

For Discussion  
18 May 2012

## **Legislative Council Panel on Transport Subcommittee on Matters Relating to Railways**

### **Our Future Railway Stage 1 Public Engagement exercise**

Upon the funding approval of the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council on 14 January 2011, the Government commissioned a consultancy study to review and update the Railway Development Strategy 2000 in March 2011. On 20 April 2012, the Government published the “Our Future Railway” consultation document to launch a three-month Stage 1 Public Engagement exercise with a view to gathering public opinion on long-term railway development.

#### **Study Objectives**

2. The Government announced the Railway Development Strategy 2000 in May 2000 to implement the policy of using railways as the backbone of our passenger transport system. Currently, we are taking forward five railway projects<sup>1</sup> concurrently at full steam. On completion of all these projects between 2014 and 2020, the total length of railways in Hong Kong will increase to more than 270 km. There will be 99 railway stations and 68 light rail stations, serving areas inhabited by more than 70% of the local population. Overall speaking, the railway network will largely be able to satisfy the transport demand in the medium and long term.

3. Railway projects involve enormous investment of public funds and have profound impacts on society, people's livelihood and economic development, on which the general public often have divided views and different recommendations, thus requiring prudent and comprehensive

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<sup>1</sup> Construction works of the West Island Line, the Hong Kong Section of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link, the South Island Line (East) and the Kwun Tong Line Extension commenced between 2009 and 2011, whereas construction of the Shatin to Central Link is expected to commence in mid-2012.

planning. It often takes more than ten years or even longer for a railway project to take shape from idea formulation to the conceptual stage, through detailed design to actual construction and completion. Moreover, there have been calls in the community requesting the Government to conduct long-term holistic railway planning on a regular basis in order to coordinate urban development and land planning.

4. Although the above five new railway projects will only be completed between 2014 and 2020, it is considered that we should be forward looking by conducting an early review and update of the existing railway development strategy. Early consultation will allow the public to participate in discussion and planning process in formulating the long-term railway development blueprint. The review study will last for about 24 months. The current public consultation will help build community consensus to facilitate the future administration to decide on the future railway development blueprint in view of the latest planning conditions and public opinions.

5. Of equal importance, we have to make timely reservation of land for railway corridors and ancillary facilities to ensure that the planning and design works of individual railway projects can commence in a timely manner in response to the actual needs of the society and the pace of local developments. This is to avoid the occupation of land by other developments which may hinder the implementation of new railway projects. By doing so, we can ensure that railway development and the planning of local areas and infrastructures can be properly integrated to achieve the optimal planning efficiencies.

6. It should be noted that the major regional railway corridors identified at this stage are conceptual schemes which have undergone preliminary study only. They are worth public discussion and would facilitate our understanding of the public views on the relevant concepts. It does not imply that the Government nor the consultants have already proposed or recommended to construct the relevant projects. In the next stage of the study, the consultants will conduct more in-depth studies and comprehensive benefit analysis to verify the technical feasibility and assess the social and economic benefits of the preferred proposals.

## Study Methodology

7. The study is conducted in two stages with a view to recommending a new railway development blueprint that is cost-effective and can meet the needs of the society.

### Stage 1: Major Regional Railway Corridors

- a) **Conduct Transport Demand Forecasts:** Examines the latest planning information to analyse the long-term local transport demands and forecast major growth areas, having regard to the development potential and needs of various districts in Hong Kong;
- b) **Review of Major Regional Railway Corridors serving Key Development Areas:** Preliminarily reviews the demand for major regional railway corridors in key development areas on the basis of the above demand forecasts to enhance railway coverage for associated areas and major infrastructures;
- c) **Public Consultation:** Consults the public on the preliminary ideas and conceptual schemes of the major regional railway corridors serving key development areas to allow early engagement of the public in the discussion and planning process;

### Stage 2: Local Enhancement Schemes

- d) **Study and Integration of Railway Networks:** Having summarised the public views collected, the conceptual schemes of major regional railway corridors are further studied and integrated into the existing railway network to develop a more cost-effective railway development framework for Hong Kong;
- e) **Review of Local Enhancement Schemes:** Forecasts the passenger traffic of the railway network and assesses potential bottleneck locations. The consultants will mainly focus on

studying local enhancement schemes, in particular those for railway services in the urban area (including constructing parallel lines, extensions or spur lines, building new stations etc.) to increase the overall capacity of the railway network and reduce road-based feeder needs; and

- f) **Public Consultation:** Consults the public on the integrated railway network and local enhancement schemes. The blueprint will be further optimised taking into account the views of the public.

8. The various railway ideas studied by the consultants over the past year include those put forward in the Railway Development Strategy 2000 which have yet been implemented, as well as others proposed by the Government or the public. The consultants consider that the Hong Kong-Shenzhen Western Express Line, the Northern Link and the Coastal Railway between Tuen Mun and Tsuen Wan (Tuen Mun to Tsuen Wan Link) are conceptual schemes which are worthy of public discussion in the public engagement for Stage 1, but it does not represent that the consultants propose to construct the above railways.

### **Public Engagement**

9. Stage 1 Public Engagement exercise commenced on 20 April 2012 to last until 21 July 2012. Roving exhibitions and public forums are to be conducted in various districts during the period. Relevant information, such as consultation documents, time and venue of exhibitions and forums etc, has been uploaded to the “Our Future Railway” dedicated website ([www.ourfuturerailway.hk](http://www.ourfuturerailway.hk)). Members of the public can also express their opinions through channels such as website, email, fax and post. During the consultation period, we initiate contact with the Legislative Council, District Councils, Heung Yee Kuk, Transport Advisory Committee, academes and professional bodies to listen to the views from different facets of our society.

### **Conclusion**

10. Members are invited to note the study and consultation work for

the Review and Update of the Railway Development Strategy 2000, and provide comments on the Stage 1 study findings and major regional railway corridors.

Transport and Housing Bureau  
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