

**For Discussion
on 2 December 2005**

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

**Northern Link
and Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link**

INTRODUCTION

This paper aims at informing Members of the latest development of the proposed Northern Link (NOL) and the Hong Kong section of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link (ERL).

BACKGROUND

- Annex
2. The NOL and a new Regional Express Line (REL) were recommended in the Railway Development Strategy 2000 (RDS-2000) as projects shortlisted for further implementation. The layout of the NOL and the REL recommended in RDS 2000 are shown in **Annex**. The proposed completion window of the NOL is between 2011 and 2016, while that for the REL would depend on the growth in demand of cross-boundary passengers.
 3. The NOL will connect West Rail at Kam Sheung Road to the land boundary crossing at Lok Ma Chau and the East Rail via the northern part of the New Territories. The REL is intended to be a dedicated rail corridor providing express train services between the urban area and the boundary, as well as through train services to cities in the Mainland.
 4. The Chief Executive announced in his 2001 Policy Address that an express rail service would be planned to link Hong Kong, Shenzhen and Guangzhou and that improved service would reduce the journey time between Hong Kong and Guangzhou from 100 minutes as at present to within one hour. The REL has thereafter been renamed as the Hong Kong Section of the ERL.

5. Since 2002, a Joint Expert Group (JEG) has been set up between the Mainland authorities and the Hong Kong SAR Government to study the ERL. A feasibility study on the ERL, jointly conducted with the Mainland authorities, was completed in March 2005.

6. In May 2004, we invited Kowloon-Canton Railway Corporation (KCRC) to submit a project proposal for the NOL. In November 2004, we asked KCRC to study, in conjunction with the NOL study, the feasibility of the ERL project including the option of using the tracks of the existing West Rail (WR), the proposed NOL and the Kowloon Southern Link (KSL) now under construction for the Hong Kong section of the ERL.

PROGRESS

7. KCRC submitted to Government a project proposal for the NOL in June 2005 and a feasibility report on the Hong Kong section of the ERL in July 2005. We are now examining those study reports in detail.

8. As the development of railways will involve huge investments and social resources, Government has always been and would continue to be prudent to plan railway projects. We are now assessing the NOL project proposal and the ERL feasibility report with particular regards to their economic and transport performance, financial implications, changing community needs, impact on the existing public transport services, location for the terminus of the ERL and the interfacing issues with the Mainland section of the ERL.

9. KCRC will give Members a presentation on the proposals of the NOL and the Hong Kong section of the ERL at the meeting.

ADVICE SOUGHT

10. Members are invited to note the latest developments in respect of the NOL and the Hong Kong section of the ERL.

The figures below show the layout of the NOL and REL recommended in RDS 2000:

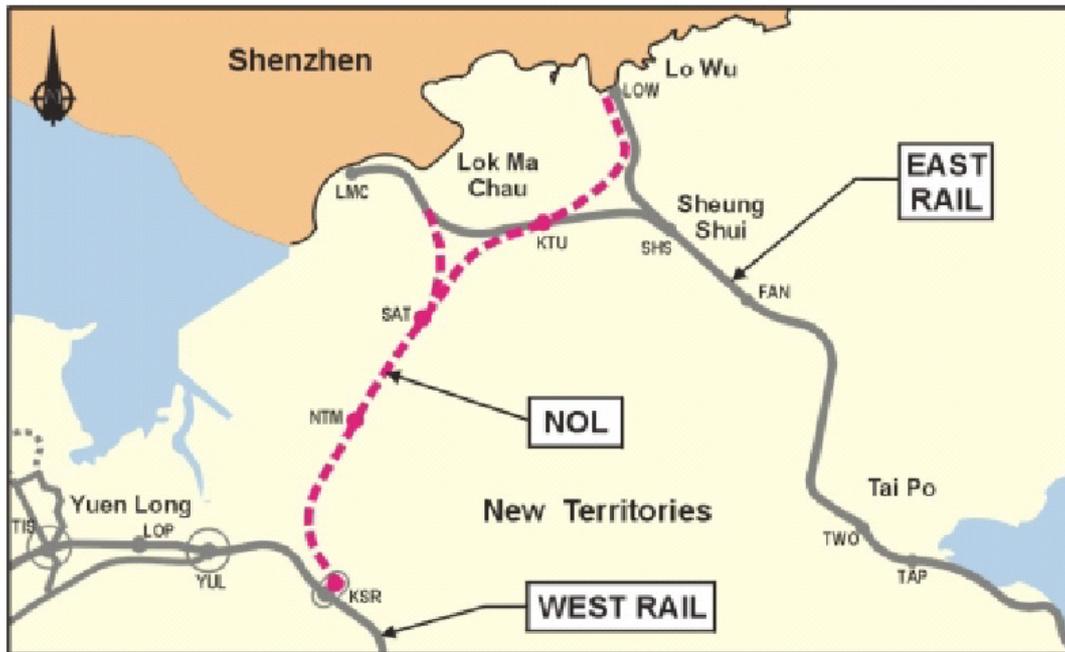


Figure 1. Northern Link



Figure 2. Regional Express Link