Our major challenge is basically one of a sustainable mobility challenge.

One basic assumption of transport planning is that it has a close relationship with population and economic growth. The faster the growth of population and the economy, the greater the demand in transport facilities. It is however difficult to project the population and economic growth. Especially in Hong Kong, the population growth is not due to natural growth but mainly because of people coming in from other places. The Government has adopted a vision-based approach while projecting the population under the HK2030 Study.

According to Government statistics, there is and will be a substantial increase in daily vehicles trips, passengers trips and Mainland visitors. In the past our transport planning has focused on traffic growth within Hong Kong but now we need to cope with the double-digit figure growth from Mainland.

Our committed and planned transport proposals indicate that both Hong Kong and Mainland are thinking about further integration of infrastructure in the Pearl River Delta (PRD) to stimulate economic development.

While we are facing the challenge of cross-boundary transport planning, we have a number of options to choose from:

- **Infrastructure to increase accessibility or strategic infrastructure:**
  - The former aims to reach out and allows more people to gain access to more facilities in the city, which is considered as a basic human right in western societies, whereas the latter is a part of the strategic planning intended to promote development such as the development of the western part of the Mainland.

- **To sustain our development or to achieve a sustainable development:**
  - The former basically means continuous economic development whereas the latter needs to take into account also the impacts of development on our environment and society.
**Road or railway system:**

- Hong Kong is tiny and Mainland is vast, a situation similar to the United Kingdom (UK) and the Europe continent. It is worth to understand why UK relies on the railway system instead of a road system to link itself with the Europe continent.

- The opening up of Hong Kong through a road system means that we need to cope with a great influx of vehicles from the Mainland. We need to consider whether we are able or whether there is a limit for us to cope with it taking into account its significant impacts on our transport network, environment (such as air quality and noise pollution problems) and society (such as accident rates, complexity of the accident insurance coverage, wages and jobs in the transportation and related industries etc.). In addition, to rely on the road system and at the same time to resolve the environmental problems, we need to turn our vehicles into something cleaner like those cars in Paris. Are we able to achieve that?

- The UK’s example to rely on railway system is worth considering. Can we rely on quiet railway system or speed train system as the backbone of our transport system, connecting ourselves with the rest of the PRD and the Mainland?

- To cope with the ever-increasing cross-boundary traffic flow, the above are some options we can choose from. While considering the cross-boundary transport links, Government should seriously take into account the impacts of large influx of vehicles from the Mainland on Hong Kong and convey such worries to the Mainland authority. Government should also seek to open the dialogue with the National Railway authority to incorporate Hong Kong as a key node in the national rail grid.
Public Forum on 20.12.2003

Speaker: Dr. Chan Man Hung
Topic: Cross-boundary Interactions and their Implications on Strategic Planning

- Guangzhou according to the plan of Mainland is the ‘dragon head’ city of the Pearl River Delta (PRD) Region.

- With the completion of the strategic transport infrastructure by the end of this decade, Guangzhou can have access to many PRD cities within 1-2 hours, access to Changsha (in Hunan) within 3 hours and to Wuhan (in Hubei) within 4 hours.

- Guangzhou will be the core of a megalopolis. Development of automobile industry in Guangzhou will further enhance the economic development of the city as well as the region. Hong Kong should improve her transport connection to this prosperous region e.g. developing the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link. Otherwise, Hong Kong will be a cul-de-sac and this will adversely impact on the people and cargo flows.

- If Hong Kong is conveniently connected to other PRD cities, a question to think about is whether it will attract more Mainlanders to live in Hong Kong or will it draws local people away. In view of the cost difference, people might live in other PRD cities and work in Hong Kong. PRD cities like Shenzhen may be more preferred as the residing place.

- With the population become more mobile, the Administration should review the housing demand and provision of community and other facilities. Planning for better living quality is more important than housing development.

- A flexible and efficient cross-boundary transport infrastructure should be provided. The Hong Kong-Shenzhen Western Corridor is mainly for freight transport, the current phase of West Rail does not connect to the Mainland directly and the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge is mainly a road linkage, not railway linkage.

- The Administration should consider how to co-ordinate with development of other PRD cities in a complementary manner. There should be a division of functions.

- Exhibition facilities at the Lok Ma Chau Loop may not be able to compete with similar facilities in the PRD cities, as in most cases, these facilities are subsidised by the local Governments.

- University town has already existed in many cities in PRD. Development of such facilities will be much expensive in Hong Kong.
Speaker: Dr. Ng Cho Nam
Topic: Environmental Consideration in Strategic Planning

- The three major environmental considerations are (a) Sustainable Capacity; (b) Absorptive/Assimilative Capacity; and (c) Carrying Capacity.

- For Sustainable Capacity, Hong Kong is the 3rd most energy efficient economy in the world, due to the highly compact development and extensive public transport system. However, Hong Kong performs badly in food and materials consumption.

- For Absorptive/Assimilative Capacity, some systems have already been overloaded, notably, air and noise pollution in urban centres as well as air and water pollution at environmentally sensitive areas.

- One example illustrating the Carrying Capacity is the total number of winter waterbirds visiting Deep Bay. The peak was registered at 1995/96.

- The key environmental considerations for future development should be further improving our efficiency in using our resources and energy and ensuring pollutant loading and habitat destruction within the absorptive capacity of environmental sensitive areas. The key concerned areas include Deep Bay Catchment and Starling Inlet Catchment.

- Consolidation Development Pattern is more preferred.

- We should aim at lowering the development intensities.

- Regarding the location for new container terminal facilities, Southwest Tsing Yi is preferred as Northwest Lantau is an environmentally sensitive area and the water area off Northwest Lantau is an important habitat for Chinese White Dolphin.

- If additional cross-boundary transport connections need to be provided, the Administration should at the same time address the related air problems.

- No industrial activities should be developed within the Frontier Closed Area because of its ecological value.