Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2010-11

Reply Serial No.

THB(T)065

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION

Question Serial No.

1706

Head: 60 - Highways Department

Subhead (No. & title): 000 Operational Expenses

Programme: (3) Railway Development

Controlling Officer: Director of Highways

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Transport and Housing

Question:

It is mentioned in paragraph 21 that the Highways Department will "assist in carrying out further studies on the proposed Hong Kong-Shenzhen Western Express Line". With regard to the above, please provide information on:

a. the estimated expenditure of the above project;
b. the schedule of discussion with Shenzhen authority;
c. the deadline for completing the routing design;
d. the mode of operation of the Express Line (e.g. light rail/large scale mass transportation);
e. the number of jobs to be created by the above project for professional staff/technical staff/labourers;
f. the expected completion date; and
g. the number of consultations with local organizations and residents.

Asked by: Hon. WONG Kwok-hing

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.

Signature _____

Name in block letters WAI CHI SING

Post Title Director of Highways

Date 18.3.2010