

LCQ2: Expediting construction of Pak Shek Kok Station of MTR East Rail Line

Following is a question by the Hon Chan Hak-kan and a reply by the Secretary for Transport and Logistics, Mr Lam Sai-hung, in the Legislative Council today (November 1):

Question:

There are views that as there will still be residential units completed in the vicinity of Pak Shek Kok in the future, and Stage 2 of the Expansion Programme of the Hong Kong Science Park (the Science Park) is underway, the transport infrastructure in the area is in a dire need for enhancement. On the other hand, the Government has confirmed in the 2022 Policy Address the construction of the Pak Shek Kok Station of the MTR East Rail Line, with a view to completing the construction of the station in 2033 or earlier. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) given that the Shenzhen branch of the Science Park located in Futian has already commenced operation, and the first batch of buildings of the Hong Kong-Shenzhen Innovation and Technology Park located in the Lok Ma Chau Loop will be completed next year, whether the Government will expedite the construction of the Pak Shek Kok Station, so as to strengthen the cross-border connections of Pak Shek Kok, Futian and the Lok Ma Chau Loop as soon as possible; if so, of the details; if not, the short to medium term measures in place to strengthen the cross-border connections of such areas;

(2) whether it has envisaged the difficulties that will be encountered in the construction of the Pak Shek Kok Station, and of the corresponding plans in place; and

(3) whether the time required for constructing the Pak Shek Kok Station is subject to the development of its topside housing or other commercial projects; if so, whether it will consider implementing other development projects only after taking forward the construction of the station, so as to bring early benefits to the residents in Pak Shek Kok and members of the public working in the Science Park; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

The current term Government advocates the "infrastructure-led" and "capacity-creating" planning approach. In order to allow Ma Liu Shui and Pak Shek Kok areas to better leverage their advantages as the Eastern Knowledge and Technology Corridor and unleash the development potential of adjacent land, the Government has earlier invited the MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL) to study the construction of a new Pak Shek Kok Station of the East Rail Line

to improve connectivity of the Pak Shek Kok and Science Park area. The target is to commission the Station by 2033. The Government will also seize this opportunity to make the best use of the additional station to unleash the development potential of its adjoining land, to provide more housing and parking spaces, shops, and public facilities for local residents.

In consultation with the Development Bureau and the Innovation, Technology and Industry Bureau, my reply to the question raised by the Hon Chan Hak-kan is as follows:

(1) The planning of the Pak Shek Kok Station is underway. We will expedite completion of detailed planning and design, and statutory procedures, with a view to commencing construction works as soon as possible for commissioning the station by 2033.

The Hong Kong-Shenzhen Innovation and Technology Park (HSITP) is located within the Lok Ma Chau Loop (the Loop) and is about one km away from the East Rail Line Lok Ma Chau MTR Station. The first three buildings of batch one of the HSITP will be completed in phases from end-2024 onwards. To align with this schedule, road networks connecting the Loop to nearby areas are scheduled for completion from end-2024 to 2025. Such roadworks include Western Connection Road connecting the Loop and San Tin, Direct Road Link connecting to Lok Ma Chau MTR Station, as well as slip roads connecting Lok Ma Chau Road and Fanling Highway/San Tin Highway. Two public transport interchanges at the Loop and Lok Ma Chau MTR Station will also be provided. The Transport Department will continue to maintain close liaison with relevant departments and in light of the development of relevant areas, arrange public transport operators to provide appropriate public transport services to meet the travel needs of users in the area.

In the long run, we will provide railway services to the HSITP. The proposed Northern Link (NOL) Spur Line will be connected to the Main Line in San Tin and the new Huanggang Port in Shenzhen, with intermediate stations at Chau Tau and the HSITP in the Loop. The NOL Main Line will serve as the main transportation backbone of the Northern Metropolis, connecting to the East Rail Line and the Tuen Ma Line, forming a railway loop linking up the New Territories and Kowloon. We are actively working with the Mainland authorities and the MTRCL on the planning of the NOL Spur Line, with a view to reaching consensus on the implementation arrangement with the Mainland authorities and commencing detailed planning and design in 2024.

(2) Since the Pak Shek Kok Station project involves the construction of an additional station on the existing East Rail Line, the construction works must be carried out without affecting the safe operation of the existing East Rail Line. Therefore one of the challenges of the project is that part of the construction works can only be carried out during non-traffic hours after the railway service at night. According to the MTRCL's preliminary proposal, such works include the construction of station platforms, adjustment of existing overhead line and power supply system equipment, trackworks and crossover tracks, electrical and mechanical systems, installation of platform screen doors as well as trackside construction, testing and commissioning. The MTRCL must ensure that the works are carried out safely and that the railway

operation can resume normal on time. In carrying out the construction, the MTRCL also needs to take into account the regular railway maintenance and other concurrent projects in various locations along the East Rail Line, as well as the co-ordination of train dispatching work. In this connection, the allowable construction time during the non-traffic hours is very limited, only about two hours every night. In addition, since the Pak Shek Kok Station is positioned close to nearby residential buildings, night works must also comply with relevant statutory environmental protection requirements. Appropriate construction methods also need to be adopted in order to reduce the nuisance to the community.

In consideration of the above constraints, the MTRCL is exploring the feasibility of packaging part of the works as advanced works, with a view to completing the project as soon as possible. In addition, the MTRCL is also exploring different innovative construction methods, such as Modular Integrated Construction (MiC) and Design for Manufacture and Assembly (DfMA), to increase efficiency and shorten the construction period.

(3) According to the information provided by the Development Bureau, based on the current plan and due to technical considerations, the Pak Shek Kok Station will only comprise facilities with direct relevance to railway operation but not topside developments. Depending on the exact location of the station, the development of sites in the vicinity will not have substantial impact on the development programme of the station. The MTRCL is now refining the details of the land and station development proposals. According to the latest plan, the Government will put forward the proposals around mid-2024 and commence statutory town planning procedures for the relevant development sites in 2025.

â€‹Thank you, President.