

Bauhinia Poll: Close to 70% of Respondents Support the Express Rail Project

(8 January 2010, Hong Kong) A poll released by the Bauhinia Foundation Research Centre (BFRC) today revealed that close to 70 percent of the respondents (69.1%) supported the construction of the express railway, which will link up Hong Kong with China's high-speed rail network.

To gauge public views on the express railway project, the BFRC has commissioned Lingnan University's Public Governance Programme to conduct a telephone poll early this month. The target respondents are Hong Kong residents aged 18 or above; a total of 773 respondents were successfully interviewed.

69.1% of the respondents said they supported Hong Kong constructing the express railway link; only 12.4% said they did not. When asked whether LegCo should complete the funding application process as early as possible, two-thirds (63.4%) of the respondents answered "yes"; only 18.9% said "no". Meanwhile, more than half of the respondents (51.5%) said any delay in the rail project would hinder economic and social integration between Hong Kong and the Mainland and weaken Hong Kong's long-term competitiveness.

BFRC Chairman, Mr Anthony Ting Yuk Wu said, "The express railway project will bring Hong Kong much closer to the Pearl River Delta region and other Mainland cities. Creating enormous opportunities for the local economy, the project will provide even more momentum for Hong Kong-Guangdong co-operation.

"With the ever-increasing traffic flow between Hong Kong and the Mainland, the number of commuters travelling across the boundary by land has gone up by four to five times over the past two decades. The proposed express railway will shorten the travelling time between Hong Kong and Guangdong by almost half. This will not only reduce the time cost, but will also make the concept of a 'one-hour life circle' in the region become a reality."

The poll also revealed that a relative majority of the respondents (40.6%) said the terminal of the express railway should be located at the West Kowloon, while 33.6% said it should be stationed at the north-west of New Territories. Another six percent said the two locations have their own advantages.

Mr Wu said, "From a commuter's perspective, convenience is the most important factor. West Kowloon is at the heart of the city, where local and Mainland travellers will be able to go to other commercial and shopping areas conveniently."

He added, "The express rail link is a major infrastructural project with significant impact for Hong Kong's future developments. While the existence of different views is understandable, I sincerely call on different sectors of the community to take into account the economic well-being of Hong Kong when considering the project."

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