

**Progress Report on
Motion on “Enhancing the railway service
in the Northwest New Territories”
at the Legislative Council meeting of 11 December 2013**

Purpose

At the Legislative Council Meeting held on 11 December 2013, the motion on “Enhancing the railway service in the Northwest New Territories” moved by Hon LEUNG Che-cheung and amended by Dr Hon KWOK Ka-ki, Ir Dr Hon LO Wai-kwok, Hon Frankie YICK, Hon SIN Chung-kai and Hon Albert CHAN was carried. The wording of the motion is at **Annex**. This report briefs Members on the follow-up actions taken by the Administration in respect of the motion.

Review and Update of the “Railway Development Strategy 2000”

2. Railway projects have profound impact on the society, people’s livelihood and economic development. It often takes eight to ten years for a railway project to take shape from formulation of ideas, conceptual planning, consultation with stakeholders, detailed design, to actual construction and completion. To allow early planning for railway development beyond 2020, the Government has commissioned a consultant to conduct a study for the Review and Update of the “Railway Development Strategy 2000”, with a view to updating the long-term railway development blueprint for Hong Kong to cater for the latest development needs of the society. To engage the public in the discussion as early as possible and to map out the future railway development of Hong Kong together with the community, we have conducted two stages of Public Engagement exercise to explore the conceptual proposals of ten railway projects, including those that serve the northwestern New Territories.

3. The Government is finalising the blueprint for railway development beyond 2020 having regard to transport demand, cost-effectiveness and development needs of New Development Areas.

We will announce the way forward for the new railway proposals as soon as possible.

Development of the Light Rail network (Extension of the Light Rail to Tuen Mun Area 54)

4. To cope with the development at Tuen Mun Area 54, the Government has appointed consultants for conducting traffic impact assessment. After considering the findings of the assessment, the Government intends to construct roads in the area, and to set up bus terminus at its central location and bus stations at roadside for meeting the need for public transport services arising from the housing development at Tuen Mun Area 54. By then, the residents could access Siu Hong Station on foot or by using feeder services, or they could use other public transport for travelling to and from other districts. Since the above arrangements would cope with the development of the area, the Government has no plan to construct new Light Rail stations in Tuen Mun Area 54.

5. Upon the completion of the new railway development strategy beyond 2020 later this year, and having regard to the planning and progress of implementation of the major transport infrastructure, we will proceed to prepare for the conduct of a review of the Public Transport Strategy, in order to update our strategy for public transport services to meet the travelling needs of the society. The review will cover the Light Rail Transit system. We will consider whether a consultancy will be commissioned in the course of the preparation.

Improvement of railway service

West Rail Line

6. Since August 2013, the MTR Corporation Limited (“MTRCL”) has adjusted train service on West Rail Line during morning peak hours and added an additional 60 trips per week to enhance carrying capacity. On top of this, starting from late August 2014, MTRCL will enhance the

train service on the West Rail Line on Friday and Saturday nights with a total of 16 extra trips each week. With the commissioning of the section between Tai Wai and Hung Hom stations of the Shatin to Central Link (“SCL”) in 2018, the carrying capacity of the railway section from Shatin to Kowloon will be increased. It will also alleviate the rather high loading situation in railway lines in urban Kowloon during peak hours. New trains will be purchased for the West Rail Line under the SCL project. The number of train compartments will be increased gradually from the current 7 to 8 starting from 2016, further increasing the carrying capacity.

Light Rail

7. MTRCL has been closely monitoring the service of various routes of the Light Rail. Train frequency is adjusted flexibly as necessary to meet passenger demand. The current train operation and service arrangements of all Light Rail routes can generally cope with the actual passenger demand. As transport needs and travelling patterns of passengers in different areas vary, MTRCL takes such variations into consideration when deciding on the service frequency of Light Rail routes in order to suit passengers’ actual needs.

8. At present, there are 12 Light Rail routes. Many stops are served by more than one route, making an overall average headway of about 3 to 5 minutes during peak periods. The headway during non-peak periods is about 6 to 8 minutes. Starting from 7 April 2014, a total of 148 trains will be added each week on the three busiest Light Rail routes 507, 705 and 706. More coupled set vehicles will be deployed on routes 505, 507, 610, 705 and 751 to provide extra carrying capacity. MTRCL will recruit 50 additional platform assistants to assist passengers boarding and alighting, and consider the feasibility of purchasing new Light Rail vehicles.

MTR bus service

9. The 6 new double-decked buses purchased by MTRCL in 2013 have been put into service since September last year, expanding the fleet to 127 buses. The MTR bus service feeding passengers to the West Rail

Line and Light Rail has thus been enhanced. The Transport Department (“TD”) has been closely monitoring the demand for MTR bus service. Surveys are conducted from time to time to monitor the service level. Whenever necessary, TD reminds MTRCL to improve service to cater for passenger needs. MTRCL would also adjust frequencies of its various bus routes serving Tuen Mun and Yuen Long to address passenger demand, having regard to their patronage and actual situation.

Franchised bus services, interchange arrangements and coordination with railway services

10. Amid the expansion of the railway network, franchised buses will continue to play an important role in our public transport system. They will complement railway services by providing feeder services or services to areas not accessible by the railway. TD will continue to coordinate the developments of franchised bus and railway services.

11. On bus route rationalisation, rationalisation in Tuen Mun under the “Area Approach” has been implemented in conjunction with the commissioning of the Tuen Mun Road Bus-Bus Interchange (“BBI”) last year. This is with the support of the district council. Better waiting facilities, bus services of wider coverage and interchange fare concessions are provided at the BBI for passengers. Feedback from residents has been generally positive. TD and the bus companies will continue to monitor the operation of the BBI and passenger demand. It will, having regard to the development and population growth of the northwestern New Territories, make timely adjustments to the public transport services in the area as necessary. Examples include examining the expansion of the route coverage of the BBI, and further extending the coverage of the overall network of bus services for the area. At the same time, TD is actively formulating with the bus companies rationalisation proposals for other districts under the “Area Approach”. Districts in the northwestern New Territories to be benefitted this year include Yuen Long / Tin Shui Wai. Together with the bus companies, TD is also considering how passenger facilities at the Tai Lam BBI can be improved to facilitate interchanging passengers.

Road improvement works

12. The northwestern New Territories is currently served by a number of trunk roads, including Tuen Mun Road, Yuen Long Road, Castle Peak Road, Kam Tin Road, Tai Lam Tunnel and Tsing Long Highway, forming a relatively comprehensive road network. Transport-related departments will closely observe the development of the area and the trend of traffic needs, with a view to meeting the overall transport demand of the northwestern New Territories by implementing road improvement works and traffic management measures (including the currently active reconstruction and improvement works of the section of Tuen Mun Road between Tsuen Wan and Sam Shing Hui as well as the traffic situation upon widening of carriageway of Tuen Mun Road at the Town Centre Section) in a timely manner and coordinating the services of railway network and other public transport modes.

Tuen Mun-Chek Lap Kok Link

13. The Tuen Mun-Chek Lap Kok Link project has entered into the construction stage. The reclamation works for the southern landfall commenced in end-2011. With funding approval of the remaining works obtained from the Finance Committee of Legislative Council in June 2013, the works commenced subsequently. It is targeted to complete the Southern Connection substantially by end-2016 in tandem with the commissioning of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge Main Bridge, and the Northern Connection by end-2018 to satisfy the local traffic demand timely.

Traffic management measures in the Northwest New Territories

14. TD will implement various traffic management measures as and when necessary. These include reviewing the traffic conditions at road junctions, modifying the existing control method and timing of traffic signals or adding new traffic signals to facilitate vehicular and pedestrian flows. TD will also implement road improvement works,

such as to increase the number of traffic lanes or widen the footpath, construct new pedestrian corridors or walkways, if there is sufficient road space.

Transport and Housing Bureau
April 2014

**Motion on
“Enhancing the railway service in the Northwest New Territories”
moved by Hon LEUNG Che-cheung
at the Council meeting of 11 December 2013**

**Motion as amended by Dr Hon KWOK Ka-ki, Ir Dr Hon LO
Wai-kiwok, Hon Frankie YICK, Hon SIN Chung-kai and Hon Albert
CHAN**

That, in the consultation document entitled ‘Our Future Railway’ Stage 2 public engagement exercise released in February this year, the Government put forward local railway enhancement schemes such as the Tuen Mun South Extension and the Hung Shui Kiu Station, etc. to integrate into the existing railway network and dovetail with the development plan for the Hung Shui Kiu New Development Area; the population in the Northwest New Territories increases rapidly, and many residents in the district need to work across districts and thus rely heavily on the existing railway and transport link for commuting to and from urban areas; in this connection, this Council urges the Government to, for the purpose of dovetailing with the existing and future development needs and after completing the relevant public consultation, expeditiously implement the planning work for the Tuen Mun South Extension and the Hung Shui Kiu Station, and conduct comprehensive studies and public consultation on the development plans for the Northern Link, the Hong Kong-Shenzhen Western Express Line, the Coastal Railway between Tuen Mun and Tsuen Wan and the extension of the Light Rail line to Tuen Mun Area 54, so as to cope with the demand of the residents in the Northwest New Territories for the railway service; the Government should also request the MTR Corporation Limited to expeditiously adopt effective measures to comprehensively improve the existing West Rail and Light Rail services, including reducing fare, increasing service frequencies, increasing and procuring more train cars, improving station facilities, improving the ‘Monthly Pass Extra’ scheme, and enhancing the Light Rail system and other connecting transportation arrangements, etc.; at the same time, the Government should, by comprehensively

considering factors such as Hong Kong's long-term population development trends, land and housing supplies and overall urban infrastructure planning etc., and based on the findings of the public consultation on 'Our Future Railway', expeditiously review and formulate Hong Kong's long-term railway development blueprint, and implement the planning concerned in a practical and orderly manner, so as to ensure Hong Kong's sustainable development; the Government should also expeditiously launch the Fourth Comprehensive Transport Study to enable the expansion of railway network to dovetail with the clear positioning of various modes of public transport, so as to provide people with more comprehensive transport network support; this Council also urges the Government based on the local enhancement schemes mentioned in the 'Our Future Railway' Stage 2 public engagement exercise to construct the North Island Line, Siu Sai Wan Line and South Island Line (West) etc., so as to improve the connection of the Northwest New Territories with other regions; this Council also urges the Government to expeditiously construct a railway between Tuen Mun and Chek Lap Kok, so that every 50 000 to 80 000 people in New Territories West may use one large-scale railway station, thus bringing the ratio of railway stations to population in New Territories West on a par with that in urban areas, and introduce bus interchange services at all large MTR stations and the entrances and exits of major highways, tunnels and flyovers.