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Panel on Transport

**Subcommittee on Matters Relating to Railways
meeting on 9 February 2010**

Background brief on South Island Line (East)

Purpose

This paper provides background information on the South Island Line (East) (SIL (East)) project and summarizes the major concerns expressed by members of the Subcommittee on Matters Relating to Railways (the Subcommittee) on the project at its previous meetings.

Background

2. The SIL (East) will be a seven-kilometre long medium capacity railway that runs between Admiralty and South Horizons with intermediate stations at Ocean Park, Wong Chuk Hang and Lei Tung. Passengers can interchange at Admiralty Station for the Tsuen Wan Line and Island Line. According to the Administration, 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 residents of the Southern District and enabling tourism and commercial developments in the District. The alignment plan is at **Appendix I**.

3. The Chief Executive announced in the 2007-2008 Policy Address that the Government would undertake 10 major infrastructure projects, including the SIL (East), to boost economic growth and improve the living environment. On 18 December 2007, the Executive Council (ExCo) decided that the MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL) should be asked to proceed with the preliminary planning and design of the SIL (East), which commenced in February 2008. The Government and the MTRCL conducted extensive public consultation from March to November 2008 in collaboration with the Southern

District Council (SDC). The railway scheme was gazetted in July 2009 in accordance with the Railways Ordinance (Cap. 519). The MTRCL commenced the detailed planning and design of the SIL (East) in August 2009. The construction works for the SIL (East) are expected to commence in 2011 for commissioning in 2015.

Major concerns on the SIL (East) project by the Subcommittee

4. On 11 January 2008, the Administration briefed the Subcommittee on the ExCo's decision and the latest development of the SIL (East). The Subcommittee discussed the project with the Administration and received views from deputations at a series of meetings. Subcommittee members expressed major concerns on the following issues -

- (a) the impacts of the proposed viaduct section between the toll plaza of Aberdeen Tunnel and Lei Tung Estate (paragraphs 5 to 6);
- (b) the impacts of the proposed viaduct section on TWGHs Jockey Club Rehabilitation Complex (paragraphs 7 to 9);
- (c) the location of barging facilities (paragraph 10);
- (d) the location of temporary magazine for overnight storage of explosives (paragraphs 11 to 12);
- (e) the location of entrances for stations at South Horizons and Lei Tung and location of ventilation shafts (paragraphs 13 to 14); and
- (f) the provision of a station in Happy Valley (paragraphs 15 to 18).

Impacts of the proposed viaduct section between the toll plaza of Aberdeen Tunnel and Lei Tung Estate

5. Some members shared the concern expressed by some deputations about the noise and visual impacts of the proposed viaduct section between the toll plaza of Aberdeen Tunnel and Lei Tung Estate. Residents were worried that the viaduct section would affect the environment of the Southern District. The MTRCL explained that if the SIL (East) was to go entirely underground, the following problems were envisaged -

- (a) the depot located in Wong Chuk Hang would need to be lowered by about 14 meters involving excavation of an additional one million cubic metres of hard rock inside the depot site. The extra excavation works would lead to about three to four years' delay in the completion of the railway;

- (b) about two-third of the Aberdeen Channel would have to be closed for three years to facilitate the construction of tunnel, leaving only a 35-metre fairway for marine traffic during the period, which may not be acceptable;
- (c) the construction of the ventilation buildings and the floodgate for the tunnel section crossing the Aberdeen Channel would require the clearance of some shipyards on the north shore of the Channel;
- (d) the two stations of Ocean Park and Wong Chuk Hang would have to be located underground. The level difference between the station platform and station entrances would become comparatively larger, making travelling time longer and therefore more inconvenient for passengers' accessibility; and
- (e) approximately 16 000 square metres of land inside the Hong Kong Police College would be required temporarily for tunnel construction for at least three years; the Tactical Training Complex Building would have to be demolished, which would affect the operation of the Police College.

6. As for the concern about the structural form of the viaduct to match with the surroundings, the Administration would consult the Advisory Committee on Appearance of Bridges and Associated Structures and the district councils concerned so as to arrive at a design that could accommodate the views of different parties concerned. The MTRCL assured members that it would spare no effort in finding an aesthetically acceptable viaduct structural form in harmony with the Wong Chuk Hang surroundings. The MTRCL also undertook that it would develop mitigation measures to address any noise impact.

Impacts of the proposed viaduct section on TWGHs Jockey Club Rehabilitation Complex (JCRC)

7. Subcommittee members noted that the JCRC Parents Committee lodged a complaint to the Complaints Division of LegCo in May 2009 expressing grave concerns on the impacts of the viaduct section on the occupants of the JCRC. The Subcommittee requested the Administration to re-consider the feasibility of adopting a full tunnel option, including a proposal on the tunnel option made by Designing Hong Kong. The Administration undertook to refine the design options in close consultation with the parents concerned and the management of the JCRC.

8. At the Subcommittee meeting on 4 December 2009, the MTRCL

proposed to erect noise enclosures at the section adjacent to the JCRC, to move the viaduct structure farther away from the JCRC by at least 18 metres, and to lower the viaduct structure such that the top of the noise enclosure would be about the same as the ground level of the JCRC. The Administration advised that the four main concerns of the JCRC on the viaduct – height, distance, noise and electromagnetic fields generation – had all been satisfactorily addressed, and over 90% of the concerns of the JCRC had been fulfilled.

9. Some members requested that the viaduct structure on the section along the JCRC be further lowered and moved farther away, e.g. by situating the viaduct on the other side of the nullah near to Heung Yip Road. The MTRCL explained that moving the viaduct about 30 metres away horizontally would involve reconstructing the nullah, which would entail significant construction works and might be even more disruptive to the JCRC. The MTRCL undertook to further discuss the matter with the JCRC. The latest progress report on the complaint case lodged by the JCRC Parents Committee provided by the Complaints Division was circulated under LC Paper No. CB(1)1018/09-10(05) for members' reference.

Location of barging facilities

10. The MTRCL originally proposed that temporary barging points be established at Tin Wan Praya Road in Kellett Bay and Lee Nam Road in Ap Lei Chau to facilitate the disposal of excavated materials by marine transport, so that the impact of dump trucks on road-based traffic and the environment could be minimized. In view of the concerns expressed by the Subcommittee and residents concerned, the MTRCL advised at the meeting on 4 December 2009 that it was exploring the feasibility of co-using the barging facility at a work site of the Drainage Services Department at Telegraph Bay. As compared with the site at Kellett Bay, the proposed site was farther away from residential development and the number of people being affected in the vicinity would be smaller. The MTRCL would continue to consult the district council, local communities and concern groups.

Location of temporary magazine for overnight storage of explosives

11. The Administration proposed a remote area at Chung Hom Shan as the location for the temporary magazine for overnight storage of explosives. According to the Administration, the proposed remote area at Chung Hon Shan was regarded as the most suitable location having considered various factors thoroughly, including the distance from residential area, access by vehicles, and distance from blasting sites. In view of the concerns expressed by residents about the proposed temporary magazine at Chung Hom Shan and the safety of explosives delivery, a quantitative risk assessment on the storage and conveyance of explosives was being conducted by the MTRCL. The assessment report would be reviewed by the Mines Division and form part of

the Environmental Impact Assessment Study Report. The MTRCL would adopt stringent risk control and safety measures in accordance with the standards stipulated in the Dangerous Goods Ordinance to ensure safe storage, conveyance and use of explosives during the construction stage of the project.

12. Some members urged the Administration to consider using marine transport means for the delivery of the explosives for the sake of safety. The Administration advised that as a suitable pier for loading of explosives, which had to be far away from residential areas, could not be identified in the Southern District, sea transportation of explosives would not be considered. The Administration also pointed out that explosives could only be delivered by marine transport from the government explosives depot at Kau Shat Wan on Lantau Island within the harbour between the hours of sunrise and sunset. A temporary magazine site was thus required for overnight storage of explosives to enable early morning blast and to allow two blasts per day to avoid noise impact in the evening and the delay of the project.

Location of entrances for stations at South Horizons and Lei Tung and location of ventilation shafts

13. At the meeting on 15 May 2009, members noted the survey conducted by the SDC in April 2009 which had revealed that residents of South Horizons and Ap Lei Chau were generally in favour of the option of providing a station in Yi Nam Road. As for the proposed station entrance at Lei Tung, the MTRCL proposed to relocate the station entrance from the playground of Tung Sing House to the vicinity of Lei Tung Commercial Centre to better respond to the demands of the local community. The Subcommittee also noted that residents of Wong Chuk Hang generally supported the proposal to build a covered footbridge or walkway at Wong Chuk Hang Station to connect to the nearby area such as Nam Long Shan Road and Sham Wan Road.

14. At the meeting on 4 December 2009, some members urged the Administration to address concerns about the proposed location of the ventilation shaft of the South Horizons Station and explore locating the shaft in industrial area. The Administration was also requested to explore the possibility of making available entrances for the Lei Tung Station with corridor connecting to the Yue On Court and Sham Wan Towers.

Provision of a station in Happy Valley

15. At its meeting on 11 January 2008, the Subcommittee urged the Administration to explore the feasibility of providing a station in Happy Valley. The Administration reported on 2 May 2008 that the MTRCL had conducted a study on four options of providing a station in Happy Valley. The results of the study revealed that all the options had considerable implications for the SIL (East) project in terms of cost and construction time. It was estimated that as

the population catchment involved was only about 19 000, a station in Happy Valley would attract less than 10 000 passengers daily. The Administration considered it necessary to further discuss with parties concerned whether a station in Happy Valley should be provided in the light of the findings of the study.

16. The Subcommittee further discussed the SIL (East) on 16 January 2009 and received views from deputations on 15 May 2009. Some members were disappointed with the decision not to provide a station in Happy Valley. These members requested the Administration to take into consideration the long-term benefits brought to the community and to the commercial development at Happy Valley by provision of a Happy Valley Station, which was justified in view of the heavy pedestrian traffic between Causeway Bay and Happy Valley on race days and public holidays, as well as the long-term population growth. Some members suggested construction of a Happy Valley subsidiary railway line and that the frequency of trains on this line would be increased only on race days.

17. The Administration advised that it had seriously considered the option for a station in Happy Valley taking into account factors like patronage, construction cost, implementation timetable and disturbance to the locals during construction. Different locations for a station in Happy Valley had been examined, but all options would lead to a longer alignment and additional construction time. The increase in journey time would also lower the economic benefits of the SIL (East). As there were also strong calls for the early commencement of construction of the SIL (East), the Administration on balance decided not to provide a station in Happy Valley.

18. The Administration also advised that since it was expected that the patronage of Happy Valley Racecourse Station during non-race days would not be high, provision of a subsidiary railway line would have adverse impact on the transport and economic benefits of the entire project.

Motion passed by the Subcommittee on the SIL (East) project in the current session

19. The Subcommittee passed the following motion requesting a comprehensive review of the SIL (East) project at its meeting on 17 September 2009 -

“That this Subcommittee requests the MTRCL and the Government to re-examine the locations of the following facilities and the alignment of the South Island Line (SIL) (East), including –

1. the temporary Barging Point at Tin Wan Praya Road;

2. the temporary magazine at Chung Hom Shan;
3. the rail alignment for the section adjacent to the Tung Wah Group of Hospitals Jockey Club Rehabilitation Complex.

This Subcommittee also requests the MTRCL and the Government to consider adopting a full tunnel option for the construction of SIL (East), and expeditiously consult this Council and the public on the financing arrangements for SIL (East), including the property developments above the rail stations.”

20. In response to the motion, the Administration continued to further consult residents/stakeholders concerned and provided an updated paper [LC Paper No. CB(1)522/09-10(05)] on the new developments for members’ reference. The paper was discussed at the meeting on 4 December 2009.

Latest developments

21. The Subcommittee agreed to further discuss the project at the next meeting scheduled for 9 February 2010.

Relevant papers

22. A list of relevant papers is at **Appendix II**.

Council Business Division 1
Legislative Council Secretariat
4 February 2010

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)

附錄 I
Appendix I



南港島線（東段）

SOUTH ISLAND LINE (SIL) (EAST)

Appendix II

Panel on Transport

Subcommittee on Matters Relating to Railways

List of relevant papers on South Island Line (East)

Date of meeting	Minutes/Paper	LC Paper No.
11.1.2008	Administration's paper on the Mass Transit Railway South Island Line	File Ref.: THB(T)CR 17/1016/99 http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr07-08/english/panels/tp/tp_rdp/papers/tp_rdp-thbtcr17101699-e.pdf
	Administration's paper on land use planning in Southern District and projected patronage of South Island Line (East) and assessment of impact of South Island Line (East) on other public transport modes	LC Paper No. CB(1)520/07-08(03) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr07-08/english/panels/tp/tp_rdp/papers/tp_rdp0111cb1-520-3-e.pdf
	Background brief on Mass Transit Railway - South Island Line	LC Paper No. CB(1)521/07-08 http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr07-08/english/panels/tp/tp_rdp/papers/tp_rdp0111cb1-521-e.pdf
	Minutes of the meeting	LC Paper No. CB(1)954/07-08 http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr07-08/english/panels/tp/tp_rdp/minutes/rd080111.pdf
2.5.2008	Administration's paper on progress report on South Island Line	LC Paper No. CB(1)1376/07-08(02) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr07-08/english/panels/tp/tp_rdp/papers/tp_rdp0502cb1-1376-2-e.pdf
	Minutes of the meeting	LC Paper No. CB(1)1747/07-08 http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr07-08/english/panels/tp/tp_rdp/minutes/rd080502.pdf
16.1.2009	Administration's paper on progress report on South Island Line	LC Paper No. CB(1)557/08-09(03) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr08-09/english/panels/tp/tp_rdp/papers/tp_rdp0116cb1-557-3-e.pdf

Date of meeting	Minutes/Paper	LC Paper No.
	Minutes of the meeting	LC Paper No. CB(1)1146/08-09 http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr08-09/english/panels/tp/tp_rdp/minutes/rdp20090116.pdf
15.5.2009	Administration's paper on progress report on South Island Line	LC Paper No. CB(1)1519/08-09(01) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr08-09/english/panels/tp/tp_rdp/papers/tp_rdp0515cb1-1519-1-e.pdf
	Minutes of the meeting	LC Paper No. CB(1)2605/08-09 http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr08-09/english/panels/tp/tp_rdp/minutes/rdp20090515.pdf
17.9.2009	Administration's paper on progress report on South Island Line (East)	LC Paper No. CB(1)2582/08-09(03) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr08-09/english/panels/tp/tp_rdp/papers/tp_rdp0917cb1-2582-3-e.pdf
	Responses of the Administration to the major concerns raised by Subcommittee members and deputations at the meeting on 15 May 2009	LC Paper No. CB(1)2602/08-09(01) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr08-09/chinese/panels/tp/tp_rdp/papers/tp_rdp0917cb1-2602-1-ec.pdf
	Minutes of the meeting	LC Paper No. CB(1)920/09-10 http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr08-09/english/panels/tp/tp_rdp/minutes/rdp20090917.pdf
4.12.2009	Administration's paper on progress report on South Island Line (East)	LC Paper No. CB(1)522/09-10(05) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr09-10/english/panels/tp/tp_rdp/papers/tp_rdp1204cb1-522-5-e.pdf
	Minutes of the meeting	LC Paper No. CB(1)1016/09-10 http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr09-10/english/panels/tp/tp_rdp/minutes/rdp20091204.pdf