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**GENERAL STATEMENT ON ROAD DEVELOPMENT BY
MR S DHANABALAN, MINISTER FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
IN PARLIAMENT ON THURSDAY, 17 MARCH 1988**

Transportation planning is an integral part of land use planning. The plan for the present network of expressways and arterial roads and the MRT was first conceptualised as part of the State and City Planning Study in 1967-1971. The plan will provide a good road and MRT linkage of all major traffic generators, such as residential towns, industrial estates and commercial centres. Transportation planning is dynamic. The plan has been constantly reviewed, updated and modified by subsequent studies to meet changing traffic demand forecast.

Since the early 1970s, the PWD has been implementing this ambitious road-building programme to provide an efficient road network for our people. The major portion of the programme has been completed. However, there are still a number of expressways and major road projects in the pipeline to be built. These will serve new areas of developments. To date 83 km of the planned 141 km of expressways have been completed. Besides these, many other new roads and road widening projects will also be undertaken. Some of the expressway projects would include Kranji Expressway (KJE), Kallang Expressway (KLE), and the remaining stretches of the Central Expressway (CTE), Seletar Expressway (SLE) and the Tampines Expressway (TPE).

* Speech was wrongly attributed to Dr Lee Boon Yang.

As a result of systematic planning and sound implementation of PWD's road development programmes over the last 10-15 years, our people are now able to enjoy a good transportation network. Our roads are now relatively free from congestion. The transportation plan for HDB new towns is fully integrated with the PWD's network of expressways and major arterial roads. When the major part of the expressway network completed by mid 1990s, our HDB new towns will all be served with good road linkages to Jurong and the city.

But there is a cost to all this. As a nation, about 11 per cent of our land has been taken up by roads. Road building has also caused sacrifices to those whose land is affected. (As pointed by the Member from Punggol), widening and realignment of existing roads are disruptive and cause much inconvenience to the public. However, in some situation we have little choice, for example, where the area is already quite built-up and there is insufficient land for a new road. This is the case for Upper Serangoon Road which is required to serve the on-going development in the north-eastern part of Singapore.

One would ask why can't PWD build viaducts or road tunnels instead of widening existing roads. The PWD has always evaluated different alternatives before a road project is implemented to ensure that it is the most cost-effective solution. Viaducts and road tunnels cost much more than surface roads. They are built only where the situation justifies the higher cost. For example, the city portion of the CTE is built in tunnels to reduce its environmental impact to the city as well as to reduce area of the prime land taken up by the expressway. Building a viaduct through the city was ruled out because of its adverse impact on the city environment.

The PWD has also used traffic management measures in the city to maximise the use of the available road space to improve traffic flow. A good example is the introduction of

the computerised traffic adaptive system for traffic lights which provide the "green wave" according to prevailing traffic flow. A third of the system is already in operation and the entire system will be completed by the end of the year. There are plans to extend similar systems to roads outside the city area.

Roads are not cheap to build. One kilometre of a six-lane arterial road can cost up to \$5 million, excluding land cost. Therefore, they should be put to optimal use. Indiscriminate parking and other inconsiderate acts cause obstruction to traffic flow and seriously affect the efficiency of the road system. The Government takes a serious view of such wanton disregard for other road users and will not hesitate to take strict enforcement action against the offenders.

Continuous road building and road-widening is not an answer to our transport requirements. Future road expansion especially within built-up areas will have to be carefully evaluated. Our overall strategy is towards more widespread use of public transport. Having spent \$3 billion on the MRT, we should make optimal use of it. Our bus system is being organised to dovetail with the MRT system. I would urge car owners to use MRT and buses for daily work and business trips and leave their cars for weekend leisure. This will help to relieve the pressure on our roads and expressways.

MINISTRY OF NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
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