

**Legislative Council Panel on Transport  
Subcommittee on matters relating to railways**

**Reorganisation of Light Rail Transit Services  
upon the Commissioning of West Rail**

**Purpose**

At the meeting of the Subcommittee on 4 April 2003, Members were updated on the progress of the public consultation on the reorganization of Light Rail Transit (LRT) services which will tie in with the opening of West Rail. This paper briefs Members the implementation programme for the revised reorganization plan proposed by the Kowloon-Canton Railway Corporation (KCRC).

**Background**

2. West Rail is scheduled to open later this year to provide a fast and efficient rail service between the North West New Territories (NWNT) and the urban areas. West Rail will interchange with Light Rail at four stations, namely Tuen Mun, Siu Hong, Tin Shui Wai and Yuen Long.

3. Concurrent with the West Rail project, KCRC is undertaking a \$2.3 billion programme to upgrade and expand the Light Rail system to provide better services to the population in NWNT. The programme includes the construction of two Light Rail extensions in Tin Shui Wai and four West Rail/Light Rail interchanges, grade separation works at several busy junctions in Tuen Mun, and the installation of a new signalling system for Light Rail. The works will enlarge Light Rail's coverage and enhance the operating efficiency of the system.

4. To tie in with these improvements, the existing Light Rail and KCR Bus routes will be re-structured to provide feeder service to West Rail, and at the same time maintain its role to provide intra-regional transport service in the NWNT.

## **Public consultation**

5. KCRC commenced public consultation on the service reorganization plan in January this year. KCRC has consulted many organizations including the following:

- District Councils and the related committees
- Area Committees
- Area Consultative Forums
- Rural Committees
- Residents organizations
- The Corporation's Light Rail Passenger Liaison Groups

6. During these consultation meetings, KCRC collected a lot of views and opinions on the plan. Having taken into account the views and concerns expressed, KCRC has revised the proposal and further consulted the local community before finalizing the plan.

7. **Annex A** is a map of the existing Light Rail routes, and **Annex B** shows the detailed routings under the revised service reorganisation plan.

8. The key concerns raised during the consultation are as follows:

- reduction in the number of long distance Light Rail routes;
- reduction in the number of direct Light Rail routes to and from certain key locations such as Tuen Mun Hospital, Tuen Mun Ferry Pier and Tuen Mun Town Centre;
- some passengers will be inconvenienced by more transfers and longer journey times;
- the reorganization will “force passengers to use West Rail”;
- possibly higher journey costs after LRT reorganization;
- chaos resulting from too many route changes upon the opening of West Rail; and
- changes to LRT services should be implemented some time after West Rail opening.

9. **Annex C** summarizes the key concerns raised by the public about the LRT service reorganization, and how KCRC addresses the concerns.

10. It can be seen that in the revised plan, most of the Light Rail stops will be served by two or more Light Rail routes, and the overall transfer time will be reduced compared with the original proposal. With regard to journey times, it is estimated that about 40% of the Light Rail passengers will benefit from higher frequency services, cutting their journey times by 1 to 3 minutes. About 45% of the passengers' journey times will remain unchanged. Only about 15%, mostly long distance passengers, will have their journey times lengthened by 1 to 4 minutes.

11. KCRC has no intention to "force" passengers to use West Rail. What KCRC intends to do is to offer passengers a genuine choice. To do that KCRC has set the West Rail fares within the NWNT at a level comparable to the existing Light Rail fares, and will be offering free Light Rail and KCR Bus transfers for West Rail passengers.

### **Implementation plan**

12. Having taken into account the feedback received and to reduce the impact of the service reorganization, KCRC plans to introduce the changes in phases.

#### Phase 1 – mid-August 2003

13. Upon the completion of the Light Rail Tin Shui Wai Extensions in summer, KCRC will commission the service for the new extensions by diverting/extending two existing routes to the new extensions in mid August. This will enable residents in Tin Shui Wai North to use Light Rail service at the earliest possible date. In addition, a new circular route will also be operated to serve Tin Shui Wai South. By that time, the overall service level in Tin Shui Wai will be significantly enhanced.

14. During this phase, Light Rail services in other areas of the NWNT will remain unchanged.

### Phase 2 – West Rail opening

15. KCRC targets to open West Rail in autumn. There will be no change of Light Rail routing at that time. This will ensure that there will not be many changes at the time of West Rail opening.

### Phase 3 – after West Rail opening

16. Two long distance Light Rail routes between Yuen Long and Tuen Mun, which are running in duplication with West Rail, will be cancelled in phases. Having taken into account the views collected during the consultation, the Corporation intends to cancel the first route (Route 615) one month after West Rail opening, while the other (Route 614) around three months after West Rail opening depending on the change of passengers' travel pattern and the actual demand.

17. With the cancellation of these routes, KCRC will be able to re-deploy the resources to increase the overall efficiency of Light Rail service. Two new circular routes will be introduced in Tuen Mun with enhanced frequency one month after West Rail opening. By implementing these two circular routes, KCRC will complete the full scheme of route reorganisation.

### Bus route reorganisation

18. KCR Bus services in the NWNT will be similarly re-organised. To minimize the impact of change, the new bus route structure will also be implemented in phases.

19. **Annex D** is a chart detailing the phases of implementation of the LRT service reorganization plan.

## **Fares in NWNT**

20. KCRC has released its current thinking on West Rail fares in May 2003 for public consultation. To offer passengers a genuine choice between West Rail and Light Rail, the Corporation has set the maximum West Rail fare within the Light Rail service area at \$5.8, at a level comparable to the current Light Rail maximum fare. In addition, free transfers on Light Rail and KCR Bus will be offered to West Rail passengers. With the proposed fare and service arrangements, the Corporation is confident that passengers will have a good choice of the Corporation's services at reasonably attractive level.

## **Publicity and passenger education**

21. To assist passengers to familiarize with the changes, extensive education and publicity programmes will be organized:

- school/community talks and briefings are on-going;
- pamphlets and leaflets are being produced;
- station open days and public trials of new services will be organized during summer time;
- passenger information will be strengthened;
- service ambassadors will be deployed to assist passengers during the initial period of changes and West Rail opening;
- passenger telephone hotline service will be enhanced; and
- drills/exercises on new services and contingency plans will be conducted.





**Summary of key concerns  
on the original Light Rail reorganisation plan**

Concerns

KCRC's plan to address these concerns

*Light Rail service:*

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reduction of long distance inter-town Light Rail routes</li><br/><li>• More transfers for some passengers on long distance journeys will be needed</li><br/><li>• Longer journey times for some passengers on long distance journeys</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Two inter-town long distance routes have been retained and/or extended to increase coverage including Tuen Mun Hospital and Tuen Mun town centre, as well as in Tin Shui Wai.</li><li>• In addition, West Rail will have ample capacity for carrying inter-town passengers.</li><br/><li>• The revised proposal will reduce the overall transfer rate of passengers to 15%, three percentage points better than the original proposal.</li><br/><li>• The revised proposal confers benefits to a greater proportion of passengers. Under the plan, 40% of passengers will benefit in terms of journey time, 45% will remain the same, while 15% will have their journey time lengthened.</li></ul> |
|--|--|



*Fares:*

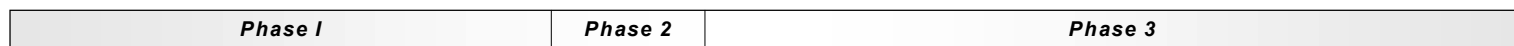
- Early release of West Rail fares
- West Rail fares within the NWNT should be as low as the current Light Rail fares
- Transfer charges from Light Rail/Bus to West Rail should be as low as possible, or free
- Request to retain free transfer between Light Rail and some feeder bus routes
- KCRC has released the Corporation's current thinking on West Rail fares on 23 May 2003 for public consultation.
- West Rail's maximum fare within the Light Rail service area, including feeder service, will be no higher than the current maximum Light Rail fare.
- Free feeder Light Rail and KCR Bus service will be provided for West Rail passengers.
- Free transfer between Light Rail and some feeder bus routes will be retained.

*Implementation:*

- Minimise changes for passengers
- KCRC will implement the changes in phases.
- Extensive publicity and passenger education programmes will be organised to familiarise the passengers with the new routings

- Some suggested that the reorganisation plan should be implemented after West Rail opens
- This will be taken care of. The new routing in Tuen Mun will be implemented after West Rail opening.
- With the imminent opening of the new extensions in Tin Shui Wai, reconfiguration for the routes in Tin Shui Wai will be desirable to residents.

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**West Rail Opening**

**Yuen Long/  
Tin Shui Wai**

Trial run on Tin Shui Wai Extensions

**10/8 and 16/8** Light Rail routes 701, 751 and 761 familiarization run

**17/8**  
Introduction of Light Rail routes 701, 751 and 761. Routes 720 and 721 to be withdrawn

**17/8**  
Withdrawal of bus route 659

**28/8**  
Introduction of bus route K75 to replace route 657. Service to be extended to Tin Shui during peak hours

**14/9**  
Introduction of bus route K65 to replace route 655  
Introduction of bus routes K66 and K68 to replace route 656

**One week after West Rail opening**  
Introduction of bus routes K72 and K73 to replace routes 670, A70, A74. Bus routes A73, K1X, K2X to be withdrawn

**Tuen Mun**

**24/8 to end of October** Light Rail routes 552 and 553 familiarization run (Sundays only)

**24/8**  
Light Rail route 505 resumes original routing (via Kin On Stop). Temporary bus route 505 to be withdrawn

**14/9**  
Introduction of bus routes K51 and K52 to replace routes 521/521P and A52

**One week after West Rail opening**  
Withdrawal of bus route A59

**One month after West Rail opening**  
Withdrawal of Light Rail route 615

**One month after West Rail opening**  
Introduction of Light Rail routes 551, 552 and 553. Routes 505 and 507 to be withdrawn

**One month after West Rail opening**  
Withdrawal of temporary bus route 506

**Two months after West Rail opening**  
Introduction of bus route K53

**Three months after West Rail opening**  
Withdrawal of Light Rail route 614