

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(1)952/04-05

Ref. : CB1/PL/TP

Panel on Transport

**Background brief on Route 4,
South Hong Kong Island Line and
West Hong Kong Island Line**

This paper sets out the background to the planning of Route 4, South Hong Kong Island Line (SIL) and West Hong Kong Island Line (WIL). It also summarizes the major views expressed by members and deputations at previous meetings of the Panel on Transport.

Route 4

2. In early 1998, the Administration obtained funding approval from the Finance Committee to undertake an Investigation and Preliminary Design Consultancy Study for the section of Route 4 (formerly known as Route 7) between Kennedy Town and Aberdeen at a cost of \$66 million. The scope of the study was to establish its land requirements, as well as the environmental, marine, drainage, traffic and other impacts on the areas concerned. The study was completed in August 2000.

3. In July 2001, the Administration put forward a proposal to proceed with an engineering review on the section of Route 4 between Kennedy Town and Pok Fu Lam. As for the remaining part of Route 4 between Pok Fu Lam and Aberdeen, the Administration indicated that it would be reviewed in the light of further development in the Southern District.

4. The Panel was concerned that the phased implementation of Route 4 could not help satisfy the transport needs of residents. The Panel passed the following motion at the meeting on 13 July 2001:

“This Panel strongly requests the Administration to construct Route 7 from Kennedy Town to Aberdeen mainly in tunnel form as soon as possible.”

5. In September 2001, the Panel received views from local bodies and green

groups on Route 4. There were divided views among the attending deputations on the development of rail and road infrastructure in the areas. The local organizations were of the view that Route 4 should be implemented without further delay as planning for Route 4 had been undertaken for a long time and there was an urgent need for increasing the traffic capacity in the areas. Other groups objected to the Route 4 project and suggested that it should be replaced by a rail link.

6. Having regard to the motion passed by the Panel and the views expressed by deputations at the meeting in September 2001, the Administration commissioned an “Alternative Alignments for Route 7 (now renamed as Route 4) - Section between Kennedy Town and Aberdeen - Investigation Study” in early 2002. The objective of the Study was to develop a number of dual 2-lane alignments for the route, as well as considering the option of upgrading existing roads.

7. In early 2003, the Administration briefed the Panel on the findings of the Study, including, inter alia, the recommended alignment options of Route 4 and other interim measures and full measures for improving Pok Fu Lam Road. The Administration pointed out that whilst Route 4 would be more effective in relieving road traffic, other less expensive alternative means could be considered which would bring the local traffic condition along Pok Fu Lam Road to a manageable level without Route 4. Details of the alignment options of Route 4 and the proposed interim measures and full measures for improving Pok Fu Lam Road are set out in the LegCo Brief issued under File Ref. ETWB(T)CR 11/1016/99. According to the LegCo Brief, the capital cost of Route 4 is \$10 billion (in September 2001 prices) and the construction cost of the Interim Measures for improving Pok Fu Lam Road is about \$50 million.

8. Subsequently, in view of the Government’s decision not to pursue the previously proposed reclamation in the Western District Development (WDD) area, the Administration had revisited the alignment of Route 4 at the Western District. Two new viaduct alignment options at the Western District as shown in **Annex A** had been identified to replace the tunnel/depressed road within the WDD.

9. Viaduct A, connecting the existing stub end at Route 4 near Sai Ying Pun, will run along the existing waterfront and take the form of a double decker along the New Praya at Kennedy Town. Viaduct B will take the form of an elevated deck running at a distance of about 100m to 150m from the existing waterfront. Visual impact will be an issue that requires careful consideration for both options. There is also a need to review whether the proposed elevated deck of alignment B could meet the Court of Final Appeal’s “overriding public need” test for reclamation.

10. From the Western District to the Aberdeen area, Route 4 can take two options. Option 1 will run in the form of a tunnel from the Kennedy Town area to Mount Davis and from there in deck structure along Sandy Bay to the Cyberport area which will then take the form of a depressed road, followed by deck structure again at Waterfall Bay and then a tunnel at the Tin Wan area until it is connected to the Aberdeen Praya

Road. Option 2 will run mainly in the form of a tunnel through the Mount Davis area to the Aberdeen Praya Road. The comparison of the two options under Route 4, the Interim Traffic Improvement Measures and SIL/WIL on road network performance (in v/c ratios at critical road sections) is set out in **Annex B**.

South Hong Kong Island Line/West Hong Kong Island Line

11. The Second Railway Development Study (RDS-2) completed in May 2000 recommended that the most effective configuration of SIL was a shuttle providing direct linkage from the main population centres of Wah Fu and Ap Lei Chau to Central Business District. RDS-2 had assessed that without substantial additional planned developments in the Southern District, SIL(RDS-2) would not be viable. In order for the scheme to achieve a financial internal rate of return of 4% in real term, an additional planned population of 170 000 and employment of 40 000 in the rail catchment would be required. SIL was therefore not included in the Preferred Railway Network under the RDS-2.

12. According to RDS-2, the design and timing of the WIL were dependent on the planning of reclamation and redevelopment in Western District.

13. To tie in with the Government's initiative to promote tourism development in Aberdeen, MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL) submitted a preliminary proposal on SIL(MTR) to the Government in June 2002.

14. After considering the proposals submitted by the MTRCL on the Island Line Extensions (ILE) and SIL and also the review on Route 4 vis-a-vis the SIL, the Executive Council decided on 21 January 2003 that –

- (a) MTRCL should be asked to proceed with further planning on the Western Island Line (WIL) Phase 1 from Sheung Wan to Belcher of the ILE including a possible link with the SIL;
- (b) 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; and
- (c) Development of SIL should be considered along with Route 4.

15. MTRCL conducted a WIL/SIL feasibility study in mid-2003 to develop a more cost effective railway scheme serving the western and southern districts. In the study, the MTRCL also evaluated the external benefits of the WIL/SIL project and the impact of the rail project on other modes of transport. MTRCL submitted a preliminary WIL/SIL Project Proposal to the Government in end March 2004.

16. MTRCL's proposed WIL/SIL scheme comprises the following three major

components:

- (a) a short extension of the Island Line from Sheung Wan to Sai Ying Pun;
- (b) a proposed WIL from Sai Ying Pun to Wong Chuk Hang via University, Kennedy Town, Cyberport, Wah Fu and Aberdeen with provision for future stations in Queen Mary Hospital and Tin Wan; and
- (c) a proposed SIL from South Horizons via Lei Tung, Wong Chuk Hang and Ocean Park to Admiralty with Happy Valley and Wan Chai Stations as optional.

17. In the Project Proposal, there are three options for the SIL to connect with the Island Line. One is a direct link from Ocean Park to Admiralty. The other options will include a station at Happy Valley in the network with two possible alignments, namely, either directly or through a Wan Chai Station to Admiralty. A plan showing the proposed alignment options prepared by MTRCL is at **Annex C**. The direct link option has the lowest capital cost and requires the least funding support. Project costs and rail catchment of MTRCL's revised WIL/SIL scheme options and the original proposal are presented in **Annex D**. Both WIL Phase 1 and SIL need Government's funding support.

Route 4 vis-à-vis SIL/WIL

18. The construction of Route 4 vis-à-vis SIL/WIL has been high on the agenda of the Panel. The Panel last reviewed the progress of the projects on 28 May 2004. Representatives from local bodies, green groups, professional bodies and transport trades were invited to the meeting to give views on the projects.

19. There are divergent views over the implementation of Route 4 vis-à-vis SIL/WIL.

20. The public transport trades have expressed strong reservation over the need, economic benefits and timing for the implementation of SIL/WIL, particularly in light of the recent performance of the West Rail. With SIL/WIL, public transport operators would be taken out of the market, given the limited population growth in the area. To address the transport needs of residents, Route 4 should be implemented instead.

21. Some members are also of the view that there are inadequate justifications to substantiate the implementation of SIL/WIL at the present stage. According to RDS-2, SIL is only one of the longer term railway possibilities due to inadequate catchment population and lack of significant additional development on South Hong Kong Island. In the absence of any major changes to these premises, the Administration should not contemplate this unviable railway project at the expense of existing public transport operators. In view of the grave concerns raised by public transport operators,

Government's decision to implement SIL/WIL must be accompanied by a well thought-out plan to re-vitalize the southern and western districts so as to bring about sustained growth in transport demand.

22. The local community however would like to see the early implementation of the SIL/WIL. The green groups and some professional bodies have also expressed the view that railway option is a better alternative to Route 4. Railway is more environmentally-friendly and would also facilitate the sustainable growth of the community. Traffic congestion in the southern district would be relieved upon the commissioning of new railway lines. On the other hand, construction of Route 4 would have substantial impact on the amenity value of shorelines in the southern and western parts of Hong Kong.

23. Some members also share the view that SIL/WIL should be implemented at once to address the transport needs of residents. The construction of SIL/WIL would also be conducive to further tourism development in the area. To address the grave concern expressed by the public transport trades on the impact of the new railway on their businesses, the Administration should assume a more proactive role in ensuring inter-modal co-ordination that could result in a win-win-win situation for the local residents, MTRCL and other road-based public transport modes.

24. On SIL/WIL, the Administration has pointed out that based on the recent performance of the West Rail, it would revisit the patronage forecast provided by the transport model so that the system configuration and project performance could be further validated. Also the Administration would examine the technical feasibility, environmental protection, passenger convenience, and the size of the funding gap to be bridged by the Government so as to ensure the best use of community resources among the many competing demands. There is also a need to examine the impact of the SIL/WIL on other transport modes.

25. Regarding Route 4, the Administration would continue with the planning of Route 4, and would endeavour to complete the Interim Traffic Improvement Measures as soon as possible to improve the local traffic conditions along Pok Fu Lam Road.

26. On 28 May 2004, the following motion was passed by the Panel:

"本事務委員會促請政府暫時擱置港島南、西鐵路的發展規劃，並重新評估港島南、西區的人口增長，以及發展南區成為旅遊／商業中心的計劃，在此期間則盡快研究並落實興建四號幹線(前稱七號幹線)，以應付該等地區居民的交通需求。"

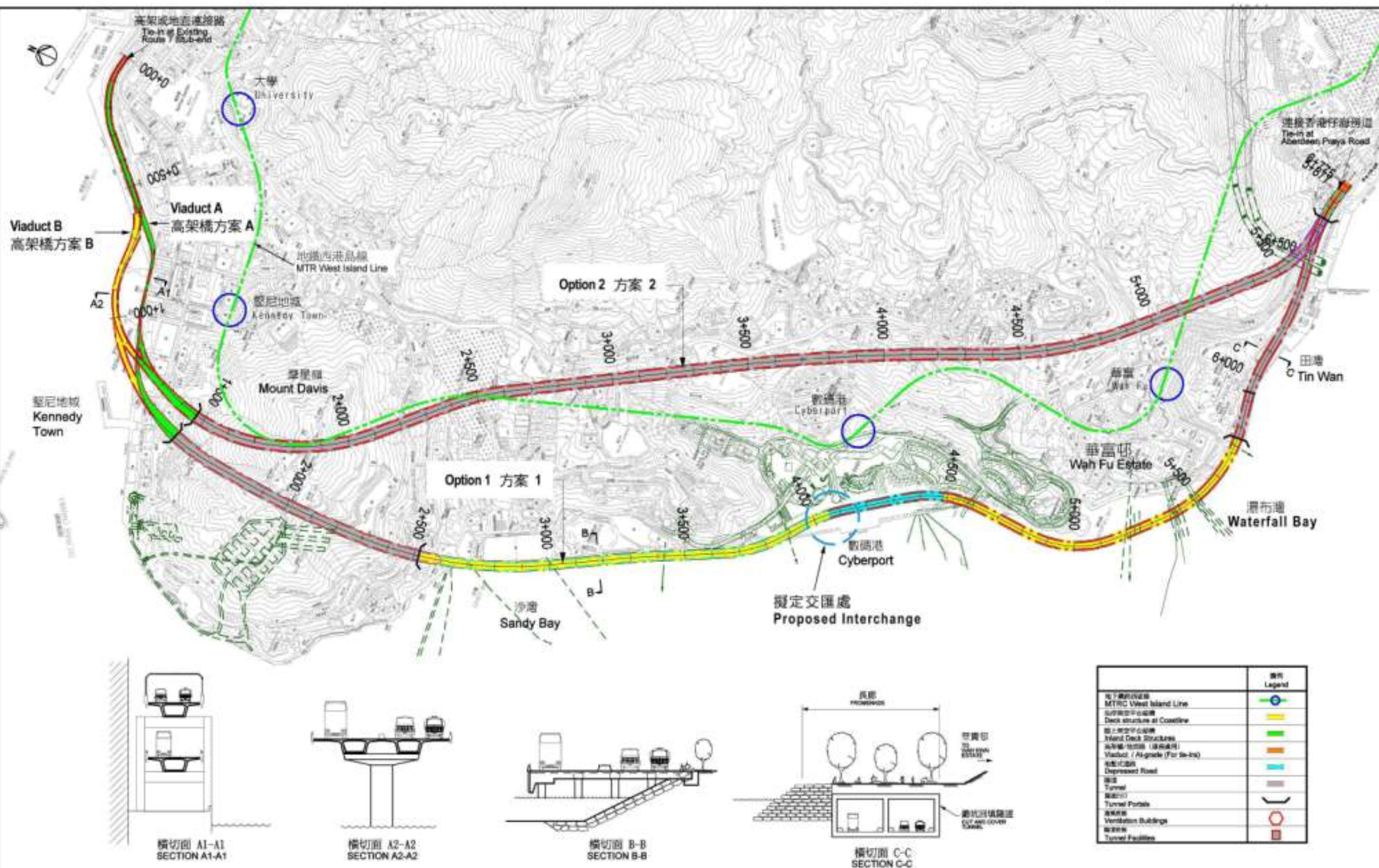
"That this Panel urged the Government to shelve any further development and planning for the South Hong Kong Island Line and the West Hong Kong Island Line pending its review on the latest population growth in the southern and western districts, as well as its

land-use planning to develop the southern district into a tourism/commercial centre. In the meantime, the Government should expedite its study and decision process for the implementation of Route 4 (formerly Route 7) so as to cope with the transport needs of the local residents." (Translation)

27. The Panel also requested the Administration to speed up the Interim Traffic Improvement Measures to improve the local traffic conditions along Pokfulam Road to a manageable level.

28. The minutes of the meeting on 28 May 2004 are in Annex E.

Council Business Division 1
Legislative Council Secretariat
21 February 2005



四號幹線
Route 4

無需填海方案
No Reclamation Scenario Options

**Table 2 - Performance of Route 4 and WIL/SIL on Road Network
(in V/C Ratio)**

Road	Scenario	Year 2016
Critical Section of Pok Fu Lam Road (between Pokfield Road and Sassoon Road)	With Interim Measures only	1.1
	Option 1 of Route 4	0.8
	Option 2 of Route 4	1.0
	WIL/SIL	1.0
Critical Section of Victoria Road (between Cadogan Street and Mt Davis Road)	With Interim Measures only	0.7
	Option 1 of Route 4	0.4
	Option 2 of Route 4	0.6
	WIL/SIL	0.5
Aberdeen Tunnel	With Interim Measures only	1.2
	Option 1 of Route 4	1.1
	Option 2 of Route 4	1.1
	WIL/SIL	1.1
Route 4	Option 1 of Route 4	0.5
	Option 2 of Route 4	0.4

Notes -

1. All the above v/c ratios have assumed Interim Measures at Pok Fu Lam Road in place.
2. The capacity constraint of Aberdeen Tunnel is mainly due to the tailback problem of the road network in its downstream areas in Wanchai and Causeway Bay. Upon completion of Central – Wanchai Bypass and Island Eastern Corridor Link, there would be general relief in the downstream road network and thus enhance the throughput of Aberdeen Tunnel. The v/c ratios for Aberdeen Tunnel have already assumed the Central – Wanchai Bypass and Island Eastern Corridor Link in place.

西港島綫及南港島綫路綫

West Island Line and South Island Line Alignments

附件C
Annex C

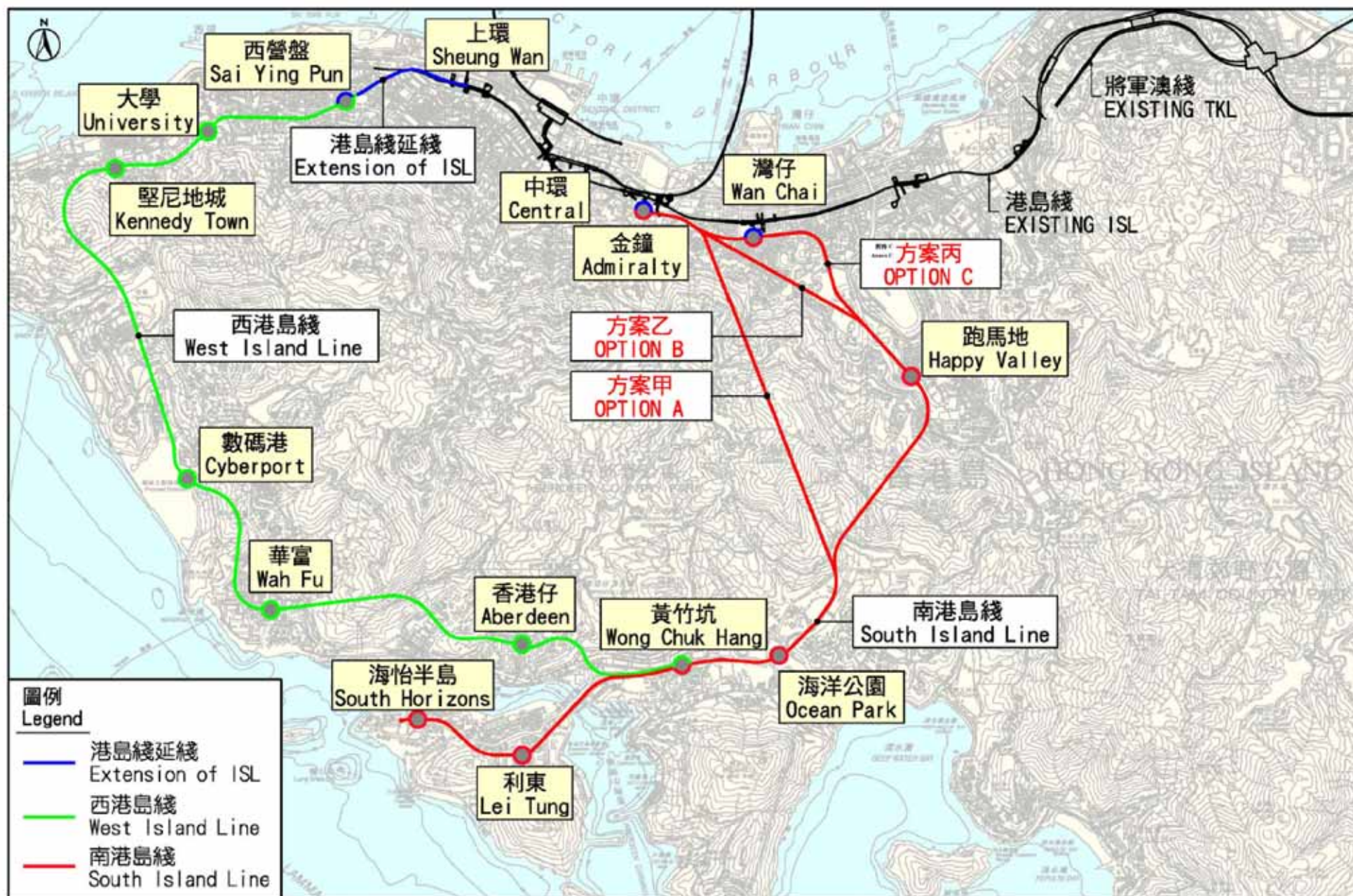


Table 1 - Project Cost and Rail Catchment

		WIL/SIL (2004 Proposal)			WIL and SIL (2002 Proposal)
		Option A	Option B	Option C	
Project Cost (\$ billion in 2003 December prices)		14.6	15.5	16.6	19.3
Additional Rail Catchment in 2016 due to WIL and SIL	Population	351 000	372 000	372 000	338 000
	Employment	141 000	151 000	151 000	140 000
	Total	492 000	523 000	523 000	478 000

Note: Option A - Direct link from Ocean Park to Admiralty

B - With Happy Valley Station and then directly to Admiralty

C - With both Happy Valley and Wanchai Stations

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(1)2408/03-04
(These minutes have been seen
by the Administration)

Ref : CB1/PL/TP/1

Panel on Transport

**Minutes of meeting held on
Friday, 28 May 2004, at 10:00 am
in the Chamber of the Legislative Council Building**

Members present : Hon LAU Kong-wah, JP (Chairman)
Hon Andrew CHENG Kar-foo (Deputy Chairman)
Dr Hon David CHU Yu-lin, JP
Ir Dr Hon Raymond HO Chung-tai, JP
Hon Mrs Selina CHOW LIANG Shuk-yee, GBS, JP
Hon CHAN Kwok-keung, JP
Hon Andrew WONG Wang-fat, JP
Hon LAU Chin-shek, JP
Hon Miriam LAU Kin-yee, JP
Dr Hon TANG Siu-tong, JP
Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, JP
Hon Albert CHAN Wai-yip
Hon LEUNG Fu-wah, MH, JP
Hon WONG Sing-chi
Hon LAU Ping-cheung

Non-Panel Members : Hon CHAN Yuen-han, JP
attending Dr Hon YEUNG Sum

Members absent : Hon Albert HO Chun-yan
Hon TAM Yiu-chung, GBS, JP
Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, JP

Public Officers attending : Agenda items IV and V

Miss Margaret FONG
Acting Permanent Secretary for the Environment, Transport and Works

Mr Raymond HO
Principal Assistant Secretary for the Environment, Transport and Works (T7)

Mr WAN Man-lung
Principal Government Engineer/Railway Development Highways Department

Mr Peter MORGAN
Chief Engineer/Major Works Highways Department

Agenda item VI

Ms Annie CHOI
Deputy Secretary for the Environment, Transport and Works

Ms Elizabeth TAI
Principal Assistant Secretary for the Environment, Transport and Works (T2)

Mr LAU Wai-choi
Acting Chief Engineer/Major Works Highways Department

Mr Y M LEE
Chief Engineer/Traffic Engineering Transport Department

Attendance by invitation : Agenda items IV and V

MTR Corporation Limited

Mr Malcolm GIBSON
Chief Design Manager

Ms Maggie SO
External Affairs Manager

HK Public Light Bus Owner & Driver Association

石國強先生
顧問

林大華先生
常務會長

的士、小巴權益關注大聯盟

Mr LAI Ming-hung
Chairman

Hong Kong Scheduled (GMB) Licensee Association

Mr WONG Man-kit
Chairman

Mr Vincent WONG
Committee Member

The Environmental Light Bus Alliance

Mr CHAN Man-chun
Spokesman

The Kowloon Taxi Owners Association Ltd.

任太平先生
President

的士權益協會

劉劍魂先生
President

香港計程車會

黎海平先生
Representative

薄扶林小巴商會

黃潤輝先生
Representative

The Taxi Operators Association Ltd.

梁平寬先生
Representative

United Friendship Taxi owners & Drivers Association Ltd.

Mr AU-YEUNG Kan
Chairman

Hong Kong Kowloon Taxi & Lorry Owners Association Ltd.

Mr TSE Ming-chue
Representative

Mr MING Wah-loi
Representative

The Hong Kong Taxi and Public Light Bus Association Ltd.

Mr TRAN Chau
Representative

林康頌先生
Representative

G.M.B. Maxicab Operators General Association Ltd.

Mr HIEW Moo-siew
Chairman

Citybus Limited/New World First Bus Services Limited

Mr Lyndon REES
Managing Director

Mr William CHUNG
Head of Operations & Engineering

運輸業界關注鐵路發展大聯盟

Mr LI Wing-sang
Representative

Mixer Truck Drivers Association

陳三才先生
Secretary

Central & Western District Council (C&WDC)

Mr CHAN Tak-chor
Chairman, C&WDC

Dr LAI Kwok-hung
Chairman, Traffic & Transport Committee of C&WDC

Hong Kong Institute of Planners

Ms Iris TAM Siu-ying
Representative

Civic Exchange

Mr SIMON K W NG
Research Fellow

Ms Veronica GALBRAITH
Researcher

Save Our Shorelines

Mr John BOWDEN
Chairman

Mr Peter BARRETT
Committee Member

The Centre of Urban Planning & Environmental
Management, The University of Hong Kong

Mr Bill BARRON
Associate Professor

Non-Academic Staff Association,
The University of Hong Kong

Mr Stephen CHAN
President

Mr CHENG Yuen-kong
Member (Executive Committee)

Director of Land Development, The University of Hong Kong

Mr Malcolm MCGRAW

Individual

Ms Gianni MOK

Clear the Air

Mr Christian MASSET
Chairman

Ms Annelise CONNELL
Representative

Individual

黎福順先生

Caritas Mok Cheung Sui Ken Community Centre
Community Ambassador Team

Mr LUK Tat-wing
Member

Individual

Ms LAU Chun-sin

南區民生促進會

陳子陞先生
Representative

Ocean Park Hong Kong

Mr Thomas MEHRMANN
Chief Executive

Mr Matthias LI
Deputy General Manager

Construction Site Workers General Union

吳海清先生
Vice Chairman

Clerk in attendance : Mr Andy LAU
Chief Council Secretary (1)2

Staff in attendance : Ms Alice AU
Senior Council Secretary (1)5

Miss Winnie CHENG
Legislative Assistant 5

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- I Confirmation of minutes and matters arising**
(LC Paper No. CB(1)1911/03-04 - Minutes of meeting held on 23 April 2004)

The minutes of meeting held on 23 April 2004 were confirmed.

- II Information papers issued since last meeting**
(LC Paper No. CB(1)1664/03-04(01) - Administration's response to the submission from Taxi & PLB Concern Group (LC Paper No. CB(1)1542/03-04(01));
LC Paper No. CB(1)1671/03-04(01) - Administration's response to the submission from HK Public-Light Bus Owner & Driver Association (LC Paper No. CB(1)1577/03-04(01));
LC Paper No. CB(1)1826/03-04(01) - Referral from Legislative Council Members' meeting with Tuen Mun District Council on 29 April 2004

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- LC Paper No. CB(1)1845/03-04(01) - regarding the traffic impact on Tuen Mun Road upon the commissioning of Shenzhen Western Corridor and Deep Bay Link;
- LC Paper No. CB(1)1846/03-04(01) - Submission dated 13 May 2004 from a member of the public expressing concern about the burden of transport cost on the travelling public;
- LC Paper No. CB(1)1919/03-04(01) - Submission from the Transport and Traffic Committee of the Sai Kung District Council on "Designation of elderly seats on public transport";
- LC Paper No. CB(1)1926/03-04(01) - Referral from Legislative Council Members' meeting with Southern District Council on 29 April 2004 regarding Route 7, South Hong Kong Island Line and West Hong Kong Island Line;
- LC Paper No. CB(1)1934/03-04(01) - Information paper on "Fortress Hill Pedestrian Link" provided by the Administration;
- LC Paper No. CB(1)1948/03-04(01) - Referral from Duty Roster Member on Students' travel subsidy and Sectional fares of franchised buses;
- LC Paper No. CB(1)1955/03-04(01) - Referral from Legislative Council Members' meeting with Sai Kung District Council on 1 April 2004 regarding development of road infrastructure in Sai Kung and Tseung Kwan O; and
- LC Paper No. CB(1)1955/03-04(01) - Information paper on "Report on Franchised Bus Operators' Review of Arrangements to Enhance Safety of Franchised Bus Operation" provided by the Administration.)

2. Members noted the above information papers issued since last meeting.
3. The Chairman drew members' attention to an information paper provided by the Administration on "West Rail service disruptions" which was tabled at the meeting (and subsequently issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(1)1986/03-04)). Members agreed that the paper would be referred to the Subcommittee on matters relating to railways for follow up at its forthcoming meeting to be held on 3 June 2004.

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III Items for discussion at the next meeting scheduled for 25 June 2004

- (LC Paper No. CB(1)1912/03-04(01) - List of outstanding items for discussion; and
LC Paper No. CB(1)1912/03-04(02) - List of follow-up actions)

4. Members agreed to discuss the following items as proposed by the Administration at the next meeting scheduled for 25 June 2004:

- (a) Hong Kong - Zhuhai - Macao Bridge and the Northwest New Territories Transport Review (Progress update); and
(b) Improvements to transport facilities and traffic arrangements at boundary control points.

5. Regarding item (a), members noted the related referral from Legislative Council Members' meeting with Tuen Mun District Council (TMDC) on 29 April 2004 (LC Paper No. CB(1)1826/03-04(01)), and agreed that representatives of TMDC would be invited to attend the meeting to present views on the matter.

6. Members also agreed that a special meeting would be scheduled in July 2004 to discuss the item "Policy on non-franchised bus services" as proposed by the Administration, and the item "Re-organization of franchised bus network on Hong Kong Island" as proposed by Mr LEUNG Fu-wah.

IV Meeting with deputations and the Administration to receive views on Route 7 (now renamed as Route 4), South Hong Kong Island Line and West Hong Kong Island Line

- (LC Paper No. CB(1)1953/03-04(01) - Submission dated 26 May 2004 from HK Public Light Bus Owner & Driver Association;
LC Paper No. CB(1)1912/03-04(03) - Submission dated 17 May 2004 from the Hong Kong Scheduled (GMB) Licensee Association;
LC Paper No. CB(1)1912/03-04(04) - Submission dated 21 May 2004 from the United Friendship Taxi Owners & Drivers Association Ltd.;
LC Paper No. CB(1)1912/03-04(05) - Submission from the Hong Kong Kowloon Taxi & Lorry Owners Association Ltd.;
LC Paper No. CB(1)1912/03-04(06) - Submission dated 24 May 2004 from Citybus Limited/New World First Bus Services Limited;
LC Paper No. CB(1)1912/03-04(07) - Submission dated 22 May 2004 from

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| | the Mixer Truck Drivers Association; |
| LC Paper No. CB(1)1912/03-04(08) | - Submission dated May 2004 from the Civic Exchange; |
| LC Paper No. CB(1)1912/03-04(09) | - Submission dated 19 May 2004 from Save Our Shorelines; |
| LC Paper No. CB(1)1912/03-04(10) | - Submission dated 18 May 2004 from the Centre of Urban Planning & Environmental Management, The University of Hong Kong; |
| LC Paper No. CB(1)1912/03-04(11) | - Submission dated 28 May 2004 from the Non-Academic Staff Association, The University of Hong Kong; |
| LC Paper No. CB(1)1912/03-04(12) | - Submission dated 20 May 2004 from Mr Malcolm MCGRAW, Director of Land Development, The University of Hong Kong; |
| LC Paper No. CB(1)1912/03-04(13) | - Submission dated 24 May 2004 from Ms Gianni MOK; |
| LC Paper No. CB(1)1912/03-04(14) | - Submission from Clear the Air; |
| LC Paper No. CB(1)1912/03-04(15) | - Submission dated 21 May 2004 from 南區居民黎福順先生; |
| LC Paper No. CB(1)1912/03-04(16) | - Submission from the Caritas Mok Cheung Sui Kun Community Centre; |
| LC Paper No. CB(1)1912/03-04(17) | - Submission dated 23 May 2004 from 南區民生促進會; |
| LC Paper No. CB(1)1912/03-04(18) | - Submission from Ocean Park Hong Kong; |
| LC Paper No. CB(1)1912/03-04(19) | - Submission dated 24 May 2004 from the Construction Site Workers General Union; |
| LC Paper No. CB(1)1912/03-04(20) | - Submission from the Wanchai District Council; |
| LC Paper No. CB(1)1912/03-04(21) | - Submission from the Southern District Council; |
| LC Paper No. CB(1)1912/03-04(22) | - Submission from 南區居民李焯文先生; |
| LC Paper No. CB(1)1912/03-04(23) | - Submission dated 22 May 2004 from the Hong Kong Dumper Truck Drivers Association; and |
| LC Paper No. CB(1)1912/03-04(24) | - Administration's response to the submission from Hong Kong Scheduled (GMB) Licensee Association) |

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7. The Chairman welcomed the attending deputations and individuals to the meeting, and invited them to take turn to present their views on the Route 4 (formerly Route 7), South Hong Kong Island Line (SIL) and West Hong Kong Island Line (WIL) projects. He also drew members' attention to written submissions from those organizations and individuals who were not available to attend the meeting (LC Paper Nos. CB(1)1912/03-04(20) to (23)), as well as the following submissions tabled at the meeting:

- (a) Joint submission dated 25 May 2004 from Southern District Council Members Mr LAM Kai-fai and Mr LAW Kam-hung (subsequently issued vide LC Paper No. CB(1)1985/03-04(02)); and
- (b) Joint submission dated 27 May 2004 from HK Island West Office of the Democratic Alliance Betterment of Hong Kong, Office of Hon IP Kwok-him, Legislative Council Member, and Office of Mr YEUNG Wai-foon and Mr CHUNG Yam-cheung, District Council Members (subsequently issued vide LC Paper No. CB(1)1985/03-04(03)).

HK Public Light Bus Owner & Driver Association
[LC Paper No. CB(1)1953/03-04(01)]

8. 石國強先生 of HK Public Light Bus Owner & Driver Association was strongly of the view that it was not justified to use a hefty \$7.5 billion of public resources to subsidize the proposed SIL/WIL project, taking into account the inadequate patronage to be generated by the population size in the southern and western districts. He stressed that the implementation of the project would have a severe impact on the unemployment situation in Hong Kong as the existing road-based public transport operators could no longer maintain viable operation while the employment benefits of railway operation was only limited. Expressing support for Route 4, he said that planning for the project had been undertaken for a long time. The Administration should undertake its previous commitment to deliver the project by 2016 so that the resources already spent on various studies for the project over the years would not be wasted. If the Administration decided to defer the project, it should clearly account for its reasons to the public and more importantly the local community.

Hong Kong Scheduled (GMB) Licensee Association
[LC Paper No. CB(1)1912/03-04(03)]

9. Mr WONG Man-kit of Hong Kong Scheduled (GMB) Licensee Association said that given the public interest at stake, the Administration should adopt a prudent approach in considering the request from MTRCL to provide funding support for the construction of SIL/WIL. Should this financially unviable project be allowed to proceed, this would mean that its future operation would require heavy cross-subsidy by

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other MTR users. Moreover, the resulting fare pressure would not be conducive to achieving the Government's policy objective of bringing down railway fares.

10. Mr WONG added that the Association was gravely concerned that the introduction of railway service would create unhealthy competition and hence, disturb the order of the public transport market in the Southern and Western areas. This could seriously undermine the interest of foreign investment in Hong Kong's public transport market. Considering all the above factors, the Association expressed opposition to the SIL/WIL project.

The Environmental Light Bus Alliance

11. Mr CHAN Man-chun of the Environmental Light Bus Alliance expressed serious concern about the impact of the construction of SIL/WIL on the operation of existing road-based public transport modes in the concerned areas including public light buses (PLBs) and taxis. According to the Administration's transport policy, railways should only be constructed to provide trunk service with feeder services to be provided by other public transport modes. However, SIL/WIL as presently proposed with its medium rail configuration was only a feeder to the existing MTR network, and would be competing directly with other public transport modes. It was incumbent upon the Administration to ensure the co-ordination of public transport services in Hong Kong so that each mode could have their respective roles to play and maintain viable operation. As the proliferation of railway development in recent years had already affected the orderly operation of the public transport market, the Alliance called on the Administration to shelve the project pending an overall review on the railway development strategy.

12. Mr CHAN also queried the assessment claimed by MTRCL that SIL/WIL would only create a small impact on the business of existing road-based transport operators. Having carefully studied MTRCL's proposal, the Alliance was not convinced that a complete picture had been presented as the Corporation had over-estimated the external benefits of the project while the important consideration of social costs to be borne by the community was not mentioned at all. The Alliance considered that a more comprehensive study on MTRCL's proposal should be conducted before a final decision was to be taken. In this respect, the PLB trade would welcome the opportunity to provide the necessary input to facilitate MTRCL's study.

The Kowloon Taxi Owners Association Ltd.

13. Referring to the performance of Airport Express Line (AEL), West Rail (WR) and Light Rail (LR), 任太平先生 of the Kowloon Taxi Owners Association Ltd. called on the Administration to carefully review the need, cost-effectiveness and timing of the SIL/WIL project. As the existing population in the southern district could not support a viable SIL, the Administration should defer its implementation until the population in southern district was well over 500 000. In the meantime, the Administration should

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proceed with the construction of Route 4 to meet the transport needs of the local community.

的士權益協會 (The Association for the Right of the Taxi Trade)

14. 劉劍魂先生 of 的士權益協會 (the Association) highlighted the need for the Administration to critically review its planning for railway development taking into account the latest changes in various planning parameters including the declining population growth. In order to ensure the prudent use of public resources, the Association called on the Administration to defer the financially unviable SIL/WIL project until a later stage. Instead, Route 4 should be constructed as a matter of priority.

香港計程車會 (The Association of Hong Kong taxis)

15. 黎海平先生 of 香港計程車會 (the Association) said that at present, the southern and western districts were already well-served by franchised bus, taxis and PLBs. In the absence of any factor that would bring about a sharp increase in population size, the Association did not consider it justified that SIL/WIL should be constructed as this would have a disastrous impact on the existing road-based public transport operators, in particular the taxi trade which was operating under very difficult conditions. Instead, Route 4 should be constructed to meet the transport needs of the local residents.

薄扶林小巴商會 (Pok Fu Lam Public Light Bus Association)

16. 黃潤輝先生 of 薄扶林小巴商會 stated support for the construction of Route 4 to alleviate the existing congestion in the concerned areas.

The Taxi Operators Association Ltd.

17. 梁平寬先生 of The Taxi Operators Association Ltd. said that he had no further views to supplement to those expressed by other transport trade deputations.

United Friendship Taxi owners & Drivers Association Ltd.
[LC Paper No. CB(1)1912/03-04(04)]

18. Mr AU-YEUNG Kan of United Friendship Taxi owners & Drivers Association Ltd. stressed that the Administration should learn from the mistakes of AEL, WR and LR, and put a halt to the planning and development of new railways in Hong Kong pending a realistic assessment of their need, cost-effectiveness and timing. Most importantly, he said that the southern district was already well-served by existing public transport modes. Given the scarce and dispersed population in the southern district, the construction of SIL was neither a viable nor sensible option. Citing the difficult operating environment faced by the taxi trade, he queried MTRCL's assessment that only 1% of the business of the taxi trade would be affected by SIL. The Association

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considered that the Route 4 project should be implemented to stimulate further economic growth in the southern district.

Hong Kong Kowloon Taxi & Lorry Owners Association Ltd.
[LC Paper No. CB(1)1912/03-04(05)]

19. Mr TSE Ming-chue of Hong Kong Kowloon Taxi & Lorry Owners Association Ltd. expressed opposition to the SIL/WIL project which was developed using out-dated planning data. Sharing the concern raised by other transport trade deputations on the need for the Administration to critically review its railway development strategy, he said that Hong Kong could no longer afford to build costly railways that failed to attract adequate patronage as in the case of WR.

20. Considering the matter from the passengers' point of view, Mr TSE relayed the Association's view that as the SIL/WIL project would not be financially viable, the passengers would have to pay high fares for the railway service. But by that time, most of the existing road-based public transport modes would have been forced to leave the market in the southern district, and the passengers would ultimately be left with no other choice. As the implementation of SIL/WIL would only create a losing situation for all parties concerned, the Association called on the Administration to shelve the project and proceed with the construction of Route 4 so as to provide a seamless road network on the Hong Kong Island.

The Hong Kong Taxi and Public Light Bus Association Ltd.

21. Mr TRAN Chau of the Hong Kong Taxi and Public Light Bus Association Ltd. stated that the implementation of the SIL/WIL project was unjustified given the inadequate catchment population in the southern and western districts. It would be wrong for the Administration to approve a financially unviable railway project that would eventually force many existing public transport operators out of business.

G.M.B. Maxicab Operators General Association Ltd.

22. Mr HIEW Moo-siew of G.M.B. Maxicab Operators General Association Ltd. shared other transport trade deputations' concern about the need for the Administration to review the timing of the implementation of SIL/WIL. Citing the declining business of the PLB and taxi trades after the opening of MTR's Tseung Kwan O Line (TKL), he was gravely worried that the situation would deteriorate with the opening of the Ma On Sha Rail scheduled later in the year. In order to ensure a reasonable "living space" for the existing public transport modes operating in the areas, the Administration should defer the SIL/WIL project until sufficient public transport demand that could support both road-based public transport operation and railway service was generated.

Citybus Limited/New World First Bus Services Limited
[LC Paper No. CB(1)1912/03-04(06)]

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23. Speaking on behalf of Citybus Limited/New World First Bus Services Limited, Mr Lyndon REES referred members to the submission from the two franchised bus companies, and expressed grave concern about the impact of the SIL/WIL project on the operation of the companies as well as the livelihood of their staff. He pointed out that at present, franchised bus operation in the southern district was only marginally viable. Should the proposed railway line be constructed, the companies would suffer from revenue loss as a result of passenger loss to SIL/WIL. This would have serious impact on the continuation of the existing level of services provided for the passengers because as many as 300 buses would have to be taken out of service, with more than 3 000 staff made redundant. Ultimately, the passengers would also suffer from a reduction in the choice of public transport modes.

24. Mr REES further said that taking into account the experience with WR's operation, the Administration must critically review whether the forecasted ridership of SIL/WIL as claimed by MTRCL was realistic. In view of the current budget deficit, he seriously doubted whether the Government's railway development strategy should be allowed to continue in its present form as the construction of unviable railway projects such as SIL/WIL was a luxury that the people of Hong Kong could not afford.

運輸業界關注鐵路發展大聯盟 (The Alliance of Transport Trades Concerned about Railway Development)

25. Mr LI Wing-sang of 運輸業界關注鐵路發展大聯盟 (the Alliance) said that the implementation of the SIL/WIL project had already aroused grave public concern. Referring to the public transport market in the southern district which was already well-served by various road-based transport modes, he said that the construction of SIL/WIL would no doubt upset the orderly operation of the market and forced many existing operators out of business. On the other hand, the local residents would also have to suffer from high railways fares as their choice of alternative public transport modes would have been taken away.

26. Referring to the experience of WR's operation which was adversely affected by a much lower than expected patronage, Mr LI called on the Administration to critically review the need, cost-effectiveness and timing of any future railway projects as outlined in the Railway Development Strategy 2000. Instead of spending more resources on futile railway projects in Hong Kong, the Alliance called on the Administration to accord priority to the development of the Regional Express Line to cater for the growing demand of cross boundary traffic. He reiterated the Alliance's stance that SIL/WIL should be shelved immediately and Route 4 be constructed to meet transport demand in the concerned areas.

Mixer Truck Drivers Association

[LC Paper No. CB(1)1912/03-04(07)]

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27. 陳三才先生 of Mixer Truck Drivers Association considered that the Administration should immediately expedite the implementation of various infrastructural projects including SIL/WIL and Route 4 so as to alleviate the hardship faced by the construction industry during the present economic downturn. Further actions should be taken by the Government to stimulate economic and population growth in Hong Kong.

的士、小巴權益關注大聯盟 (The Alliance Concerned about the Rights of the Taxi and Public Light Bus Trades)

[Submission tabled at the meeting and subsequently issued vide LC Paper No. CB(1)1985/03-04(01)]

28. Mr LAI Ming-hung of 的士、小巴權益關注大聯盟 (the Alliance) did not agree with MTRCL's claim that only the provision of SIL/WIL would be conducive to economic development in the southern and western districts. Instead, the construction of Route 4 could be used by all road-based transport modes and hence, could help meet the demand of both passenger and goods traffic. As such, he called on the Administration to carefully consider the views expressed by the transport trades before making a final decision on the SIL/WIL and Route 4 projects.

Central & Western District Council (C&WDC)

29. Dr LAI Kwok-hung, Chairman of the Traffic & Transport Committee, C&WDC, reiterated the long-standing call of C&WDC for the early provision of railway services in the western district so as to meet the transport needs of the local community.

Hong Kong Institute of Planners

30. Ms Iris TAM Siu-ying of Hong Kong Institute of Planners said that the Institute supported the provision of SIL/WIL on account of its environmental benefits to be achieved for the community as a whole both in terms of improved air quality and reduced noise disturbance. From a planning point of view, the provision of railway service could improve the accessibility and hence revitalize the development of the southern district, both as a major tourists' attraction as well as an industrial area.

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Civic Exchange

[LC Paper No. CB(1)1912/03-04(08)]

31. Mr Simon NG of Civic Exchange expressed strong support for the construction of SIL/WIL as railway was an environmentally friendly mass carrier. With its construction, traffic congestion in the southern district could be relieved. As far as employment impact was concerned, Civic Exchange acknowledged that there would be job losses among franchised bus and minibus drivers in the order of a few hundred. However, he highlighted some major findings of the study conducted by Civic Exchange on the matter, and stressed that new jobs would be created by the new railway in the range of 14 000 to 22 000, mainly as a result of hotel and commercial development in the Wong Chuk Hang area. He therefore urged the Government to take a balanced view on the matter.

Save Our Shorelines

[LC Paper No. CB(1)1912/03-04(09) and further submission tabled at the meeting (and subsequently issued vide LC Paper No. CB(1)1985/03-04(04))]

32. Mr John BOWDEN of Save Our Shorelines (SOS) drew members' attention to the publication "Shorelines: Hong Kong's Hidden Heritage" tabled at the meeting, which contained major arguments put forward by SOS against the construction of Route 4 as it would have substantial impact on the amenity value of shorelines in the southern and western parts of Hong Kong. Instead, SOS supported the construction of SIL/WIL as an alternative and more effective solution to the traffic problems. In brief, SOS invited members to consider the following in relation the provision of Route 4:

- (a) The construction of Route 4 would permanently cut off public access to the shorelines that were now extensively used by the people for amenity.
- (b) The non-reclamation scenario for the construction of Route 4 as presented by the Administration was cynical, disingenuous and misleading as it only noted the word but not the spirit of public opinion raised during the recent Central-Wanchai reclamation issue. Running a multi-lane expressway along the shoreline either on low or high supporting pillar was as damaging to the community as full-scale reclamation.
- (c) The parks and public amenities proposed at Cyberport would never materialize.
- (d) The green environment, peace and tranquility currently enjoyed by schools and hospitals in the area would be lost forever.
- (e) The value of properties along the Route 4 alignment would be reduced.

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The Centre of Urban Planning & Environmental Management, The University of Hong Kong

[LC Paper No. CB(1)1912/03-04(10)]

33. Mr Bill BARRON, Associate Professor, Centre of Urban Planning & Environmental Management, The University of Hong Kong, drew members' attention to the comparison between Route 4 and SIL as stated in his submission. He pointed out that SIL presented a far better option than Route 4 both in terms of cost-effectiveness as well as the overall benefits to be achieved for the community. He stressed that railway development was a trend all over the world as people realized the high price to be paid for the construction of roads which took up valuable space.

34. Mr BARRON added that while job loss was inevitable as a result of changes to be made for progress, the impact of railway development on other road-based public transport modes could be better managed through early planning and co-ordination. Some long-haul franchised bus and minibus routes could be re-deployed as feeder services. He believed that as the railway line would rejuvenate the southern district, the gains for the community would be far greater than the short-term job losses.

Non-Academic Staff Association, The University of Hong Kong

[LC Paper No. CB(1)1912/03-04(11) tabled at the meeting]

35. Mr Stephen CHAN of Non-Academic Staff Association, The University of Hong Kong, referred members to the findings of a questionnaire survey conducted by the Association which indicated overwhelming support for the construction of SIL/WIL to meet the transport needs of the staff and students of the university.

Director of Land Development, The University of Hong Kong

[LC Paper No. CB(1)1912/03-04(12)]

36. Mr Malcolm MCGRAW, Director of Land Development, The University of Hong Kong (HKU), stated support for the SIL/WIL project as its implementation would be conducive to future development of HKU by providing vastly improved transport connections to the university. This was essential to the long-term strategic development of the university. In fact, HKU was already planning the future expansion of its Main Campus and student hostels in the western district taking into account the major benefits to be accorded as a result of WIL and the dedicated University Station.

37. As regards Route 4, Mr MCGRAW said that HKU did not support the project as it would provide a barrier to the sea and the environment. Moreover, its construction and operation would have a detrimental effect on the university's major sports facilities and the staff quarters complex in the Sandy Bay area.

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Individual

[LC Paper No. CB(1)1912/03-04(13)]

38. Speaking as a local resident in the southern district, Ms Gianni MOK stated support for the construction of SIL/WIL. She suggested that Wong Chuk Hang should serve as a focal point in SIL's alignment so that the residents in the southern district would be transported directly to Admiralty for onward connection to the MTR network. This could minimize the undue impact during the construction works and reduce the overall project cost. She believed that as railway development would bring about new economic activities in the area, other road-based public transport modes could find their "living space" by serving as feeder to the railway system.

39. Stressing that most of the local residents in the southern district chose to live there because of its peace and quiet, Ms MOK called on the Administration and MTRCL to ensure that any adverse environmental impact arising out of the construction of the railway would be minimized.

Clear the Air

[LC Paper No. CB(1)1912/03-04(14) tabled at the meeting]

40. Ms Annelise CONNELL of Clear the Air stated strong support for the SIL/WIL proposal as railway was an environmentally friendly form of transport that could provide fast, reliable and efficient service to the public. If the Government really wanted to solve the traffic congestion problem on hand, it should formulate the right traffic management measures by implementing Electronic Road Pricing and start building SIL/WIL right now. By further adding road capacity, Route 4 would only serve to bring more congestion to the existing traffic jams from Aberdeen to Central, Wanchai and Causeway Bay. But with SIL/WIL, it could help free up space on existing roads for taxis, minibuses, goods vehicles and tour buses.

Individual

[LC Paper No. CB(1)1912/03-04(15)]

41. As a local resident in the southern district, 黎福順先生 expressed support for the SIL/WIL project to serve the transport need of local residents. He said that as the railway would take some time to build, the Government should work together with the affected public transport operators to see how their services could be modified to supplement the new railway service in the area.

Caritas Mok Cheung Sui Ken Community Centre Community Ambassador Team

[LC Paper No. CB(1)1912/03-04(16) tabled at the meeting]

42. Mr LUK Tat-wing of Caritas Mok Cheung Sui Ken Community Centre Community Ambassador Team referred to the long-standing request of local residents

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in the western district for the provision of railway service, and expressed support for the early provision of WIL.

Individual

43. Ms LAU Chun-sin said that as a local resident in the western district, she was supportive of the early implementation of WIL which could bring about substantial transport, environmental and economic benefits to the local community.

南區民生促進會

[LC Paper No. CB(1)1912/03-04(17)]

44. 陳子陞先生 of 南區民生促進會 said that the early provision of SIL/WIL could ensure commuters' choice in the southern district and in turn, help relieve the heavy burden of transport costs of the local residents. With the provision of railway service, it could help rejuvenate the southern district and stimulate further economic and tourism developments in the area.

Ocean Park Hong Kong

[LC Paper No. CB(1)1912/03-04(18)]

45. Mr Thomas MEHRMANN of Ocean Park Hong Kong said that at present, attendance at Ocean Park was seriously affected by acute traffic congestion, especially in public holidays. This congestion not only created gridlocks for long periods in the immediate vicinity of the Park, but also created frequent tailback traffic jams into the Aberdeen Tunnel upon entry and exit to the Park in the morning and the evening. As such, it merited urgent and detailed examination of how road access to Aberdeen and the southern district could be improved.

46. Mr MEHRMANN further said that the redevelopment of Ocean Park which was underway was pivotal to the regeneration of the Aberdeen Harbour area and would be one of the important "tourism offerings" for Hong Kong. As the redevelopment plans were being drawn up, it had become clear that no transformation could succeed without radical improvement of the transport infrastructure surrounding the Park, and providing access to the area. The redevelopment of Ocean Park, together with the ancillary and related development of the surrounding area, would significantly increase the transportation needs in/out of the Aberdeen area and present a bigger market opportunity to all forms of transportation means. As such, Ocean Park strongly supported the need for a responsible and effective infrastructure improvement for traffic management which would include SIL. The Park also supported road improvements that would, together with the railway line, preempt disastrous gridlock in the Aberdeen area towards the end of the decade.

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Construction Site Workers General Union
[LC Paper No. CB(1)1912/03-04(19)]

47. 吳海清先生 of Construction Site Workers General Union called on the Administration to make an early decision for the implementation of SIL/WIL so as to improve the employment situation of the construction industry.

48. The Chairman thanked the deputations and individuals for their views and suggestions.

V Meeting with the Administration on Route 7 (now renamed as Route 4), South Hong Kong Island Line and West Hong Kong Island Line

(LC Paper No. CB(1)1929/03-04(01) - Information paper provided by the MTR Corporation Limited; and

LC Paper No. CB(1)1912/03-04(25) - Information paper provided by the Administration)

49. At the invitation of the Chairman, the Acting Permanent Secretary for the Environment, Transport and Works (PSET(Atg.)) made the following brief comments in response to the views presented by some deputations/individuals on Route 4 and SIL/WIL:

- (a) The Administration had yet to make a decision on the SIL/WIL project. After MTRCL submitted its preliminary SIL/WIL project proposal in March 2004, the Administration had been assessing the proposal in detail. The Administration's preliminary observation was that two areas would require further study. Firstly, the Administration would need to review carefully the soundness of MTRCL's forecast economic internal rate of return (EIRR) to ascertain its accuracy. Secondly, a detailed study to assess the impact on the various public transport operators would be required.
- (b) As regards the Route 4 project, the Administration would continue with the necessary planning work. In view of the Government's decision not to pursue the previously proposed reclamation in the Western District Development (WDD) area, the Administration had revisited the alignment of Route 4 at the western district. Two new viaduct alignment options at the western district had been identified to replace the tunnel/depressed road within WDD.

50. Mr Malcolm GIBSON, Chief Design Manager of MTRCL (CDM/MTRCL), referred members to the presentation materials tabled at the meeting and highlighted the following in relation to MTRCL's project proposal for SIL/WIL:

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- (a) 80% of the proposed SIL/WIL would be underground. It would provide a safe, reliable and environmentally friendly mode of transport to the southern and western districts, and also serve as a convenient access to the rest of the MTR network. The Corporation believed that it would be a better transport alternative to Route 4.
- (b) About 85% of the existing population and employment centres in the southern and western districts would be directly served by SIL/WIL.
- (c) The patronage and revenue forecasts presented by MTRCL were robust and conservative. The Corporation had an obligation to its shareholders to adopt a prudent approach in all its proposed projects. The Corporation had assumed that full competition from other public transport modes would continue, and had taken into account the relatively low forecasted growth in the economic conditions.
- (d) However, the project was not directly financially viable and would require some form of public funding support. In return, the community and the Government would gain substantially through the improved economic activities brought about by the improved accessibility.
- (e) According to a comprehensive study conducted by the Hong Kong University, the total external benefits of SIL/WIL over the entire life of the railway were estimated to be in the order of \$40 billion, of which the direct financial benefits accruing to the Government would be \$4 to \$5 billion through increases in property taxes and rates.
- (f) Another major benefit of SIL/WIL was the creation of employment opportunities. The new railway line would generate some 5 000 temporary job opportunities during construction, and some 300 permanent jobs during operation. In the longer term, the new railway would create at least 20 000 new jobs in the hotel, retail, service and transport sectors through stimulation of economic activities.

(Post-meeting note: A set of presentation materials tabled at the meeting by MTRCL was subsequently issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(1)1985/03-04(05).)

Provision of SIL/WIL vis-à-vis Route 4

51. Emphasizing the long-standing request of the local community in the western and southern districts for the provision of railway service, Dr YEUNG Sum stated support for SIL/WIL as it was an environmentally friendly mass carrier and its provision was conducive to further tourism development in the area. However, he acknowledged the grave concern expressed by the public transport trades on the impact of the new

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railway on their businesses, and considered that the Government should assume a more pro-active role in ensuring inter-modal co-ordination that could result in a win-win-win situation for the local residents, MTRCL and other road-based public transport modes. In this connection, he suggested that consideration could be given to adjusting the alignment and station provision of SIL/WIL to allow other public transport modes to maintain viable operation through the provision of feeder services to railway stations.

52. Ms Miriam LAU however was unconvinced that adequate justifications had been provided by the Administration to implement SIL/WIL at the present stage. According to the Railway Development Strategy 2000, SIL was only a longer-term possibility due to the inadequate catchment population and the lack of significant additional development on South Hong Kong Island. In the absence of any major changes to these premises, Ms LAU considered it unfair that the Administration should contemplate this unviable railway project at the expense of existing public transport operators. Furthermore, she was skeptical about MTRCL's claim of substantial gains to be brought about by SIL/WIL through improved economic activities such as tourism and commercial development in the southern and western districts because all along, there was no commitment on the Government's part to support such developments. In view of the grave concerns raised by public transport operators, she stressed that the Government's decision to implement SIL/WIL must be accompanied by a well-thought-out plan to re-vitalize the southern and western districts so as to bring about sustained growth in transport demand.

53. Mr Albert CHAN opined that in view of grave public concern on the matter, the Administration should make an early decision on the provision of SIL/WIL vis-à-vis Route 4. Given the current budget deficit, it was unrealistic to create false hope among the public that both projects could be undertaken concurrently. While acknowledging the request from local residents for railway service, he was gravely concerned that MTRCL might have over-estimated the patronage forecasts of SIL/WIL. The same mistake made in the case of WR and AEL had already created a heavy burden on public expenditure. The Administration should therefore adopt a cautious approach in reviewing the project performance of MTRCL's proposal. Instead of relying on MTRCL's consultation, the Administration should also take a more pro-active role in soliciting the views of local community and the public transport trades on the matter.

54. Ir Dr Raymond HO stated that the provision of rail and road infrastructure was not mutually exclusive as they served different transport needs. With better planning, the environmental impact associated with road construction and operation could be managed. Hence, he considered that even if the Government should decide to implement SIL/WIL now, it should not preclude the provision of Route 4 at a later stage. Looking further ahead, Ir Dr HO called on MTRCL to make reference to overseas experience in the construction and operation of medium rail capacity railways so as to ensure the effectiveness and efficiency of the proposed SIL/WIL, as well as its integration with the existing MTR heavy rail network.

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55. Mr CHENG Kar-foo pointed out that as indicated by the volume/capacity (v/c) ratios of the critical sections in 2016 set out in Table 2 of Annex B to the Administration's paper, neither the implementation of Route 4 nor SIL/WIL could bring about significant improvements to the congestion of the existing road network. As such, he asked whether this might be indicative of the need for both projects.

56. Mr LEUNG Fu-wah said that the Administration should not try to push through the SIL/WIL project without critically reviewing its need, timing and cost-effectiveness, as well as the impact on other public transport operators. As illustrated by TKL and WR, the opening of new railways was no guarantee of commuters' choice as the Administration would seek to rationalize the level of public transport services provided in the areas. Moreover, the public would also have to shoulder the burden of an increasing number of loss-making railways in Hong Kong. Hence, he was strongly of the view that the Administration should defer the SIL/WIL project until there was further population growth and economic development in the southern and western districts.

57. Expressing serious doubt about the ridership forecasts as well as the estimate of total external benefits presented by MTRCL, Mrs Selina CHOW pointed out that the southern district was currently well-served by road-based public transport modes. In the absence of any major development, she considered it unfair that an unviable railway project should be pursued by sacrificing their interests. Moreover, she cautioned that in the case of the southern district, railway might not be the most cost-effective means to cope with the transport demand as the population centres were highly dispersed. Once a railway was built, other public transport modes would be forced to operate elsewhere. This would in turn limit the choice of public transport modes available. She therefore urged the Administration to base its decision on a balanced consideration of the interests of various stakeholders.

58. In response, PSET(Atg.) affirmed the Administration's commitment of maintaining inter-modal co-ordination under Hong Kong's public transport system with railways as the backbone and other public transport modes playing a supplementary role. As the Government's objective was to ensure reasonable commuters' choice, it would not undertake a railway project by sacrificing the interest of other public transport trades. PSET(Atg.) further said that the Administration was aware of the concerns expressed by the franchised bus, PLB and taxi trades about the impact of the proposed railway on their business. As such, the Administration considered that a detailed study by MTRCL to assess such impact would be required. She assured members that during the process, the Administration would gauge the views of the transport trades.

59. PSET(Atg.) added that the Environment, Transport and Works Bureau had been maintaining close liaison with the Planning Department (PlanD) in order to ensure timely provision of all necessary transport infrastructure to cope with various committed and new developments in the southern and western districts including those

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related to tourism development. At members' request, the Administration would advise after the meeting when PlanD's on-going study was expected to be completed.

60. PSET(Atg.) also said that the Administration had examined the ultimate peak hour patronage of SIL/WIL. SIL had a higher peak hour patronage than WIL. Preliminary assessment indicated that the peak hour flow in the peak direction on SIL in 2016 was unlikely to exceed 17 000 passengers. A medium capacity railway system as proposed by MTRCL was expected to be sufficient to handle the demand up to 2030.

61. Taking members' through the Administration's on-going planning for Route 4, PSET(Atg.) said that various issues were involved. Visual impact would be an issue that required careful consideration for both viaduct alignment options. Moreover, the Administration would need to review whether the proposed elevated deck of alignment B could meet the Court of Final Appeal's "overriding public need test" for reclamation.

62. In respect of the performance of SIL/WIL and Route 4 to relieve traffic congestion on the existing road network, PSET(Atg.) advised that according to the latest transport assessment, the introduction of SIL/WIL would only reduce the amount of road traffic in 2016 on Pok Fu Lam Road and Aberdeen Tunnel by about 10%. On the other hand, the relief to be attained by both alignment options of Route 4 on Aberdeen Tunnel was similar and the v/c ratios would be reduced from 1.2 to 1.1. With regard to the traffic conditions along Pok Fu Lam Road, the two alignment options performed differently. Option 1 reduced the v/c ratios at the critical section of Pok Fu Lam Road between Pokfield Road and Sasson Road in 2016 from 1.1 to 0.8 whilst Option 2 had only marginal benefit in relieving the traffic congestion. Due to the lack of connection with the Cyberport and the local roads in the vicinity, the v/c ratio of Option 2 in 2016 was only 0.4 which indicated a low utilization rate while that of Option 1 reached 0.5.

63. PSET(Atg.) also highlighted that in the meantime, the Interim Traffic Improvement Measures which would improve the local traffic conditions along Pok Fu Lam Road to a manageable level up to 2016 without Route 4, were now being carried forward as planned. Preliminary planning and design work were in progress. As planned, construction works would commence in mid 2005 for completion by late 2006/early 2007.

64. While noting members' concern about the need for an early decision on the matter, PSET(Atg.) said that as explained, the Administration would need more time to examine MTRCL's proposal and would require a more detailed study from MTRCL on the impact of SIL/WIL on other transport modes and how such impact could be mitigated. In parallel, the Administration would continue with the planning of Route 4. She assured members that the Administration was aware of public concern in this matter. However, in view of the substantial funding requirements involved, it would be unlikely for both projects to proceed. Hence, the Administration would need to carefully assess the cost-effectiveness and transport benefits of the projects before a firm decision could be made. In this respect, PSET(Atg.) said that the Administration would

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strive to take the issues forward within the next six months, and revert to the Panel once there were any new developments.

Consideration of funding support for SIL/WIL

65. Dr YEUNG Sum and Ir Dr Raymond HO sought the Administration's stance on the provision of funding support for the construction of SIL/WIL.

66. PSET(Atg.) stated that the objective of railway development must be to bring about transport as well as other benefits to the community at large. This issue of funding support for railway development required careful consideration on the Government's part to ensure the best use of community resources among the many competing demands and would not be given lightly. In particular, the Administration would carefully consider the timing and need of the proposed railway taking into account the land use planning and development in the concerned areas. As such, it would be too early to speculate on the form of funding support to be provided, if any.

Motion

67. Mr LEUNG Fu-wah referred to the proposed motion circulated prior to the meeting vide LC Paper No. CB(1)1970/03-04(01), and said that he had slightly revised the motion on account of the views expressed by the deputations/individuals and members. Mr LEUNG stressed that taking into account the recent performance of WR, the Administration should carefully consider the need and cost-effectiveness of the SIL/WIL project at this stage. Hence, he put forward a motion urging the Government to shelve any further development and planning for SIL/WIL pending its review on the latest population growth in the southern and western districts, as well as its land-use planning to develop the southern district into a tourism/commercial centre. In the meantime, the Government should expedite its study and decision process for the implementation of Route 4 so as to cope with the transport needs of the local residents. The wording of the motion was as follows:

“本事務委員會促請政府暫時擱置港島南、西鐵路的發展規劃，並重新評估港島南、西區的人口增長，以及發展南區成為旅遊／商業中心的計劃，在此期間則盡快研究並落實興建四號幹線(前稱七號幹線)，以應付該等地區居民的交通需求。”

68. Members agreed to proceed with the motion.

69. Reiterating her view that the Administration should review the need for the proposed SIL/WIL taking into account its land-use planning to develop the southern district into a tourism/commercial centre, Ms Miriam LAU expressed support for the proposed motion. She also recapped that during previous discussions on the projects, the Panel had passed a motion calling for the early implementation of the Route 7 (now renamed as Route 4) project from Kennedy Town to Aberdeen which should be

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constructed primarily in tunnel form.

70. Mr Albert CHAN expressed support for the motion. He said that all along, the public's general expectation was that both projects would be implemented eventually. However, in view of the current fiscal position, it was quite clear that such thinking was unrealistic. Hence, he considered that the Administration should adopt a clear stance on which project would be proceeded with taking into account all the relevant factors. A public consultation exercise should then be conducted to gauge the views of the public on the way forward. His view was shared by Mrs Selina CHOW.

71. Speaking on behalf of Legislative Council Members belonging to the Democratic Party (DP), Mr CHENG Kar-foo said that DP did not support the proposed motion. In view of the long-standing request of local residents for railway service, DP did not agree that any further development and planning for SIL/WIL should be shelved. This would not be in line with the Government's established policy of relying on railways as the backbone of the public transport system. Notwithstanding the current budget deficit, he said that it was incumbent upon the Administration to continue examining the case for both projects and implement the same if considered justified on transport grounds. Similar view was expressed by Dr YEUNG Sum.

72. Mr Andrew WONG said that taking into account the Administration's stance that further information and assessment was required before a decision on the SIL/WIL and Route 4 projects could be taken, it was premature for the Panel to consider a motion calling on the Administration to shelve the railway proposal. Hence, he would oppose to the motion.

73. Ir Dr Raymond HO restated his view that the development of rail and road infrastructure was not mutually exclusive. Considering that planning for neither project should be shelved, he said that he would vote against the motion.

74. Speaking on behalf of Legislative Council Members belonging to the Democratic Alliance for Betterment of Hong Kong (DAB), the Chairman said that DAB did not support motion as it was premature to decide on which project should be shelved. It would be more appropriate to hold further discussion on the matter after the Administration presented its report to the Panel.

75. The Chairman put the motion to vote. Six members voted for and three members voted against the motion. The Chairman declared that the motion was carried.

76. In view of time constraint, members agreed to defer the following item on "Provision and operation of tunnels and tollways" to a later meeting.

(Post-meeting note: The item was subsequently scheduled for discussion at the Panel meeting on 25 June 2004.)

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VI Any other business

77. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 1:05 pm.

Council Business Division 1
Legislative Council Secretariat
21 July 2004