

Southern District Council
Report on Progress of the Shatin to Central Link

Introduction

1. This paper briefs Members on the progress of the Shatin to Central Link (SCL).

Background

2. In March 2008, the Executive Council decided to proceed with the implementation of the SCL project using the 'concession approach'. The Government will be responsible for the construction cost of the SCL and the MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL) will be entrusted with the planning and design of the project.
3. In August 2009, the Government and the MTRCL submitted to the Southern District Council a document introducing the SCL project and its progress to seek the views of the Council. On 30 November 2009 and 26 July 2010, the Government and the MTRCL met with the District Development and Environment Committee of the Southern District Council to introduce the Hung Hom to Admiralty Section of the SCL and its related temporary reclamation work proposal, as well as the arrangement for setting up the immersed tube tunnel casting yard for SCL and Trunk Road T2 by using the rehabilitated Shek O Quarry.
4. The SCL project was gazetted under the Railways Ordinance on 26 November 2010 and has started the statutory consultation process.

Shatin to Central Link Railway Scheme

(I) Strategic Railway

5. The 17-kilometre SCL is a territory-wide strategic railway with 10 stations, namely Tai Wai, Hin Keng, Diamond Hill, Kai Tak, To Kwa Wan, Ma Tau Wai, Ho Man Tin, Hung Hom, Exhibition and Admiralty (See **Annex 1**). The project is linked with a number of existing railways, forming two strategic railway corridors, namely the 'East West Corridor' and the 'North South Corridor' (See **Annex 2**).

6. The 'East West Corridor', which extends the Ma On Shan Line from Tai Wai Station towards Kowloon to connect with Hung Hom Station of the West Rail Line, will allow passengers to travel from Wu Kai Sha Station to Hung Hom, East Kowloon, New Territories West and Tuen Mun without interchanging, providing a more direct and convenient railway service for passengers who travel between New Territories East and New Territories West.
7. The 'North South Corridor', which extends the existing East Rail Line from Hung Hom Station across the harbour to Admiralty Station, will allow passengers (using the East Rail Line) from Lo Wu and Huanggang (using the Lok Ma Chau Line) to reach the heart of Hong Kong Island directly.
8. The SCL will significantly reduce the journey time for passengers who travel between East Kowloon, East New Territories and Hong Kong Island. It will also increase the capacity of the railways that carry passengers from Shatin to Kowloon and across the harbour, as well as relieve the congestion on the existing railway lines.

(II) Interchange Stations

9. The SCL will have new stations in six districts serving a wide catchment across Hong Kong Island, Kowloon and the New Territories. The SCL will be linked to a number of existing and future railway lines including the East Rail Line, the West Rail Line, the Ma On Shan Line, the Tsuen Wan Line, the Kwun Tong Line, the Kwun Tong Line Extension, the Island Line, the South Island Line (East) and the future North Island Line at six interchange stations, further enhancing the railway service in Hong Kong. Some of the six interchange stations are extensions of the existing ones, while others are new additions. The six interchange stations are:

- i. Tai Wai Station – interchange station for 'East West Corridor' and 'North South Corridor'

Ma On Shan Line passengers will be able to switch to the East Rail Line here, while passengers from New Territories North will be able to change trains for destinations in East Kowloon. Modifications to Tai Wai Station including the upgrading of station facilities will be made to accommodate its interchange functions.

- ii. Diamond Hill Station – interchange station for Kwun Tong Line and SCL

As the interchange station for the Kwun Tong Line and the SCL, Diamond Hill Station will become the railway hub in East Kowloon. Passengers travelling from Ma On Shan to East Kowloon will be able to change trains for the Kwun Tong Line at Diamond Hill Station, while Kwun Tong Line passengers will be able to change over to the SCL for destinations in the New Territories or Hong Kong Island. A new station concourse, platforms and rail tracks will be constructed to the south of the existing Diamond Hill Station. The new and the old stations will be interlinked by pedestrian walkways.

- iii. Ho Man Tin Station – interchange station for Kwun Tong Line Extension and SCL

Passengers will be able to change for the Kwun Tong Line Extension at Ho Man Tin Station to reach Whampoa. Passengers from Whampoa will be able to switch over to the SCL at Ho Man Tin Station to reach East Kowloon, or travel to Hung Hom Station to reach Hong Kong Island or the New Territories. The proposed eight-storey Ho Man Tin Station will provide two levels of platforms for Kwun Tong Line Extension and the SCL, and an interchange concourse.

- iv. Hung Hom Station – interchange station for ‘East West Corridor’ and ‘North South Corridor’

Hung Hom Station will become an important railway hub of Hong Kong serving passengers travelling along the ‘East West Corridor’ and the ‘North South Corridor’ to reach destinations in the New Territories, Kowloon and Hong Kong Island. To prepare the ‘North South Corridor’ of the SCL for crossing the harbour, large-scale extension works will be carried out at Hung Hom Station. The existing station concourse will substantially be modified to make it more convenient for passengers to interchange between railway lines.

- v. Exhibition Station – interchange station for the SCL and the future North Island Line

Passengers from the New Territories or East Kowloon will be able to

switch to the future North Island Line at Exhibition Station for the Eastern District on Hong Kong Island.

- vi. Admiralty Station – interchange station for the SCL, Tsuen Wan Line, Island Line and the South Island Line (East)

Admiralty Station will become the transport hub on Hong Kong Island that serves as an interchange for the Island Line, the Tsuen Wan Line, the future South Island Line (East) and the SCL. The existing Admiralty Station will be expanded eastwards below the Harcourt Garden to accommodate the new train platforms and interchange concourses.

(III) Other major Works

- 10. Apart from the six interchange stations, other major works for the SCL include –

- (a) Ma On Shan Line (MOL) Station Improvement Works

- Upon the completion of the SCL 'Tai Wai to Hung Hom Section', the MOL will form part of the 'East West Corridor'. Trains will change from the existing 4-car ones to the 8-car configuration. Space has been provided in the existing MOL stations to accommodate the extension of platforms.

- (b) East Railway Line (EAL) Modification Works

- Upon completion of the SCL 'Hung Hom to Admiralty Section', the EAL will form part of the 'North South Corridor'. Modifications to the existing EAL will be made to accommodate the future operation system and service demands of the SCL:

- (i) The EAL, which is operating with 12-car trains, will link up with the Hung Hom to Admiralty Section of the SCL to reach Admiralty via Hung Hom and Exhibition. With limited space in the vicinity of the alignment on the Hong Kong Island, the stations can only accommodate 9-car train platforms. Therefore, unlike the EAL which is currently using 12-car trains, the entire 'North South Corridor' will operate with 9-car configuration;
 - (ii) Modification works of the EAL trains and station will be made to meet the 9-car train operation; and

(iii) Upgrading to the EAL signalling system will be made as the current EAL signalling system is not able to support the more frequent train service of the SCL.

(c) Diamond Hill Stabling Sidings (DHS)

The Diamond Hill Stabling Sidings will be built at the former Tai Hom Village site to allow the timely train deployment in the morning to meet the passenger flow during morning peak hours. Apart from stabling of trains in non-service hours, the DHS will also be used for routine inspection and cleaning.

(d) Tsz Wan Shan Pedestrian Facilities Improvement Works

To improve the connectivity between Tsz Wan Shan and the SCL Diamond Hill Station, pedestrian links in the district will be improved by connecting existing footbridges and retrofitting lifts to facilitate barrier-free access for pedestrians.

Benefits

11. The SCL will provide fast, reliable and convenient railway service to passengers in the New Territories East, Kowloon and Hong Kong Island. It helps to divert passengers to different railway lines by giving them more options for reaching their destinations, and takes some of the strain off the road traffic in the areas surrounding the Cross Harbour Tunnel.
12. The SCL brings the railway service to areas like Kai Tak, To Kwa Wan, Ma Tau Wai and Ho Man Tin which are currently not covered by the railway network, to facilitate the revitalisation and development of the district. It also relieves the congestions in Hung Hom which currently rely on road transport only. The new Kai Tak Station provides means for residents to access the facilities in the Kai Tak new development district.
13. The SCL saves travel time. It is estimated that a journey from Tai Wai to Diamond Hill will take about 5 minutes; from To Kwa Wan to Yuen Long about 31 minutes; from Hung Hom to Admiralty about 5 minutes and from Admiralty to Lo Wu about 50 minutes;
14. The SCL project will create over ten thousands of employment opportunities,

and spur tourism and commercial developments when completed.

15. It reduces air and noise pollution as rail cars are electrically-driven and do not generate exhaust. The rail line also improves road safety by reducing the need for car journeys and enhance the quality of life.

Public Consultation

16. Since mid 2008, the Government and the MTRCL have undertaken public consultation on the SCL. Apart from consulting District Councils, community consultation activities, including roving exhibitions and public forums, have been held. Various channels have also been utilised to brief local groups and residents on the railway scheme as well as to gather their views.
17. During the consultation, the general public, concern groups and professional groups expressed their support for the early commencement of the SCL project.
18. To gauge the effectiveness of the SCL public consultation activities, an independent research agency was commissioned to carry out a study in July 2010. Over 1,500 street intercept face-to-face interviews were conducted in various districts. More than 90 per cent of the respondents supported the construction of the SCL, while 70 per cent supported its construction as early as possible. In response, an extensive roving exhibition was launched again in MTR stations and shopping malls across the territory in August and September this year. A dedicated website for the SCL has been produced and launched to provide a convenient platform for the general public to obtain details of the SCL project.

Protection Works, Advance Works and Major Reprovisioning Works

19. Some of the SCL works have to interface with existing railway lines, existing public facilities and other public infrastructure projects, or take place concurrently with other projects. The implementation of the SCL will involve substantial modification to existing railways, railway protection works in other public infrastructure projects, reprovisioning of affected public facilities, and provision of new essential public infrastructure:

(a) Protection Works under Wan Chai Development Phase II (WDII) Project

The SCL has entrusted WDII with protection works to avoid diversion of large water mains and cooling water main to be laid at the same area of the reclamation to be constructed under the WDII project.

(b) Protection Works under Central – Wan Chai Bypass (CWB) Project

As the SCL will cross above the CWB inside the Causeway Bay Typhoon Shelter (CBTS), construction of a 160m long tunnel section will be entrusted to CWB to minimise the impact on the vessel owners in the CBTS.

(c) Advance Works at Admiralty Station (ADM)

Since the ADM will become the interchange station for SCL and South Island Line (East), extension works will be carried out simultaneously in the station so as to minimise disturbance to the environment, community and passengers.

(d) Advance Works at Ho Man Tin Station (HOM)

Ho Man Tin Station will be the interchange station for the future SCL and the Kwun Tong Line Extension. To minimise the disturbance to the community and passengers, the entire station will be built under the Kwun Tong Line Extension project.

(e) International Mail Centre (IMC)

The SCL alignment will pass through the foundations of the International Mail Centre (IMC) located to the south of Hung Hom Station. The IMC will thus need to be demolished and is to be reprovisioned before the commencement of the SCL project in order that the postal operation will not be disrupted. It is proposed that the IMC be reprovisioned at a vacant site at Wang Chin Street in Kowloon Bay. To ensure the postal operation will not be disrupted and to meet the SCL construction schedule, the reprovisioning of the IMC will commence prior to the construction of the SCL.

The SCL Cross-harbour Rail Tunnel

20. The SCL Cross-harbour Rail Tunnel in Victoria Harbour will be built with immersed tubes, while a portion of the tunnel located near the Hung Hom waterfront will be constructed by cut-and-cover method and thus require temporary reclamation. It is proposed to set up an immersed tube tunnel casting yard at ex-Shek O Quarry to construct the immersed tube tunnel pre-cast units. Temporary reclamation in the foreshore of Hung Hom will be one hectare. Together with those in the foreshore of the Hong Kong Island (Causeway Bay Typhoon Shelter), the reclamation area will total 3.2 hectares. All temporary reclamations will be removed upon completion of the works. Some fender piles located in the sea for protection of the Hung Hom Bypass will have to be permanently relocated to make way for the SCL tunnel. Part of the Hung Hom Freight Pier will also be demolished to make way for the SCL tunnel. The pier be reinstated after SCL works, and will be built within the original footprint, without affecting the harbour's operation.
21. According to the Protection of the Harbour Ordinance (PHO), all reclamation (including temporary reclamation) must meet the criterion of overriding public need.
22. To demonstrate there is an overriding public need for the SCL-related reclamation works, the MTRCL organised a series of public consultations with members of the public, District Councils, professional bodies and harbour protection organisations from June to December 2009. In July 2010, a report entitled 'Cogent and Convincing Materials to Demonstrate Compliance with the Overriding Public Need Test' was prepared to show that the proposed reclamation satisfies the requirements of PHO. The report has been uploaded to the SCL website.
(para. 21 and 22 – please see Chinese version)

Resumption of Land or Underground Strata

23. The SCL traverses many districts across the territory, some of which are among the most densely developed urban areas. It is inevitable that the railway line will pass under some private lots. In designing the SCL alignment, the MTRCL has tried to minimise the need for land resumption. To minimise the impact on the public, the current proposed alignment only involves the resumption

of underground strata and does not require the resumption of any private buildings.

Environmental Protection

24. The MTRCL will ensure the design, construction and operation of the SCL complies with all relevant statutory requirements on environmental protection. It will also implement all necessary measures to minimise the project's impact on the public and the environment. Independent consultants have been appointed to assess the potential impact arising from construction and operation of the new railway line on the nearby environment and the trees, and recommend mitigation measure. The report is expected to be completed in mid-2011.

Project Programme

25. Construction of the SCL is expected to start in 2012. As the Tai Wai to Hung Hom Section will involve extra strengthening works to avoid resumption of private buildings, the project is expected to take six years and will be completed in 2018. The Hung Hom to Admiralty Section will have to interface with other infrastructure projects, including Wan Chai Development Phase II and Central-Wan Chai Bypass, and is expected to be completed in 2020.

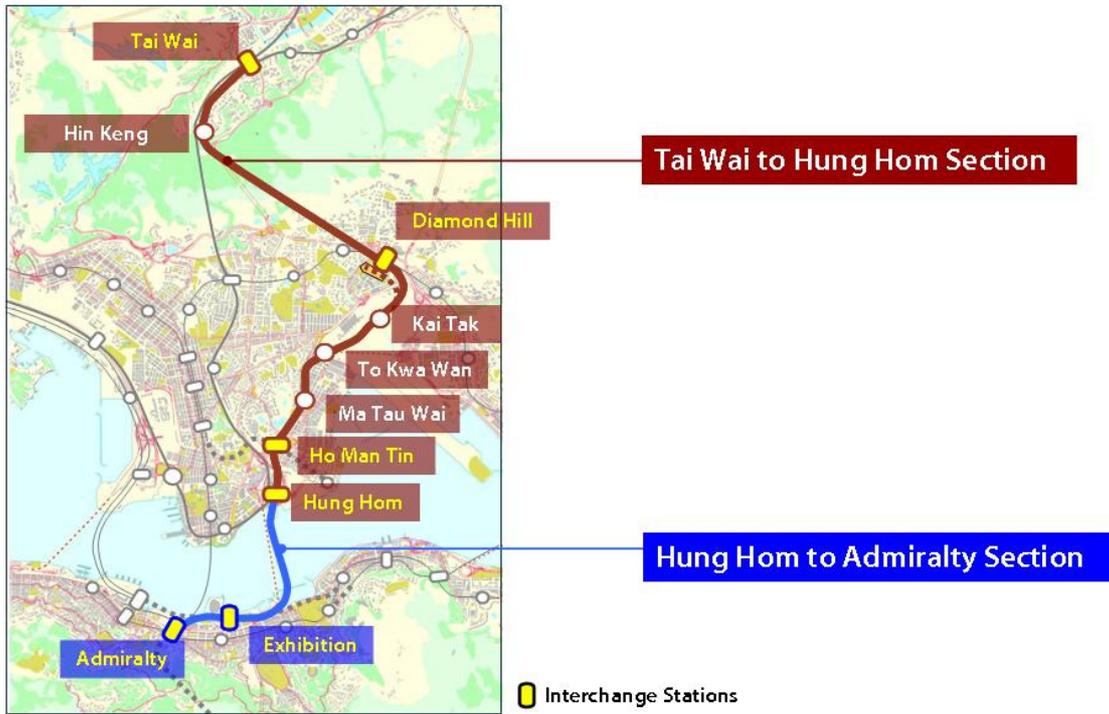
Advice Sought

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

**Transport and Housing Bureau
MTR Corporation**

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Annex 1
SCL Alignment



East West and North South Corridor

