

Legislative Council Panel on Transport

Better Co-ordination of Public Transport Services arising from the Commissioning of MTR Tseung Kwan O Extension (Phase 1)

Purpose

Phase 1 of the MTR Tseung Kwan O Extension (“TKE”) is targetted to open in mid August 2002. This paper informs Members of the public transport service plan to tie in with its opening.

Background

2. Phase 1 of the TKE is an extension of the MTR between Po Lam in Tseung Kwan O (“TKO”) new town and North Point on Hong Kong Island. There will be five new MTR stations : Po Lam, Hang Hau, Tseung Kwan O, Tiu Keng Leng and Yau Tong. Phase 2 of the TKE will add one MTR station in TKO Area 86 in around 2005. The map plan at the Annex illustrates the rail alignment and station arrangement of the TKE.

Annex

3. The TKE is linked up with the existing MTR network and will provide speedy and reliable service to many residents in TKO and Yau Tong. The main features of the TKE are given below :

- (a) convenient : about 80% of TKO residents as well as a substantial portion of Yau Tong residents will be within walking distance to railway stations;
- (b) fast, as illustrated below :

<u>From Tseung Kwan O Station</u>	<u>Journey Time by TKE</u> (estimates)
To :	
- Kwun Tong	10 minutes
- Mong Kok	28 minutes
- Tsim Sha Tsui	27 minutes
- Central	25 minutes

The journey time will be shortened by more than 50% when compared with existing direct bus services for travelling from TKO town centre to Central, or by about 40% for travelling to Kwun Tong, Mong Kok and Tsim Sha Tsui;

- (c) frequent : peak headway of the TKE service will be about 3 minutes while off-peak headway will be about 4 minutes;
- (d) reliable : the TKE will be congestion free;
- (e) competitive fares : according to the MTRCL, the fares of TKE will be competitive and broadly in line with the zonal fare structure of the existing MTR Lines; and
- (f) environmentally friendly.

4. Public transport interchanges (“PTIs”) and pedestrian facilities will be provided near the new TKE stations. Three new PTIs will be built near the Hang Hau, TKO and Tiu Keng Leng Stations, while Po Lam will be served by an existing PTI. Walk links will be provided for convenient access to the stations.

Proposed Public Transport Service Plan

5. Our transport objective is to provide a safe, efficient, reliable and environmentally friendly transport system which meets the economic, social and recreational needs of the community, and which is capable of supporting sustainability and the future development of Hong Kong. The transport strategy is to place emphasis on rail transport and the co-ordination of public transport services. Priority will be accorded to railways which will form the backbone of our public transport system, and their use will be encouraged. Franchised buses will continue to be an important mode, especially in feeding passengers to railways and providing services to areas not conveniently served by railways. Green minibuses (“GMBs”) will continue to supplement the railways and franchised buses. As regards residents’ services (“RS”), their role will continue to help reduce the peak-hour demand for franchised bus and GMB services where they are inadequate. The different modes of transport will be better co-ordinated to enhance network efficiency, maintain reasonable fares, relieve congestion and address environmental concerns.

6. At present, TKO new town is mainly served by buses, GMBs and some RS. When opened, the TKE will more than double the capacity of external public transport services for TKO. Given the attractions of the TKE service in terms of journey time, fare, convenience and reliability, there will be substantial changes to the travel pattern of passengers, many of whom are expected to switch to use the new railway.

7. Transport Department (“TD”) has examined the implications of the opening of TKE. The findings showed that many TKO passengers who currently use direct services to travel to the urban area and those who use feeder services for travelling to Kwun Tong to interchange to the MTR Kwun Tong Line are expected to use the TKE directly. Whilst some passengers will require walkway links, others will require feeder services to the TKE stations. Thus there will be demand for feeder services to TKE stations. On the other hand, the utilization of the existing feeder routes to Kwun Tong and of the routes which will overlap the TKE is expected to decrease to varying degrees. On the basis of the findings, changes will need to be made to the public transport services for TKO, taking into account the relevant objectives which include -

- (a) the broad transport policy framework described in paragraph 5 above;
- (b) to ensure good connectivity of the TKE for easy access by passengers through the provision of feeder services;
- (c) to maintain an efficient public transport network by rationalising and improving co-ordination of public transport services to better match changing demand and minimize wasteful competition;
- (d) to help maintain viable service networks of franchised buses and GMBs; and
- (e) to maintain healthy competition among service providers and reasonable choice.

8. The public transport service changes will include introduction of new routes, frequency enhancement, and re-routing of some existing routes to feed passengers to the TKE stations, and frequency adjustment or route modification/cancellation for services which overlap the TKE. It is expected that the service changes will help relieve the congestion problem at the TKO Tunnel.

Consultation and Implementation

9. The relevant District Councils (“DCs”) are being consulted on the public transport service plan. TD will set up working groups with DC members and local representatives to examine and discuss details of the arrangements. The target is to finalize the public transport service plan in mid 2002 so that adequate publicity can be mounted before opening of the TKE.

10. The public transport service plan will be implemented in a progressive manner. A phased approach will facilitate smooth implementation and avoid confusion. There will be comprehensive publicity before implementation of any changes.

11. To ensure smooth commissioning of the TKE and implementation of the public transport service plan, a service hotline will be provided upon opening of the TKE and it will be widely publicized. MTRCL will ensure smooth train operations and arrange for spare buses. The franchised bus companies will also ensure that there are adequate spare buses on standby during the initial period of TKE commissioning. In addition, TD will conduct site observations to monitor the actual situation and activate its Emergency Transport Co-ordination Centre to co-ordinate arrangements as appropriate.

12. There will be close monitoring of the implementation of the service changes after opening of the TKE. If necessary, refinements may be made to the phased implementation programme and other service adjustments may be implemented in consultation with the working groups having regard to the actual situation on the ground.



