



## **Joint Select Committee on Land and Physical Infrastructure**

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### **Summary of Proceedings**

#### **Public Hearing Summary**

*Tuesday March 13, 2018 at 10:12 a.m.*

#### **Topic:**

An inquiry into the establishment of systems for the maintenance of drainage and roadways.

#### **Objectives of the Inquiry:**

- 1. To examine the current systems in place for the maintenance of drainage and roadways;**
- 2. To examine the programmes and initiatives geared towards the maintenance of drainage and roadways in order to determine whether they are adequate and effective; and**
- 3. To determine the challenges associated with the maintenance of drainage and roadways.**

**Venue:** The J. Hamilton Maurice Room, Mezzanine Floor, Office of the Parliament, Tower D, The Port of Spain International Waterfront Centre, 1A Wrightson Road, Port-of-Spain.

#### **Committee Members:**

The following Committee Members were present:

- Mr. Stephen Creese – Chairman
- Mr. Rushton Paray, MP – Vice Chairman
- Mrs. Glenda Jennings-Smith, MP – Member
- Mr. Darryl Smith, MP – Member
- Dr. Lovell Francis, MP – Member
- Mr. Nigel De Freitas - Member

#### **WITNESSES WHO APPEARED:**

##### **➤ Officials from the Ministry of Works and Transport:**

- Mrs. Sonia Francis-Yearwood - Permanent Secretary (Ag.);

- Ms. Dhanmattee Ramdath - Deputy Permanent Secretary (Ag.);
- Mr. Parasram Ramlogan - Chief Technical Officer (Ag.);
- Mr. Marvin Gonzales - Director, Legal Services Unit;
- Mr. Mahadeo Jagdeo - Director, Maintenance Division;
- Mr. Navin Ramsingh - Director, Highways Division (Ag.);
- Mr. Hayden Phillip - Programme Director, PURE;
- Mr. Rabindranath Jogie - Director, Mechanical Services Division;
- Mrs. Candice Gray-Bernard - Director, Coastal Protection Unit;
- Mr. Kerry Sheppard - Chief Engineer, Maintenance & Construction;
- Ms. Paula Webber - Director, Drainage Division; and
- Mr. Adande Piggott - Traffic Engineer.

### **Key Issues Discussed:**

#### **Mandate – Ministry of Works and Transport**

- i) The genesis of the Ministry of Works and Transport (MOWT) in 1958;
- ii) The Ministry is the successor organisation to the Works Hydraulics Department;
- iii) The MOWT is responsible for providing public infrastructure and transportation for the social and economic development for the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago;
- iv) The aim of the MOWT is to effectively provide and maintain sea, air and land infrastructure;
- v) The core function of the MOWT;

#### **The Studies conducted or being conducted by the Drainage Department**

- vi) The studies conducted or being conducted by the Drainage Department include National Drainage Development Studies;
- vii) The MOWT has studies for most of the sectors; and
- viii) The Northwest Peninsula Study remains outstanding and will be tendered by the second quarter, 2018;

### **The status of Implementation of Recommendations of Studies**

- ix) Studies are implemented under the MOWT's development programme and PSIP Programmes once received; and
- x) Recommendations may result in considerable social upheavals and may involve moving whole communities.

### **The MOWT's Plan as it concerns Squatters**

- xi) The MOWT's Plan as it concerns squatters includes working with other agencies with responsibility for squatter regularisation such as the Land Settlement Agency (LSA); and
- xii) The MOWT provides technical advice even though squatting does not fall under its jurisdiction.

### **The reason for the recent potholes given available technology and International Organization for Standardization (ISO) standards**

- xiii) The remit of the MOWT as it pertains to roadways includes highways and in terms of drainage, main watercourses;
- xiv) The MOWT is sometimes incorrectly identified as the party responsible for all road and drainage issues;
- xv) The Ministry of Rural Development and Local Government (MoRDLG) and the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Fisheries (MALF) also share responsibility for road and drainage issues;
- xvi) Potholes identified on roadways not falling under the purview of the MOWT; and
- xvii) The reason for the delays in repairing potholes.

### **The reason for the regularity and severity of floods experienced in 2017 in parts of South Trinidad**

- xviii) Many areas with drainage issues were identified as not being under the remit of the MOWT;
- xix) Drainage infrastructure not having the capacity to hold heavy rainfall;

- xx) A siltation problem that developed overtime is being addressed by way of a De-silting the Watercourses Programme; and
- xxi) Programmes were also developed for pumps and gates which the MOWT is seeking to put in place.

**The current conversation arrangement as it pertains to drainage and roadways amongst the entities**

- xxii) The MOWT has been seeking to closely liaise with counterparts in different departments, to put resources together to address road and drainage issues;
- xxiii) A large number of complaints received via the MEND Hotline are related to the Water and Sewerage Authority (WASA) and Municipal and City Corporations;
- xxiv) The decision was taken by the MOWT to pass on information received via the MEND Hotline to the respective entities;
- xxv) The approach taken by MOWT to pool resources amongst the entities where at least three (3) Corporations are on board with the initiative; and
- xxvi) The MOWT indicated that it is not impossible or too expensive to build roads that last.

**The issue of axel loading**

- xxvii) The lack of enforcement of the law as it pertains to the use of roads by trucks and heavy vehicles;
- xxviii) The uncertainty over whether the agricultural access roads were designed to be used by trucks;
- xxix) The need for collaboration including the Ministry of Planning and Development (MOPD) and the development of a National Plan; and
- xxx) The need for the commuter system to be sorted.

**The methodology or mechanism for monitoring roads**

- xxxi) The MOWT's system of monitoring roads involves supervisors passing by and identifying all road defects; and
- xxxii) The MOWT has to prioritise due to inadequate resources.

### **The Status of Ongoing Discussions with WASA**

- xxxiii) WASA submits its programme to the MOWT and any additional works;
- xxxiv) The MOWT is pursuing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with WASA as it concerns the standard of repairs; and
- xxxv) The MOWT will also be engaging in new techniques that will be shared with WASA.

### **Forthcoming or Current Initiatives to Improve Usage of Roads**

- xxxvi) The forthcoming or current initiatives to improve usage of roads include pulling over trucks that exceed the weight limit and increasing the number of Licensing Officers to enforce the law;
- xxxvii) The forthcoming or current technology the MOWT is pursuing to target usage;
- xxxviii) The responsibility of the Trinidad and Transport Board to regulate vehicles over 15,000 kg or 15 tonnes on roads;
- xxxix) The fact that there is no other way but to weigh vehicles to determine the weight of axels; and
- xl) The need to make special allowances for some overloaded trucks to use Agricultural Access Roads in order to facilitate industry and development.

### **The Attendance of the MOWT and WASA at Co-ordinating Meetings**

- xli) The MOWT has been attending co-ordinating meetings and is trying to make attendance more regular; and
- xlii) The MOU will address WASA's attendance to ensure their regularity at Coordinating meetings.

### **The Standard Procedure at the MOWT to Repair Potholes**

- xliii) The standard procedure to repair potholes takes into consideration the type of road to be repaired; and
- xliv) There are two (2) types: engineered roads which can go up to ten (10) years without a pothole, and evolved roads, which are more difficult to maintain due to the soil type and terrain and can last two (2) to three (3) years until being repaved.

### **The location of Weigh Bridges**

- xliv) Weight bridges are located at Madonna Doyle & Associates Limited (MDA) building, Gordon Street Port of Spain and Golconda;
- xlvi) Within a month the MOWT will be taking action against overloaded trucks in South, Trinidad;
- xlvii) The current fine for an overweight truck's is approximately \$1000; and
- xlviii) The MOWT will consider an increasing fines when it reviews the relevant legislation.

### **The effectiveness of supervision**

- xlix) The MOWT has human resource constraints and has started discussions with the Unions regarding the labour required; and
- l) The MOWT is short of Supervisors by 50% and has been making an effort to fill these critical positions.

### **The MOWT's aging fleet of equipment**

- li) The MOWT has an aging fleet of equipment comprising approximately 25% active equipment and 75% which are either not functioning properly and/or awaiting parts;
- lii) The need for funding to purchase new equipment; and
- liii) The issue requires a multifaceted approach since it involves obtaining information regarding the status of all equipment, approaching the Ministry of Finance for funding, and working with partner agencies to avoid duplication of resources.

### **The MOWT's plan to deal with road slippage**

- liv) The MOWT's plan involves a Bridges and Land Slippage Programme to address the backlog of land slips and the deterioration of bridges.
- lv) The shift in the authority of the MOWT to being management based has affected its ability to undertake works in the same capacity as in the past;

### **Factors which impact the selection of contracts for projects**

- lvi) These include past quality of work;
- lvii) For large projects, the Contractor has the responsibility to repair the defects. Smaller contracts are supervised by staff of the MOWT;
- lviii) Evaluations of each Contractor must be completed by a MOWT Engineer;
- lix) Contractors that fail to fulfil contractual obligations are blacklisted; and
- lx) The re-employment of contractors who have produced and continue to produce bad work is impacted by supervision and enforcement.

**The process at the MOWT which allows for the voices and complaints of the community to be heard**

- lxi) This process includes the district system, website and availability of Directors of the relevant Divisions for lodging complaints;
- lxii) The PURE Unit is the only unit with in-house design and project management capabilities which allows for feedback from the community; and;
- lxiii) The Unit conducts testing both in house and externally. ;

**An overview of the PURE Programme**

- lxiv) The projects for the PURE Programme are contracted by NIPDEC after which, PURE will take over the project; and
- lxv) The PURE certifies payments approved by the Permanent Secretary after which payments are forwarded to NIPDEC.

**The lack of authority/ power of the Director of Drainage**

- lxvi) The power of the Director of Drainage is limited since there is no legislative framework for such under the Act which makes provision for action to be taken against illegal developer; and
- lxvii) The Ministry of Planning and Development (MoPD) and the Municipal Corporations are armed with the authority under legislation to deal with developers.

### **An update on the Coastal Erosion in the Guayaguayare and Mayaro areas**

- lxviii) A note was taken to Cabinet by the MOWT to incorporate a programme for Guayaguayare and the MOWT is seeking to pursue that programme provided that funding is provided.

### **Issue of Rouge Developers**

- lxix) The number of rouge developers before the court;
- lxx) All land developments require plans from the Town and Country Planning Division; and
- lxxi) Town and Country Planning Division will identify the type of approvals required be it from the MOWT or MoRDLG.;

### **View the Hearing:**

The hearing can be viewed on our YouTube page via the following link:

<https://youtu.be/aOOKfEj3Tp0>

### **Contact Information:**

You may contact the Committee's Secretary at [jsclpi@tparliament.org](mailto:jsclpi@tparliament.org) or 624-7275 Ext. 2828.

*Committees Unit*

*March 13<sup>th</sup>, 2018*