

For information

21 November 2008

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

Progress of Railway Projects under construction and design

Introduction

In October 2007, the Chief Executive announced in his Policy Address that he would implement ten large-scale infrastructure projects, which included a number of railway projects. This paper seeks to brief Members on the latest progress of the railway projects under construction and design.

Railway under construction

Kowloon Southern Link

2. The Kowloon Southern Link (KSL) is one of the railway projects recommended in the Railway Development Strategy 2000 for implementation. The scheme comprises a 3.8-kilometre long railway line, running from the Nam Cheong Station of the West Rail Line via the new Austin Station (formerly named as the Kowloon West Station) to the East Tsim Sha Tsui Station of the East Rail Line (alignment plan shown at Annex 1). The KSL will link up the East Rail Line and West Rail Line, providing direct rail access to the urban areas for around one million people from the northwestern part of the New Territories.

3. Works for the KSL are still underway and have been progressing well. It is expected that the KSL will come into operation in the second half of 2009.

Railways under design

West Island Line

4. The West Island Line (WIL) is a three-kilometre long railway extension of the Island Line of the MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL). It will run from the existing Sheung Wan Station to Kennedy Town with two intermediate stations at Sai Ying Pun and near the University of Hong Kong (alignment plan shown at Annex 2). The WIL project will greatly improve the traffic situation in the Central and Western District, a traditional

district with much room for rejuvenation. Upon completion, the WIL will provide the impetus for more economic activities and redevelopment thereby improving the vibrancy of the district.

5. Upon approval of the first stage funding by the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council in November 2007, the MTRCL is now working on the detailed design of the WIL. The Government is examining the cost and financial proposal submitted by the MTRCL. It is expected that application for the second stage funding support will be made to the Finance Committee in the first half of next year. We hope to commence the construction of the WIL in 2009 for commissioning in 2013 or 2014.

6. Twenty-five objections had been received after the gazettal of the original scheme of the WIL under the Railways Ordinance in late October 2007. Amendments to scheme were subsequently gazetted on 12 September 2008. At present, the government departments concerned and the MTRCL are dealing with the objections. For all unwithdrawn objections, the objectors will be invited to attend a hearing by the Railway Objections Hearing Panel, to ensure that the objections are handled in a fair, open and transparent manner. The hearing is scheduled to be held in late December 2008.

7. Upon gazettal of the scheme, members of the public have raised objections to the proposed scheme. The government departments concerned and the MTRCL have reviewed the scheme and the justifications for each objection, and explained the review results to the objectors. Our responses to the main objections are as follows:

- (a) To address the concern of residents over the proposed ventilation shaft under the flyover at Hill Road, the relevant government departments and the MTRCL have, on a number of occasions, briefed the District Council and residents concerned on the operation of the ventilation shaft and arranged on site inspections. Visits to ventilation facilities of existing stations were also arranged for the residents. In the course of design, the MTRCL will strive to optimise the design of the structure and beautify its appearance to blend in with the surroundings in order to alleviate the visual impact;
- (b) Regarding the public's concern over the impacts on noise and air quality, the MTRCL has submitted an environmental impact assessment (EIA) report in respect of the WIL project to the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) and such report has been made available for public inspection in accordance with prescribed procedure. All the works have to comply with the requirements of relevant environmental protection legislations;

and

- (c) As for the public's concern about the safety of the magazine and blasting method, the MTRCL will comply with the safety standards and requirements stipulated in the Buildings Ordinance, Dangerous Goods Ordinance and relevant legislations to ensure the structural safety of the adjacent buildings.

8. The WIL is a long-awaited railway for the residents of the Western District and has gained the public's support. The Government and the MTRCL will stay in close touch with the local communities to develop a scheme for the WIL that can meet the aspirations of the majority of the public. We plan to commence construction as soon as possible.

South Island Line (East)

Annex 3

9. The South Island Line (East) (SIL(E)) 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 (alignment plan shown at Annex 3). Upon completion, the SIL(E) will enhance the railway network on the Hong Kong Island, save travelling time for the residents of the Southern District and facilitate tourism and commercial developments in the District.

10. The MTRCL commenced the preliminary planning and design of the SIL(E) in February 2008 and has already conducted two rounds of public consultation in collaboration with the Focus Group on Planning and Development of South Island Line under the Southern District Council. The Government and the MTRCL have also attended a number of forums organised by residents' organisations to brief them on the proposed scheme, and to continue to listen to the views of the public on the SIL(E). The Government is now in discussion with the MTRCL on the detailed scope and implementation programme of the project. It is our target to commence construction of the railway in 2011 for completion and commissioning in 2015.

11. During the above-mentioned public consultations, we noted the views of the public and have made initial responses as follows:

- (a) In response to the request in the public for early completion and commencement of operation of the SIL(E), we will continue to strive for completion of the project as soon as possible;
- (b) Members of the public were concerned about the noise and visual impacts of the proposed viaduct section between the toll plaza of Aberdeen Tunnel and Lei Tung Estate. Some residents were

worried that the viaduct section would affect the long-term development of the district and requested a change to using tunnels instead. In this connection, the MTRCL has completed the feasibility study of the tunnel option and provided further explanation to the public. We are of the view that the adoption of a tunnel option would result in a lot of difficulties and drawbacks. In particular, part of the Aberdeen Channel will be required to be closed for three years, leaving only a 35-metre fairway for marine traffic, in order to construct the tunnel section across the Channel. This will adversely affect the operation of the nearby Aberdeen Typhoon Shelter where the mooring space will correspondingly be reduced. The dispersal of the contaminated materials due to dredging of the marine deposit within the Typhoon Shelter during the construction will have impact on the water quality there. The disposal of the marine mud will add to the burden of the mud pit capacity problem. Besides, we will develop mitigation measures to address any noise impact. As for the concern about the structural form of the viaduct to match with the surroundings, we shall 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;

- (c) The MTRCL has noted the public's suggestions on the locations of entrances for stations at South Horizons and Lei Tung and will take these into consideration in the course of design of the stations; and
- (d) As regards concern over the impact on the livelihood of the public during construction, the MTRCL will explore suitable mitigation measures to reduce the impact of the works to an acceptable level.

12. Early this year, we asked the MTRCL to explore, in conjunction with the Hong Kong Jockey Club, the feasibility of providing a Happy Valley Station. Upon completion of an option review, the Government and the MTRCL consulted the District Councils concerned and the Subcommittee on Matters Relating to Railways under the Legislative Council Panel on Transport on the review report in May 2008. The main considerations are summarised below:

- (a) The views of the public over the provision of Happy Valley Station are divided;
- (b) In 2016, the catchment population of the station will be around 19 000 and the projected patronage is not high;
- (c) In order to provide a Happy Valley Station, the alignment of the SIL(E) will have to deviate from the original alignment that connects Admiralty directly with Wong Chuk Hang (route map as

Annex 4

shown at Annex 4). The increase in mileage will be about 2.5 kilometres. With a longer tunnel, the additional excavation will lengthen the time for construction, which is not in line with the public's aspiration for early completion of the SIL(E); and

- (d) The provision of a station will increase substantially the construction cost of the SIL(E) and the longer journey time will also have significant impact on the transport and economic benefits of the project.

In view of the above considerations, we have strong reservation for the provision of Happy Valley Station in the SIL(E). We shall explain the above considerations in detail to the relevant District Councils in due course.

13. We also noted the heavy pedestrian traffic between Causeway Bay and Happy Valley on race days and public holidays, with a large number of pedestrians crossing Leighton Road in front of Craigengower Cricket Club and Percival Street near the Times Square. The construction of a pedestrian subway linking the heart of Causeway Bay with the busy streets bordering Happy Valley could alleviate the traffic congestion in the area and improve roadside air quality. The Transport Department will commission a consultancy study on the above subway scheme in the second quarter of next year for a period of twelve months. We will brief the District Councils concerned on the progress in due course.

14. We will continue to consult the District Councils and local communities concerned so that the design of the SIL(E) could better meet the aspirations of the majority of the public, and the railway scheme could be gazetted as soon as possible to facilitate commencement of construction.

Shatin to Central Link

15. The Shatin to Central Link (SCL) comprises two railway lines with a total length of 17 kilometres: the Tai Wai to Hung Hom Link connecting the Ma On Shan Line, Kowloon Southern Link and West Rail Line to form an east-west strategic railway corridor; and the cross harbour section from Hung Hom to Central extending the East Rail Line to Central to form a north-south strategic railway corridor (alignment plan shown at Annex 5). Along the SCL, there will be nine stations, six of which will be integrated interchange stations allowing passengers to interchange between platforms to the existing railway network.

Annex 5

16. The Executive Council has decided to proceed with the implementation of the SCL project using the "concession approach". The Government will be responsible for the construction costs of the SCL and the MTRCL will be entrusted with the planning and design of the project.

Upon completion, the MTRCL will be granted a service concession for the operation of the railway line while the Government will receive a service concession payment annually. The Legislative Council has approved the first stage funding and the design and site investigation works are underway. Construction is scheduled to commence in late 2010 for phased completion in 2015 and 2019.

17. During the preliminary consultation stage, we noted the views of the public and have made initial responses as follows:

- (a) Regarding the request for provision of Hin Keng Station, we consider, in principle, there are justifications in terms of design and demand, and will work in this direction;
- (b) After the provision of Tsz Wan Shan Station has been confirmed to be not technically feasible, the public has expressed concern about how the footbridge system in Tsz Wan Shan could be improved and how the connectivity with Diamond Hill Station could be strengthened. In this connection, we have conducted a feasibility study on the options put forward by the parties concerned. The District Councils and local communities will be consulted after we have conducted a comprehensive analysis of the options and finalised a proposal;
- (c) As to the public's concern over the planning of the development above the SCL depot at the former Tai Hom Village site and how the three historical structures thereat would be preserved, the Planning Department will further pursue the matter and the MTRCL will also commission a consultancy study and put forward proposals on conservation;
- (d) As regards the public's concern over the provision of the Central South Station, we will review the matter after a decision has been made on the future land use of the site occupied by the current Central Government Offices so as to better match the future developments in the area; and
- (e) In the course of design of the stations, the MTRCL will take into consideration the public's request that locations of the station entrances should be user-oriented.

18. In view of the requests and concerns of the stakeholders, the Government and the MTRCL will, in due course, consult the District Councils and local communities concerned on the preliminary scheme of the SCL. Suitable amendments will be made having regard to the feasibility of the suggestions. We hope the scheme will be gazetted as soon as possible to facilitate commencement of construction.

Kwun Tong Line Extension

Annex 6

19. The Kwun Tong Line Extension (KTE) is a three-kilometre long railway extending from the Yau Ma Tei Station of the Kwun Tong Line to a new station in Whampoa (alignment plan shown at Annex 6). Passengers may change to the SCL at the proposed Ho Man Tin Station. The extension will provide convenient railway services to the residents of Ho Man Tin and Whampoa.

20. The Executive Council has decided to proceed with the implementation of the railway project under the “ownership approach” and has commissioned the MTRCL to take forward the project. The MTRCL has commenced the further planning and preliminary design of the KTE and conducted the first stage consultation programme in collaboration with the Kowloon City District Council from June to August 2008. Views of the public on the KTE were collected through roving exhibitions and public forums. The main concerns of the public during this stage of consultation and the initial responses of the MTRCL are summarised below:

- (a) The proposed Ho Man Tin Station will be the interchange station for the KTE and the SCL and to tie in with the alignment of the SCL, the station will be located at the former Valley Road Estate. The residents were of the view that this site was far away from the more densely populated Ho Man Tin Estate and Oi Man Estate. In this connection, the MTRCL will explore the feasibility of a pedestrian link; and
- (b) The MTRCL has proposed two feasible sites, located at Tak On Street and Dyer Avenue, for the Whampoa Station. Tak On Street is a private street in Whampoa Garden and the proposal will involve land resumption. In view of the heavier pedestrian and vehicular traffic along Tak On Street, it is expected that the construction will have greater impact on the environment and traffic. The Dyer Avenue option will not involve land resumption and will also have less impact on the environment and traffic. Though the Dyer Avenue site is further from Whampoa Garden and the old urban area of Hung Hom, it is close to Laguna Verde. As the residents are divided over the station location, the MTRCL will consult the public again after it has examined the views collected.

21. The MTRCL is working on the preliminary design of the KTE. The Government and the MTRCL will continue to consult the District Councils and local communities concerned on the design for the project. We plan to gazette the scheme and commence construction as soon as possible. Construction is expected to commence in 2010 for completion in 2015.

Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link (Hong Kong Section)

22. The Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link (XRL) is an express rail service, which will link up Hong Kong, Shenzhen and Guangzhou. The journey time between Hong Kong and Guangzhou will be reduced from about 100 minutes as at present to about 48 minutes. The XRL will be connected to the national high-speed rail network, including the Beijing-Guangzhou Passenger Line and Hangzhou-Fuzhou-Shenzhen Passenger Line. Journey time between Hong Kong and major cities such as Beijing and Shanghai will be greatly shortened. Through interchanging with the Pearl River Delta (PRD) Rapid Transit System, the XRL will also connect Hong Kong with major PRD cities. The Mainland section of the XRL will start from Shibi in Guangzhou with stations at Humen in Dongguan, and Longhua and Futian in Shenzhen before entering Hong Kong via Huanggang. The terminus of the Hong Kong section will be located in West Kowloon (alignment plan of the Hong Kong section shown at Annex 7).

Annex 7

23. The Executive Council has decided to proceed with the implementation of the Hong Kong section of the XRL. This 26-kilometre long rail link will be implemented under the “concession approach”. The Government will fund the construction of the railway. Upon completion, the MTRCL will be granted a service concession to operate the railway for fifty years. In this connection, we briefed the Subcommittee on Matters Relating to Railways on 2 May 2008 and obtained funding approval from the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council for the design and site investigation of the XRL on 8 July 2008. The MTRCL is now carrying out the design and site investigation of the XRL.

24. We have consulted the public on the Hong Kong section of the XRL and concerns were mainly on the compensation for land resumption, connectivity of the West Kowloon Terminus, traffic in the West Kowloon area and the impact on the environment during construction. Our responses are as follows:

- (a) As regards compensation for land resumption, the Hong Kong section of the XRL will run entirely underground. The above-ground activities and present permissible land use of the lots should not be affected. The Government will only resume the stratum of the lots. We will continue to keep the residents informed and will deal with the issue of compensation in accordance with established land policy and relevant legislations. We hope to obtain the understanding of the residents;
- (b) We will keep in view the connectivity of the West Kowloon Terminus of the XRL, the Austin Station of the Kowloon Southern Link and the Kowloon Station of the Airport Express Line in the

detailed design stage, so as to provide maximum convenience to passengers;

- (c) Regarding traffic congestion in the vicinity of the West Kowloon Terminus, the Transport Department is now conducting a transport study, which will explore the impact on the traffic situation upon completion of a number of major large-scale developments in the area and put forward a proposal that can solve the long-term traffic and transport problems. The study is scheduled for completion in end 2008; and
- (d) As for the impact on the environment during construction, the MTRCL will assess the impact of the XRL on the environment during construction and in its daily operation in accordance with the Environmental Impact Assessment Ordinance and propose mitigation measures in the EIA report. The EPD will not issue an environmental permit for the construction of the XRL unless it is satisfied with the EIA report.

25. As for the implementation timetable, it is hoped that the scheme of the Hong Kong section of the XRL could be gazetted in late 2008 so that construction could commence in late 2009 for commissioning in 2014 or 2015. We plan to apply for funding from the Legislative Council to start the construction of the Hong Kong section of the XRL in the fourth quarter of 2009.

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

Transport and Housing Bureau
November 2008



現有南昌站
EXISTING
NAM CHEONG
STATION

柯士甸站
AUSTIN
STATION

現有尖東站
EXISTING EAST
TSIM SHA TSUI
STATION

圖例
LEGEND



現有鐵路路線
EXISTING RAIL LINE



建造中的九龍南線
KOWLOON SOUTHERN LINK (KSL)
(UNDER CONSTRUCTION)

米 0 500 1000 m
比例尺 1 : 20 000 SCALE BAR

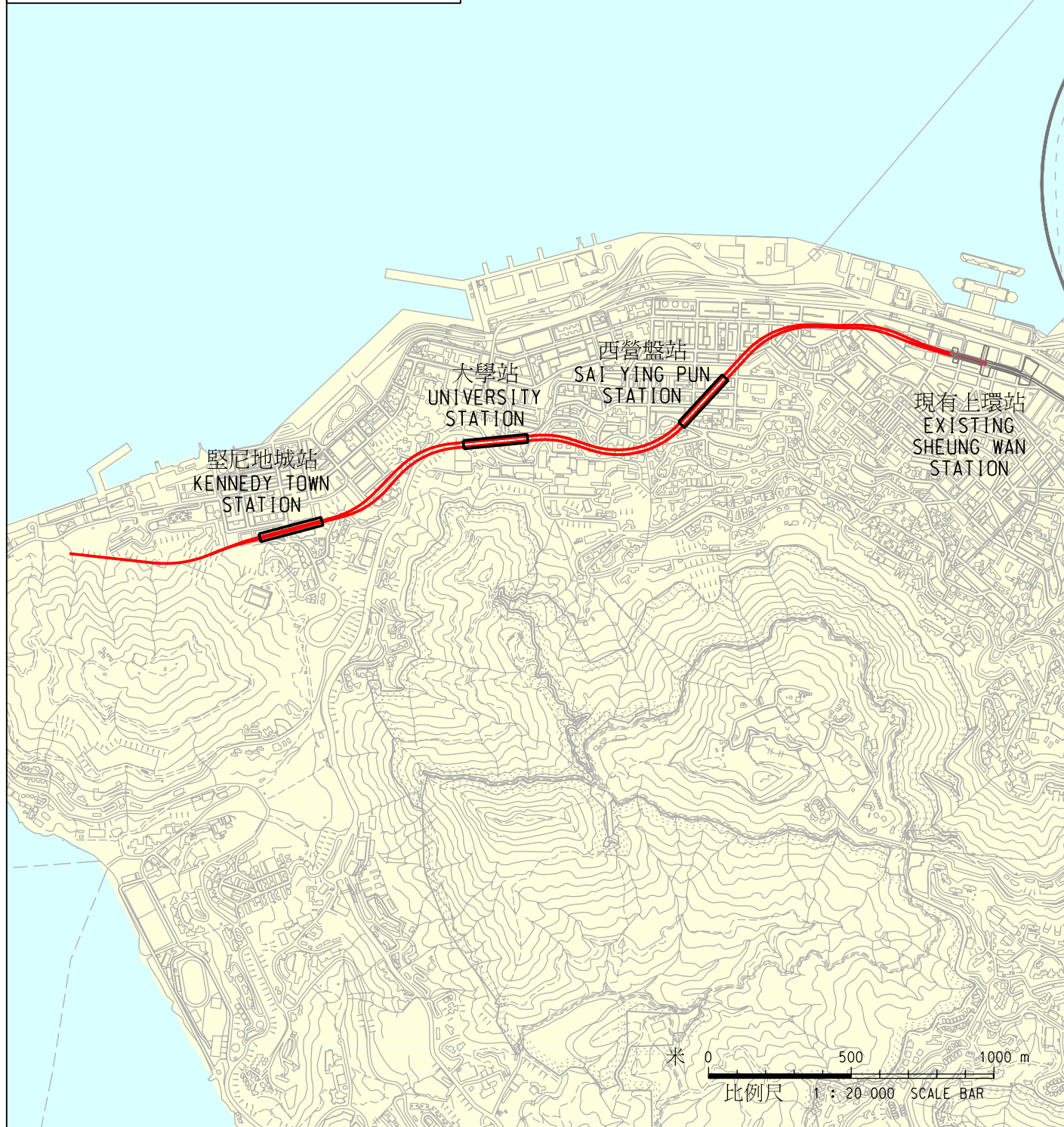
九龍南線

KOWLOON SOUTHERN LINK (KSL)

圖例
LEGEND

- 現有鐵路路線
EXISTING RAIL LINE
- 擬建西港島線
PROPOSED WEST ISLAND LINE (WIL)

附件二
Annex 2



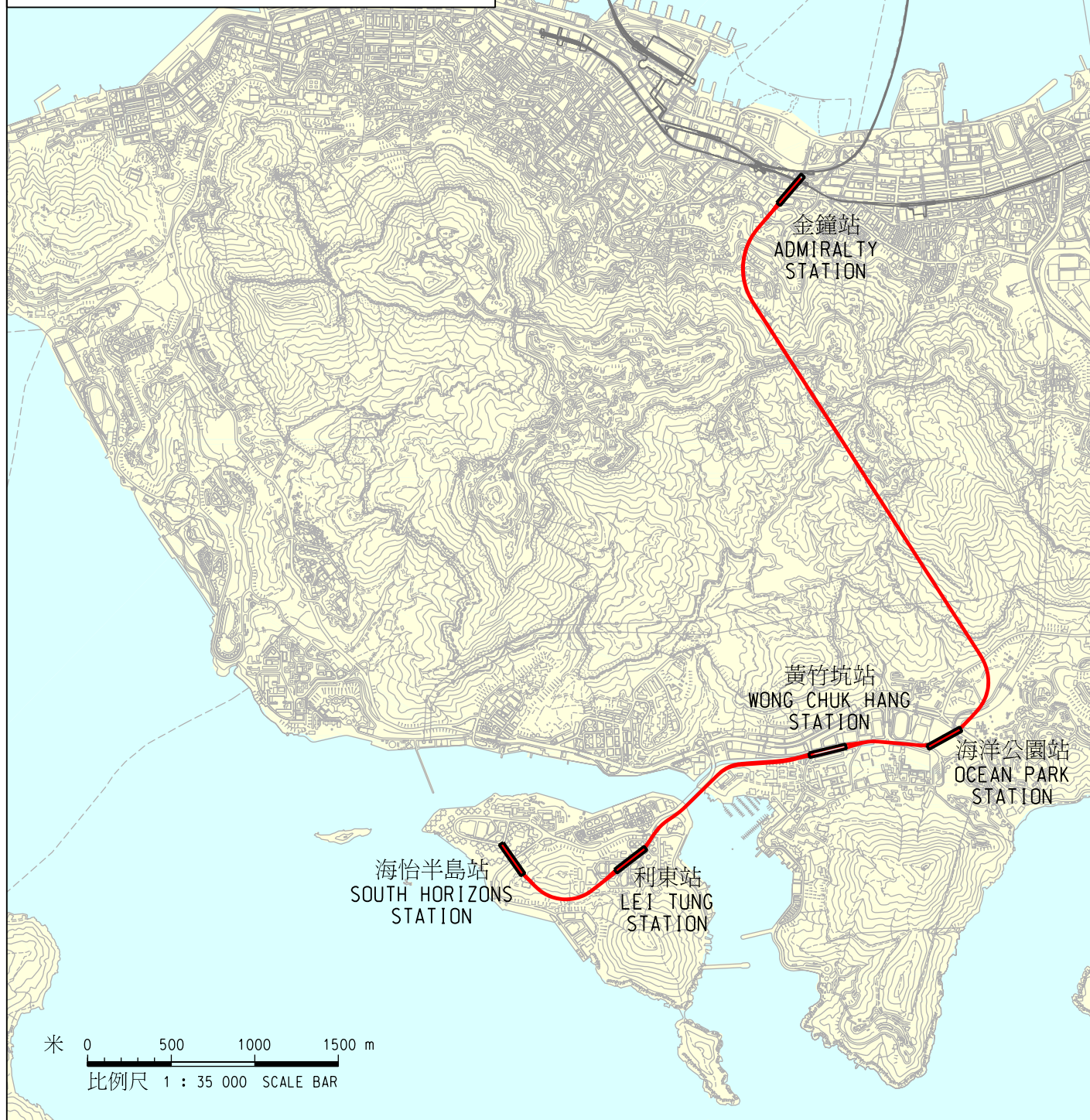
西港島線
WEST ISLAND LINE (WIL)

圖例
LEGEND

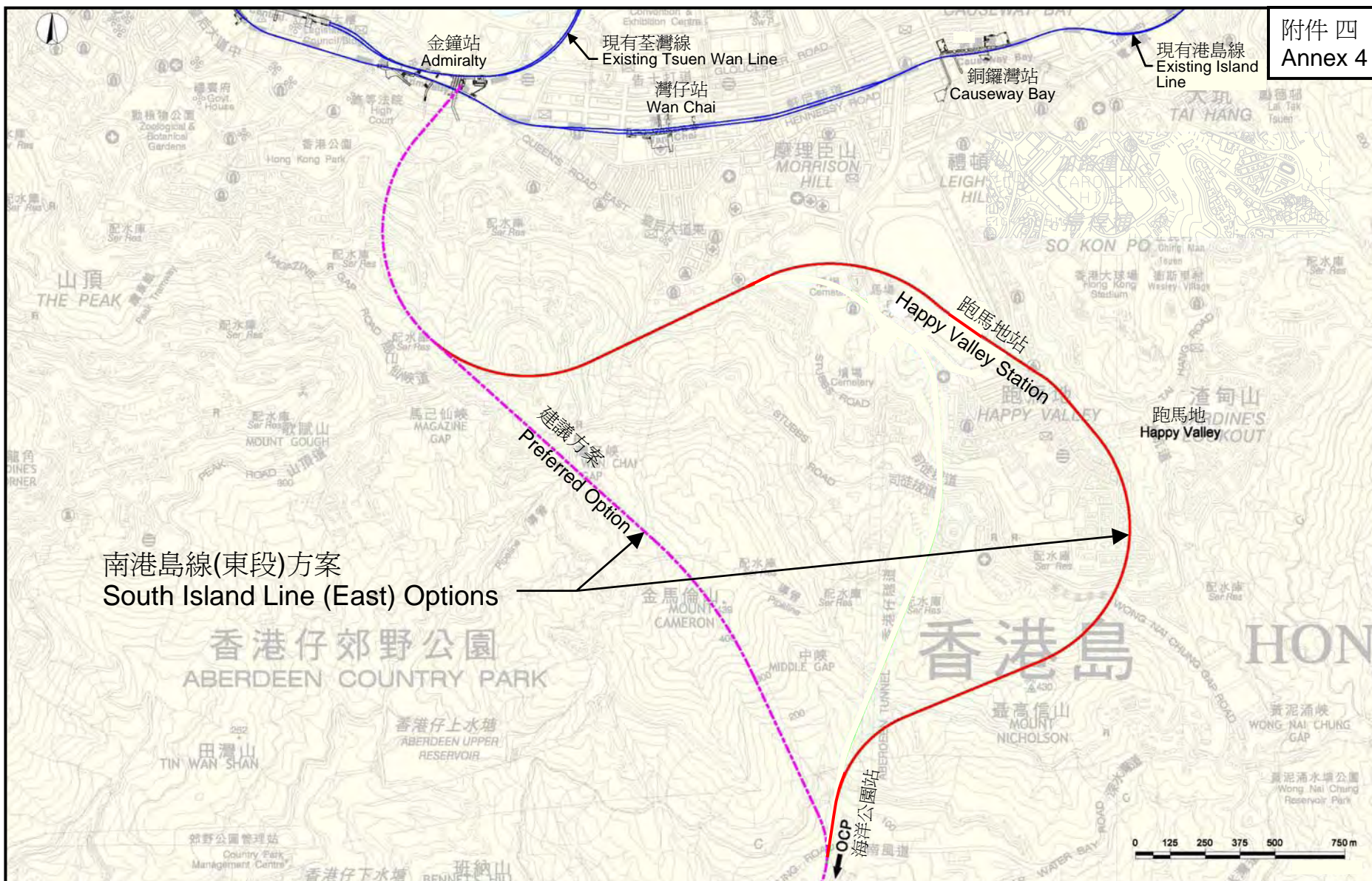
—— 現有鐵路路線
EXISTING RAIL LINE

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

附件三
Annex 3



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



南港島線(東段)－跑馬地站繞道
South Island Line (East) – Detour with Happy Valley Station

圖例
LEGEND

現有鐵路路線
EXISTING RAIL LINE

擬建沙田至中環線
(東西鐵路走廊)
PROPOSED SHATIN TO
CENTRAL LINK (SCL)
EAST WEST LINE

擬建沙田至中環線
(南北鐵路走廊)
PROPOSED SHATIN TO
CENTRAL LINK (SCL)
NORTH SOUTH LINE

附件五
Annex 5



沙田至中環線
SHATIN TO CENTRAL LINK (SCL)

圖例
LEGEND

— 現有鐵路路線
EXISTING RAIL LINE

— 擬建觀塘線延線
PROPOSED KWUN TONG
LINE EXTENSION (KTE)

附件六
Annex 6



觀塘線延線
KWUN TONG LINE EXTENSION (KTE)



廣深港高速鐵路香港段
HONG KONG SECTION OF GUANGZHOU-SHENZHEN-HONG KONG
EXPRESS RAIL LINK (XRL)