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LegCo Panel on Transport

**Subcommittee on matters relating to the
implementation of railway development projects**

**Background brief on
Shatin to Central Link**

Introduction

The progress of the planning and construction of new railway project is being monitored by a subcommittee formed under the Panel on Transport. At the Subcommittee meeting held on 10 July 2001 when deliberating on the development right for the Shatin to Central Link project, members agreed that the Administration should be requested to consult the Subcommittee before a decision was made by the Executive Council on which railway corporation should be granted with the development right for the project.

2. This paper gives some background information on the Shatin to Central Link project.

Shatin to Central Link (SCL)

3. SCL is planned as a through running line between Tai Wai and the Central Business District of Hong Kong Island. It effectively comprises three elements, namely the Tai Wai to Diamond Hill Link, the East Kowloon Line and the Fourth Rail Harbour Crossing. The likely completion window for the SCL is 2008-2011.

4. The Administration has drawn up a Project Brief for the SCL, which lays down the essential requirements for the SCL, so that the two Corporations have a common basis to prepare their bidding proposals.

Conforming Proposals

5. The Administration has advised that it would decide on the SCL operator based on a like-for-like comparison of Conforming Proposals which meet all the requirements including alignment specified in the Project Brief. While Railway Development Strategy 2000 has also recommended a Victoria Park Option for SCL's alignment on Hong Kong Island, the Administration has specified that the Conforming Proposals shall be based on the Exhibition/Admiralty Option because this can provide a more direct route to the Central Business District and take shorter time to build. It is also estimated to cost substantially less by \$5-7 billion and therefore yield a higher rate of economic and financial return.

Assessment of Corporations' Proposals

6. The Administration has advised that it shall assess the Conforming Proposals based on assessment criteria which can be categorized into technical and financial aspects carrying equal importance. In board terms, the Administration will favour proposals with –

- (a) more convenient interchanges and accessible stations;
- (b) less land resumption, and less implications to environment, traffic, existing and planned landuse;
- (c) an earlier completion in whole and phases;
- (d) a lower average fare level;
- (e) a lower capital cost to build;
- (f) less funding support requirement from the Government; and
- (g) a higher ability to finance the project.

Non-Conforming Proposals

7. The bidders may also submit Non-Conforming Proposals. The Administration has specified in the Project Brief the minimum requirements for such Proposals such as the end destinations and the key interchange stations. Non-Conforming Proposals will not be considered before the assessment of the Conforming Proposals has been completed. According to the Administration, this will ensure that the choice of the Corporation to undertake the SCL project is based on an equitable, like-for-like basis. After the selection of the Corporation to be awarded the SCL project, the Non-Conforming Proposals submitted by that Corporation only will be evaluated, and considered further

only if the Non-Conforming Proposals perform better than the Conforming one but the Government is not obliged to accept any Non-Conforming Proposal. This is in line with the general practice of all Build, Operate and Transfer projects.

Public views

8. District Councillors and residents in different areas have expressed different views on the SCL project. The Ma On Shan sector has called for early completion of the section from Tai Wai to Diamond Hill and suggested that this could be achieved by awarding this link to Kowloon-Canton Railway Corporation direct. On the other hand, the Kowloon City District has called for early completion of the East Kowloon Line and suggested that this could be achieved by delinking this from the Tai Wai to Diamond Hill Link and by direct award to MTR Corporation Limited. Both groups of the sectoral interests have also pressed for specifying explicitly in the terms of bidding an earlier completion date for their concerned sections of the SCL. For the Fourth Rail Harbour Crossing, the two landing options on Hong Kong Island (i.e. Exhibition and Victoria Park) have their own supporters.

9. The sectoral interests have also proposed a number of additional stations, including Hin Keng, San Po Kong, Whampoa and some others at the existing population centres in Kowloon City and Ho Man Tin.

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