 registered (6 Chinese speaking tables, 2 English speaking tables)

~100 non-registered

Representatives from Highways Dept., Meinhardt and Transport Dept.

Bosco Wong from Meinhardt – consultants to Highways Department (HyD):

Introduction to Stage 1 – 4 lanes to be built from Ho Chung roundabout to Pak Wai with some sections along the downhill from Clearwater Bay Rd., including a loop road from the Ho Chung traffic lights, along Ho Chung Rd to Luk Mei village to Marina Cove.

The objectives are to improve:

- Flow capacity
- Alignment
- Safety

Comprehensive consultation has been carried out (23 sessions) that include local groups.

Apparently the works for Stage 1 are only awaiting a Directive from Transport Bureau to commence (starting date 2010, finish date 2012).

Stages 1 and 2 are not and will not be coordinated, apparently.

Introduction to Stage 2- from Pak Wai to Sai Kung

HyD wants to “keep the character of Sai Kung, and improve sustainability” (*whatever that means*)

The “considerations” are:

- Safety (wider road, better alignment, wider footpaths)
- Capacity (congestion indicator to be kept <1.2 = hourly traffic volume/road capacity). *A considerable amount of time was spent on this and on justifying the need to improve the road based on the figures, however at the end of the day the predictions are that in 2016 only 7 out of 32 locations and times will exceed the 1.2 figure during weekdays, the congestion issue arises only on weekends.*
- Land issues (land resumption to be kept to a minimum)
- Tree preservation (minimise the number of trees affected)

6 options were presented (minor improvement works, more considerable works, 3 lanes, 4 lanes and 2 options with tunnels). An extra option to build an underpass tunnel through Sai Kung was presented. For the detailed options please click here. *HyD website hasn't been updated yet.*

Jimmy Chan from Transport Department

- Encouraging people to use public transport is a "good idea"
- Public's views are important to see how the road improvements could be carried out
- Safety of Hiram's Highway is important

Questions and answers

Heung Yee Kuk Executive Member – economic development needs better roads to attract people but minimise adverse impact on residents.

Friends of Sai Kung – our children deserve a green Sai Kung with no mass development (a banner was presented to Highways Dept., 1500 signatures have been collected against a multi-lane highway).

Village Representatives – about half the people registered were VRs (or VRs supporters), they presented a banner in favour of the road improvements and in favour of developing Sai Kung.

Sai Kung Rural Committee – support the Government proposal (*which one?*), but concerned about cost and timings.

Chairman of Sai Kung Property Agency Association – people shouldn't be so selfish as to try to monopolise the use of Sai Kung, bring everyone to Sai Kung.

Non-registered attendee – *the only one who did actually ask anything*

- How is the sustainability of Sai Kung going to be improved? (A: *no answer*)
- Rumours have it that someone in HyD had been calling up VRs to ask them to come to the forum, is this true? (A: *no answer*)
- What are the provisions for pedestrians? (A: *wider footpaths, no mention of crossings, traffic lights, etc*)
- An improved section of the road has already killed 18 people, how does safety justify the works? (A: *no answer*)
- Statistics are not backed up (A: *the usual response as to where figures come from: planning Dept. and traffic projections*)
- The improvements will speed up traffic flow, decreasing safety. (A: *no answer*)
- Other needed local improvements are being delayed by this project. (A: *no answer*)

SKDistrict Council councillor

A long speech not really related saying "vote for me".

Forum session

- The 8 tables were to discuss the various options and vote on their preferred options
- Except for the English speaking tables most the others favoured options 5 or 6 (the tunnel options) and thought that options 1 and 2 (minimal works) would not improve the situation.
- The English speaking tables preferred the minimal works options – one of which considered 1 and 2 for the short term and the tunnel option for the long run
- Options to build 3 or 4 lanes were not popular with anyone.

Conclusion

It is likely that Stage 2 will be to the liking of FSK, a tunnel is not economically feasible, 4 lanes are not physically possible and 3 lanes are considered dangerous. So chances are we will see a mix of options 1 and 2 (not doing anything didn't seem to be an option).

If you missed the forum and would like to comment on the various options we have uploaded the HyD comments form, you can print it out and post it in the special box at the Sai Kung District Office.