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[English translation]

Council Business Division  
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1 Legislative Council Road, Central  
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(Attn.: Ms Sophie LAU)

22 June 2020

Dear Ms LAU,

**Panel on Transport**  
**Subcommittee on Matters Relating to Railways**

Your letter of 11 June 2020 is acknowledged. Regarding the motions passed at the meeting of the Subcommittee on Matters Relating to Railways on 5 June 2020, our responses are as follows.

Motion moved by Hon CHAN Han-pan and passed under agenda item II on “Tuen Mun South Extension” at the meeting on 5 June 2020 (LegCo Paper no. CB(4)695/19-20(01))

The MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL) will study the railway alignment and station locations of the Tuen Mun South (TMS) Extension in the detailed planning and design stage, and discuss with relevant government departments on the works proposals, including examination of the impact of TMS Extension on the nearby public facilities during the construction stage and after its completion in order to minimise the relevant impact and the potential inconvenience caused to the residents.

Due to the constraints arising from the railway alignment, some of the affected facilities could not be reprovisioned at the original locations, including the Tuen Mun Swimming Pool, Tuen Mun Community Green Station and Hoi Wong Road Garden. We propose to reprovision these facilities elsewhere in Tuen Mun to enable the construction of an intermediate station as well as the related residential development at Area 16 (A16), thereby unlocking the development potential of the area. Therefore, we will find suitable sites and commence reprovisioning works of relevant facilities as early as possible, so as to enable continuous provision of public services and minimise the impact arising from the project.

Nevertheless, the extent of the facilities to be affected and the specific proposals for handling them are subject to confirmation, having regard to the technical study in the detailed planning and design stage. When the details of the proposed railway scheme (such as the alignment, location of stations and implementation timetable, etc.) are available, the Government will consult the public in accordance with established procedures.

As regards the service of the West Rail Line (WRL), the number of train cars of the trains running on this line increased gradually from seven to eight in the period from 2016 to 2018, resulting in an increase in the maximum passenger carrying capacity by 14% compared with that in 2015. Currently, the train frequencies of the WRL in the morning and evening peaks are around 3 minutes and 3.5 minutes respectively for trips between Tuen Mun and Hung Hom. During the busiest period of the morning peak, MTRCL has additionally provided a regular special train trip departing from Tin Shui Wai Station for Hung Hom, which helps carry away the passengers waiting at the stations in Yuen Long district. The signalling system of WRL will also be enhanced. Subject to the actual passenger demand, it is expected that the train frequency can increase to about 24 trains per hour per direction in 2021 the earliest, resulting in a cumulative increase of about 37% in the passenger carrying capacity as compared with that in 2015. Besides, in order to enhance the passenger carrying capacity and efficiency of the overall railway network, MTRCL has been taking various measures to relieve the passenger demand during peak periods, including increasing train frequency where practicable (such as the above-mentioned special train trip), and enhancing platform management at stations to facilitate on-time departure of trains. MTRCL will continue to closely monitor the passenger loading of the railway line, as well as review and consider proposals from time to time, to cope with the demand

generated by future patronage.

On the suggestion of embarking on a study for the Tuen Mun - Tsuen Wan - Kwai Chung - Shatin Link, when formulating the Railway Development Strategy 2014 (RDS-2014), our consultant at that time evaluated in detail the feasibility of constructing a railway along the coastline between Tuen Mun and Tsuen Wan. According to the consultant's analysis, the local population is mainly concentrated at the eastern and western ends of the coastline between Tuen Mun and Tsuen Wan; while the development density of the remaining areas is relatively low and no basis for new source of passengers is anticipated. Meanwhile, due to the technical difficulties involved, the construction cost of a railway along the coastline between Tuen Mun and Tsuen Wan alone is expected to be very high. The RDS-2014 states that the cost-effectiveness of such railway can hardly be established according to the information at that time; and in longer term, if there are further changes in the development planning and population along the coastline between Tuen Mun and Tsuen Wan resulting in a long-term increase in transport demand, the Government would consider relevant railway proposal in due course. For the technical feasibility of a railway connecting Tsuen Wan and Shatin, when formulating the RDS-2014, the consultant at that time also made relevant assessment. According to the consultant's analysis, various technical difficulties would be encountered for the railway with an alignment linking Tsuen Wan with Shatin, including the need for passing through country park and reservoir areas, and the lack of land for building railway facilities such as stations where the population is concentrated along the alignment.

A part of the railway related to the artificial islands in the Central Waters is similar to the alignment of Tuen Mun-Tsuen Wan Link (Tuen Mun to Tsing Lung Tau). The Transport and Housing Bureau plans to take forward the "Strategic Studies on Railways and Major Roads beyond 2030" on the basis of the conceptual spatial requirements to be firmed up under the study of "Hong Kong 2030+: Towards a Planning Vision and Strategy Transcending 2030", which is being conducted by the Development Bureau and the Planning Department. The demand and supply of the transport infrastructure, including railways and major roads, in Hong Kong (including the Northwest New Territories) from 2031 to 2041 or beyond will be reviewed in the Strategic Studies based on the latest planning information. The proposal for the strategic layout of railway and major road infrastructure would be looked into to ensure that the planning of large scale transport infrastructure can meet the needs of the overall long-term land use developments of Hong Kong.

Motion moved by Hon Michael TIEN Puk-sun and passed under agenda item II on “Tuen Mun South Extension” at the meeting on 5 June 2020 (LegCo Paper no. CB(4)695/19-20(02))

The Government will carry out negotiation with MTRCL on the funding arrangement of TMS Extension in the detailed planning and design stage. Since the purpose of granting property development rights to MTRCL under the “Railway-plus-Property” model in previous railway projects was to bridge the funding gap of these projects, the relevant sites were mostly used for private housing developments. For the current railway project, it may only be possible for us to consider providing public housing at the A16 site if the revenue generated from the housing development atop is more than enough to fully bridge the funding gap of the TMS Extension project.

The detailed proposal of reprovisioning the swimming pool would affect the construction programme of the A16 Station and is subject to further technical study. To complete the TMS Extension as soon as possible, we will explore different schemes of reprovisioning the swimming pool in order to commence the works of the A16 Station as early as possible. When the details of a proposed scheme are available, the Government will consult the public in accordance with established procedures.

Yours sincerely,

[Chinese version signed]

(Thomas K. H. SZE)

for Secretary for Transport and Housing

c.c.:

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