

LCQ18: New railway projects and Tung Chung traffic

Following is a question by the Hon Holden Chow and a written reply by the Secretary for Transport and Housing, Mr Frank Chan Fan, in the Legislative Council today (December 18):

Question:

The Chief Executive stated in this year's Policy Address that the Government would expedite the implementation of the projects proposed in the Railway Development Strategy 2014, including the Tung Chung Line Extension, Tuen Mun South Extension and Northern Link, and would invite the MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL) to commence the relevant detailed planning and design in the coming year. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) whether it knows the time needed for MTRCL to carry out the detailed planning and design for the aforesaid projects, and when the authorities will give the public an account of the details of each of the new railway stations (including their locations as well as the arrangements for their entrances and exits);
- (2) of the estimated time needed for completing the relevant public consultation processes; and
- (3) given the continuous population growth in Tung Chung and the fact that it takes time to construct the Tung Chung Line Extension, whether the authorities will consider, prior to the commissioning of the Extension, enhancing the Green Minibus services in Tung Chung and introducing ferry services plying between Tung Chung and the Hong Kong and Kowloon regions, so as to meet Tung Chung residents' outbound transport needs?

Reply:

President,

My reply to Hon Holden Chow Ho-ding's question is as follows:

(1) and (2) The Transport and Housing Bureau had invited the MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL) to submit proposals for the implementation of the seven new railway projects under the Railway Development Strategy 2014. The MTRCL submitted proposals for the five railway projects of Tuen Mun South Extension, Northern Link (and Kwu Tung Station), East Kowloon Line, Tung Chung Line Extension and North Island Line to the Government successively.

Having examined the proposals submitted by the MTRCL and considered the urgency of and the land development potential that may be brought about by these projects, the Chief Executive indicated in the 2019 Policy Address that the Government would invite the MTRCL to commence the detailed planning and

design for the Tung Chung Line Extension, Tuen Mun South Extension and Northern Link in the coming year, so that work on these three railway projects can commence as early as possible.

The detailed planning and design stage would involve a number of activities, including consultation with the public and stakeholders and resolution of the comments received, carrying out feasibility study, site investigation, project design, gazettal of railway schemes and handling of objections, carrying out environmental impact assessment, seeking authorisation of the railway schemes, as well as preparation of relevant agreements with the MTRCL. In particular, the Government and MTRCL would need to handle technical issues associated with the new railway projects, such as the impact on nearby residents, the environment and ecology arising from the railway alignment and its mitigation measures, the interface with existing railway network, utilisation of resources, etc. When the details of a proposed scheme such as railway alignment as well as location of station(s) and entrance(s) are available, the Government will consult the public in line with established procedures. In respect of projects for which the MTRCL had submitted the proposals, the time required for the detailed planning and design stage is preliminarily estimated as three to five years, including the time allowed for public consultation, subject to the degree of complexities of the projects and the progress of implementing the above activities.

(3) At present, Tung Chung is served by a convenient, efficient and diversified public transport network. Apart from using the railway for travelling to and from various districts of Hong Kong Island, Kowloon and the New Territories, Tung Chung residents may also take franchised buses, ferries, green minibuses and taxis where appropriate to different destinations. In response to the population growth in Tung Chung, the Transport Department (TD) will continue to closely monitor the operation and service quality of the public transport services in Tung Chung, as well as the change in passengers' demand for the public transport services. The department will introduce new services or request relevant existing operators to enhance or optimise their services (e.g. increasing the frequency) in a timely manner in order to further improve the public transport network of Tung Chung and the overall efficiency to meet passengers' demand. Among others, the TD regularly reviews the utilisation of franchised bus service in different districts and works with the franchised bus companies for improving franchised bus service in districts by examining proposals submitted by the companies under the annual Route Planning Programme. These include proposals on introduction of new routes as well as adjustment of the existing service frequency, service hours and routes, in order to ensure the provision of adequate and proper franchised bus services to meet passengers' demand.