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Legislative Council Panel on Transport

**KOWLOON SOUTHERN LINK
PROGRESS REPORT**

INTRODUCTION

This paper updates Members on the progress of the proposed Kowloon Southern Link project (KSL).

BACKGROUND

2. The KSL is one of the priority railway projects recommended in the Railway Development Strategy 2000 (RDS-2000) promulgated in May 2000. The KSL scheme proposed in RDS-2000 is an extension of the West Rail from its Nam Cheong Station to connect with the East Rail East Tsim Sha Tsui Station with one station in-between at West Kowloon. Upon its completion, the KSL will provide an efficient rail link for people in the North West New Territories to access the Tsim Sha Shui area directly. It will bring significant benefits to the community.

3. In response to the Government's invitation in early 2001, the Kowloon-Canton Railway Corporation (KCRC) conducted a preliminary project feasibility study (PPFS) on the KSL and submitted a proposal to the Government in July 2001. In its proposal, the KCRC suggested that an additional station at Canton Road (the "CAR Station") should be considered under the schematic design.

4. When further developing the details of its KSL scheme, the KCRC considered that using the Cut and Cover Option as originally planned to construct the tunnels underneath Canton Road would cause substantial disruption to road users, pedestrians, business operations and residents in the area. Another major concern identified was that the pile foundations of some of the existing buildings on the eastern side of Canton Road terminate well above bedrock. The Cut and Cover Option might lead to instability of the buildings and would attract unacceptable risks. Moreover, parts of Canton Road would have to be permanently occupied by the KSL access structures and ventilation shafts for the proposed CAR Station. Therefore, it is unlikely that

the Option would be acceptable to the public. The KCRC therefore re-visited the Bored Tunnel Option. It concluded that the Bored Tunnel Option would reduce the disruption in the area, both in terms of severity and duration, and that it would enable Canton Road to revert to its original layout upon completion of the KSL.

5. For the railway tunnels along Canton Road to be constructed using the Bored Tunnel Option, the CAR Station would have to be located at either side of the railway tunnels. However, both sides of Canton Road have been developed with buildings. If construction of the CAR station has to be carried out together with the rest of the KSL project, the resumption of several existing buildings would be necessary. Moreover, the MTR Tsim Sha Tsui Station and the KCR East Tsim Sha Tsui Station are within walking distance from Canton Road. Therefore, there is no transport justification to support resumption. The KCRC therefore decided to defer provision of the CAR Station. It informed the Legislative Council Panel on Transport Subcommittee on matters relating to railways (the “Railways Subcommittee”) accordingly in November 2003. At that meeting of the Railways Subcommittee, a suggestion was made that the KCRC should explore the feasibility of providing the CAR Station in the future through, for example, cooperation with private sector developers undertaking redevelopment of suitable sites along Canton Road. The suggestion has been taken on board and the KCRC has since been exploring that option. We last briefed Members of the Railways Subcommittee in June this year, in particular on the progress of the discussion with Wharf Estates Development Limited (Wharf) on the feasibility of providing a CAR Station in the future redevelopment of its property on Canton Road, and undertook to keep Members posted of developments. A progress update prepared by the KCRC showing the historical and latest developments of the CAR Station is provided at **Annex A**.

Annex A

RAILWAYS ORDINANCE

6. The KSL scheme was gazetted under the Railways Ordinance on 26 March 2004 with one station at West Kowloon as shown at **Annex B**. A total of 56 objections and eight enquiries were received. Some of the objectors, including Wharf, strongly requested the provision of a CAR Station.

Annex B

7. We have interviewed all the objectors to see how their objections could be accommodated in the final KSL scheme such that they could consider withdrawing their objections. So far, three objectors have confirmed withdrawal of their objections. Meanwhile, KCRC is working on the amendments to the KSL scheme to address the concerns of the objectors as far as possible. Once the necessary amendments have been finalised, the

Government will gazette the amendments under the Railways Ordinance for public consultation.

NEXT STEP

8. The KCRC will continue to discuss with Wharf the provision of a CAR Station upon the future redevelopment of Wharf's property on Canton Road. In order to gazette the changes so arising from the future provision of the CAR Station together with the other changes that we propose to make to address the objections received, and to avoid unduly delaying the KSL project, a deadline of the end of November 2004 has been set for the KCRC and Wharf to reach agreement or otherwise. Our plan is to issue the gazette early next month. According to the present plan, works for the KSL project will commence in mid-2005 for completion in 2009. As regards the methods of constructing the railway tunnels along Salisbury Road, we have employed the City University of Hong Kong to undertake an independent study to see if the Bored Tunnel Option can be adopted. The study will be completed by the end of 2004. This will not affect the gazetting of the amendments to the KSL scheme early next month.

9. Members are requested to note the contents of this paper.

**Environment, Transport and Works Bureau
November 2004**

KOWLOON SOUTHERN LINK (KSL)

Progress Update

Introduction

This paper sets out the historical development of the Canton Road (CAR) Station and the progress of the discussion with Wharf Estates Development Limited (Wharf) on building a station within their premises.

Background

2. The KSL comprises a 3.8-km passenger rail line linking the West Rail terminus at Nam Cheong Station with the newly opened East Rail East Tsim Sha Tsui Station. A station will be provided in-between at West Kowloon. Upon completion of the KSL, the West Rail will be extended from Nam Cheong Station to Hung Hom via West Kowloon and East Tsim Sha Tsui, and both the East Rail and the West Rail will terminate at the Hung Hom Station with convenient cross-platform interchanges provided.

Historical Development of CAR Station

3. The CAR Station was not included in the scheme recommended in the Government's Railway Development Strategy 2000. The CAR station was first raised by KCRC when the Corporation took up the detailed planning of the KSL project in September 2002. The Corporation then proposed to build the railway tunnels and the CAR station along Canton Road using the cut and cover option. However, after further investigation, the Corporation had to abandon this option as it would cause unacceptable disturbance to the public and pose great threat to the structural integrity of some of the adjacent buildings.

Alternative Proposals for the CAR Station

4. The only practical alternative to the cut and cover option for

Annex A

building the railway tunnels and station along Canton Road would be the bored tunnel option. That option would necessitate locating the station concourse off-line on either side of Canton Road, as well as resumption of certain private buildings in order to make way for the CAR station. As the Tsim Sha Tsui area is now well served by the MTR and KCR systems, there is no compelling ground to undertake resumption of private lots for building the CAR Station. The Corporation then took the initiative to approach Wharf to see if the CAR station could be built in conjunction with their redevelopment project. However, no agreement could be reached as Wharf indicated that they would claim compensation at a level so high as to make the CAR Station financially not viable.

5. The Corporation had also examined two alternative proposals from Sino Properties for a station located within or adjacent to China Hong Kong City (CHKC).

6. The first proposal is to locate an off-line station concourse within the existing PTI below CHKC and to move this PTI to the Tsim Sha Tsui Fire Station site immediately north of CHKC. The second proposal is to locate the station concourse within the Tsim Sha Tsui Fire Station. Both proposals were found to be not feasible as the Tsim Sha Tsui Fire Station site is not available for such a purpose.

Corporation's Assessment on the CAR Station

7. While rail passengers will find the CAR station useful given its location within a tourist and shopping centre, there will only be very marginal gain in railway patronage for KSL as the area is presently well served by both KCR and MTR systems. As it is more urgent to take forward KSL as planned in view of its great transport benefits to the community, the Corporation therefore dropped any immediate plan to provide a station at Canton Road in November 2003.

Discussions with Wharf on the CAR Station

8. Following the gazettal of the KSL scheme in March 2004, KCRC was requested by the Legislative Council on 3 June 2004 to work together with Wharf to build the CAR station within their Harbour City premises in the future.

9. The Corporation has since been working very closely with Wharf and the Government on building the CAR station. 14 Steering

Annex A

Group Meetings (chaired by ETWB), 20 Technical Works Group Meetings (chaired by HyD) and 15 Technical Workshop Meetings (chaired by KCRC) have been held to study the proposed scheme thus far in addition to frequent exchanges with Wharf. Wharf has been fully involved in all those meetings. All the parties concerned have been making great efforts in the most professional manner in the process.

10. Two options have been considered in great detail, namely -
 - (a) Basement Scheme: to construct a station below the existing World Finance Towers.
 - (b) Redevelopment Scheme: likewise, but to build a station in conjunction with the redevelopment of the World Finance Towers.

11. After detailed study, it was agreed by the Government, Wharf and KCRC that the Basement Scheme would incur unacceptably great risks to the buildings above even with the implementation of very elaborated and expensive mitigation measures to accommodate the works required. Because of that, the joint efforts were then directed to exploring the Redevelopment Scheme. As there is at present no established time-table for Wharf's redevelopment programme, minimum enabling works and future station requirements to be implemented as part of the KSL works have been developed and agreed, and associated cost estimates established. It is intended that once the commercial arrangement has been agreed between KCRC and Wharf, these works would be included in the amendments of the KSL scheme to be gazetted under Railways Ordinance in early December 2004. To preserve the provision of a future CAR station, the enabling works have to be implemented as part of the KSL Project.

12. Wharf confirmed at the Steering Group meeting on 23 September 2004 that they preferred the Redevelopment Scheme. Wharf also stated then that they were unable to commit to any timetable for redevelopment of Harbour City and construction of the CAR Station. KCRC has subsequently advised Wharf that, due to uncertainty of the redevelopment scheme of Wharf, any expenditure in the enabling works would require firm commitment and undertaking from Wharf. If such commitment would not be forthcoming, the Corporation would ask Wharf to fund the enabling works subject to a refunding mechanism to be worked out with Wharf.

Programme for KSL Works

13. The Corporation decided in July 2004 to defer the tendering for the KSL project, in order to show the sincerity of the Corporation and to allow time for securing Wharf's agreement on building the CAR station. However, as it is more urgent to deliver the KSL by 2009 as planned, we have to tender the KSL contracts in December 2004 irrespective of whether or not there will be a CAR Station. However, options for the enabling works have been included in the tenders so that tendering and commercial discussion with Wharf can be undertaken in parallel.

**Kowloon-Canton Railway Corporation
November 2004**



九龍南線定線圖

Alignment Map of Kowloon Southern Link