

**For discussion**

**Legislative Council Panel on Transport**

**Route 7, South Hong Kong Island Line  
and West Hong Kong Island Line**

**INTRODUCTION**

This paper serves to update Members on the progress of the development of the Route 7 and the South Hong Kong Island Line (SIL) and West Hong Kong Island Line (WIL).

**BACKGROUND**

2. After considering the proposals submitted by the MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL) on the Island Line Extensions (ILE) and SIL and also the review on Route 7 vis-a-vis the SIL, the Executive Council (ExCo) decided on 21 January 2003 that -

- (i) MTRCL should be asked to proceed with further planning on the West Hong Kong Island Line (WIL) Phase 1 from Sheung Wan to Belcher of the ILE including a possible link with the SIL;
- (ii) Development of SIL should be considered along with Route 7. The planning of Route 7 would be kept under review; and
- (iii) MTRCL should be asked to examine modifications to its preliminary proposal on SIL with a view to arriving at a more cost effective option, in particular options in railway technology.

3. The following sections report the latest development of the Route 7, SIL and WIL since the above ExCo decision.

## **SIL and WIL**

4. We have agreed with the MTRCL that there should be substantial benefits in integrating the development of the SIL and WIL Phase 1, and they have commissioned a study to develop various schemes for integrating the two railway lines.

5. The main objective of the MTRCL study is to develop an optimum railway scheme which will serve the western and southern districts, interchange conveniently with the existing railway network on the northern side of Hong Kong Island, and help relieve the traffic congestion within the central business areas. The study will also explore available new railway technology to optimize the cost and economic benefits of the railway. As part of the study, the impact of the SIL/WIL on other modes of transport will also be evaluated.

6. As of October 2003, the study has reached the stage of options study in which some of the most promising alignment options and railway systems have been selected for further evaluation. The progress of study in specific areas is briefly outlined in the following paragraphs -

### **a. Railway System**

7. Based on the latest population and employment forecast issued by Government, the estimated ultimate peak hour patronage of the SIL/WIL in 2016 is around 20 000 passengers, which is about one quarter of the peak hour capacity of the existing MTR urban lines of 85 000 passengers. A medium capacity railway system will be more cost effective in handling this demand, rather than the more expensive heavy rail system used on the existing MTR and KCR.

8. It is anticipated that the SIL/WIL will employ trains of shorter lengths and will require smaller platforms and stations. The use of a medium capacity railway system will also incur less operating and maintenance costs. Different medium capacity systems currently available in the international market are now being evaluated.

**b. Alignment**

Annex A 9. The original SIL and WIL are shown in Figure 1 at **Annex A**. The more onerous space requirement of the heavy railway type stations and tunnels as proposed for the WIL preclude the possibility of a Kennedy Town Station, should there be no Western District reclamation. Construction of the WIL on its present alignment on Des Voeux Road West would also be a major challenge in terms of maintaining effective traffic management and avoidance of public complaints. Efforts are now made to improve the SIL alignment so that it can also serve Aberdeen and provide better interchange for those passengers heading towards Kowloon<sup>1</sup>.

10. A number of alignment options like the one shown in Figure 2 at **Annex A** have been developed during the study to address the shortcomings of the original alignment of the SIL and the WIL. The engineering of these alignment options is now being developed to allow a more accurate assessment of constructability, patronage, costs, environmental and economic benefits and financial viability.

**c. Interchange**

11. The original SIL and WIL scheme proposed an interchange between the SIL and the WIL at Belcher and with Island Line at Wanchai. With the development of the alignment options, interchange stations at Sheung Wan and Admiralty are being carefully studied.

**d. Finance**

12. MTRCL's preliminary financial assessment suggests that the SIL/WIL would not be a financially viable project based on fare revenue alone, when considered from an investment point of view of the MTRCL. Nonetheless the project will bring along economic or indirect benefits. A study to quantify the benefits that the project may generate is being commissioned by MTRCL.

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<sup>1</sup> Cross-harbour trips account for around 30% of the total public transport trips of the Southern District.

## **Public Consultation**

13. Public views are being sought through the district councils and other avenues on the planning and design of the railway throughout the course of the study.

14. In September 2003, MTRCL reported to the Southern District Council, Central & Western District Council and Wanchai District Council on the progress of the study and obtained valuable comments on the preferred railway alignments from the Councils. It is noted that -

- (i) the Councils are in general supportive of the SIL/WIL proposal;
- (ii) the railway extension should also serve Kennedy Town and Aberdeen;
- (iii) the railway design should be compatible with the existing development character of the local community; and
- (iv) a more convenient interchange at Admiralty if technically feasible, would be preferred.

15. MTRCL has taken into account the views of the District Councils in the development of alignment options and will continue to hear the views of the community throughout the planning and development of the SIL/WIL.

## **Next Step**

16. MTRCL will continue to evaluate the shortlisted options based on technical, financial and social merits and identify the preferred option for recommendation in the project proposal.

17. It is anticipated that MTRCL will complete the study in early 2004 and will submit the project proposal to the Government by the second quarter of 2004.

## **ROUTE 7**

18. Route 7 is kept under review pending the review study of the WIL and SIL conducted by the MTRCL, the two alignments recommended in the Alternative Alignments Study for Route 7 are being protected administratively.

19. As the Western District Reclamation will not go ahead, we are looking into the possibility to adopt a landward alignment of Route 7 and to change the proposed underpass on the reclaimed land to a viaduct. Preliminary assessment indicates that if there is no reclamation in the Western District, a low level deck structure of some 400 metres long has to be erected over the water outside Kennedy Town. The technical feasibility and the operational aspects for this inland option are now under investigation. **Annex B** shows the revised alignment of the two recommended options at the Kennedy Town.

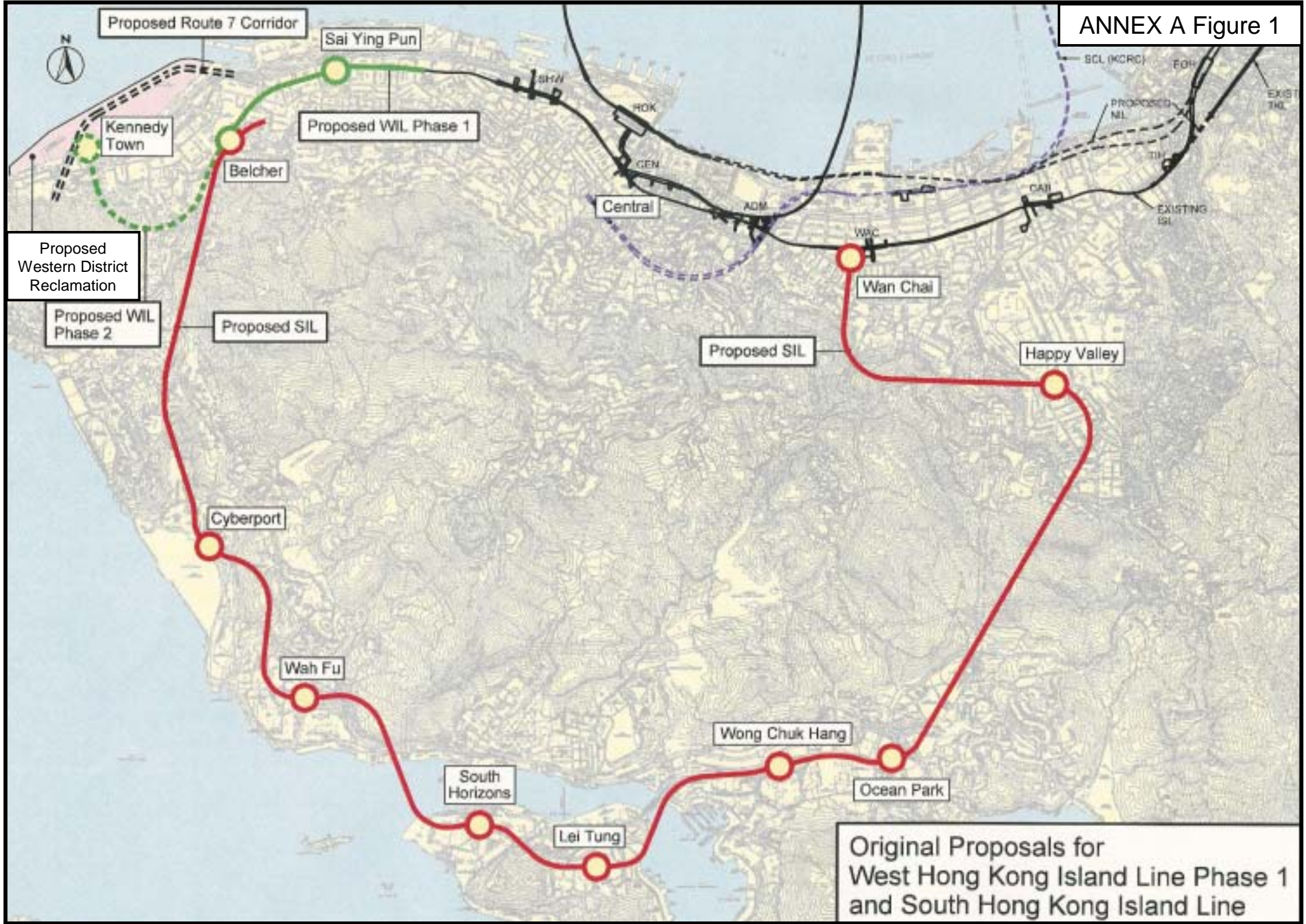
Annex B

20. In the meantime, the Interim Traffic Improvement Measures, which will improve the local traffic conditions along Pokfulam Road to a manageable level without Route 7, are now being carried forward as planned. Once we have established the technical feasibility for these measures by later this year, we will formulate a realistic delivery programme and take necessary steps to complete the works as soon as possible.

Environment, Transport and Works Bureau

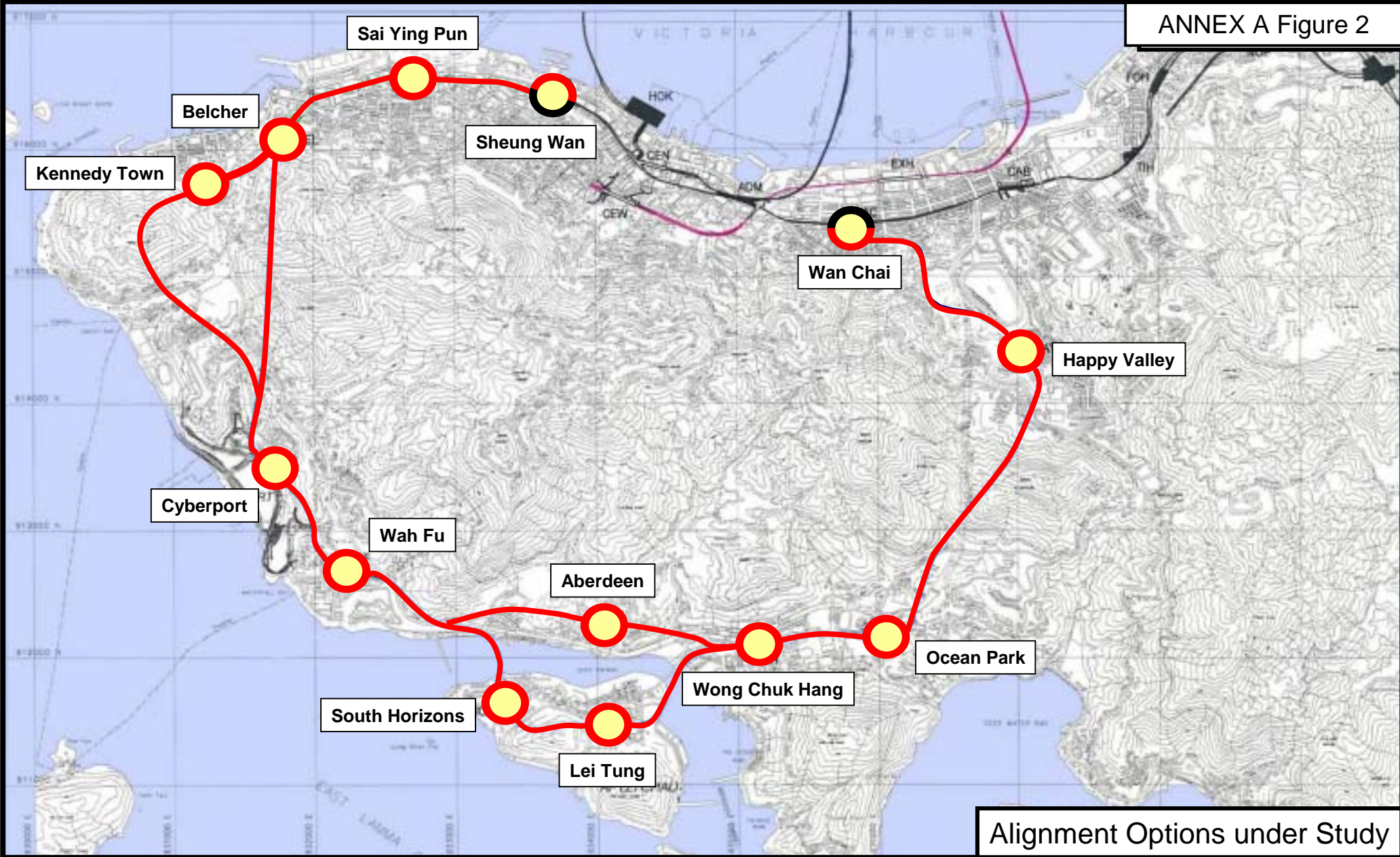
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Original Proposals for West Hong Kong Island Line Phase 1 and South Hong Kong Island Line





Alignment Options under Study



# LAYOUT OF ROUTE 7

Annex B

