

For Information
5 January 2007

Legislative Council Panel on Transport
Subcommittee on matters relating to railways

Update on the Shatin to Central Link

INTRODUCTION

This paper briefs Members on the current position of the proposed Shatin to Central Link (SCL).

BACKGROUND

2. The SCL is one of the priority railway projects recommended for implementation in the Railway Development Strategy 2000. One of its objectives is to provide railway service to the new developments at Kai Tak now under active planning in the Kai Tak Planning Review.

3. In June 2002, after a deliberated tender assessment, we awarded the SCL project to the Kowloon-Canton Railway Corporation (KCRC). Subsequent to the award, the KCRC refined the SCL configuration and submitted an SCL Draft Final Proposal (DFP) to Government for consideration. The SCL in the DFP comprises two portions. The east-west portion is a rail link between Tai Wai Station of the Ma On Shan Rail and Hung Hom Station of the East Rail and by means of the current rail connection to Tsim Sha Tsui East, the SCL can link up the Kowloon Southern Link now under construction, forming a connection with West Rail to Tuen Mun. The north-south portion is an extension of the East Rail across the harbour to Central District on the Hong Kong Island.

4. In February 2004, the Government invited the MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL) and the KCRC to discuss the possible rail merger. Government has set the early resolution of interchange arrangement for new rail projects under planning, notably the SCL, as one of the key parameters for the merger discussions.

5. On 4 March 2005, Members were briefed of the progress of the SCL project and the changes proposed in the DFP.

6. On 11 April 2006, the Government reached an

understanding with MTRCL on the structure and terms for merging the MTR and KCR rail systems. The proposed SCL scheme in the context of the rail merger would provide for fully integrated interchange stations. At present, the legislative amendment exercise to implement the rail merger is on-going.

CURRENT POSITION

7. After the last briefing to this Subcommittee on 4 March 2005, the railway corporations continue to review and refine their SCL schemes taking into account the latest developments of the various planning and infrastructure projects along the SCL alignment. The two major projects are the Kai Tak Planning Review and the Wan Chai Development Phase II Review.

8. To cope with the latest planning of the Kai Tak Development, the SCL will provide a station (Kai Tak Station) at the proposed Kai Tak City Centre. This underground station will directly serve the developments at the ex-North Apron area including the public housing developments in the east, the new residential and commercial developments around the station, and the multi-purpose stadium complex in the west. Through a network of footbridges/subways or enhanced at grade crossing, the existing developments in San Po Kong and Kowloon Bay can be connected with the station. Furthermore, with suitable feeder services, the Kai Tak Station can also serve the proposed Metro Park and cruise terminal at the Runway end.

9. In view of the public comments received in the Stage 3 consultation of the Kai Tak Planning Review, the railway corporations have been asked to study the proposal of relocating the SCL depot, originally planned at Kai Tak to Diamond Hill. The railway corporation considers that a depot in the urban area is vital for the operation of the SCL. The study by the railway corporation concluded that locating the SCL depot at Diamond Hill is technically feasible. However, further study would be required to examine the implications of the proposal including the interface with the adjacent and future developments, and the associated environmental and traffic impacts.

10. The cross-harbour tunnel of the SCL will cut across the alignment of the proposed Central-Wan Chai Bypass (CWB) at Causeway Bay Typhoon Shelter. The planning of the CWB is currently being reviewed under the Wan Chai Development Phase II Review project. Subject to the final scheme, alignment and the implementation programme of the CWB, enabling works may be required to protect either the CWB tunnels or the SCL tunnel.

IMPLEMENTATION TIMING

11. The implementation programme for the SCL will be dependent on the progress of the Kai Tak Planning Review in finalizing the development plan for Kai Tak and the Wan Chai Development Phase II Review in finalizing the scheme for the CWB, and the progress of the rail merger.

NEXT STEP

12. We will actively liaise with the relevant departments regarding the Kai Tak Development and the Wan Chai Development Phase II with the aim to finalizing the SCL scheme as soon as possible. We will continue to review the SCL proposals with the railway corporations in light of any changes that may affect the SCL scheme and discuss with them on the implementation details, including the funding approach and implementation programme for the project taking into account the progress of the rail merger exercise.

13. Members are requested to note the latest situation regarding the implementation of the SCL

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