



CHINA / Regional

Shanghai maglev link to be extended

(Shanghai Daily)

Updated: 2007-03-23 09:20

Shanghai has reportedly received state approval to extend its magnetic-levitation train line to Hongqiao Airport as part of a high-speed transport link between the city and Hangzhou.

The go-ahead for the project came from the National Development and Reform Commission, the 21st Century Business Herald reported yesterday, citing an unidentified source in city government.

The reported approval of the Hongqiao link follows the decision last March by the country's top economic planning body to build a 35 billion yuan (US\$4.5 billion) maglev line between Shanghai and Hangzhou, capital of neighboring Zhejiang Province.

According to the newspaper, Shanghai began to set aside land and relocate residents in October to pave the way for the construction.

Site selection

The extension will be sited along waterways and existing rail tracks as much as possible to avoid disrupting traffic and the lives of residents, said Sun Zhang, a professor at Tongji University.

The current line, which carries trains on a field of magnetic energy, runs from the Pudong International Airport to the Longyang Road Metro Station. The new link will go from Longyang to Hongqiao International Airport, with stops at the site of the 2010 World Expo and the Shanghai South Railway Station.

Construction on the segment from Shanghai to Jiaxing, a small city in Zhejiang, and from Jiaxing to Hangzhou may start after 2010, the newspaper report said. If so, that would represent a delay from the previously announced schedule, which called for the Shanghai-Hangzhou link to be completed in time for the World Expo.

Shanghai will be in charge of the construction of the Shanghai-Jiaxing stretch, and the remainder will be built by Zhejiang Province, the report said.

Reaching speeds up to 450 kilometers an hour, trains will take a half hour to make the 175-kilometer trip between Shanghai and Hangzhou, compared with about two hours now.

The Herald said the Shanghai section will start construction first, as the city needs an expedited transport network to serve the World Expo.

The event, slated to run from May 1, 2010 through October 31, 2010, is expected to host 70 million people from home and abroad.

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