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Panel on Transport

Subcommittee on Matters Relating to Railways
Meeting on 1 March 2013

Updated background brief on the review and update of
the Railway Development Strategy 2000

Purpose

This paper provides background information on the review and update of the Railway Development Strategy 2000 ("RDS 2000"). It also summarizes the views and concerns expressed by the Subcommittee on Matters Relating to Railways ("the Subcommittee") in the past.

Background

2. RDS 2000 was announced in the year 2000. It maps out the railway network expansion plan for Hong Kong up to the year 2016, so as to tie in with the overall development in Hong Kong, to meet the daily traffic need of the public, as well as to echo the sustainable transport policy of making railway as the backbone of our passenger transport system, providing Hong Kong citizens with convenient and safe public transport services at reasonable prices.

3. RDS 2000 recommended six priority railway schemes. They were Kowloon Southern Link ("KSL"), Northern Link ("NOL"), West Island Line ("WIL"), North Island Line ("NIL"), Shatin to Central Link ("SCL") and Regional Express Line [now known as the Hong Kong section of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link ("XRL")]. In addition, RDS 2000 also recommended the development of the Port Rail Link, linking Lo Wu to a rail terminal at Kwai Chung, which was shelved subsequently.

Railway projects in progress

4. Currently, five railway projects are in progress. WIL and XRL are now under construction for completion in 2014 to 2015. The funding applications for SCL were approved by the Finance Committee on 18 April 2012. The construction works for the Tai Wai to Hung Hom Section of SCL are expected to be completed in 2018, whereas the Hung Hom to Admiralty Section is expected to be completed by 2020. In view of the public needs and to enhance the overall railway network, the Administration decided to develop the Kwun Tong Line Extension (KTE) scheme which was suggested in the course of the study of SCL. The Administration also advanced the planning of South Island Line (East) (SIL(E)). Both KTE and SIL(E) are now under construction and to be completed in 2015. The above said railway projects under construction, projects completed (including Lok Ma Chau Spur Line, West Rail Line, Ma On Shan Line, Tseung Kwan O Line and Tsim Sha Tsui Extension), projects shelved or under review and projects recommended in RDS 2000 are indicated on the map in **Appendix I**.

Need for review and update of RDS 2000

5. Although the five new railway projects under construction, including WIL, XRL, SCL, KTE and SIL(E) will only be completed between 2014 and 2020, the Administration considers that it should be forward looking by conducting an early review and update of the existing railway development strategy because railway projects involve enormous investment of public funds and for a railway project to take shape, it would take more than 10 years to go through the stages of formation of ideas, public consultation, approval of funding and construction. Early consultation can also allow the public to participate in the discussion and planning process in formulating the long-term railway development blueprint.

Deliberations by the Subcommittee and Finance Committee

6. The Administration seeks the Subcommittee's support at the meeting held on 4 November 2010 to create a commitment of \$43 million to review and update RDS 2000 because it is considered necessary in view of the changing needs of the society and latest planning parameters. They include –

- (a) **Hong Kong 2030 Study** – formulating a broad planning framework to guide the future development of Hong Kong up

to year 2030. Hong Kong 2030 Study suggested that planning strategy should follow three broad directions, namely providing a quality living environment; enhancing economic competitiveness; and strengthening links with the Mainland.

- (b) **Satisfying the demand arising from growing population** – in 2010, the Administration announced the latest population projections and made adjustment in various planning parameters for population forecast, population and employment distribution. Therefore, the railway development strategy should also be fine-tuned accordingly.
- (c) **To tie in with the planning of the New Development Areas ("NDAs")** – the Chief Executive announced in 2007 that NDAs (including Kwu Tung North, Fanling North, Ping Che and Ta Kwu Ling and Hung Shui Kiu) should be planned without delay, so as to ease the pressure on developed areas and to meet the demand for land arising from population growth. In this connection, railway development should be planned accordingly to meet the traffic demand arising from the NDAs.
- (d) **Supporting external traffic** – The traffic between Hong Kong and Mainland and other countries has been increasing. In 2009, land-based cross boundary passengers reached an average of 470,000 per day, whilst the annual passenger throughput of the Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA) was around 46 million, representing over 70% and 50% growth respectively in 10-year period. Railway development strategy needs to be adjusted accordingly, so as to tie in with the overall planning and development strategy of HKIA, Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge (HZMB), various boundary control facilities, as well as the Pearl River Delta area.
- (e) **Public opinions** – Members of the public have from time to time expressed views on railway development, including proposals on extension of existing lines or new lines/stations, improvements to existing rail services, etc. The Administration considers it necessary to study these

conceptual proposals in detail to meet public expectations and demands.

7. Members of the Subcommittee generally supported the proposal and raised the following concerns and suggestions –

- (a) the review should explore means to enhance the railways' role as the backbone of public transport through better coordination with other transport modes, including the provision of park-and-ride facilities at major MTR stations to ease traffic congestion of harbour crossing;
- (b) the outcome of the review should be published from time to time without waiting for completion of the whole review exercise; and
- (c) the review should also cover NOL and NIL, which were proposals identified in RDS 2000 but not yet implemented.

8. The funding proposal was approved by the Finance Committee on 14 January 2011. At the meeting, Members expressed the following major concerns –

- (a) the review should look into causes of aggravating surface traffic conditions, and the possibility of extending railway network to the newly developed areas and other areas on Hong Kong Island not currently served by railway;
- (b) the review should cover other new railway proposals, such as a railway linking Tuen Mun and Tsuen Wan, a railway linking Tuen Mun and Hong Kong International Airport, a railway line for Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge and the railway development in New Territories West;
- (c) the increase of sea and truck freight volume over the years could in fact be a result of the absence of Port Rail Link (PRL). The PRL was intended for transporting goods directly from the Mainland to the Kwai Tsing Container Terminals in an environmental-friendly and cost-effective manner; and

- (d) the review should be driven by an overall development blueprint with clear future direction for Hong Kong in moving ahead. There should be a strategic plan on the number of city centres and their locations, and how these would complement the development in the region. The public should also be engaged in the process.

9. The Administration then commissioned a consultancy study to review and update the RDS 2000 in March 2011. The study is conducted in two stages, focusing on the major regional railway corridors and the local enhancement schemes respectively.

Stage One Public Engagement Exercise

10. The three-month Stage One Public Engagement Exercise was held from 20 April to 21 July 2012 to seek views on the stage one study findings. In this connection, a consultation document entitled "Our Future Railway" was published in April 2012.

Stage one study findings

11. The consultants consider that the following three conceptual schemes are worthy of public discussion in the Stage One Public Engagement Exercise –

- (a) **Hong Kong-Shenzhen Western Express Line (WEL)**
The preliminary conceptual scheme of WEL is in **Appendix II**. It comprises three components, i.e. Airport Rail Link; Cross-boundary Spur Line between Hung Shui Kiu and Qianhai; and Domestic Spur Line between Tuen Mun and Siu Ho Wan.
- (b) **Northern Link (NOL)**
The preliminary conceptual scheme of NOL is in **Appendix III**. Depending on the major role to be played by NOL, the consultants advised that NOL could be connected to the Lok Ma Chau Spur Line either at Kwu Tung or Lok Ma Chau. If NOL is positioned to mainly serve the new development areas and divert the East Rail Line traffic, then to cater for cross-boundary transport needs, it is more appropriate for

NOL to connect to the Lok Ma Chau Spur Line at Kwu Tung. If NOL is to facilitate passengers from the western New Territories to travel to and from the boundary, it would be more convenient for NOL to connect to Lok Ma Chau.

(c) **Tuen Mun to Tsuen Wan Link (TMTWL)**

In 2011, the Task Group on the Construction of Railway between Tuen Mun and Tsuen Wan formed by the Tuen Mun District Council and Tsuen Wan District Council published the Study on the Construction of Railway along Castle Peak Road Corridor between Tuen Mun and Tsuen Wan Final Report. The proposed alignment of TMTWL is in **Appendix IV**.

12. At the meeting on 22 May 2012, the Administration briefed the Subcommittee on its plan to launch the Stage One Public Engagement Exercise. The Subcommittee noted that the major regional railway corridors identified at this stage were conceptual schemes which had undergone preliminary study only. They were worthy of public discussion and would facilitate the Administration's understanding of the public views on the relevant concepts. It did not imply that the Administration nor the consultants had already proposed to construct the relevant projects. In the next stage of the study, the consultants would conduct more in-depth studies and comprehensive benefit analyses to verify the technical feasibility and assess the social and economic benefits of the preferred proposals.

13. Some Members considered that in the course of the study, the Administration and its consultants should also take into account the findings of the Third Comprehensive Transport Study in 1999, which had looked at improvements to be made for better co-ordination of public transport services, in order to develop a balanced transport plan for Hong Kong. Some Members considered that NOL should be actively explored as it could provide a more direct and convenient cross boundary railway service for residents in New Territories West. Some Members, however, expressed doubt on the patronage forecast of WEL and suggested that the consultants should conduct more in-depth study to ascertain the service demand for WEL.

14. When the Subcommittee considered the items to be discussed in the 2012-2013 legislative session at the meeting on 30 November 2012, Members proposed to discuss a number of new railway projects, namely the South Island Line (West), an extension of West Rail Line to Tuen Mun

Pier, an extension of Tung Chung Line and an extension of Island Line to Siu Sai Wan.

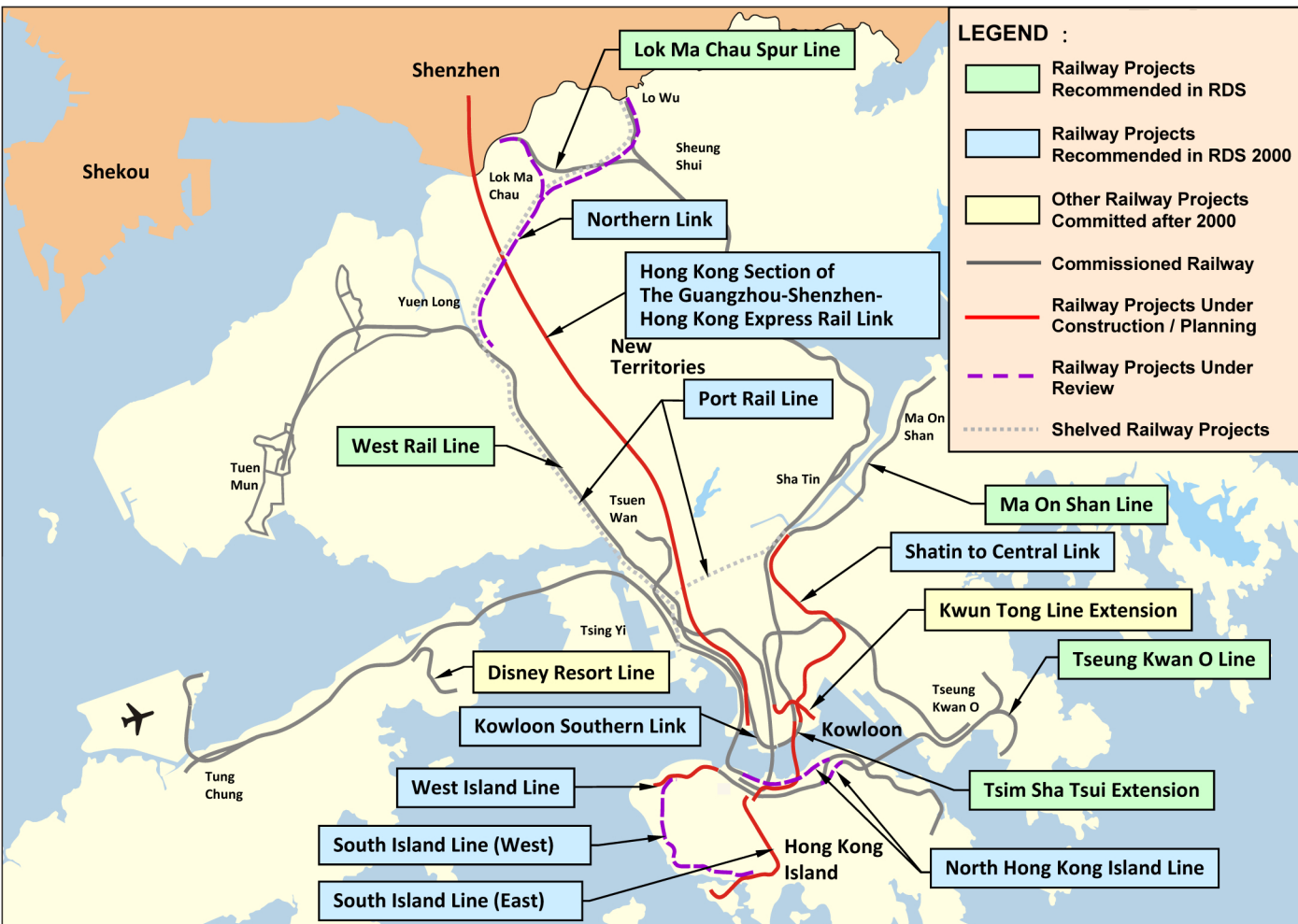
Latest developments

15. The Administration will brief the Subcommittee on its plan to launch the Stage Two Public Engagement Exercise at the meeting to be held on 1 March 2013.

Relevant papers

16. A list of relevant papers is in **Appendix V**.

Council Business Division 1
Legislative Council Secretariat
26 February 2013









Appendix V

Review and Update of the Railway Development Strategy 2000 List of relevant papers

Date of meeting	Committee	Minutes/Paper	LC Paper No.
4 November 2010	Subcommittee on Matters Relating to Railways	Administration's paper on review and update of the Railway Development Strategy 2000	CB(1)256/10-11(03) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr10-11/english/panels/tp/tp_rdp/papers/tp_rdp1104cb1-256-3-e.pdf
		Minutes of meeting	CB(1)1068/10-11 http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr10-11/english/panels/tp/tp_rdp/minutes/rdp20101104.pdf
14 January 2011	Finance Committee	Administration's paper on review and update of the Railway Development Strategy 2000	FCR(2010-11)53 http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr10-11/english/fc/fc/papers/f10-53e.pdf
		Minutes of meeting	FC116/10-11 http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr10-11/english/fc/fc/minutes/fc20110114.pdf
22 May 2012	Subcommittee on Matters Relating to Railways	Administration's paper on "Our Future Railway – Stage 1 Public Engagement Exercise"	CB(1)1832/11-12(02) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr11-12/english/panels/tp/tp_rdp/papers/tp_rdp0522cb1-1832-2-e.pdf
		Legislative Council Secretariat's background brief on the review and update of the Railway Development Strategy 2000	CB(1)1832/11-12(03) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr11-12/english/panels/tp/tp_rdp/papers/tp_rdp0522cb1-1832-3-e.pdf

Date of meeting	Committee	Minutes/Paper	LC Paper No.
		Minutes of meeting	CB(1)2542/11-12 http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr11-12/english/panels/tp/tp_rdp/minutes/rdp20120522.pdf

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