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\$m study into light rail links

By JULINA CHAN

The Kowloon-Canton Railway Corp (KCRC) has commissioned a multi-million dollar study of the development and urban links of the Tuen Mun Light Rail Transit (LRT) system.

The nine-month study includes extensions within the western New Territories to phase one of the LRT now under construction, as well as three optional routes connecting the LRT to either KCRC or the Mass Transit Railway.

Three urban links will be studied: the connection from Tuen Mun to Tsun Wan along the coast; Yuen Long to Tsun Wan through Tai Mo Shan; and Yuen Long to the KCR at Sheung Shui, Fanling or Taipo.

A KCRC spokesman said yesterday consultants will evaluate costs, patronage projections and potential revenue for each link to determine the best choice.

The consultants will also review other phases of the LRT system planned for the western New Territories and decide whether more extensions are needed and when they should be built, the spokesman said.

The study, by Scott Wilson Kirkpatrick and Partners, Wilbur Smith and Associates and Kennedy Henderson Ltd, will end in December.

Mr Peter Quick, managing director of KCRC, said the study is in response to the demands of Tuen Mun and

Faster Shenzhen trips soon

Construction of the double-track Guangzhou-Shenzhen railway is expected to be completed by the end of the year.

The new line will shorten travelling time between Kowloon and Guangzhou by one hour.

The head of the Guangzhou Railway Bureau, Mr Yang Qihua, said the 147 km line will be completed one year ahead of schedule, according to a China News Service report yesterday.

The estimated cost of the five-year project, which includes electrification, is 700 million yuan (about HK\$1.75 billion).

Mr Yang attributed the rapid progress to "good management" by the Guangzhou-Shenzhen Railway Corp and its "adoption of economic self-responsibility."

Yuen Long residents for an extension of the LRT to urban areas.

A Government official, who asked not to be named, said each option had advantages and disadvantages.

He said it might be unrealistic to simply look at construction costs because consideration must also be given to potential revenue.

For example, the coastal line from Tuen Mun to Tsun Wan would be running along the most populated area com-

pared with the other two lines and might promise a higher revenue.

However, there would be physical constraints in constructing the link because the best route is occupied by the Tuen Mun Highway, he said.

An elected member of Tuen Mun District Board, Mr Ng Ming-yum, said residents in the district had no preference for a link.

He said they only wanted a smooth traffic flow to urban Kowloon and fares that were not too expensive.