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24 May 2004

By Fax & Post  
Fax no. 2136 3328

Dr Sarah Liao  
Secretary for Environment, Transport and Works Bureau  
Environment, Transport and Works Bureau  
10/F, Citibank Tower  
3 Garden Road  
Hong Kong

Dear Dr Liao

Re: Objection to Scheme for KCRC Kowloon Southern Link (the "Scheme")  
As referred to in Gazette Notification GN 1951 dated 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2004

On 24 September 2002, the Chief Executive-in-Council decided to invite the Kowloon-Canton Railway Corporation (KCRC) to proceed with the detailed planning and design of the Kowloon Southern Link (KSL) project. The planning of the KSL is now at an advanced stage, and likely to be finalized early next year.

The KSL will extend the West Rail from its terminal at Nam Cheong Station, through the West Kowloon reclamation to Hung Hom Station. It will provide an efficient east-west link in the southern part of the Kowloon peninsula and enable some one million population (in 2016) within West Rail 1-km catchment to have more direct access to the main employment/business areas in urban Kowloon. Upon its completion, passengers can interchange at Hung Hom with East Rail and the Sha Tin to Central Link.

The detailed design of the KSL is nearing completion. KCRC now proposes to construct only one station at West Kowloon and defer the Canton Road (CAR) Station in view of the engineering considerations and the extensive disruption to the public during its construction.

We hereby object to the Scheme pursuant to Section 10(1) and 10(3) of the Railways Ordinance on behalf of Canton Road Association, an association representing owners and operators of business premises along Canton Road. The grounds of our Objections are as follows:-

1. The traffic impact on the already congested Canton Road and the lack of alternate routing to access Canton Road is not acceptable. What other solution can government offer?
2. The pedestrians traffic impact as a result of the road works (shafts construction and grouting) and the possible further narrowing of the pavements will cause more congestion. Can government offer any alternatives?
3. The environment impact will affect not just everyday life of the people working and living in Canton Road, but will have a severe detrimental effect on the hotels, offices, food & beverage outlets and international shops and local businesses on the street.

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4. Canton Road and TST are world class tourist destinations as promoted by the Hong Kong Tourist Board, and have the largest cluster of international brands in Kowloon. Serious traffic disruption and an unpleasant aesthetic environment will drive away tourists and shoppers as it has from Salisbury Road and other areas recently and will tarnish Hong Kong's tourism reputation. What can government do to soften this detrimental impact?
5. Why should government propose this intense and disruptive work and ultimately construct only one station at West Kowloon and not construct the Canton Road (CAR) Station? If government is going to "bite the bullet" and do all these works, then why is a proper train station at CAR not created to immediately improve the already impossible congestion in the areas once the project has been completed? We urge the government to rethink its plans and construct the CAR Station as part of its primary plan. Any future construction of CRS means double suffering for Canton Road and we reserve the right for compensation.
6. The estimation made by KCRC on KSL should be further evaluated and scrutinized given the poor performance of the West Rail (widely recognized as "a white elephant") as projected by KCRC. Has the KCRC presented a truly accurate picture of KSL without the CAR station?
7. There is a lack of detailed information disclosed in the government gazette to better assess what is going on (e.g. what are the specific areas of impact and extent? What specific traffic will be in place during construction? What performance pledge can we expect from KCRC to ensure controlled impact on Canton Road and its environs? These are questions that need to be answered.
8. Has a "Sustainability Impact Assessment" been created? If so, may we see the results of said assessment?

May we remind the government that the damage and hurt to people's ability to earn a living, (particularly following the disruption of SARS and the poor economy of late) and to otherwise live and work in harmony in this part of the city erodes public tolerance and trust in the government to control the consequences of which are likely to be unpleasant.

While not elaborating too much due to lack of specific data, we feel that the cost-benefit of the project (using our tax dollars) is unclear, if not questionable, and requires clarification.

Thank you for your kind attention.

Yours sincerely

John A. Gizard  
Chairman