

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

THB(T)045

Head: 60 - Highways Department Subhead 000 Operational
(No. & title): Expenses

Question Serial No.

2286

Programme: (3) Railway Development

Controlling Officer: Director of Highways

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Transport and Housing

Question:

Under Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2010-11 of the Transport and Housing Bureau, it was mentioned that the Administration will continue to foster closer co-operation between the Hong Kong International Airport and Shenzhen International Airport and to take forward the planning of the Hong Kong-Shenzhen Western Express Line (WEL) (previously known as Hong Kong-Shenzhen Airport Rail Link) in collaboration with the Shenzhen authorities. In this connection, will the Administration inform this Committee of the latest progress of the planning of the WEL; clarify earlier media reports about the deferment of the implementation of the WEL and advise on the expenditures incurred and manpower involved from the commencement of the studies?

Asked by: Hon. FUNG Kin-kee, Frederick

Reply:

The proposed Hong Kong-Shenzhen Western Express Line (WEL) is intended to be a multi-function cross-boundary railway. It will provide cross-boundary passengers with environmentally friendly and efficient railway services between Hong Kong and Shenzhen. It will also facilitate the development of the Northwest New Territories (NWNT) and Qianhai in Shenzhen. Through this railway project, we would also like to enhance the cooperation between the two airports in Hong Kong and Shenzhen, and provide convenient services for passengers of the two places. This may result in a win-win situation.

The preliminary feasibility study on the WEL has confirmed the technical feasibility. We have signed with the Shenzhen Municipal Government the "Cooperation Arrangement on Advancing WEL", under which both parties agree to continue with the relevant in-depth studies on WEL. As one of the major functions of the WEL is to promote the development of Qianhai and NWNT, it is important for the design of the WEL to take into consideration the planning of these two areas. With the development of Qianhai and NWNT being pushed ahead, more planning parameters for these areas will be available. This will enable us to conduct in-depth studies on the WEL, and investigate various alignment options and their respective patronage forecasts, the functionality of the railway, its technical standards, operational and service requirements, etc. Upon completion of these studies, when we have more concrete information, we will consult the public, inviting the community to express views on the development of WEL.

Since the financial year of 2008-09, we have deployed a total of around \$23 million to investigate the preliminary feasibility of the proposed WEL. The manpower involved in taking forward the studies was absorbed by internal redeployment and hence there was no additional manpower.

Signature _____

Name in block letters WAI CHI SING

Post Title Director of Highways

Date 18.3.2010