“10! 9! 8! 7! 6! 5! 4! 3! 2! 1! Happy New Year!” The Taipei 101 fireworks show for each New Year attracts tens of thousands of visitors. In 2013, the number of visitors to the fireworks show was a record 850,000, the highest in the past few years. Most of these visitors came to the New Year celebration event by riding the Mass Rapid Transit (or MRT hereunder). According to statistics released by Metro Taipei, from 6 a.m. December 31, 2012 to 6 a.m. January 1, 2013 more than 3,650,000 passengers traveled on the MRT. With the completion of the MRT network in planning and in construction, the system will be able to provide service to even more passengers.

While inspecting the Daan Station Construction of the Xinyi Line in the beginning of January, 2013, Mayor Hau Lung-bin mentioned that the Xinyi Line is the second east-west bound MRT line. Upon completion, the public can then take the Xinyi Line to take part in the New Year Celebration Party at City Hall.

The Taipei Metro features great accessibility, keeping pace with other advanced countries in the world. In addition to the lines currently in operation, planning for other lines is also underway. As of the end of October 2012, progress on the Xinzhuang Line and the Luzhou Line was 98% ; the Xinyi Line was 93.31% and the Songshan Line was 78.03% completed. Such progress compels us to look forward to the day when the vision of a green and vibrant Taipei City with the MRT at the center of its transport network.

In addition to the MRT network constructed in Taipei City, the Department of Rapid Transit Systems, TCG, also collaborated with the inter-city MRT construction projects in other cities so as to serve more people. For instance, construction on the Taiwan Taoyuan International Airport MRT System (the section from Sanchong to
Taipei City was commissioned by the Department of Rapid Transit System, TCG) reached a completion rate of 71.03%; the MRT Circular Line Phase One is 37.23%; the Tucheng Line Extension to Dingpu is 61.05%; for the Taichung Metropolitan Area MRT System, the Wuri-Wenxin-Beitun Line is 20.01% complete. The MRT has become an important means of daily transportation for the public in Metropolitan Taipei.

The status quo, summary and description of the joint MRT Land Development and the execution plan worked out by the Department of Rapid Transit System, TCG are described below.

Advancement in Metropolitan Transportation, MRT on the Way—Execution Summary of the MRT Construction Projects

To promote the quality of the MRT and build a complete MRT network, the Taipei City Government (TCG) has made it a top priority. On the basis of the current MRT network, the Department of Rapid Transit System, TCG, commenced the planning and construction of other MRT systems and the overall network. For example, the construction of the Xinzhuang and Luzhou Lines, Xinyi Line, Songshan Line and Xinyi Eastern Extension are already in progress. Some were completed and are now in operation. As for the Taiwan Taoyuan International Airport MRT System Project (the section from Sanchong to Taipei City), the MRT Circular Line Phase 1, Tucheng Line-Extension to Dingpu, the Wanda-Zhonghe-Shulin Line, and the Taichung Metropolitan Area MRT System: the Wuri-Wenxin-Beitun Line (Green Line) Construction Plan, the progress of the construction remains on schedule. Below are more details.

◆ The Xinzhuang Line and Luzhou Line (26.1 KM)

This construction project connects the Xinzhuang Line and the Luzhou Line, after which they go through Zhongxiao Xinsheng Station to connect with Guting Station. It was completed and opened to the public on September 30, 2012. However, due to the delay in the construction of the Xinzhuang Station, the Department had to conduct an internal review, was and decided to open to the public only the New Taipei City section of the Xinzhuang Line to the public (from Taipei Bridge Station, Cailiao Station, Sanchong Station Xianse Temple Station, Touqianzhuang Station, Xinzhuang Station to FJU Station). This decision benefitted many commuters in Taipei and New Taipei City and it received much positive feedback.

◆ Xinyi Line Engineering (6.4 KM)

The civil engineering and the mechanical and electrical system engineering were scheduled to be completed in February 2013. Stability testing and environment and road surface improvement projects will follow. After passing all tests, the Line will be open for operation.

◆ Songshan Line Engineering (8.5KM)

The Songshan Line was scheduled to be completed in December 2013. The civil engineering and the mechanical and electrical system engineering are described below.
1. Civil Engineering

(1) Construction from Beimen Station to Songjiang Nanjing Station: Construction of the body, exits and entrances of the stations, renovation, installation of common pipes, improvement of the public environment including pavement and bikeways are all underway.

(2) Construction from Nanjing East Station to Taipei Arena Station: Construction of the body, exits and entrances of the stations, renovation, installation of common pipes, improvement of the public environment including pavement and bikeways are all underway.

(3) Construction from Nanjing Sanming Station to Songshan Station: Construction of the body, exits and entrances of the stations are all underway.

(4) Rail Construction: Installation of rails from Ximen Station to Zhongshan Station southbound, the special crossover for Songshan Station and the non-ballasted track between Songshan Station and Songjiang Nanjing Station is underway.

2. Mechanical and Electrical Systems Engineering (Combined with the Xinyi Line Construction)

◆ Xinyi Eastern Extension Engineering

It is scheduled to be completed by the end of 2017.

◆ Taiwan Taoyuan International Airport MRT System Engineering (Section from Sanchong to Taipei City) (4.1 KM, the Section in the Taipei City)

It is scheduled to be completed in October 2014.

✦ The Mechanical and Electrical Systems Engineering and completion and operation of the Line are the responsibility of the Bureau of High Speed Rail, MOTC

◆ The MRT Circular Line Phase 1 (15.4 KM)

It is scheduled to be completed in October 2015. The civil engineering and the mechanical and electrical system engineering are described below.

1. Civil Engineering

The diaphragm wall and structural system engineering of Dapingling Station (Y6) of the Circular CF641 bid, has been completed. Currently, the digging of metro decks to the north is underway. For the section of the Circular CF650 bid, work, including the diaphragm wall, foundation piles, foundation of overpasses, bridge piers, is ongoing. For the section of the Circular CF640 bid, work, including the translocation of pipe lines, construction of the diaphragm walls, foundation piles for over-passing section, construction of cofferdam for piers, etc., is ongoing.

2. Mechanical and Electrical Systems Engineering

The first phase of the Mechanical and Electrical Systems Engineering, track, and automatic fee collecting system engineering consists of the detailed design and review of all documents.
The Tucheng Line Extension to Dingpu (2KM)

The construction of the Tucheng Line Extension to Dingpu is scheduled to be completed in December 2013. The civil engineering and the mechanical and electrical system engineering are described below.

1. Civil Engineering

   For the DC552 bid, the extension of the Tucheng Line proceeded to the digging for the north/south-bound by shield machines, the construction of the station and platform level, and the base foundation of the joint development for Exit C.

2. Mechanical and Electrical Systems Engineering

   For the Mechanical and Electrical Systems Engineering of the Dingpu Extension of CD552 A, an amendment to the supplementary purchase agreement was made.

Wanda-Zhonghe-Shulin Line Engineering

It is scheduled to be completed by the end of 2018. The bid for the first phase of the mechanical and electrical system engineering and the automatic collecting system project for the Wanda Line ended with no bid and is now pending. Currently there have been efforts put into the review of strategies. Financial plans are being drafted and revised. Vegetation transplantation projects for the IQ8V4A bid and IQ8U4A are underway.
The Taichung Metropolitan Area MRT System: 
Wuri-Wenxin-Beitun Line (Green Line) Construction Plan (16.7 KM)

This section of the Green Line is now scheduled for completion by October 2015. Updates for the civil engineering and the Mechanical and Electrical Systems Engineering progress are as below:

1. Civil Engineering:
   The IJXX04/ IJXX05 Pipeline Translocation and Continuation Engineering projects and Main Body Engineering were open for bidding at end of 2012.

2. Mechanical and Electrical Systems Engineering
   Design work and document reviews for the details of Mechanical and Electrical Systems were underway.

The Blueprint for Urban Planning on Creating Commercial Opportunities around the MRT stations-Promoting the Joint Development of the Planned Land for MRT Construction

During the process of constructing the MRT System, it has been always difficult to obtain land from private landowners. Through the joint development of MRT land, the privileges and benefits of landowners can be maintained and the business opportunities of the developed area can be augmented. This has become the mainstream practice. To take into consideration the benefits of a majority of people, the Department of Rapid Transit System of TCG actively promoted this joint-development model and it resulted in very positive developments. So far, in the Great Taipei area, Taoyuan and Taichung, several joint-development projects are underway. Through this type of approach and planning, the outcome can be beneficial to all involved parties, including landowners, investors, the Government and the general public.

So far, there have been several ongoing joint-development projects on MRT land in the metropolitan Taipei area. In this area, a total of 82 bases were planned to follow this joint-development model. Moreover, the Department of Finance, TCG, was commissioned to handle the urban renewal for six municipal and non-publicly-owned land bases, among which the Taipei Main Station District Parcel C1/D1 attracted much attention.

The land development project on Parcel C1/D1 in the Taipei Main Station District refers to the two skyscrapers on Parcel C1/D1 integrated with the Taipei Main Station on the Taiwan Taoyuan International Airport MRT line to co-construct two skyscrapers, C1 and D1. At Parcel C1, a building of 56 floors above the ground and four floors underground would be built whereas at Parcel D1, a building of 76 floors above the ground and four floors underground would be constructed. These
two super high-rises are positioned as a complex venue for multiple functions, including shopping centers, office space, international tourist hotels, a hub for cultural and urban service and operations.

It is worth mentioning that in 2012 the Department of Rapid Transit System, TCG, participated in the 20th Annual Chinese Golden Stone Awards for Architecture and four MRT co-construction projects were awarded. Among them, the Joint Development Project on Nanshijiao Station of the Zhonghe Line (MRT Line 6), the Joint Development Project on Nanjing Station of the Songshan Line (MRT Line 10), and the Joint Development Project on St. Ignatius High School Station of the Luzhou Line (MRT Line 1) were all awarded the Golden Stone in the category of Excellent Public Construction and Leisure Industry-Planning and Design; whereas Wenxin Moving Light Castle, the Joint Development Project on Gangcian Station of the Muzha-Neihu Line won the Golden Stone Prize in the category of Excellent Construction Quality- High Residential Buildings.

In addition to the above-mentioned, the first phase of MRT land development for the New Taipei City Circular Line was completed by changing the urban planning for nine base lands. In addition, for the joint development project commissioned by the Taoyuan County Government, the DORT (the Department of Rapid Transit System, TCG) has completed its review and selection for eleven base lands. As for the Land Development Project on the Wenxin-Beitun Line and Station of the Taichung Metropolitan Area MRT System: For the Wuri-Wenxin-Beitun Line, a total of seven joint development bases were reviewed and selected. DORT also assisted the Taichung City Government in organizing a Land Appraisal and Purchase Coordination Meeting, in which land owners who took an interest in land development were invited. With these, the results were satisfactory.

Regardless of how many discussions are made about the MRT network, capacity and joint land development projects, we have to admit that this transport means has already reshaped Taipei City and helped it to transform into a green and vital city. Through MRT-related construction projects by the DORT, the MRT has become an attractive transport medium for the public and has created a group of loyal fans and patrons. Like an alternative MRT version of Maybe I Love You (as derived from a popular TV series—In Time With you), the MRT can be a new topic of conversation.