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[English Translation]

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31 May 2017

Fax No. : 2978 7569
Legislative Council Secretariat
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central, Hong Kong
(Attn: Ms Mandy LI)

Dear Ms LI,

Legislative Council Panel on Development

Follow-up Actions from Meeting on 8 November 2016

Supplementary Information

Regarding Items 1(b) and 1(e) on the list of follow-up actions of Legislative Council Panel on Development (as at 19 May 2017) (LC Paper No. CB(1)950/16-17(2)), the supplementary information is provided below:

Whether the enhancement of the signaling system of the West Rail Line (“WRL”) could effectively solve the problem that only one train would be allowed inside the tunnel from Kam Sheung Road Station to Tsuen Wan Station

According to the MTR Corporation Limited, the number of trains that could be allowed at the Tai Lam Tunnel section between Kam Sheung Road Station and Tsuen Wan West Station is mainly depending on the design of the tunnel and various tunnel facilities

(e.g. the ventilation facilities), instead of the signaling system of WRL. There is also no restriction that only one train is allowed to travel at Tai Lam Tunnel section.

Whether the Administration would review the railway service between Tsuen Wan and Tuen Mun

The Transport and Housing Bureau announced the Railway Development Strategy 2014 (RDS-2014) in September 2014, which recommends that seven new railway projects, including the Northern Link and (Kwu Tung Station), the Tuen Mun South Extension, the East Kowloon Line, the Tung Chung West Extension, Hung Shui Kiu Station, the South Island Line (West) and the North Island Line, be completed in the planning horizon up to 2031 having regard to transport demand, cost-effectiveness and the development needs of New Development Areas and other new development projects.

The RDS-2014 sets out the blueprint for territory-wide railway development based on the findings and final recommendations of the consultancy study. Apart from giving due consideration to the views collected during the Public Engagement exercises in 2012 and 2013, it takes into account a wide range of factors, including transport demand, land use planning, local development needs, economic return of railway projects, financial and social benefits, environmental impact and engineering feasibility.

Our consultants have examined in detail the feasibility of building a coastal railway between Tuen Mun and Tsuen Wan, i.e. the Tuen Mun to Tsuen Wan Link (TMTWL), in the RDS-2014. According to the analysis by the Consultants, the local population is mainly concentrated at the eastern and western ends of the coastline along the TMTWL corridor. The development densities of the remaining land sections are comparatively low, and no new patronage generation is thus expected. The cost of the project is also expected to be very high (about \$65 billion (in 2013 prices)) due to the technical difficulties involved. The cost-effectiveness can hardly be established up to this point.

Meanwhile, after the improvement works for Tuen Mun Road were completed in 2014, the road network between Tuen Mun and urban area has been further improved. This helps shorten the journey time for the franchised bus services between Tuen Mun and the urban area. As far as the travelling time is concerned,

more passengers may prefer to travel to and from Tuen Mun by franchised buses, thereby reducing attractiveness of the TMTWL. Implementation of the project will also create negative visual and landscape impacts along the scenic coastal areas.

In the long run, we would consider revisiting the railway proposal if there are further changes in the planning circumstances and population as well as increase in transport demand in the longer term in the coastal areas between Tuen Mun and Tsuen Wan or other relevant new considerations in the planning for development in the region.

While it is the Government's policy to use railways as the backbone of our passenger transport system, we also strive to build a diversified public transport system under which complementarity of various public transport modes could be enhanced so that the public will be provided with different choices. We will closely observe the development of Northwest New Territories (NWNT) and the trend of its transport demand, watch over the utilisation of the railways and various bus and minibus routes, implement road improvement works and traffic management measure under individual circumstances, with a view to meeting the overall transport demand of the area.

In view of the future developments in NWNT, including the planning of the Hung Shui Kiu New Development Area and Yuen Long South development, we will implement Route 11 which links NWNT with the urban areas to cope with the increased traffic demand as well as enhancing the “external connectivity” of the Lantau and the airport island. In order to start the works early, we are applying funding from the Legislative Council for conducting a feasibility study on Route 11.

We will also take forward strategic studies on railways and major roads beyond 2030 based on the results of the “Hong Kong 2030+: Towards a Planning Vision and Strategy Transcending 2030” study and its public engagement exercise with regard to the planning directions for Hong Kong beyond 2030. The strategic studies will, inter alia, explore the transport infrastructure required for the developments at Lantau, NWNT and New Territories North (such as a trunk road linking North Lantau to the western part of Hong Kong Island), with a view to preliminarily formulating the layout of infrastructure and proposing implementation timetable for the infrastructure according to the changes in distribution of

population and employment, so that the planning of major transport infrastructure can complement the needs arising from the overall long-term land development of Hong Kong. We plan to consult the Legislative Council Panel on Transport on the strategic studies on railways and major roads beyond 2030 within this legislative session.

Yours sincerely,

[Signed at Chinese Version]

(S. H. LEUNG)

for Secretary for Transport and Housing

c.c.

Highways Department (Attn: Mr. Jonathan LEUNG) (Fax: 2187 2971)
MTR Corporation Limited (Attn: Ms. Prudence CHAN) (Fax: 2795 9991)

Encl.