

**MTR Corporation welcomes Government's decision on
Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link**

The MTR Corporation welcomes the Government's decision to ask the Corporation to proceed with further planning and design of the Hong Kong Section of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen- Hong Kong Express Rail Link (Express Rail Link) with a view to implementing the high speed railway under the concession approach.

"The Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link, connecting Hong Kong to the National High Speed Rail Network, will further enhance the strategic position of Hong Kong as the southern gateway of China. The high-speed rail service will bring people closer and allow Hong Kong to have better social and economic integration with cities in the Pearl River Delta as well as all other major cities in the Mainland," said Mr C K Chow, Chief Executive Officer of MTR Corporation Limited.

The Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link is a 142 km high-speed rail link running from Shibi in Guangzhou, via Humen in Dongguan and Longhua and Futian in Shenzhen to the West Kowloon Terminus in Hong Kong. The Express Rail Link will connect to the new high-speed national rail network now being developed, including the Beijing-Guangzhou and Hangzhou-Fuzhou-Shenzhen Passenger Lines.

The 26 km Hong Kong section will be a dedicated corridor from the boundary to the new terminus located in West Kowloon. The construction of the rail link is expected to commence in 2009 for completion in 2014/2015.

The Corporation welcomes the HKSAR Government's decision in adopting the Concession Approach in bringing forward the Express Rail Link. Under the Concession Agreement, the project cost will be funded by the HKSAR Government. The Corporation will be entrusted with the design and construction of the project. Upon the completion of its construction, it will be operated by the Corporation under a service concession agreement and the Corporation will pay concession payments to the Government.

Currently, intercity passenger train services are provided from Hong Kong to Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou. It takes about 100 minutes to travel between Hong Kong and Guangzhou on the current through train service. The Express Rail Link will cut this to 48 minutes. A rail journey from Hong Kong to Futian in Shenzhen will take only 14 minutes.

High-speed rail service will provide an alternative mode of transport to travellers now using air travel to access the mainland. "From the experience of the Shinkansen in Japan, TGV and Euro Star in Europe, rail journeys less than 3-4 hours covering a distance of within 1,000 km are more appealing to travellers than road or air travel. Reduced check-in and boarding formality and the convenient location of rail stations in the hearts of cities, more leg room and comfortable train compartments do offer travellers a better choice," added Mr Chow.

The Express Rail Link is expected to provide 5,000 employment opportunities during its construction and will generate huge social and economic benefits in terms of employment and development opportunities as a result of better regional integration.

Meanwhile, the Corporation will commence further planning and design of the high-speed rail link with a view to delivering a safe, high speed, comfortable and high quality transport service between city centre of HKSAR, Shenzhen, Dongguan, Guangzhou and other cities in the mainland outside Guangdong to facilitate and promote business and tourism travel.

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