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Legislative Council

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Panel on Transport

Subcommittee on matters relating to railways

Background brief on Shatin to Central Link

Introduction

In January 2001, the Government invited the two railway corporations to submit proposals for Shatin to Central Link (SCL) based upon a design, construct, operate and finance arrangement. According to the Project Brief for SCL, SCL will be a through running line between Tai Wai and the Central Business District of Hong Kong Island. Under the requirements specified in the Project Brief (Conforming Proposal), SCL effectively comprises three elements:

- (a) Tai Wai to Diamond Hill Link which comprises a new station at Tai Wai or an integrated station with the existing KCR Tai Wai Station, together with a running line through to the proposed Diamond Hill SCL Station;
- (b) East Kowloon Line (EKL) which comprises a running line, with stations at Diamond Hill, Kai Tak on the South East Kowloon Development site, To Kwa Wan, Ma Tau Wai, either Ho Man Tin or Gillies Avenue, and Hung Hom; and
- (c) the Fourth Rail Harbour Crossing which comprises a running line crossing Victoria Harbour with new stations at Exhibition, Admiralty and Central West.

2. Having regard to the technical and financial merits of the two Conforming Proposals submitted by the two railway corporations, the Government announced the award of SCL to the Kowloon-Canton Railway Corporation (KCRC) on 25 June 2002. Details of the technical and financial assessments of the Conforming Proposals are set out in the Legislative Council

Brief issued by the Administration under File Ref. TBCR 10/1016/99.

Scheme design development for SCL

3. Under the provision in the Project Brief, the awardee is allowed to propose changes or additional details to arrive at the Final Scheme for the SCL. In August 2002, KCRC proposed a revised scheme (the Original Proposal) as follows (**Annex A**):

- (a) The alignment would follow essentially that outlined in the SCL Project Brief comprising ten stations viz. Tai Wai, Diamond Hill, Kai Tak, To Kwa Wan, Ma Tau Wai, Ho Man Tin or Gillies Avenue, Hung Hom, Exhibition, Admiralty and Central West;
- (b) KCRC proposed to add a new station at Tsz Wan Shan;
- (c) KCRC proposed to build an automated people mover system (APM) linking the Hung Hom Station to the Whampoa area; and
- (d) KCRC proposed to make provision for a future station at Hin Keng.

4. In September 2003, the Subcommittee on matters relating to railways formed under the Panel (the Subcommittee) noted that as a result of the Government's decision not to allow for any railway station or tunnel directly underneath the new Central Government Complex and the LegCo Complex at Tamar, KCRC had proposed to locate the SCL Admiralty Station east of the MTR Admiralty Station to avoid the restrictions imposed on the Tamar site. At the same time, the Corporation was undertaking a comprehensive review on the Original Proposal so as to develop a Final Scheme design for SCL that would best serve the public while entailing commercial returns. The objective was to come up with an option that could improve the transport performance of SCL based on the latest planning parameters. In an attempt to improve on the complex 3-way interchange at the proposed Hung Hom Mass Transportation Centre (MTC), the option of extending the East Rail (ER) across the harbour from Hung Hom to Central (West) via Admiralty and Exhibition to improve the interchange at Hung Hom MTC would be studied.

5. On 16 February 2004, KCRC presented its Preferred Scheme on SCL (**Annex A**) which adopted the ER across the harbour option. The railway line would consist of a north-south railway from Lo Wu to Central by extending ER across the harbour; and an extension of the Ma On Shan (MOS) Rail from Tai Wai to Hung Hom MTC via the EKL to serve the population in the southeast Kowloon. Compared with the SCL Original Proposal, the railway alignment of the Preferred Scheme is the same as the Original Proposal. The key differences are:

- (a) ER passengers, including cross boundary passengers from Lo Wu and Lok Ma Chau, will have a direct link to Hong Kong Island, with the provision of a north-south railway corridor.
 - (b) Extension of MOS Rail to Hung Hom MTC and through running to Tuen Mun via Kowloon Southern Link and West Rail will provide an east-west railway corridor, thus giving MOS Rail and EKL passengers a direct link to Tsim Sha Tsui, West Kowloon and Northwest New Territories.
 - (c) MOS Rail and EKL passengers travelling to Hong Kong Island will transfer at Hung Hom MTC or Tai Wai.
 - (d) The proposed Hung Hom MTC will be simplified from a 3-way to a 2-way interchange.
6. Other developments in relation to the Preferred Scheme are summarized as follows:
- (a) As the number of interchanging passengers would be reduced under the proposed 2-way interchange at Hung Hom MTC, the safe operation of the station in terms of emergency evacuation would be greatly enhanced.
 - (b) For ER, the existing 12-car trains would be modified to 9-car trains with an enhanced signalling system to increase the maximum hourly train frequency from 27 trains to an ultimate of 34 trains during peak hours.
 - (c) Instead of providing an underground Tsz Wan Shan Station, a dedicated above ground automated people mover (APM) link would be provided between Diamond Hill Station and Tsz Wan Shan area.
 - (d) Due to passenger safety, site and engineering constraints, To Kwa Wan Station would be combined with Mau Tau Wai Station.
 - (e) The provision of a people mover system for the Whampoa area would depend on the Government's decision on whether it would accept MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL)'s proposal to extend the Kwun Tong Line to Whampoa.
 - (f) Planning would be made for the construction of a new Causeway Bay North Station along Gloucester Road to serve the busy commercial and shopping centre.

- (g) Instead of providing a station at the Tamar site, the Admiralty East Station would be constructed to the east of the MTR Admiralty Station.
- (h) Instead of providing a station in Central West, consideration was being given to constructing a Central South Station at the south of Upper Albert Road.
- (i) KCRC was liaising with MTRCL on the details of interchange arrangement at Diamond Hill and Admiralty East Stations. Study was also in progress on the interchange arrangement with MTR at Causeway Bay North Station.
- (j) According to current estimate, the total project cost of the Preferred Scheme was \$35.5 billion. The Preferred Scheme would be fully funded by the Corporation with no need for financial support from the Government.
- (k) Subject to the Government's approval, the Corporation's target was to complete the SCL project within the window originally suggested in the Railway Development Strategy 2000, i.e. by 2011.

Major views and concerns expressed at previous meetings

7. The Subcommittee held a series of meetings to receive views from the local communities and concerned parties on the project, and to examine various issues in relation to the development of scheme design for SCL.

ER across the harbour option

8. The primary concerns of the Subcommittee in respect of the ER across the harbour option were related to the capacity of ER and the impact on the financial viability of MOS Rail and EKL. With ER across the harbour, the projected patronage of MOS Rail as well as EKL of SCL would be significantly reduced. Under such circumstances, concerns had been raised over the cost-effectiveness of SCL. The Subcommittee requested the Administration and KCRC to carefully review, in the context of the on-going merger talks, the perceived benefits of the Preferred Scheme in terms of transport benefits, passenger convenience and overall efficiency of the KCR network as well as impact on other public transport modes.

9. The Subcommittee was also concerned about KCRC's proposal to downsize ER train configuration from 12-car to 9-car trains. According to

KCRC, there was serious space constraint at the four proposed SCL stations on the Hong Kong Island, and hence there was a need to adopt a 9-car train configuration. However, the proposal to run shorter trains with more frequent headway on ER under the Preferred Scheme was designed to handle up to 100 000 passengers per hour. It was more than adequate to meet the Government's design capacity requirement of 85 000 passengers per hour for SCL. There would also be other design features to guide passengers to the front part or rear part of train compartments where spare capacities were observed during peak periods.

Provision of SCL stations and extensions

10. The Subcommittee noted that the relevant District Councils were in support of the Preferred Scheme of SCL. They asked that the SCL project should be expedited and completed in stages before 2011. In particular, they urged that the Tai Wai to East Kowloon section should be opened for service as soon as possible. Both the DC members and local community groups requested for stations at Hin Keng and Tsz Wan Shan and that the To Kwa Wan station be preserved.

11. The Kowloon City District Council and local residents in the Whampoa area supported the proposed extension of MTR Kwun Tong Line from Yaumati to Whampoa via Homantin on account of the perceived environmental and transport benefits as it would be easily accessible by local residents for seamless connection with the MTR network.

12. According to the Administration, it would further examine and compare the rail link proposals for Whampoa from KCRC and MTRCL on the basis of their relative transport and economic performance, impact on the environment, and commercial viability. The amount of funding gap would also be one of the important considerations. A decision on the rail link would be made in conjunction with the Final Scheme for SCL taking into account the outcome of merger talks between the two railway corporations.

13. The Subcommittee was gravely concerned about the serious traffic disruption caused by the proposed construction of the Causeway Bay North Station. On the other hand, the proposed location of the Central South Station at south of Upper Albert Road was not desirable as it was far away from the business centre.

14. The Subcommittee also raised general concern about the potential noise and visual impact arising from the construction and operation of SCL.

Interchange with MTR

15. The Subcommittee is very concerned about the design of the interchange

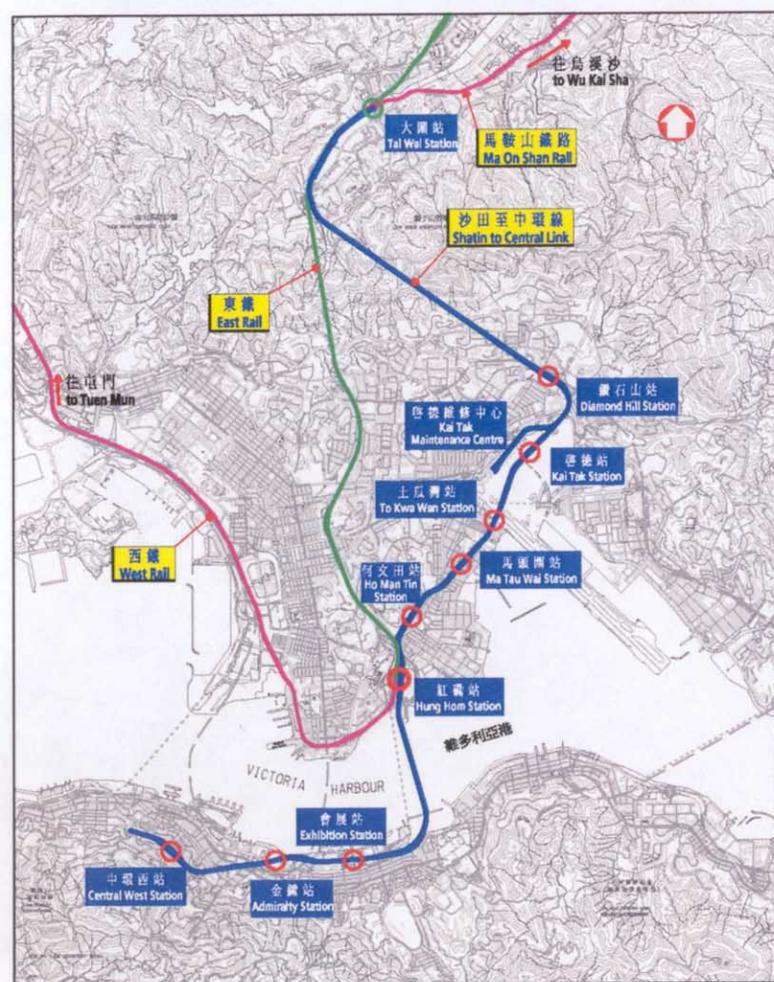
arrangements between SCL and MTR at Diamond Hill and Admiralty East Stations. The Subcommittee urges the Administration and KCRC to carefully plan for the related station facilities with a view to providing for the most convenient interchange for the benefit of the traveling public.

Impact on other public transport trades

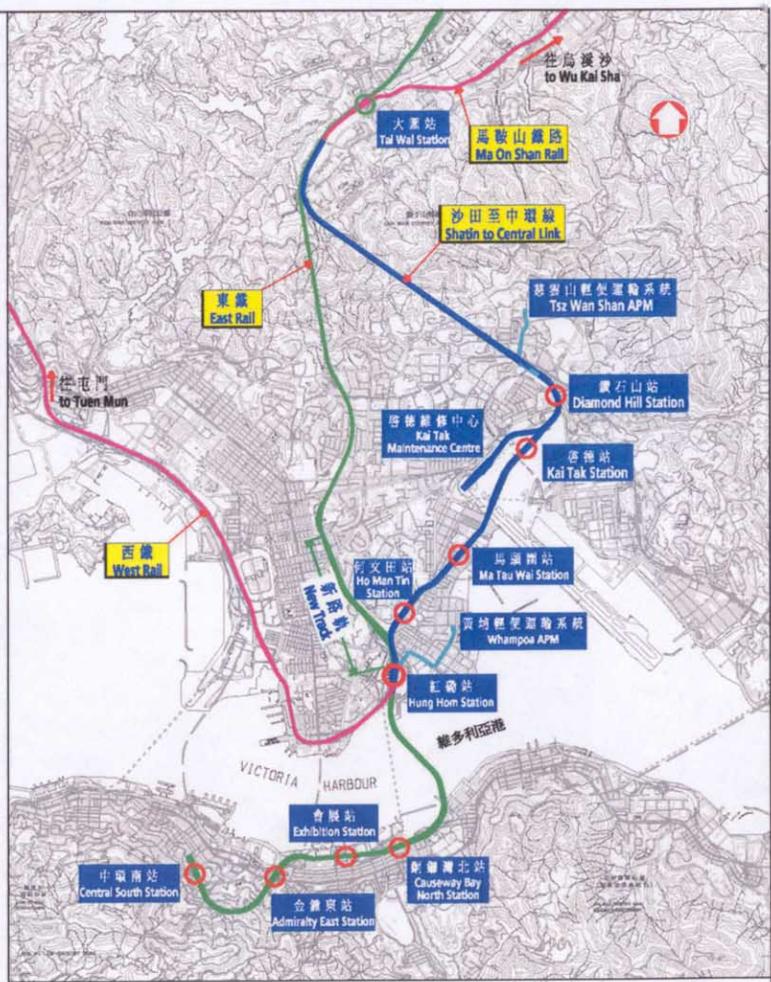
16. The transport trades expressed serious concern about the proliferation of railway development in the territory, particularly those railway extensions which only intended to provide feeder services such as the proposed Tsz Wan Shan and Whampoa APMs. This would seriously affect the businesses of other public transport modes and the order of the public transport market.

17. A list of relevant papers is in **Annex B**.

Council Business Division 1
Legislative Council Secretariat
3 January 2005



ORIGINAL PROPOSAL 原來方案



PREFERRED SCHEME 建議方案

Shatin to Central Link

List of relevant papers

Council/Committee	Date of meeting	Paper
Council	31 May 2000	Hon Andrew CHENG raised a question on Sha Tin – Central Rail Corridor http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr99-00/english/counmtg/agenda/ord3105.htm#q_6
Council	6 Dec 2000	A motion moved by Hon LAU Chin-shek's motion as amended by Hon LAU Kong-wah and Dr Hon TANG Siu-tong on railway development strategy was passed http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr00-01/english/counmtg/agenda/cmtg0612.htm#m_2
Council	14 Mar 2001	Hon LAU Kong-wah raised a question on early completion of Rail Link from Sha Tin to Central http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr00-01/english/counmtg/agenda/cmtg1403.htm#q_12
Subcommittee on matters relating to railways (SC on railways)	6 Dec 2001	This progress report informs Members of the latest situation regarding the bidding of the Shatin to Central Link (SCL) (LC Paper No. CB(1)472/01-02(03)) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr01-02/english/panels/tp/tp_rdp/papers/tp_rdp1206cb1-472-3e.pdf Background brief on SCL prepared by the Secretariat (LC Paper No. CB(1)466/01-02) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr01-02/english/panels/tp/tp_rdp/papers/tp_rdp1206cb1-466-e.pdf
SC on railways	27 Jun 2002	The Executive Council advised on 25 June 2002 and the Chief Executive ordered that the SCL should be awarded to Kowloon-Canton Railway Corporation (KCRC) (Legislative Council Brief (TBCR 10/1016/99)) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr01-02/english/panels/tp/tp_rdp/papers/tbcr_10_1016_99.pdf

Council/Committee	Date of meeting	Paper
Council	10 Jul 2002	Hon Fred LI raised a question on railway alignment of the SCL http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr01-02/english/counmtg/agenda/cmtg0710.htm#q_16
SC on railways	27 Sep 2002	This report informs members of the latest progress regarding the SCL (LC Paper No. CB(1)2556/01-02(01)) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr01-02/english/panels/tp/tp_rdp/papers/tp_rdp0927cb1-2556-1e.pdf
Council	26 Feb 2003	Hon Abraham SHEK raised a question on selection of railway corporation to operate the new SCL http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr02-03/english/counmtg/agenda/cmtg0226.htm#q_2
Public Works Subcommittee (PWSC)	7 May 2003	Funding proposal on Central Government Complex, Legislative Council Complex, exhibition gallery and civic place at Tamar, Central and planning and Infrastructure Exhibition Gallery at Tamar – exhibits design and fabrication (PWSC(2003-04)16) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr02-03/english/fc/pwsc/papers/p03-16e.pdf
SC on railways	18 Jul 2003	Tamar Development and public transport services (LC Paper No. CB(1)1741/02-03(01)) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr02-03/english/panels/tp/papers/tpcb1-1741-1e.pdf Further information on the implication of the decision not to allow for any railway station or tunnel directly underneath the new Central Government Complex (CGC) and the LegCo Complex (LCC) at Tamar on the planning and implementation of the SCL, and the resulting financial implication (LC Paper No. CB(1)2209/02-03(01)) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr02-03/english/panels/tp/tp_rdp/papers/tp_rdp0718cb1-2209-1e.pdf

Council/Committee	Date of meeting	Paper
SC on railways	29 Sep 2003	<p>This paper provides Members with the latest update on the SCL and addresses the enquiries raised by Members at the meeting on 1 August 2003 (LC Paper No. CB(1)2493/02-03(01)) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr02-03/english/panels/tp/tp_rdp/papers/tp_rdp0929cb1-2493-1e.pdf</p> <p>Background brief on SCL (LC Paper No. CB(1) 2490/02-03) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr02-03/english/panels/tp/tp_rdp/papers/tp_rdp0929cb1-2490-e.pdf</p>
PWSC	18 Feb 2004	<p>Funding proposal for site preparation and infrastructure works in the north apron area of the former Kai Tak Airport including the site for future developments of the SCL railway (PWSC(2003-04)66) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr03-04/english/fc/pwsc/papers/p03-66e.pdf</p>
Finance Committee	27 Feb 2004	<p>Recommendations of the PWSC made at its meeting on 18 February 2002 regarding the site preparation and infrastructure works in the north apron area of the former Kai Tak Airport to prepare the site for future developments including the Shatin-to-Central Link railway (FCR(2003-04)60) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr03-04/english/fc/fc/papers/f03-60e.pdf</p>
SC on railways	3 Jun 2004 7 May 2004	<p>Progress update on SCL (LC Paper No. CB(1)1676/03-04(02)) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr03-04/english/panels/tp/tp_rdp/papers/tp_rdp0507cb1-1676-2e.pdf</p>
SC on railways	3 Jun 2004 7 May 2004 16 Feb 2004	<p>Progress on the scheme design of the SCL (LC Paper No. CB(1)981/03-04(01)) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr03-04/english/panels/tp/tp_rdp/papers/tp_rdp0216cb1-981-1e.pdf</p>
SC on railways		<p>Supplementary information on scheme design of SCL (LC Paper No. CB(1)1841/03-04(01)) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr03-04/english/panels/tp/tp_rdp/papers/tp_rdp0216cb1-1841-1e.pdf</p>

Council/Committee	Date of meeting	Paper
SC on railways		Supplementary Information on SCL — Passenger Forecast of Whampoa automated people mover systems (LC Paper No. CB(1)2441/03-04(01)) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr03-04/english/panels/tp/tp_rdp/papers/tp_rdp0603cb1-2441-1e.pdf