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**Transport and
Housing Bureau**
Government Secretariat
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[English Translation]

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(Attn: Ms Sophie LAU)

16 December 2019

Dear Ms LAU,

Panel on Transport
Policy briefing cum Meeting on 25 October 2018

Supplementary Information

At the request of the Panel on Transport for the plan and timetable for taking forward the proposed East Kowloon Line (EKL) under the Railway Development Strategy 2014 (RDS-2014) made at the meeting held on 25 October 2019, I append our reply as follows:

The Transport and Housing Bureau (THB) had invited the MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL) to submit proposals for the implementation of the new railway lines under RDS-2014. The MTRCL submitted a proposal for EKL to the Government in end July 2017. The THB, the Highways Department and relevant bureaux/departments have evaluated the proposal and requested the MTRCL to provide additional information and supplement details. In carrying out the evaluation, our main focus is to ensure that the proposal is practically feasible and can bring maximum benefits to the community.

The proposed EKL will have to run through hilly terrains between Kwun Tong and Tseung Kwan O areas. The railway stations will have to be located at deeper underground strata and connected by longer adits. Besides, stations such as Diamond Hill and Po Lam will have to be constructed in densely developed areas. Land for station entrances and works sites are also very limited. The design and planning of the EKL are thus more complicated and protracted.

Railway projects involve huge capital investment, and the Government has to plan in a prudent manner. The new railway projects proposed in the RDS-2014, including the EKL, have different degrees of complexities. Moreover, due to the tight overall housing supply and the potential housing supply that may be brought about by railway development, the Government is reviewing the proposal submitted by the MTRCL in this light.

As stated in the RDS-2014, the taking forward of individual proposed railway projects set out in the Strategy will be subject to the outcome of detailed engineering, environmental and financial studies relating to each project, as well as updated demand assessment and availability of resources. Moreover, for railway projects which are mainly intended to complement new development areas and new housing developments, the implementation timetable for the development areas and new housing developments in question will be an important planning parameter for the railway projects. Therefore, the indicative implementation windows recommended in the RDS-2014 may be adjusted having regard to any change in circumstances.

In line with established procedures, prior to the finalisation of any new railway scheme, we will consult the public, including the Legislative Council and the relevant District Councils, on the details of the scheme.

Yours sincerely,

[Chinese version signed]

(CHEUNG Kwok-ming)

for Secretary for Transport and Housing

c.c.:

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