

For information

15 May 2009

Legislative Council Panel on Transport

Subcommittee on Matters Relating to Railways

Progress Report on the South Island Line

Introduction

This paper briefs Members on the progress of the proposed South Island Line (SIL)(East) project.

Background

2. The SIL (East) will be a seven-kilometre long medium capacity railway, running between Admiralty and South Horizons with intermediate stations at Ocean Park, Wong Chuk Hang and Lei Tung (a plan showing the alignment is at Annex 1). Passengers can interchange at Admiralty Station for the Tsuen Wan Line and Island Line. Upon completion of the SIL and the Shatin to Central Link, the railway network on the Hong Kong Island will be enhanced, saving travelling time for the residents of the Southern District and enabling tourism and commercial developments in the District.

Annex 1

3. We last briefed the Subcommittee on the latest progress of the planning of the SIL (East) project on 16 January 2009.

Current Position

4. The MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL) commenced in February 2008 the preliminary planning and design of the SIL (East) which are expected to be completed in the near future. The Government and the MTRCL conducted extensive public consultation from March to November 2008 in collaboration with the Southern District Council

(SDC). The local community including the District Council was briefed on the proposed railway scheme. Roving exhibitions were held in community centres and shopping malls. In 2008, we have attended five meetings organized by the Planning and Development of South Island Line (Focus Group), which is formed under the SDC, to exchange views on issues related to the project. The Government and the MTRCL also attended a number of forums organized by residents and exchanged views with them on the project.

5. Since the last Subcommittee meeting on 16 January 2009, the MTRCL and the Government have continued to maintain close contact with the local community regarding the concerns of the residents over the SIL (East) project, such as railway design, station and entrance locations and temporary facilities to tie in with the works, etc. Through meetings with Owners' Corporations, Owners' Committees and the residents concerned as well as liaison with related organisations located along the railway and arrangement of site visits, the understanding of the local community of the project has been enhanced. Furthermore, representatives of the MTRCL and the Government attended the meetings of the SIL Focus Group on 22 January and 11 March 2009 to seek the views of the members. The Focus Group passed a motion endorsing the Government's plan to gazette the SIL (East) scheme under the Railways Ordinance as soon as possible in mid-2009 and to conduct further public consultation. To tie in with the Modification Works of MTR Admiralty Station for the SIL (East) project, representatives of the Government and the MTRCL consulted the Central and Western District Council (C&W DC) on 12 March 2009. The proposal was supported in principle by C&W DC. If the railway scheme is authorised for implementation in 2010, the construction works for the SIL (East) will commence in 2011 for commissioning not later than 2015.

Residents' Concerns and our Responses

6. During the above-mentioned public consultation, we noted the views of the public and have made responses as follows:

(a) Station and Entrance Locations

(i) *South Horizons*

The views of the residents of the South Horizons over the station locations, i.e. in South Horizons Drive or Yi Nam Road, were previously divided. The MTRCL has met representatives of the Owners' Committee and management company of the South Horizons a number of times to explain the details of the options for station provision. In April 2009, the SIL Focus Group under the SDC conducted a questionnaire survey, it was revealed that more than 80% of residents of South Horizons and more than 70% of residents of Ap Lei Chau Estate supported the option of providing a station in Yi Nam Road.

(ii) *Lei Tung*

During the two rounds of public consultation arranged by the MTRCL and the SDC in March and November 2008, residents of Lei Tung Estate and the schools nearby strongly demanded that the proposed station entrance at the playground of Tung Sing House of Lei Tung Estate be relocated to the vicinity of Lei Tung Commercial Centre. After careful examination of the design and based on technical considerations, we consider providing a station entrance near Lei Tung Commercial Centre can offer full coverage of the residents in the neighbouring housing estates. This, together with proper transport interchange facilities, can effectively serve the main population group of Lei Tung area, although the change of the station entrance location will lengthen the average walking distance of the residents using the station. In response to the views and demands of the local community, the MTRCL proposed to relocate the station entrance from the playground of Tung Sing House to the vicinity of Lei Tung Commercial Centre. To tie in with the construction works and to alleviate the impact on the residents, some of the bus stops and a taxi stand outside Lei Tung

Commercial Centre will have to be moved to the nearby roadside or open space, but existing bus services will not be affected.

(iii) *Wong Chuk Hang*

Some residents worried that the viaduct design would hinder the future development and planning of Wong Chuk Hang and other areas in the Southern District. In this regard, we consider that a railway line, be it constructed in viaduct or tunnel form, can both support and facilitate the development of the Southern District and help promote tourism. The residents generally supported the proposal to build a covered footbridge or walkway at Wong Chuk Hang Station to connect to the nearby area. They also supported decking part of the Staunton Creek nullah, as well as providing a public transport interchange underneath the overhead station to facilitate passengers to interchange to other modes of transport.

(b) Impact on the Ecology of Staunton Creek Nullah

Some residents were concerned about the impact of the works on the ecology of Staunton Creek nullah, especially the potential threat to the egrets in the area. The MTRCL is now conducting an environmental impact assessment (EIA) for the SIL (East) project in accordance with the Environmental Impact Assessment Ordinance. Based on preliminary information, the area of the nullah proposed to be decked is not the downstream mouth of the nullah frequented by egrets, and that the Staunton Creek nullah is neither a breeding ground of egrets. The MTRCL will proceed with the EIA and draw up appropriate measures to ensure that the construction and operation of the project will not give rise to unacceptable impact on the environment and ecology of the neighbouring areas.

(c) Temporary Construction and Demolition Material Barging Points

To ease the burden of the large quantity of debris generated during the construction period on local surface traffic and external trunk roads, and to reduce the impact on the environment, the MTRCL has proposed to set up two temporary

construction and demolition material barging points along the coastline in the Southern District to ship away the debris. The barging points will be built at Yi Nam Road on Ap Lei Chau, east of Hong Kong School of Motoring and at the waterfront of Kellett Bay in Aberdeen, south of Wah Kwai Estate and Ka Lung Court. The debris excavated from the works areas on the island of Ap Lei Chau, the former Wong Chuk Hang Estate and the works areas at Nam Fung Road respectively will be shipped away through these barging points. Hence, vehicles transporting debris can be prevented from using the Ap Lei Chau Bridge. The Focus Group under the Southern District Council has discussed many times the proposal of setting up a temporary construction and demolition material barging point at the waterfront of Kellett Bay. Some members of the Focus Group urged the MTRCL to consider other locations. To mitigate the impact on the neighborhood arising from the barging point at Kellett Bay, in addition to carrying out the EIA study, the MTRCL has proposed to plant trees and shrubs and provide park facilities on the vacant site adjacent to the barging point for greenery along the waterfront of Kellett Bay facing Wah Kwai Estate. With the introduction of appropriate temporary traffic measures, the impact on traffic, the environment and local community brought about by the project will be kept to the minimum.

(d) Temporary Magazine

Given the use of explosives will be required for excavation of the construction of the Wong Chuk Hang depot and the two tunnel sections by means of blasting, the MTRCL proposed to set up a temporary magazine south of Chung Hom Shan in the Southern District for the storage of explosives required for the project. The proposed magazine will be neither of a large scale nor in close proximity to residential areas. Its design will be required to meet the stringent safety requirements of the Mines Division. To ensure public safety, conveyance and the use of explosives will also be subject to the strict control of the Division. The MTRCL has already sought the preliminary views of the Division and it has been confirmed that the

proposed site is viable. We have also consulted the Focus Group under the Southern District Council on the proposed site and understood that some members were very concerned about the safety of the magazine. The MTRCL is now conducting a quantitative risk assessment on the storage and conveyance of explosives. If the assessment results indicate that the risks involved are acceptable according to Government guidelines, the Southern District Council will be further consulted. Prior to the commencement of the project, the Administration will draw up stringent risk control and safety measures in accordance with the Dangerous Goods Ordinance (Cap. 295) for the use, conveyance and storage of explosives in the implementation of the SIL.

(e) Railway Design

Some residents of the Southern District and organisations located along the railway have expressed concerns over the design of the SIL (East) project, particularly the section between the toll plaza of the Aberdeen Tunnel and Ap Lei Chau, which will be built on a viaduct. In this regard, the Government and the MTRCL have held meetings separately with district councilors, residents and representatives of the organisations of the Southern District for in-depth discussions and exchanges. Site visits were also arranged for the stakeholders to better understand the design, alignment and operation of the railways on that viaduct section, and the difficulties and drawbacks associated with the change to a tunnel section. The MTRCL will make reference for overseas examples and improve the design of the viaduct structural form to mitigate any visual impact. In the assessment of the revised proposal, the Government will consult the Advisory Committee on Appearance of Bridges and Associated Structures and the District Council so as to arrive at a design that could accommodate the views of the different parties concerned.

Providing a Subsidiary Railway Line Connecting Happy Valley under the SIL Project

Annex 2

7. We have given consideration to the feasibility of providing a subsidiary railway line connecting Happy Valley under the SIL (East) project and have preliminarily studied four options (a plan showing the alignments is at Annex 2). All of the four options require the provision of a railway tunnel of about four to five-kilometres in length alongside the proposed three-kilometre railway tunnel between Admiralty and the Southern District. The additional excavation will lengthen the construction period of the entire project from 10 months to 31 months, which is not in line with the most of public expectations for early completion of the SIL (East). The construction cost of the project will also increase substantially. We note the views of the public over the provision of Happy Valley Station are divided. The difficulty and cost of construction will be further increased if the Happy Valley subsidiary railway line is to be built without affecting the time of commissioning of the SIL (East). Since it is expected that the patronage of Happy Valley Racecourse Station during non-race days will not be high, provision of a subsidiary railway line will have adverse impact on the transport and economic benefits of the entire project. Having balanced the various factors, we consider it not advisable to provide a subsidiary railway line connecting Happy Valley under the SIL (East) project.

Study on Feasibility of Linking the Heart of Causeway Bay with Happy Valley

8. We commenced a 12-month consultancy study in March 2009 to mainly explore the feasibility of building two pedestrian subways (one linking the existing pedestrian subway in Sports Road with Victoria Park via the heart of Causeway Bay and MTR station; the other linking the re-developments in Caroline Hill with Yun Ping Road) and to proceed with the preliminary design. To tie in with the study, we intend to consult the area committees concerned in mid-2009; and will consult the District Council/Traffic and Transport Committee later this year once concrete proposals are available.

Study on Interchange Facilities at Admiralty

9. In the next few years, a number of large-scale projects will be implemented in the vicinity of Admiralty, including the new Central Government Complex at Tamar scheduled for completion in 2011 to 2012, the SIL (East) to be commissioned in 2015 and the future Shatin to Central Link project. The MTR Admiralty Station will become a major interchange station serving four railway lines, namely the existing Tsuen Wan Line and Island Line and the future SIL (East) and Shatin to Central Link. The MTRCL has currently completed the preliminary study and is now prepared to proceed with the detailed design of the modification works for Admiralty Station. In addition to the layout of the station and interchange facilities, the company will also examine the pedestrian arrangements and overall traffic flow between the MTR station and the landmarks in the vicinity of Admiralty.

10. During the construction of the SIL (East) and Shatin to Central Link, the MTRCL will devise schemes for the temporary traffic arrangements, and conduct traffic impact assessments if necessary, for approval by the departments concerned to minimise the impact on the public. We anticipate that upon commissioning of the SIL (East) followed by the Shatin to Central Link, road-based public transport will decrease and correspondingly the demand for transport interchange facilities at Admiralty. Nevertheless, the permanent and temporary traffic arrangements in the vicinity of Admiralty are inter-related and we will brief Members on the latest traffic and transport studies during construction.

Impact on Road-based Public Transport Modes upon Commissioning

11. In view of the potential change in the travel pattern of passengers, the Administration will co-ordinate public transport services after the new railway line has come into operation in order to maintain an efficient public transport service network that meets passenger demand and to reduce unnecessary competition. As regards franchised buses and green minibuses, the Administration will adopt mitigating measures, such as re-organisation of route network, route modification, adjustment of

frequency, introduction of new routes or realignment of existing routes to provide feeder services linking the new railway stations and their neighbouring areas. With regard to red minibuses and taxis, the Administration will adopt measures to enhance their feeder role and identify suitable sites near the new railway stations to provide taxi stands and general pick-up and drop-off points. The above measures will help the affected trades to expand their market and bring new business opportunities, alleviating the impact of the SIL (East).

12. As in the case of previous new railway projects, the Administration will map out a new plan for public transport services before the SIL (East) comes into operation and will consult the affected public transport trades and the District Council in due course.

13. Members are invited to note the contents of this paper.

Transport and Housing Bureau
May 2009

圖例
LEGEND

—— 現有鐵路路線
EXISTING RAIL LINE

—— 擬建南港島線（東段）
PROPOSED SOUTH ISLAND LINE (EAST)

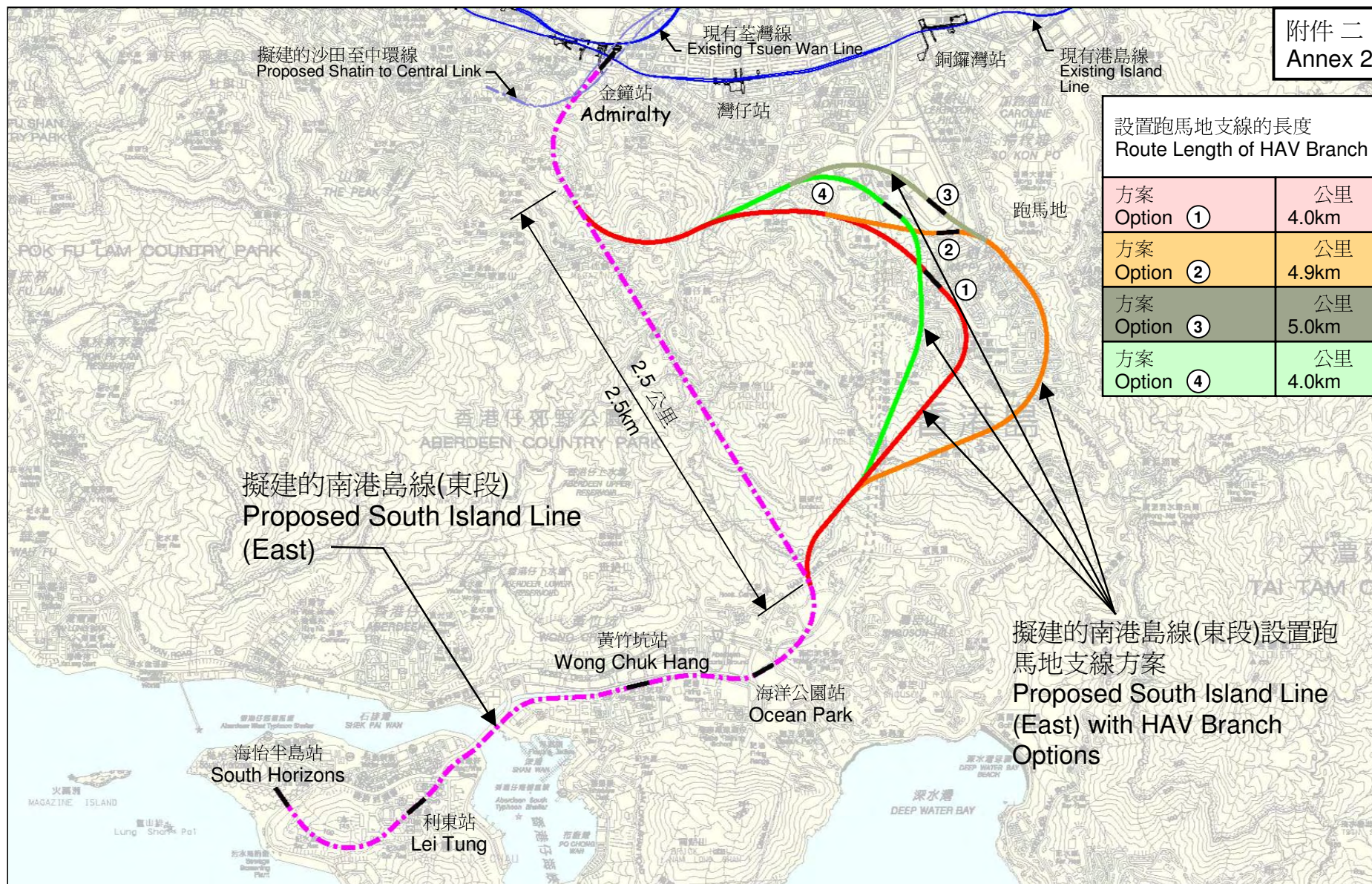
附件一
Annex 1



南港島線（東段）
SOUTH ISLAND LINE (SIL) (EAST)

設置跑馬地支線的長度
Route Length of HAV Branch

方案 Option ①	公里 4.0km
方案 Option ②	公里 4.9km
方案 Option ③	公里 5.0km
方案 Option ④	公里 4.0km



南港島線(東段)－跑馬地支線方案
South Island Line (East) – Happy Valley Branch Options

