

For information
17 September 2009

Legislative Council Panel on Transport
Subcommittee on Matters Relating to Railways

Progress Report on the South Island Line (East)

Introduction

This paper briefs Members on the latest progress of the proposed South Island Line (SIL) (East) project.

Background

2. The SIL (East) will be a seven-kilometre long medium capacity railway, running between Admiralty and South Horizons with intermediate stations at Ocean Park, Wong Chuk Hang and Lei Tung (a plan showing the alignment is at Annex 1).

3. We last briefed the Subcommittee on the latest progress of the planning of SIL (East) project on 15 May 2009 and have collected opinions from about 30 organizations.

Latest Progress

4. The proposed SIL (East) railway scheme was gazetted on 24 and 31 July 2009 in accordance with the Railways Ordinance (Cap. 519). The MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL) has commenced the detailed design of the SIL (East) and is proceeding with the environmental impact assessment in accordance with the requirements of the Environmental Impact Assessment Ordinance. The Government will continue to liaise with the MTRCL on the detailed design, cost estimation and financial arrangement. The construction works for the SIL (East) is expected to commence in 2011 for commissioning in 2015.

5. During the preliminary planning stage, the Government and the MTRCL, in collaboration with the Southern District Council, jointly conducted

two rounds of extensive public consultation in 2008 to consult the local community and exchange views on issues related to the proposed railway scheme, such as railway design, station and entrance locations and temporary facilities to tie in with the works, etc. Based on the opinions, the MTRCL has made some amendments to the design of the railway project. The gazette scheme has taken account of the views as far as practical on the railway design, locations of stations, entrances and works areas collected in the previous rounds of consultation, as well as the technical considerations on the construction and operation of the railway project. The Government and the MTRCL will continue to liaise with the residents and related organizations regarding their concerns about the SIL (East) project, and stay in close touch with the District Council concerned and the local community with a view to continuing to listen to their views.

6. According to the proposed railway scheme of the SIL (East) project, some portions of Government land and private land will be required for implementation of the SIL (East) project. Among the affected private lots, only two, comprising 0.14 hectare, will be required for partial land resumption and no buildings will be affected. Other private lots will be affected by underground strata resumption, creation of easements and other permanent rights, as well as temporary occupation of land. The Administration will follow up with affected parties who have a compensatable interest in accordance with the Railways Ordinance. The Government and the MTRCL have arranged meetings with individual affected parties including Incorporations of Owners, Owners' Committees and representatives of related organizations after the scheme gazettal to explain the associated land impacts on private lots and to listen to their views.

Public Concerns

7. During the consultation with the District Council and the local community, we noted the following views and concerns of the public:

Proposed Temporary Barging Point at Tin Wan Praya Road

8. Since the construction of the SIL (East) will generate large amounts of excavated materials, the MTRCL has proposed to establish temporary barging facilities at Tin Wan Praya Road in Kellett Bay and Lee Nam Road in Ap Lei Chau for removal of the excavated materials by marine transport, with a view to

minimizing road-based traffic impact. Setting up two barging facilities is required to share the delivery volume and therefore minimize the traffic impact on the local community, especially on major roads connecting Southern District to Central or Wanchai.

9. We note that some members of the local community are concerned about the impacts brought about by the proposed barging point and other facilities at Tin Wan Praya Road, including the potential traffic impacts, air and noise impacts. The MTRCL has conducted a traffic impact assessment study in the preliminary design and the results revealed that the traffic impact at Tin Wan Praya Road will be within acceptable levels.

10. Regarding the potential air and noise pollution, the MTRCL has engaged consultants to carry out the environmental impact assessment (EIA) in accordance with the Environmental Impact Assessment Ordinance, which covers the holistic assessment of the impacts due to the proposed barging point as well as the nearby facilities. Suitable mitigation measures and temporary traffic arrangements will be devised to minimize the impacts on the environment and the community. Compensatory planting works are proposed along the waterfront of Kellett Bay. It is expected that the EIA study will be completed in early 2010 and submitted to the Environmental Protection Department for subsequent review and approval. The EIA Report will be deposited for public inspection. The barging points are temporary facilities and the two locations will be reinstated and returned to the Government upon completion of the SIL (East) project.

Proposed Magazine at Chung Hom Shan

11. The construction works of the SIL (East) project will include blasting where excavation in hard rock is required. The MTRCL has proposed a temporary magazine at a remote area at Chung Hom Shan for overnight storage of a small amount of explosives for the construction of the SIL (East). Before recommending the proposed site the MTRCL has considered the feasibility of various alternative sites, including Cape Collinson, Mount Davis Path, Chung Hom Shan, Chi Fu and Victoria Road. The sites at Cape Collinson and Mount Davis Path are not accessible by the Government explosive delivery vehicle and emergency vehicles. The site at Chi Fu is close to the residential area and existing water supply facility, with a smaller storage capacity which cannot meet

the demand for the use of SIL (East). The site at Victoria Road is restricted for the use of the West Island Line.

12. The MTRCL has also examined the feasibility of using the site at Shek O Quarry as an alternative. The site is further from the blasting site with a longer haul route which doubles the length of and overlaps with the Chung Hom Shan route. The additional haul route is also winding and narrow. Taking all factors into consideration, including the distance from nearby residential areas, accessibility of the site and the length of the delivery route, the proposed Chung Hom Shan site is considered the most suitable location.

13. To address the safety concerns of the proposed magazine, the MTRCL is proceeding with a quantitative risk assessment on the transport and storage of explosives for SIL (East). The assessment will be reviewed by the Mines Division and form part of the EIA study report. Moreover, the MTRCL will ensure strict compliance with the Dangerous Goods Ordinance and will enforce stringent risk control and safety measures to ensure safe delivery, storage and use of explosives.

14. All licensed vehicles used for transportation of explosives should be approved by the Commissioner of Mines. Specific safety measures including separate storage compartments for detonators and cartridge explosives, fire fighting equipment, etc. should be provided for these vehicles. Drivers of these vehicles should have adequate fire fighting and explosives handling training and they need to adopt safe driving procedures in transportation of explosives. Individual contractors will need to obtain a removal permit from the Commissioner of Mines for the explosive delivery. Given the long history of using explosives in construction works in Hong Kong and no accident involved in delivery vehicles carrying explosives, the storage, conveyance and handling of explosives is proven to be very safe.

Concerns of the Tung Wah Group of Hospitals Jockey Club Rehabilitation Complex

15. Based on the current scheme, the proposed viaduct will run adjacent to the Tung Wah Group of Hospitals Jockey Club Rehabilitation Complex (JCRC) at Wong Chuk Hang. We note the concerns of the parents of the occupants accommodated at the JCRC as well as the management of the JCRC, about the

potential impact on the centre brought about by the railway. The Government and the MTRCL have been in close contact with the parents and representatives of the JCRC to understand their operations, while the JCRC and the parents have also paid a visit to the existing railway system to better understand the railway operations.

16. Since June 2009, we have been meeting JCRC representatives and the parents regularly to report on the progress of design developments. The JCRC and the parents have requested for the viaduct section to be lowered and moved further away from the centre, and the provision of a noise enclosure. The MTRCL is still addressing these requests taking into account the alignment and geographic constraints and other design considerations in developing the detailed design of the railway project.

17. The MTRCL is carrying out the EIA study, which will include the viaduct section in the vicinity of the JCRC, to ensure that the construction and operation of the SIL (East) will comply with the statutory requirements of the relevant environmental protection ordinances and codes of practice. Appropriate mitigation measures, including provision of noise enclosures, will be provided to ensure compliance with the statutory requirements and to further minimize the noise impact as much as practical.

Comparison between Viaduct Option and Tunnel Option

18. We note that some organizations have expressed concerns over the design of the SIL (East) project, particularly the section between the toll plaza of the Aberdeen Tunnel and Ap Lei Chau, which will be built on a viaduct. In this connection, the MTRCL has looked into the tunnel option and provided further explanation to the Railway Subcommittee in the meetings held on 16 January and 15 May 2009. To pursue the tunnel option, we anticipate the following implications and drawbacks to the community:

- (i) The depot located in Wong Chuk Hang would need to be lowered by about 14 metres involving excavation of an additional one million cubic metres of hard rock inside the depot site. The extra excavation works will lead to about three to four years' delay in the completion of the railway;

- (ii) About two-thirds of the Aberdeen Channel will have to be closed for three years to facilitate the construction of tunnel, leaving only a 35-metre fairway for marine traffic during the period, which may not be acceptable;
- (iii) The construction of the ventilation buildings and the floodgate for the tunnel section crossing the Aberdeen Channel will require the clearance of some shipyards on the north shore of the Channel;
- (iv) The two stations of Ocean Park and Wong Chuk Hang will have to be located underground. The level difference between the station platform and station entrances will become comparatively larger, making travelling time longer and therefore more inconvenient for passengers' accessibility; and
- (v) Approximately 16,000 square meters of land inside the Hong Kong Police College will be required temporarily for tunnel construction for at least 3 years; and the Tactical Training Complex Building will have to be demolished, which will affect the operation of the Police College.

19. In view of the programme implications to the community, the benefits and impacts to the district, as well as relevant planning and environmental considerations, the viaduct design is considered to be a practicable option.

20. In carrying out the detailed design, the MTRCL will implement suitable mitigation measures to reduce the impact of the works to an acceptable level, and to consult the Advisory Committee on Appearance of Bridges and Associated Structures and the District Council so as to arrive at a design that could accommodate the views of the different parties concerned.

Project Programme

21. The SIL (East) project is a major item of transport infrastructure for Southern District. The gazettal marks a new chapter in the project development. We plan to commence the construction works of the SIL (East) in 2011 and for completion in 2015.

22. Members are invited to note the contents of this paper.

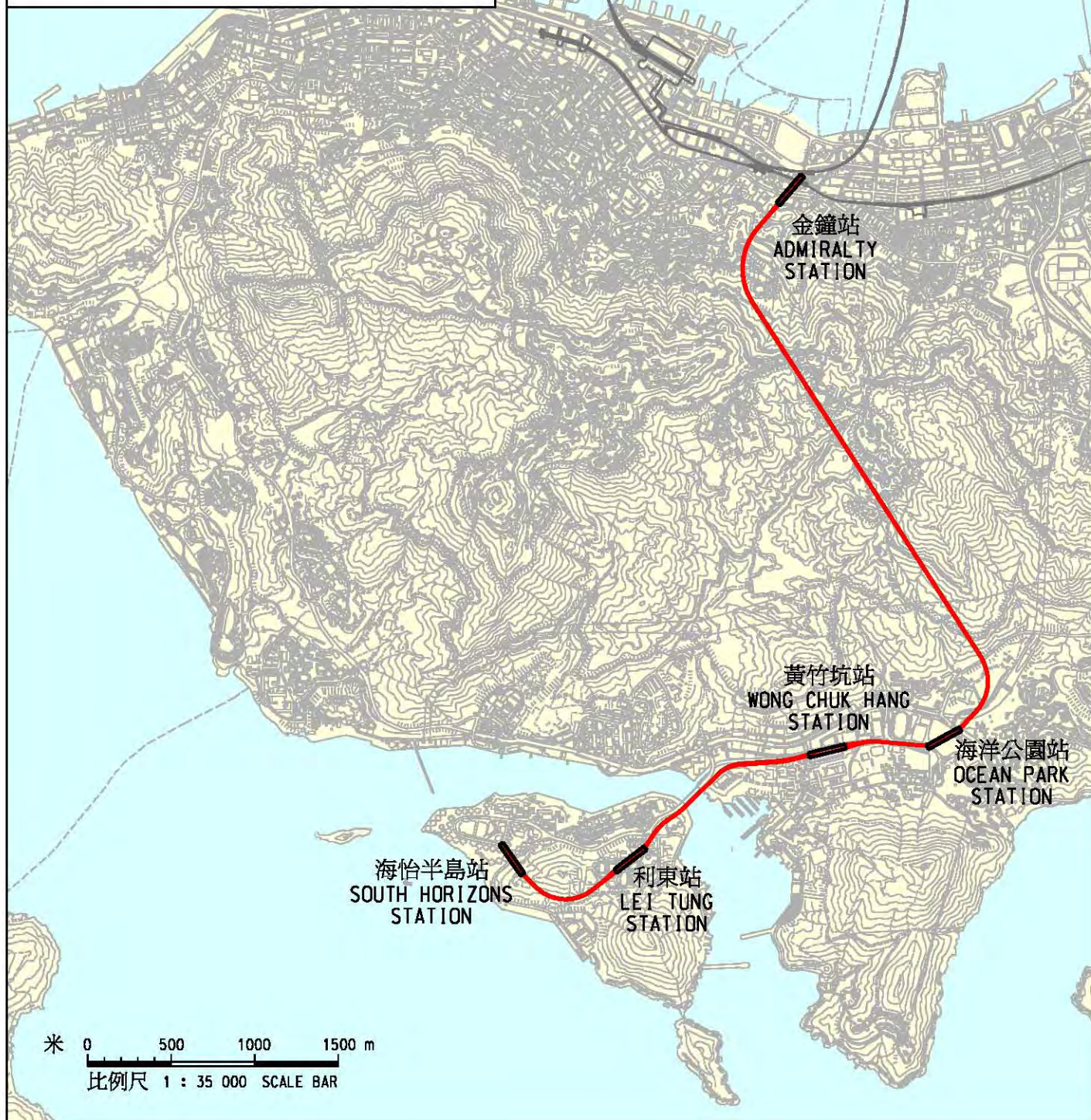
Transport and Housing Bureau
September 2009

圖例
LEGEND

— 現有鐵路路線
EXISTING RAIL LINE

— 擬建南港島線（東段）
PROPOSED SOUTH ISLAND LINE (EAST)

附件一
Annex 1



南港島線（東段）

SOUTH ISLAND LINE (SIL) (EAST)