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Panel on Transport

Subcommittee on Matters Relating to Railways
Meeting on 18 May 2012

Background brief on the review and update of
the Railway Development Strategy 2000

Purpose

This paper provides background information on the review and update of the Railway Development Strategy 2000 (RDS 2000). It also summarizes the views and concerns expressed by Members on the subject.

Background

2. RDS 2000 was announced in 2000. It maps out the railway network expansion plan for Hong Kong up to the year 2016, so as to tie in with the overall development in Hong Kong, to meet the daily traffic need of the public, as well as to echo the sustainable transport policy of making railway as the backbone of our passenger transport system, providing Hong Kong citizens with convenient and safe public transport services at reasonable prices.

3. RDS 2000 recommended six priority railway schemes. They were Kowloon Southern Link (KSL), Northern Link (NOL), West Island Line (WIL), North Island Line (NIL)¹, Shatin to Central Link (SCL) and Regional Express Line [now known as the Hong Kong section of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link (XRL)]. In addition, RDS 2000 also recommended the development of the Port Rail Link (PRL), linking Lo Wu to a rail terminal at Kwai Chung.

¹ NIL will provide an additional rail corridor between the Hong Kong Station and the Fortress Hill Station to relieve congestion at the Causeway Bay section of the existing Island Line.

Implementation of recommendation in RDS 2000

4. Upon further studies and public consultation, KSL was commissioned in 2009. WIL and XRL are now under construction for completion in 2014 to 2015. The funding applications for SCL were approved by Finance Committee on 18 April 2012. The construction works for the Tai Wai to Hung Hom Section of SCL are expected to be completed in 2018, whereas the Hung Hom to Admiralty Section is expected to be completed by 2020. Besides, the Administration is reviewing the implementation of NOL and NIL. As regards PRL, the Administration decided not to further pursue this project due to the continued decline of rail freight volume.

5. In view of the public needs and to enhance the overall railway network, the Administration decided to develop the Kwun Tong Line Extension (KTE) scheme which was suggested in the course of SCL study. The Administration also advanced the planning of South Island Line (East) (SIL(E)). KTE and SIL(E) are now under construction for completion in 2015. Details of the implementation of railway projects since 2000 are at **Appendix I**.

Need for review and update of RDS 2000

6. The Administration considers that it should continue its policy of making better use of railway as the backbone of the passenger transport system, so as to minimize the pollutions and land requirement arising from transport infrastructure and maintaining a sustainable transport system. The Administration considers it necessary to review and update the blueprint of the railway development strategy in RDS 2000 to take account of the changing needs of the society and latest planning parameters. It includes reviewing the priority of the railway network expansion proposals that were recommended previously but not yet implemented, as well as adding new railway proposals. The Administration's target is to update the railway development strategy to meet the transport need up to year 2031.

7. The review and update of RDS 2000 comprises two main parts –
- (a) **Network Development Study (NDS)** – to review those proposals identified in the RDS 2000 but not yet implemented (e.g. NIL, NOL, the fifth harbour crossing, etc.), and other new railway proposals and related suggestions made by the Administration or public since the

announcement of RDS 2000 (e.g. Hong Kong-Shenzhen Western Express Line, extension of Tung Chung line to Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge (HZMB) Hong Kong Boundary Control Facility, rail connection between Tuen Mun and Tsuen Wan, new stations along existing rail lines, etc.).

- (b) **Topical studies** – to tie in with NDS, the Review would also comprise a number of topical studies on issues such as potential bottlenecks and areas of overloading in the existing railway network, rooms for railway service enhancement, cross-boundary passenger demands, funding arrangement for implementing new railway projects, etc.

Previous discussions

8. The Subcommittee on Matters Relating to Railways (the Subcommittee) discussed on 4 November 2010 the funding proposal to create a commitment of \$43 million for the review and update of RDS 2000. Members generally supported the proposal and raised the following concerns and suggestions –

- (a) the review should explore means to enhance the railways' role as the backbone of public transport through better coordination with other transport modes, including the provision of park-and-ride facilities at major MTR stations to ease traffic congestion of harbour crossing;
- (b) the outcome of the review should be published from time to time without waiting for completion of the whole review exercise; and
- (c) the review should also cover NOL and NIL, which were proposals identified in RDS 2000 but not yet implemented.

9. The funding proposal was approved by the Finance Committee (FC) on 14 January 2011. At the meeting, Members expressed the following major concerns –

- (a) the review should look into causes of aggravating surface traffic conditions, and the possibility of extending railway network to the newly developed areas and other areas on Hong Kong Island not currently served by railway;

- (b) the review should cover other new railway proposals, such as a railway linking Tuen Mun and Tsuen Wan, a railway linking Tuen Mun and Hong Kong International Airport, a railway line for HZMB and the railway development in New Territories West;
- (c) the increase of sea and truck freight volume over the years could in fact be a result of the absence of PRL. The PRL was intended for transporting goods directly from the Mainland to the Kwai Tsing Container Terminals in an environmental-friendly and cost-effective manner; and
- (d) the review should be driven by an overall development blueprint with clear future direction for Hong Kong in moving ahead. There should be a strategic plan on the number of city centres and their locations, and how these would complement the development in the region. The public should also be engaged in the process.

10. At the special meeting of FC on 6 March 2012, some members requested the Administration to provide an interim report on RDS 2000, including the progress of review of NOL, to the Subcommittee for discussion. They also asked whether the review covered railway development in North District to meet the traffic demand arising from the opening up of the Frontier Closed Area. The Administration advised that it would soon consult the Subcommittee on the findings of an interim report of RDS 2000, including a review update of NOL. The railway development needs for the New Territories were also covered in the review study.

Latest developments

11. The Administration will brief the Subcommittee on the public consultation on the interim study findings of the review and update of RDS 2000 on 18 May 2012.

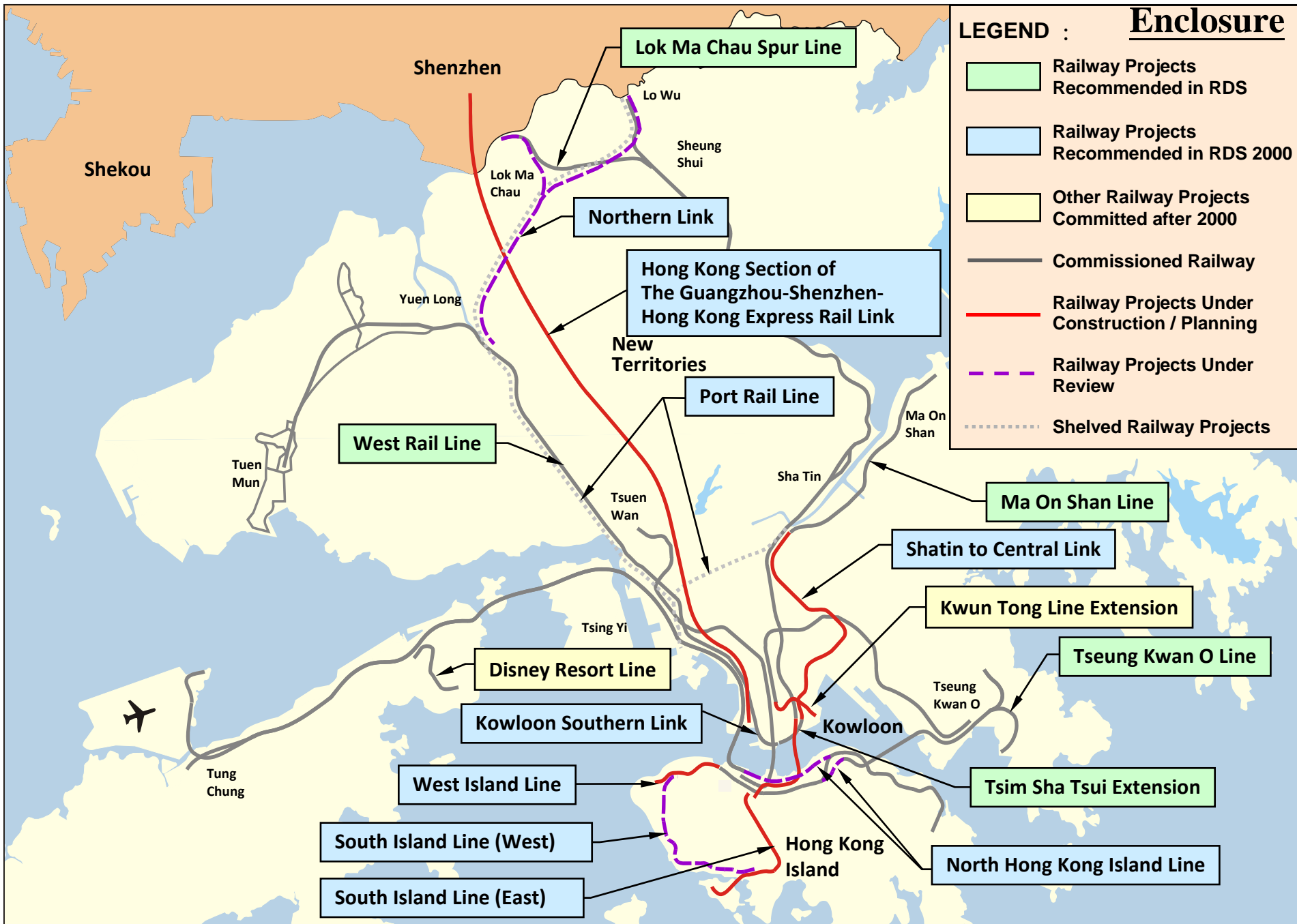
Relevant papers

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

Enclosure

LEGEND :

- Railway Projects Recommended in RDS
- Railway Projects Recommended in RDS 2000
- Other Railway Projects Committed after 2000
- Commissioned Railway
- Railway Projects Under Construction / Planning
- Railway Projects Under Review
- Shelved Railway Projects



Appendix II

Review and Update of the Railway Development Strategy 2000

List of relevant papers

Date of meeting	Committee	Minutes/Paper	LC Paper No.
4 November 2010	Subcommittee on Matters Relating to Railways	Administration's paper on review and update of the Railway Development Strategy 2000	CB(1)256/10-11(03) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr10-11/english/panels/tp/tp_rdp/papers/tp_rdp1104cb1-256-3-e.pdf
		Minutes of meeting	CB(1)1068/10-11 http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr10-11/english/panels/tp/tp_rdp/minutes/rdp20101104.pdf
14 January 2011	Finance Committee	Administration's paper on review and update of the Railway Development Strategy 2000	FCR(2010-11)53 http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr10-11/english/fc/fc/papers/f10-53e.pdf
		Minutes of meeting	FC116/10-11 http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr10-11/english/fc/fc/minutes/fc20110114.pdf