

Legislative Council Panel on Transport

Railway Development Strategy 2000

PURPOSE

This paper informs Members of the findings of the Second Railway Development Study (RDS-2) and the new railway development strategy entitled "Railway Development Strategy 2000".

INTRODUCTION

2. Subsequent to the 1994 Railway Development Strategy, six railway lines, namely the KCR West Rail, the MTR Tseung Kwan O Extension, the Ma On Shan to Tai Wai Rail Link, KCR Extension to Tsim Sha Tsui, the Sheung Shui to Lok Ma Chau Spur Line and the Penny's Bay Rail Link, are under active stages of planning and implementation for completion between 2002 and 2005.

3. The Government has announced the "Railway Development Strategy 2000" on 16 May 2000, which was formulated on the basis of RDS-2's findings. We have issued to each Member a copy of the Strategy and a Legislative Council Brief, which gives an account of RDS-2's findings and the Strategy, on the same day.

THE SECOND RAILWAY DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY for the HKSAR

The new phase of railway expansion

4. The Strategy maps out a blueprint for planning and implementing the next phase of railway network expansion to meet Hong Kong's needs up to 2016. This phase of railway expansion includes five new passenger railway projects and a Port Rail Line. The five new passenger railway projects are :

- a. Island Line Extensions comprising the North Hong Kong Island Line and West Hong Kong Island Line
- b. Shatin to Central Link comprising Tai Wai to Diamond Hill Link, East Kowloon Line and Fourth Rail Harbour Crossing
- c. Kowloon Southern Link
- d. Northern Link
- e. Regional Express Line

Benefits of the Strategy

5. The Strategy will be vital in supporting the economic, social and population growth of the HKSAR in the next 15 years in a sustainable manner and conducive to our vision of building Hong Kong to a world-class city. In addition, the Strategy will facilitate even closer economic and social linkage between the HKSAR and the Mainland, particularly Guangdong and the Pearl River Delta.

6. Completion of the strategy will expand the existing railway by some 70% to over 250 kilometres. Over 70% of our population and 80% of our employment will then be within walking distance from railway stations. As a result, the expanded railway network will boost the rail share in the public transport system to 43% and will bring about an economic internal rate of return of more than 15%. By reducing the reliance on road-based transport, the Strategy will also help reduce vehicle emissions of some 600 tonnes of air pollutants and 160,000 tonnes of “greenhouse” gas a year.

Implementation

7. The indicative implementation timeframe is to complete the Island Line Extensions Project between 2008 and 2012, the Shatin to Central Link Project between 2008 and 2011, the Kowloon Southern Link Project between 2008 and 2013 and the Northern Link Project between 2011 and 2016. The timing of the Regional Express Line and the Port Rail Line depends on the cross-boundary passenger and freight growth respectively. In order to provide the railways to serve the needs in a timely manner, we will carry out more detailed studies and monitor any changes in landuse,

population and transport parameters in reviewing and triggering the projects.

8. The Strategy reaffirms our policy of healthy competition that the two Railway Corporations will be invited to bid for any new project, which is not a natural extension of an existing line, namely the Shatin to Central Link and the Regional Express Line depending on the alignment. In considering such bids, the Government will take into account all relevant factors and ensure that the two Corporations are competing on a level playing field.

Project Costs

9. The rough order of cost of implementing the six railway projects outlined in paragraph 4 above is \$80 to 100 Billion in 1998 prices. To facilitate the implementation of the projects, we will continue the well-proven practice to grant appropriate property development at a full market value premium on a bare site basis and pay for ancillary essential public works items. Additional form of support to help the viability of the railway projects may be considered on a case-by-case basis having regard to the particular situations.

CONCLUSION

10. Members are requested to note the findings of the Second Railway Development Study (RDS-2) and the new railway development strategy entitled "Railway Development Strategy 2000".

Transport Bureau
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