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**Report of the Subcommittee on Matters Relating to Railways
for submission to the Panel on Transport**

Purpose

This report gives an account of the work of the Subcommittee on Matters Relating to Railways ("the Subcommittee") during the 2012-2013 legislative session.

The Subcommittee

2. The Panel on Transport ("the Panel") decided at its meeting in the current session on 16 November 2012 to form a subcommittee to oversee matters relating to railways. The terms of reference and membership list of the Subcommittee are at **Appendices I and II** respectively.

3. Under the chairmanship of Hon CHAN Kam-lam, the Subcommittee has held five meetings (up to late-June 2013) with the Administration and the MTR Corporation Limited ("MTRCL").

Major work

Public consultation on the review and update of the Railway Development Strategy ("RDS") 2000

4. The Administration commissioned a consultant in March 2011 to conduct a study for the review and update of RDS 2000, with a view to

updating the long-term railway development blueprint for Hong Kong's future. It included reviewing the priority of the railway network expansion proposals that were recommended previously but not yet implemented, as well as adding new railway proposals. The Administration's target was to update RDS to meet the transport need up to year 2031. The Administration conducted the Stage 1 Public Engagement Exercise from 20 April to 21 July 2012 which featured conceptual schemes of 3 major regional railway corridors, namely the Hong Kong-Shenzhen Western Express Line, Northern Link and Coastal Railway between Tuen Mun and Tsuen Wan, for public discussion, taking into account the consultant's findings.

5. At the meeting on 1 March 2013, the Administration briefed the Subcommittee on its 3-month Stage 2 Public Engagement Exercise from 21 February to 20 May 2013 with a view to gathering public opinion on the 7 local enhancement schemes for existing railway lines. The 7 schemes included the North Island Line, Siu Sai Wan Line, South Island Line (West) ("SIL(W)"), Tuen Mun South Extension, Hung Shui Kiu Station, Tung Chung West Extension and Kwu Tung Station. The Subcommittee further held a special meeting on 3 May 2013 to invite members of the public to express views on the 7 schemes. A total of 51 deputations and individuals attended the meeting.

6. Whilst the Subcommittee generally welcomed the development of the North Island Line, it was concerned about the alignment design of the route. Besides, some members expressed concern that excessive resources might be spent in less populated areas such as those near the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre and Tamar on North Hong Kong. On the alignment design, two proposals namely, the "Interchange"¹ and the "Swap"² Schemes were put forward by the Administration for public consultation. In considering that the "Swap" Scheme would divide the existing Island Line into two separate sections which would discourage residents on Hong Kong Island to take the MTR due to interchange reason, members preferred the "Interchange" Scheme, which would retain the integrity of the existing Island Line.

¹ "Interchange" Scheme: merely extending the underground section of the Tung Chung Line and Tseung Kwan O Line for interchange midway along the northshore of the Hong Kong Island.

² "Swap" Scheme: extending the Tung Chung Line and Tseung Kwan O Line in tunnels, and realigning the existing Island Line by dividing it into two separate sections.

7. Members in general welcomed the development of the Siu Sai Wan Line while views on the "Extension"³, "Bifurcation"⁴ and "Feeder"⁵ Schemes as proposed by the Administration were divergent. Some members preferred the "Extension" Scheme as it would allow the provision of a more smooth and flexible service with a lesser impact on train frequency. However, some members were concerned about the technical difficulties associated with the "Extension" Scheme as certain buildings near the existing Chai Wan Station or along the alignment would have to be demolished. Some members took the view that as the "Bifurcation" Scheme would probably involve reclamation, it might be worthwhile to further pursue the "Feeder" Scheme which would be built in the form of viaduct. The Subcommittee urged the Administration to conduct further studies, taking into account the views expressed by members and the public.

8. Some members opined that the Administration should first develop the railway service from Aberdeen to Wah Fu in view of the technical difficulties in Pokfulam area and the divergent views of residents there. Members in general supported the development of SIL(W), in particular the section from Aberdeen to Wah Fu and suggested that the South Island Line (East) ("SIL(E)") under construction be extended to cover Aberdeen, Wah Fu, Wah Kwai and Queen Mary Hospital. However, some members had doubts over the capacity of SIL(E) to cater for the passenger flow from SIL(W) because even without the Aberdeen Section, the average train loading of the section from Wong Chuk Hang Station to Ocean Park Station of SIL(E) might reach 60% or above during morning peak hours in 2031, as mentioned in the Administration's Consultation Document, and therefore SIL(E) might not be able to accommodate the extra passenger load brought by the Aberdeen Section. It was suggested that the capacity of both SIL(E) and SIL(W) should be reviewed together by the Administration in developing railway service for residents in the district.

9. The Administration explained that they would consider developing the railway service for residents in Aberdeen, Wah Fu and Pokfulam, having regard to the further development of the districts and technical feasibility.

10. Some members opined that in view of the pressing transport

³ "Extension" Scheme: a direct extension of the Island Line from Chai Wan Station to Siu Sai Wan.

⁴ "Bifurcation" Scheme: bifurcating the Island Line in the Eastern District to Siu Sai Wan.

⁵ "Feeder" Scheme: the construction of a dedicated medium capacity railway system for Siu Sai Wan to connect Heng Fa Chuen Station.

needs of residents in Tuen Mun South, the Tuen Mun South Extension should be accorded higher priority for development. It was also suggested that in order to facilitate residents in Tuen Mun South who had to ride the Light Rail or bus to reach Tuen Mun Station of the West Rail, an automated people mover system should be constructed as a supplementary transport means. Other members also suggested that with the growing population in Tuen Mun, the West Rail Line might become overloaded with the addition of the Tuen Mun South Extension. The Administration noted members' views and pledged to consider railway as well as other public transport facilities to meet the growing transport needs in the northwestern New Territories.

11. Members indicated their support to the proposed Hung Shui Kiu Station, taking into account the population intake in the surrounding public housing estates, and the resultant transport needs of residents nearby. Some members were of the view that development of the Kwu Tung Station should be closely coordinated with the study of the Northern Link, one of the major regional railway corridors under study, to achieve better social and economic benefits. It was suggested that new towns and railway projects could be simultaneously developed and that railway development should be forward-looking enough to drive new town development.

12. Some members shared the views that the Tung Chung residents were very much in need of the Tung Chung West Extension to meet their transport needs. Since a total of more than 10,000 persons were expected to move to Tung Chung's new public housing estates in around 2018, the development of the Tung Chung West Extension should commence as soon as practicable. The Administration advised that they would continue to monitor the growing trend of the Tung Chung population and examine the transport needs of the Tung Chung area. Furthermore, the Tung Chung New Town Extension Study was still undergoing and they were unable to advise whether reclamation would be involved at the current stage.

13. The Administration explained that upon completion of the Stage 2 Public Engagement Exercise in May 2013, the consultant would collate the views of public collected at both Stage 1 and Stage 2 of the exercise. The entire RDS study was expected to be finished in 2013. The

Administration would then consider the consultant's final recommendations in the light of the development progress of new development areas and explore the way forward for different railway projects, with a view to reporting the results to the public in 2014.

14. Members took the chance to suggest that the Transport and Housing Bureau and the Development Bureau should work together to speed up the development of the Northern Link. Members also urged the Administration to consider the conduct of the Fourth Comprehensive Transport Study after the review of RDS.

Progress of SIL(E)

15. The Subcommittee has also closely monitored the implementation of SIL(E). SIL(E) is a 7-kilometre long medium capacity railway, connecting the MTR network at Admiralty to the Southern District of Hong Kong via Ocean Park, Wong Chuk Hang, Lei Tung and South Horizons. Construction works of it commenced in May 2011 and completion was expected to be in 2015. The Subcommittee was briefed by the Administration and MTRCL on the new railway system of SIL(E) project at the meeting on 4 January 2013.

16. The Subcommittee noted that Fully Automatic Operation ("FAO") would be introduced for the operation of SIL(E). FAO would support the signalling system with automatic recovery function, enabling operational control from trains, stations and the Operations Control Centre ("OCC"). Under the operation of FAO system, there would be no captain on board the train and preparation for train service including function tests before service, setting trains in motion, speed control, train stopping, as well as door opening and closing would be fully automatic under the control of OCC with preset commands. The Subcommittee noted that FAO was being adopted in some of the railway lines in overseas cities, like Paris, London, Barcelona and Vancouver. The Disneyland Resort Line of MTR had also been operated under FAO since its service commencement in 2005. Some members, however, expressed concern over passenger safety during emergency under FAO system. The Administration assured members that before the commissioning of SIL(E), it would request MTRCL to provide detailed contingency plans to handle service disruptions for the review of the

Electrical and Mechanical Services Department to ensure passenger safety.

17. The Subcommittee also noted that the headway of SIL(E) services would be similar to other existing MTR lines with a peak hour headway of around 3 minutes. In addition, SIL(E) would be operated with a 3-car configuration and a capacity of about 20,000 passengers per hour in each direction. Some members expressed concern that the passenger handling capacity would be insufficient and enquired the feasibility of replacing the 3-car configuration by 4-car configuration. MTRCL advised that the 3-car configuration was selected to allow more flexibility in alignment planning, enabling the stations be located in the most populated areas. With the current arrangement, it would not be possible to expand the stations to accommodate 4-car trains. However, train service would be provided with headway similar to urban lines.

Hong Kong section ("HKS") of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link ("XRL")

18. XRL is an express rail of a total length of about 140 kilometres linking up Hong Kong with Guangzhou via Futian and Longhua in Shenzhen and Humen in Dongguan. Its terminus in Guangzhou will be located at Shibi. HKS will be a 26-kilometre long underground rail corridor from the boundary at Huanggang to the West Kowloon Terminus ("WKT").

19. Following the Finance Committee's approval of the funding applications for implementation of the railway and non-railway works of HKS of XRL on 16 January 2010, the construction works commenced in end January 2010 for completion in 2015. The Administration has been providing half-yearly progress reports to the Subcommittee for information. In October 2012, the Subcommittee noted from the 5th half-yearly report on construction progress and financial situation of XRL project for the period between 1 January and 30 June 2012 that the cumulative expenditure for the awarded contracts was \$19.985 billion, and that the award of contracts was on schedule and within budget. At the meeting on 24 May 2013, the Administration provided the 6th half-yearly report for the period between 1 July and 31 December 2012 and briefed members on the progress and financial situation of the

construction of HKS of XRL.

20. The Administration advised that as at 31 March 2013, over 70% of the excavation works for the tunnels and WKT had been completed. Excavation works at the southern end of WKT had reached to level B4, and the main structures for the first two underground levels had been completed. As at the end of 2012, all major construction contracts for civil, electrical and mechanical works had been awarded with a total value of \$44.812 billion. As at 31 March 2013, the cumulative expenditures were about \$24.418 billion. Since the 6th half-yearly report had only updated the construction progress and financial situation of XRL project up to 31 December 2012, the Subcommittee urged the Administration to provide the latest information on the construction of HKS of XRL, including the categories and sum of substantiated claims made after December 2012.

21. The Subcommittee was invited to pay a visit to the construction sites of WKT of HKS of XRL and that of a tunnel section to better understand its progress on 24 June 2013.

Art in railway stations

22. The Subcommittee received a briefing by MTRCL on the MTR Station Art Programme at the meeting on 4 January 2013. According to MTRCL, the "art in MTR" concept had been introduced since 1998 to enhance the travelling environment and showcase the diversity of cultural and historical characteristics of local districts. MTRCL had asked the local communities to contribute their ideas for the art element for new stations in the preliminary stage of the station design, in order to reflect the cultural and historical characteristics unique to each station in the design.

23. MTRCL informed members that the MTR Station Art Programme were implemented for new railway projects, namely West Island Line ("WIL"), SIL(E), Kwun Tong Line Extension, Shatin to Central Link and HKS of XRL. For instance, views of the local residents had been incorporated into the design of WIL starting from the preliminary conceptual stage. Art activities, such as "Our Memories of the Western District" Photography Competition and "Our Impressions of

Western District" Workshops and Tours were launched. Members noted that for SIL(E), two core themes, "Inspiration of Southern District" and "Integration into Southern District", were executed through open call for proposals at Admiralty Station and Ocean Park Station.

24. The Subcommittee expressed appreciation of MTRCL's goodwill to promote art and to enhance the space inside railway stations. Regarding the display of art pieces, some members considered that MTRCL should formulate a policy to replenish or replace the art pieces on display. Some members also considered that MTRCL should provide a less commercial environment inside stations by reducing the number of advertising light boxes at MTR stations to give more space for display of art pieces.

25. Some Subcommittee members were of the view that the elements of art should be incorporated into the architectural appearances of stations and viaducts and also functional objects in stations such as benches or signages. MTRCL informed that the terminus station of HKS of XRL and the future Admiralty Station would have unique appearance and could be seen as a piece of architectural art by itself.

Other issues

26. On 17 May 2013, more than 70 passengers were injured when a 2-carriage train of the Light Rail was derailed in Tin Shui Wai, Yuen Long. The Administration and MTRCL briefed the Subcommittee on the incident at the meeting on 24 May 2013. The Subcommittee noted that MTRCL had implemented a number of safety enhancement measures subsequent to the incident. These included a more frequent reminder to the Light Rail captains on the importance of safe driving, stepping up of spot-checks within the Light Rail network on the on-site speed of the Light Rail vehicles, and a pilot test of installing fixed speed cameras at appropriate locations. The Subcommittee members in general expressed concerns over the effectiveness of the improvement measures to enhance traffic safety of the Light Rail. Some members urged the Administration to consider the development of a new above-ground rail system to replace the existing Light Rail system.

Recommendation

27. The Panel is invited to note the work of the Subcommittee.

Council Business Division 1
Legislative Council Secretariat
3 July 2013

Panel on Transport

Subcommittee on matters relating to railways

Terms of Reference

To follow up various issues relating to the planning and implementation of new railway projects, and the operation of existing railways as follows:

Planning and implementation of new railway projects

- (a) planning and financing of new railway projects;
- (b) environmental impact assessment of new railway projects;
- (c) resumption of land arising from the implementation of new railway projects under the Railways Ordinance (Cap. 519);
- (d) progress update on the implementation of new railway projects;
- (e) provision of supporting public infrastructure for new railway projects; and
- (f) co-ordination of public transport services arising from the commissioning of new railway lines.

Railway operation

- (a) performance of existing railway lines including train service performance and safety management;
- (b) maintenance programme; and
- (c) train service disruptions and breakdowns, and arrangements for handling emergency situations.

Matters relating to corporate governance of the post-merger corporation and fares, including review of the fare adjustment mechanism, should be dealt with by the Panel on Transport.

**Legislative Council
Panel on Transport**

Subcommittee on Matters Relating to Railways

Membership list for 2012-2013 session

Chairman	Hon CHAN Kam-lam, SBS, JP
Deputy Chairman	Ir Dr Hon LO Wai-kwok, BBS, MH, JP
Members	Hon LEE Cheuk-yan Hon James TO Kun-sun Hon WONG Kwok-hing, BBS, MH Hon Ronny TONG Ka-wah, SC Hon CHAN Hak-kan, JP Hon Mrs Regina IP LAU Suk-yeet, GBS, JP Hon LEUNG Kwok-hung Hon Michael TIEN Puk-sun, BBS, JP Hon Frankie YICK Chi-ming Hon WU Chi-wai, MH Hon Gary FAN Kwok-wai Hon CHAN Han-pan Dr Hon Elizabeth QUAT, JP Hon TANG Ka-piu Hon Christopher CHUNG Shu-kun, BBS, MH, JP Hon Tony TSE Wai-chuen

(Total: 18 members)

Clerk Ms Sophie LAU

Legal Adviser Miss Evelyn LEE

Date 3 July 2013