

WTSDC Paper 13/2012 (17.1.2012)

Wong Tai Sin District Council Shatin to Central Link Wong Tai Sin Section

Purpose

This paper aims at briefing Wong Tai Sin District Council (WTSDC) on the latest progress of the proposed Shatin to Central Link (SCL) project and associated improvement works.

Background

2. Since the gazettal of the SCL scheme under the Railways Ordinance (RO) on 26 November 2010, the project has entered into the statutory consultation period. During the public consultation, the Government and the MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL) have received valuable views on the railway scheme from the local community and residents. After detailed consideration of the concerns and views raised by the public, we have, where practicable, initiate amendments to the SCL scheme. The first and second stage scheme amendments were gazetted on 15 July and 11 November 2011 respectively. We are currently at the final stage of handling public views on the railway scheme. Although the programme is extremely tight, we target to complete the statutory process under the RO within the next few months and strive to seek funding approval before the summer recess of the Legislative Council, with a view that the SCL and the associated community improvement works can commence as soon as possible within this year.

Latest Progress

Deletion of Diamond Hill Stabling Sidings

3. The SCL needs a stabling sidings in the urban area to facilitate train launching in the morning. During consultation, the public expressed much concerns on the construction of Diamond Hill Stabling Sidings. In response to their concerns, we have reviewed in detail the planning of the SCL stabling sidings and strive to work out a revised proposal that will

not only satisfy the train launching requirement, but also minimize impacts on the local community.

4. Our approach is to make use of the existing facilities as far as possible for train stabling and to avoid the provision of new stabling sidings. This will minimize the in-take of the valuable land in the urban area and reduce the impact to the public. Based on this approach, we propose using the Hung Hom Freight Yard, which is located below the podium of Hung Hom Station and originally used for railway cargo handling but ceased operation in April last year, for the SCL trains stabling. There are existing tracks inside the Hung Hom Freight Yard which is a railway facility in accordance with the land use planning. The revised proposal optimizes the utilisation of existing railway facility and is in line with the current planning and use of land. After careful consideration, we plan to introduce a series of improvement measures at the Hung Hom Freight Yard, including tracks shunting for train launching and turning. Also, we need to add extra tracks in the proposed underground station at Kai Tak and the existing Pak Heung Depot, and reschedule the train launching in the morning to meet the operation of the SCL. With the above arrangements in place, we have come up with a stabling sidings proposal which will, in compliance with the principle of optimizing the use of land resources, make better use of the existing facilities for the provision of SCL stabling sidings and minimize the impact on the public. We therefore gazetted the deletion of the proposed Diamond Hill Stabling Sidings.

5. Due to the deletion of Diamond Hill Stabling Sidings, the section of connection tunnel adjacent to Rhythm Garden is no longer required and is therefore cancelled.

6. Regarding the proposed development at the ex- Tai Hom Village site, although it is not part of the SCL project, the Government, having regard to the deletion of the Diamond Hill Stabling Sidings and the public views, is reviewing the development options, including the location and preservation of the three relics. The Government will consult WTS DC when the preliminary proposals are available.

Reduction of Underground Strata Resumption

7. The safety of the buildings will not be affected by the underground strata resumption for the construction of the SCL. As far as practicable, we strive to adjust the railway alignment to reduce the number of buildings involved in underground strata resumption. In the second

amendment to the railway scheme gazetted in November last year, we proposed to adjust the railway alignment to avoid the underground strata resumption at Tropicana Gardens in response to the request of the local residents.

8. In consideration of various constrains, such as geographical settings, soil condition and locations of buildings etc., there would not be any room for further adjustment of the SCL alignment at other locations so as to reduce the underground strata resumption. Given the fact that the SCL is 17 km long and will pass through many densely populated districts, it is inevitable that underground strata resumption is required at certain locations. We have minimized the need of underground strata resumption in the design of SCL. As a result the number of underground strata resumption for the current SCL scheme is relatively less in comparison with the other railway projects (such as West Island Line).

The Provision of Public Transport Terminus and Coach Park adjacent to Wong Tai Sin Temple

9. Subsequent to rounds of intensive consultations with WTSDC, we proposed a preliminary two-level design in August last year. The lower level is designed as public transport terminus while the upper level is for coach parking. The preliminary design has been agreed in principle with WTSDC in September last year. The MTRCL is now proceeding with the detailed planning and design and taking into consideration the valuable views offered by the WTSDC. We will continue listening to the views from the local community on the planning details and will closely liaise and consult WTSDC on the scheme.

The Facilities at Ma Chai Hang

10. We consulted WTSDC in August and September last year on the Ma Chai Hang (MCH) facilities. Most of the members accept in principle the provision of a indoor game hall. We note that the local community have different views on the location of the indoor game hall as well as the reprovisioning of MCH recreation ground. The MTRCL is now investigating in detail the feasibility of different options and will further consult WTSDC. It is our view that there is sufficient time for detailed discussions on the different options in order to provide a facility that will meet the local need and will not affect the implementation of the SCL project.

11. Regarding the traffic impact of the works site at MCH, the MTRCL has appointed an independent consultant to conduct traffic impact assessment and would propose suitable mitigation measures to minimise traffic impact. According to the latest information, there is no other planned major project in the vicinity of MCH recreation ground during the construction of the SCL. We will provide timely updates to WTSDC upon the completion of the traffic impact assessment.

12. The MTRCL is proactively organizing the setting up of the Community Liaison Groups. Prior to the commencement of construction, the MTRCL will invite various stakeholders to join and share views regarding the arrangement on the construction works. In addition, the MTRCL and relevant government departments will set up Site Liaison Groups to coordinate the works for smooth implementation with a view to minimizing the impacts on traffic and pedestrian flows.

Pedestrian Link Facilities in Tsz Wan Shan

13. The proposed pedestrian link facilities in Tsz Wan Shan are part of the SCL scheme. During the public consultation, the Government and the MTRCL received valuable views from the local community and residents. Subsequent to rounds of intensive consultations, we have agreed in principle with WTSDC on the alignment of the pedestrian link. MTRCL is about to complete the detailed design. We have also considered the views from the community concerning the visual impact and have modified the alignment of the proposed footbridge at Wan Wah Street in the second amendment of the scheme gazetted in November last year. Based on previous consultations, it is clear that the local urges for early finalization of the pedestrian link details and early implementation of the works. We now plan to include the pedestrian link facilities in the first batch of contracts following the completion of the statutory process and the funding approval of the Legislative Council. We are striving to commence construction in 2012 for successive completion between 2014 and 2016, so the facilities will be available for public use at the earliest opportunity.

Pedestrian link connecting Tsui Chuk Garden

14. We understand the local concerns about the transport arrangements between Tsui Chuk Garden as well as the nearby residential estates and the MTR Wong Tai Sin Station. Relevant

government departments will keep close liaison with the residents on their needs. Transport Department will also continue communicating with the WTSDC and the residents to follow up the public transport service in the vicinity of Tsui Chuk Garden, including bus route no. 211 and shuttle bus route no. KR21.

Environmental Impact Assessment Report

15. In accordance with the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Ordinance, the SCL project is required to complete the EIA process. The MTRCL has appointed independent environmental consultants to assess the environmental impacts due to the construction and operation of the railway, including water quality, visual, noise and air quality, and will recommend mitigation measures to ensure that the design, construction and operation of SCL will comply with the relevant statutory requirements.

16. The EIA reports for SCL have been withdrawn previously due to the impact arising from the judicial review on the EIA report of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge (HKZMB) project. As a result, the EIA process of the SCL project was delayed by 8 months. Subsequent to the unanimous clear decision of the Court of Appeal on 27 September 2011 for the HKZMB judicial review case, the MTRCL re-submitted the EIA reports for the SCL on 12 October 2011. Environmental Protection Department is now examining these reports and the public views in accordance with the relevant ordinance.

Conclusion

17. Members are requested to take note of the paper.

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January 2012