

**For information on
30 March 2007**

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

Mass Transit Railway West Island Line

INTRODUCTION

This paper aims to update Members of the latest progress of the West Island Line.

BACKGROUND

2. At the meeting of the Executive Council on 28 June 2005, the Council ADVISED and the Chief Executive ORDERED that the MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL) should be asked to proceed with the preliminary planning and design of the proposed "West Island Line" (WIL), involving the extension of the heavy rail MTR Island Line from Sheung Wan to Kennedy Town with two intermediate stations at Sai Ying Pun and University; and that negotiations with the MTRCL on the detailed scope, cost and implementation programme for the WIL should commence.

3. Afterwards, the MTRCL submitted the WIL Revised Project Proposal to the Administration in end August 2006. The proposed route length of the WIL is about 3 km long and its alignment is shown at **Annex A**. In the past few months, the Administration has been thoroughly discussing with the MTRCL on their proposal. The Administration also keeps close contact with the Central and Western District Council and the local residents to solicit to their views on the WIL Revised Project Proposal.

A

TRANSPORT BENEFITS

4. Residents travelling to and from the Central and Western Districts are now relying mainly on road-based transport modes. At present, traffic congestion along the main corridors of Connaught Road, Des Voeux Road and Queen's Road (including the section between Sheung Wan and Kennedy Town) does occur. Traffic congestion, aggravated by kerbside loading and unloading activities on Des Voeux Road and Queen's Road and traffic weaving, can be observed at many locations in the area. As Western District is fully developed, there are serious constraints in constructing any new roads or widening the existing roads to alleviate the traffic congestion problem. Development of underground railway system is a more feasible way to improve the traffic condition in the area.

5. The WIL alignment will pass through the major population and employment centres in the Western District. By 2016, the catchment population of the three additional stations at Sai Ying Pun, University and Kennedy Town will total 140 000, while the corresponding catchment employment will be about 60 000.

6. The WIL, when put into operation, will provide commuters with a quicker and more convenient alternative transport means. In terms of journey time, it takes 15 to 25 minutes during the rush hours for travelling by road-based transport modes for the 3 km between Kennedy Town and Sheung Wan. When the WIL is in place, the journey time by the MTR between the two locations will be no more than eight minutes. The WIL will bring in significant transport benefits.

PROGRESS OF THE EXAMINATION OF THE WIL

7. After several months of examination of the project proposal, and coordination and negotiation among the departments and the MTRCL, the Administration and the MTRCL have achieved good progress in most areas. For the reprovisioning of the Kennedy Town Swimming Pool to cater for the construction of the Kennedy Town Station, government departments have agreed to relocate the existing Kennedy Town Swimming Pool currently located at Smithfield Road to the nearby area at Shing Sai Road adjacent to the Belcher Bay Park. Regarding the temporary works areas arrangement, government departments and the Central and Western District Council have agreed that those above ground structures of the ex-Abattoir and Inclinor Plant site be demolished to enable the site to be available for use as the major works area in supporting the construction of the WIL. The decontamination works of the underground soil should then be carried out immediately after the completion of the WIL. In order to minimize the impact on the road traffic, concerned departments also agree to release a portion of the area within the Western District Public Cargo Working Area for the MTRCL to set up a temporary barging point for transporting the excavated materials from construction works by sea to the Fill Banks. As part of the existing temporary lorry car parks will be taken up as works sites, concerned departments have also identified the seafront area opposite to the Western Park Sports Centre for the reprovisioning of the affected lorry car parks. Moreover, to cater for tunnel construction, the MTRCL has proposed to establish a small scale magazine and to ensure safe storage and delivery of explosive according to all safety standards.

8. The Administration will endeavour to complete the remaining works on assessment of the project proposal. The Administration aims to submit the WIL Revised Project Proposal to the Executive Council for approval later this year for the gazetting of the WIL.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF WIL

9. The estimated project cost of the WIL is about 8 billion. According to the MTRCL's assessment, the WIL will not be financially viable without Government's financial support. The Administration is examining the financial benefits of the WIL Revised Project Proposal, and the mode of funding support is being considered. However, this should not affect the progress of the gazetting.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

10. The WIL will be a designated project under the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Ordinance. The environmental impact for the WIL will be assessed by the MTRCL.

11. According to the EIA Ordinance, the MTRCL will address in the EIA Study various key environmental issues including the construction impact (in particular noise nuisance, the disposal of construction and demolition materials and the impact on trees and cultural heritage), the ground borne noise transmission to the various properties along the alignment and the operational noise impact.

PUBLIC SUPPORT

12. The local community of Western District, the Central and Western District Council and the Legislative Council have been urging for the early provision of the WIL. Representatives from the Bureau and government departments have attended the Central and Western District Council Meetings and public forums to solicit to the views of the public. The local community would generally welcome and look forward to the WIL.

WAY FORWARD

13. As mentioned in Paragraph 8 above, the Administration aims to submit the WIL Revised Project Proposal to the Executive Council for approval later this year for the gazetting of the WIL. The Administration will submit proposal to the Legislative Council in seeking funding to proceed with the detailed design for the WIL.

**Environment, Transport and Works Bureau
March 2007**

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西港島線路線圖 (2006年8月)

Alignment of West Island Line (August 2006)

附件 A
Annex A

