



香港建築師學會
The Hong Kong Institute of Architects

22 August 2012

By Fax and By Post
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Mr Henry Chan, JP
Principal Government Engineer / Railway Development
Railway Development Office
Highways Department
1st Floor, Ho Man Tin Government Offices
88 Chung Hau Street
Ho Man Tin
Kowloon

Dear Mr Chan

“Our Future Railway” Stage 1 Public Engagement

Thank you your letter dated 26 April 2012 informing the launch of the captioned public engagement exercise and inviting the Institute to join the focus group meetings on 12 May 2012 and 23 May 2012.

Further to our attendance in the focus group meeting on 12 May 2012, the Institute is pleased to deliver our written views on the subject. Please find enclosed our written submission for your consideration.

Thank you for your kind attention.

Yours sincerely

Dominic K K Lam *FHKIA RA*
President



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Comment on the Stage 1 Public Engagement Our Future Railway - Review and Update of the Railway Development Strategy 2000

Thank you for inviting the Hong Kong Institute of Architects (HKIA) to attend the Captioned Consultation on 12 May 2012. Our comments on the initial finds are summarized as follows :-

1) The Hong Kong-Shenzhen Western Express Line

- The HKIA supports the proposal in general;
- The HKIA acknowledges the importance of the proposed line in respect of Hong Kong's economic development. The HKIA agrees that it is of high priority status;
- It is noted that Qianhai development in Shenzhen would proceed as planned with or without Hong Kong's participation. Therefore, a firm commitment and quick decision is solicited from the Government;
- The HKIA has no objection to the proposed airport link, but opined that railway network should primarily aim to serve domestic planning goals rather than for outside Hong Kong commercial interests;
- In this connection, the HKIA highlights that Hung Shui Kiu (HSK), being strategically close to the landing point of the Western Corridor, should be planned as a major commercial centre in the Northwest New Territories. The railway line should be seen primarily as a development driver for the new town with secondary function as airport link. As such, the routing of the proposed railway line should pass through HSK;
- The proposed railway line is a combined commuter/freight/airport line. A terminal Station in Hung Shui Kiu is considered necessary.
- Highways Department is urged to coordinate with Planning Department to agree on the long term planning intention of the HSK area first as any change of fundamental design parameters at a later stage might have an effect on the railway ridership and patronage forecast

2) The Northern Link

- The HKIA supports the proposal in general and reckoned this as the most urgently needed line of all the proposals as it could help re-distribute the patronage flow in the over-congested Lo Wu and the under-utilised Lok Ma Chau;
- It is noted that the original planned population of Kwu Tung was 200,000. This was later revised to 65,000;
- As the planned population drop is substantial, Highways Department is urged to coordinate with Planning Department to agree on the planning intention of Kwu Tung first, as it might have an effect on the railway ridership and patronage forecast;
- The HKIA would also query, while the Government is currently seeking public views on increasing land supply and possibly reclamation outside Victoria Harbour, the reason for the planned population drop was not given. Highways Department is asked to seek clarification with Planning Department.



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3) The Coastal Railway between Tuen Mun to Tsuen Wan Link

- The current coastline along Castle Peak Road is one of the most scenic coastlines in Hong Kong. It is dotted with many beaches and landing points for boating and recreational fishing;
- The proposed railway viaduct will detrimentally destroy the scenic beauty of the coastline. The viaduct option is not supported. Should the said railway line needs to proceed, other means of construction should be explored;
- For those people who chose to move to live in the residential developments along this route, they did so for the scenic beauty and not for convenience. Therefore, any proposal that impairs the existing scenic quality should also address possible public resentment;
- Although it is acknowledged that the development of this railway line may release land for further residential developments to meet the current land shortage, it is advised that care should be taken to evaluate the environmental aspects in balance with the housing supply need;
- The current Tuen Mun to Tsuen Wan route is served by buses and green minibuses. With the current upgrading works along Tuen Mun Road and Castle Peak Road well underway, the traffic condition is likely to be improved. The congested traffic condition experienced by the local Tuen Mun residents, who are most supportive for the said railway line, should then be re-evaluated after the upgrading works;
- In the future, if enhanced transportation from Tuen Mun to Tsuen Wan should become necessary, there is always an option for ferry services to meet the demand;
- It is also noted from the Consultation Meeting of 12 May 2012 that concerns were expressed that the said rail would compete with the existing West Rail, thus further hampering its ridership;
- Based on the above, the HKIA considers there is no pressing need for such rail for now, and more thorough investigation and studies must be carried out first before decision is made.

Notwithstanding the above, the HKIA will be very concerned about the urban design aspects of any new town/ district development plans to complement any railway strategies and/or concepts developed by your project team(s). We opine that such would be most constructively reviewed or evaluated in a holistic manner. We look forward to such opportunities should you find it necessary.

Should you require any further information or assistance from us, please feel free to contact our Secretariat, Ms Catherine Wong or Ms Janice Chan on tel. no. 2805 7084 or 2805 7145 respectively.

The Hong Kong Institute of Architects
July 2012