

**立法會**  
**Legislative Council**

LC Paper No. CB(1)701/03-04  
(These minutes have been  
seen by the Administration)

Ref: CB1/PS/2/00/1

**Panel on Transport**

**Subcommittee on matters relating to railways**

**Minutes of meeting on  
Tuesday, 25 November 2003, at 4:30 pm  
in Conference Room A of the Legislative Council Building**

**Members present** : Hon Miriam LAU Kin-yee, JP (Chairman)  
Ir Dr Hon Raymond HO Chung-tai, JP  
Hon CHAN Kwok-keung, JP  
Hon LAU Kong-wah, JP  
Hon Andrew CHENG Kar-foo  
Hon TAM Yiu-chung, GBS, JP  
Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, JP  
Hon Albert CHAN Wai-yip  
Hon LEUNG Fu-wah, MH, JP  
Hon WONG Sing-chi

**Members absent** : Dr Hon David CHU Yu-lin, JP  
Hon Albert HO Chun-yan  
Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, JP  
Hon LAU Ping-cheung

**Public Officers  
attending** : **Agenda Item IV**

Environment, Transport and Works Bureau

Mr Arthur HO  
Deputy Secretary for the Environment, Transport and  
Works (T)2

Mr William SHIU  
Principal Assistant Secretary for the Environment,  
Transport and Works (T)4

Mr K M WOO  
Chief Inspecting Officer/Railways

Transport Department

Ms Carolina YIP  
Assistant Commissioner/Bus & Railway

Highways Department

Mr K K CHAN  
Chief Engineer/West Rail

**Agenda Item V**

Environment, Transport and Works Bureau

Ms Margaret FONG  
Deputy Secretary for the Environment, Transport and Works (T)1

Mr Raymond HO  
Principal Assistant Secretary for the Environment, Transport and Works (T)7

Highways Department

Mr WAN Man-lung  
Principal Government Engineer/Railway Development

**Attendance by invitation : Agenda Items IV and V**

Kowloon-Canton Railway Corporation

Mr Michael TIEN  
Chairman

Mr K Y YEUNG  
Chief Executive Officer

Mr Samuel LAI  
Senior Director, Finance & Management

Mr James BLAKE  
Senior Director, Capital Projects

Mr Y T LI  
Director, East Rail

Mr K K LEE  
Director, East Rail Extensions

Mr Ian THOMS  
Director, West Rail

Mrs Irene YAU  
General Manager, Corporate Affairs

**Clerk in attendance :** Mr Andy LAU  
Chief Assistant Secretary (1)2

**Staff in attendance :** Ms Alice AU  
Senior Assistant Secretary (1)5

Miss Winnie CHENG  
Legislative Assistant 5

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**I Confirmation of minutes of meeting and matters arising**  
(LC Paper No. CB(1)339/03-04 - Minutes of meeting held on 17 October 2003)

The minutes of meeting held on 17 October 2003 were confirmed.

**II Information papers issued since last meeting**

2. Members noted that no information paper had been issued since last meeting.

**III Items for discussion at the next meeting scheduled for 8 January 2004**  
(LC Paper No. CB(1)348/03-04(01) - List of railways and projects)

3. Members agreed to discuss the following items as proposed by the Administration at the next meeting scheduled for 8 January 2004:

- (a) Report on the scheme design of Shatin to Central Link; and

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- (b) Progress update on Ma On Shan Rail and Tsim Sha Tsui Extension and the proposed public transport service plan to tie in with the commissioning of the two railway projects.

*(Post-meeting note: At the request of the Administration and with the concurrence of the Chairman, discussion on item (a) was deferred to a later meeting.)*

- 4. Regarding item (b), members further agreed that the item should also include a progress update of the two railway projects being constructed.

**IV West Rail — latest update**

(LC Paper No. CB(1)348/03-04(02) - Information paper provided by the Kowloon-Canton Railway Corporation)

- 5. The Chairman welcomed the representatives of the Administration and the Kowloon-Canton Railway Corporation (KCRC) to the meeting.

6. Mr Michael TIEN, the Chairman of KCRC, advised members that the Corporation's aim was to achieve high standards of safety, train punctuality and service reliability. In the past few months, the Corporation had been working on measures to resolve the problems identified during trial operations, particularly in respect of the signalling system. With stability of the signalling system achieved, train services had been operated during trial operations in accordance with timetables. Since mid-October, average daily train punctuality had exceeded 98% and daily service delivery over 99%, as compared with 95% and 97.5% respectively as the minimal punctuality and service delivery rates required for normal trial operations. With such good progress, he said that WR could be commissioned in late December 2003.

- 7. With the aid of PowerPoint, Mr Ian THOMS, Director of West Rail, KCRC (D/WR, KCRC), and Mr Y T LEE, Director of East Rail, KCRC, gave a presentation on the following aspects of work undertaken by KCRC to prepare for the opening of WR:

- (a) final preparation works required for statutory certification;
- (b) measures to resolve the signalling problems;
- (c) measures to resolve the vibration problems;
- (d) additional containment measures to ensure compliance with statutory noise requirements and to address noise complaints from residents in individual locations;
- (e) emergency drills and exercises;

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- (f) standards of punctuality and service reliability during trial operations; and
- (g) pre-commissioning publicity activities organized to familiarize the public with the services of WR.

*(Post-meeting note: A set of presentation materials provided by KCRC on the WR project was subsequently issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(1)442/03-04(01).)*

Commissioning date

8. Given the high punctuality and service reliability rates achieved during recent trial operations, Mr CHENG Kar-foo queried whether there were other undisclosed problems with WR which the Corporation still needed time to resolve. He also cautioned that as demonstrated by the experience of MTR Tseung Kwan O Line, such high standards achieved during trial operations were no guarantee that service disruptions would not occur during initial operation. As such, he called on the Corporation to advance the commissioning of WR so that any teething problems could be identified and hence, resolved earlier.

9. Mr Albert CHAN opined that WR should open to passenger operations as early as possible if no safety implication was involved. Apart from providing early convenience to the residents in the Northwest New Territories (NWNT), the Corporation could also take in fare revenue from WR earlier. In this respect, he enquired about the financial implication of delaying the opening of WR for the Corporation.

10. Mr LAU Kong-wah however considered that the Corporation should be on the safe side and adopt a more cautious approach in deciding the commissioning date. As such, the Corporation should be prepared to postpone WR's opening in case some new problems were identified in the meantime.

11. Mr TAM Yiu-chung asked whether full-load testings had been conducted to enable the Corporation to identify any potential problems associated with WR's passenger operations, particularly in respect of electromagnetic interference caused to the signalling system.

12. In response, the Chairman of KCRC assured members that all hardware and software problems identified with the signalling system had been fixed. This had enabled train service to achieve a very high level of reliability and punctuality over the past few weeks. He further said that in determining the commissioning date, the KCRC Managing Board had decided on a 42-day test period during which train service was required to maintain the minimal punctuality and service delivery rates required for normal trial operations on a full daily schedule. The Government had also agreed on the test period.

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13. The Chairman of KCRC added that as the required levels had been achieved since late October, the test period would soon expire in early December. Subject to the decision of the Managing Board, the Corporation would then arrange to obtain the necessary statutory approvals from the authorities which would take about one week to 10 days to complete. All this would take the earliest date of WR's commissioning to late December. As far as the financial implication was concerned, he said that in accordance with the Project Agreement, the target commissioning date of WR was late December 2003. The financial planning for the WR project was also made on that basis. He also said that assuming there were 200 000 estimated passenger trips per day and \$10 per trip for WR, the early opening of WR could bring about a fare revenue of about \$2 million per day.

14. Noting KCRC's assurance that the technical problems of the signalling system had been resolved, Mr CHENG Kar-foo sought an undertaking from the Chairman of KCRC that the opening of WR would be less disruptive than other new railways in the past. As regards the actual date of commissioning, he cautioned that KCRC should avoid opening WR close to the Christmas holidays so as to minimize the likelihood of incidents caused by the festive crowds.

15. The Chairman of KCRC assured members that every effort would be made to ensure the smooth operation of WR right from the start. Nonetheless, certain problems might occur during initial operation causing occasional disruptions to train service. While noting the member's concern that WR should be commissioned as early as possible when ready, he stressed that the most important thing was to ensure that there was absolutely no compromise on railway safety.

Vibration problems

16. Mr LAU Kong-wah sought elaboration on the effectiveness of re-machining of train wheels in resolving the vibration problems of WR. In reply, D/WR, KCRC said that the unusual level of vibration detected during the trial operations at certain parts of the WR alignment might cause discomfort to passengers but he stressed that there was no safety implication at all. The excessive vibration which was related to wheel/track interface could be resolved by re-machining the train wheels. The Corporation would re-machine all train wheels before WR opened for passenger operations. The Chairman of KCRC also confirmed from his personal experience that the level of vibration had been reduced to an acceptable level after the train wheels had been re-machined.

Interchange fare and arrangements

17. Referring to the shortcoming in WR's network which needed to be supplemented by the use of feeder services, Mr LAU Kong-wah reiterated the need for KCRC to provide better arrangements, both in terms of facilities and fare discounts, to facilitate WR passengers' interchange with other modes of public transport.

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Otherwise, it would be very difficult to attract the residents in NWNT to switch to WR.

18. Mr Albert CHAN also reiterated his suggestion that covered walkways should be provided to residential developments within 800 metres (m) of WR stations so as to enhance the accessibility of WR. Moreover, the Corporation should consider introducing monthly tickets for its WR and LR services so as to alleviate the burden of the travelling public.

19. Citing the Nam Cheong Station as example, the Chairman of KCRC said that KCRC had always aimed at providing convenient and user-friendly interchanging facilities for WR passengers. When WR opened, passengers could enjoy inter-modal discounts for interchanging with franchised bus and GMB services. The Corporation would also continue to pursue with MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL) the feasibility of introducing interchanging discounts between MTRCL and KCRC networks.

20. In this connection, the Deputy Secretary for the Environment, Transport and Works (T)2 (DS for ETW(T)2) advised that for three months after WR's opening, MTRCL would offer a 10% introductory discount to all Octopus cardholders taking the MTR to and from Nam Cheong and Mei Foo stations. Having considered the actual effect of the introductory fare discount on interchanging passengers between WR and MTR, MTRCL would ascertain the financial impact of such a scheme and continue discussions with KCRC and the Administration.

21. Mr Tam Yiu-chung called on the Corporation to co-ordinate the opening of the Tin Shui Wai New Light Rail (LR) Extension with the commissioning of WR to facilitate interchanging of passengers.

22. Mr Albert CHAN also said that the Tin Shui Wai New LR Extension should be opened to passenger operations as soon as its safe operation was confirmed.

23. The Chairman of KCRC stated that the Corporation's intention was to phase out the opening of WR and the Tin Shui Wai New LR Extension. As regards the latter, preparation works were already at an advanced stage for opening possibly in early December. An announcement was expected to be made shortly after securing necessary statutory approvals from the authorities. As such, the passengers would have more time to get familiarized with the new LR service before WR's opening. Pre-opening test rides would also be arranged.

Public transport plan (PT plan)

24. Mr LEUNG Fu-wah enquired about the implementation of the proposed PT plan to re-organize the existing public transport services following the opening of WR. In particular, he asked whether the existing level of franchised bus services would be maintained initially even if bus patronage was significantly reduced after WR's opening.

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25. In response, the Assistant Commissioner for Transport/Bus & Railway took members through the three phases of the proposed PT plan which would be implemented over a period of three to six months after WR's opening. Initially, feeder franchised bus and green minibus services to WR stations would be enhanced. Major changes such as the cancellation of bus routes would only be introduced after passenger travel patterns had been carefully monitored and assessed. She confirmed that external franchised bus services would be maintained during the first two weeks of WR's opening.

26. To supplement, DS for ETW(T)2 assured members that the reorganization of public transport services in NWNT would be introduced progressively to reduce the impact on the local residents. The Administration would closely monitor the changing demand of other public transport services after WR's opening. If necessary, refinements might be made to individual service adjustment items and/or their implementation programme in consultation with the concerned parties having regard to the actual situation on the ground.

**V Kowloon Southern Link — latest update**

(LC Paper No. CB(1)348/03-04(03) - Information paper provided by the Administration)

27. The Chairman of KCRC updated members on the latest development of the Kowloon Southern Link (KSL) as set out in the paper provided by KCRC (Appendix to LC Paper No. CB(1)348/03-04(03)). He said that in view of the engineering consideration and extensive disruption to the public during its construction, the Corporation had re-examined the case for providing a station at Canton Road. The present proposal was to construct only one station at West Kowloon along the alignment of KSL and defer the Canton Road (CAR) Station. The Corporation's major considerations for not taking forward CAR were summarized as follows:

- (a) Construction of CAR by cut-and-cover methods would give rise to major disruption, not only to traffic and pedestrians using Canton Road but also to the owners and occupiers of adjacent buildings. It would be impossible to maintain two traffic lanes with two-metre wide pedestrian footpaths on either side of the road during construction. Even after completion of the works, only two lanes of traffic could be maintained at Canton Road with reduction in the width of the pedestrian footpaths there to provide sites for station entrances and facilities.
- (b) As the pile foundations of some of the existing buildings located on the eastern side of Canton Road terminated well above bedrock, the cut-and-cover methods would create instability in the buildings and pose unacceptable risks.



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- (c) The alternative of using a bored-tunnel design along Canton Road would require resumption of several properties. This would involve serious disruptions to both owners and occupiers. Since there would be two railway stations, viz. the existing MTR Tsim Sha Tsui Station and the future KCR Tsim Sha Tsui East Station, which were within 600 metres walking distance of Canton Road, there was no justifiable transport need to support resumption.
- (d) The Corporation would endeavour to ensure convenient access for passengers travelling to and from the Canton Road area to other stations. KCRC was examining the provision of underground pedestrian subways, possibly incorporating travellators and air-conditioning if permitted, to link these stations to the Canton Road area.

*(Post-meeting note: A set of presentation materials on the KSL project was tabled at the meeting and subsequently issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(1)442/03-04(02).)*

Provision of CAR

28. Notwithstanding the explanation given by KCRC, Mr CHENG Kar-foo said that the Corporation was simply making its decision from a financial perspective which aimed at maintaining a higher rate of return for the project by avoiding the additional cost required for resumption. He stressed that the Corporation must re-visit its stance on the provision of CAR from transport considerations of meeting the needs of the travelling public. Moreover, he found it confusing that the Corporation had left open the possibility of providing CAR in the longer term. Highlighting the engineering difficulties of constructing CAR, Mr CHENG was particularly worried about the escalating cost of providing the station in future. If CAR were to be constructed eventually, the cost and resources of providing the underground pedestrian subways would become abortive. He thus sought clarification on the stance of the Corporation and the Administration on the provision of CAR.

29. Mr LAU Kong-wah was gravely disappointed by the Corporation's decision to drop CAR. Citing the important function of KSL to connect West Rail passengers from NWNT to urban Kowloon, he said that the present one-station proposal clearly failed to serve the purpose as neither the Kowloon West Station nor the Tsim Sha Tsui East Station was the final destination of NWNT residents. The cost-effectiveness of the KSL project would be highly doubtful without CAR. Moreover, he was unconvinced that the provision of underground subways was indeed a desirable solution as the passengers would still have to walk quite a long distance. Considering that public money should be worthily spent to pursue the greatest benefits to the passengers, he called on the Corporation to review its decision so that a cost-effective railway project could be developed.

30. Sharing similar views, Ir Dr Raymond HO opined that CAR should be provided on transport grounds. He was unconvinced that the station should be dropped simply

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to avoid disruption to the owners and operators as railway construction works were invariably disruptive. To avoid paying extra for the provision of CAR in future, he called on the Corporation to critically review all the issues involved before finalizing its decision. To facilitate members' consideration on the adequacy of KCRC's present proposal in addressing the transport needs of the passengers, he requested KCRC to provide a tentative layout plan of the proposed underground subways to members for information after the meeting.

*(Post-meeting note: The requested information was circulated to members vide LC Paper No. CB(1)657/03-04(01).)*

31. In response, the Chairman of KCRC stressed that the decision was not made out of financial considerations because provision had already been made in the project estimate to meet any costs of resumption required under the project. Under the circumstances, the Corporation was trying to adopt a pragmatic approach in taking the project forward. Although CAR was contemplated in the earlier planning for KSL, the Corporation had subsequently confirmed that the major disruptions and technical risks arising out of the cut-and-cover methods would be unacceptable. As regards the alternative bored tunnel option, the presence of two railway stations in the vicinity would also make it not justifiable on transport grounds to support resumption of the buildings concerned. Nonetheless, he believed that the Corporation had now come up with a proposal that could satisfy the need to provide the essential rail link between WR and the future Mass Transportation Centre in Hung Hom whilst minimizing the disturbance caused to the community during construction and operational stages of KSL.

32. The Chairman of KCRC further said that the Corporation was now contemplating the provision of connecting underground subways to facilitate passenger access to other railway stations in Tsim Sha Tsui. In view of all these, the Corporation had thus dropped any immediate plans to provide a station at Canton Road. While recognizing the add-on value of CAR for WR passengers, he said that public interest could be served by the early provision of KSL.

33. While noting KCRC's explanation, Mr CHENG Kar-foo said that if both the Corporation and the Administration were convinced that the provision of travellers in the underground subways could adequately meet the transport need of the travelling public, a clear stance in respect of the provision of CAR station should be provided. He further suggested that in order to enhance the environment of the underground subways, the Corporation could consider the possibility of developing an underground shopping mall.

34. In reply, the Chairman of KCRC said that railway projects were undertaken to meet the long-term transport and development needs of the community. As such, KCRC had not precluded the desirability of providing the CAR station in future if the practical difficulties of construction could be overcome and the capital costs reduced to a level which would not impact adversely on the project rate of return. The Corporation would continue to explore any possible options for providing a station in

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future, say through co-operation with private sector developers undertaking future re-development of suitable sites along Canton Road.

35. The Deputy Secretary for the Environment, Transport and Works (T)1 (DS for ETW(T)1) advised that KSL was a recommended project under the Railway Development Strategy 2000 to link up WR from its Nam Cheong Station to connect with the KCR Tsim Sha Tsui Extension. As originally proposed, KSL would only have one station, i.e. the Kowloon West Station. CAR was subsequently proposed by the Corporation for further consideration under schematic design. The Administration's view was that with the present one-station proposal, KSL could still serve the strategic function of linking up WR and East Rail while transporting the passengers to urban Kowloon. Consideration had also been given to the engineering considerations, the extensive disruption to the public during construction, as well as the extent of traffic impact caused as a result of Canton Road being permanently narrowed to two lanes. Given all these factors, the provision of CAR in the immediate future did not seem justified. Nonetheless, the Administration would further consider the matter taking into account the views expressed by members.

## Environmental impacts

36. Acknowledging the concern previously raised by members, the Chairman of KCRC re-assured members that the Corporation would pay special attention when addressing the noise and vibration impacts of the proposed KSL. Noise experts would be engaged especially for the purpose.

37. Mr LAU Kong-wah reiterated his strong call that neither the construction nor operation of KSL should have any adverse noise or vibration impact on the adjacent Cultural Centre facilities. Referring to the Corporation's undertaking that it would seek the agreement of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) on the mitigation measures to be developed in respect of vibration impacts, he considered that in so doing, the Corporation should seek to achieve the highest standard possible.

38. Mr K K LEE, Director of East Rail Extensions, KCRC, responded that the Corporation would work closely with LCSD and the Environmental Protection Department in addressing the related issues. The design requirement was that the current absolute level of ambient noise at the Cultural Centre would not be exceeded. He further assured members that the use of a special floating track form could effectively minimize the impact of noise and vibration from trains.

## Impact of KSL on employment

39. Mr LEUNG Fu-wah reiterated his grave concern about the employment and livelihood issues created as a result of the proposed implementation of railway projects on other public transport operators. In this respect, he asked whether the Administration had made a realistic assessment of the problem.

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40. DS for ETW(T)1 responded that in considering the development of railway projects, the Administration would take into account the overall long-term economic benefits to be brought to the community at large, including the public transport benefits in terms of time saving and the creation of job opportunities both during construction and operation. Sharing the member's concern about the impact of railway development on the operation of other public transport modes, she said that the Administration would conduct detailed assessment before the commissioning of a new railway. Once the schematic design of KSL was finalized, the Administration would look into the related issues and revert to the Subcommittee on its outcome when available.

41. Summing up the discussion, the Chairman said that members in general were concerned about the Corporation's present proposal of dropping CAR. Some members considered that such a move was not justified, especially on transport grounds. As such, members had requested for further information to help them ascertain the effectiveness of KCRC's proposal to provide underground subways to enhance access for the passengers.

42. In reply to the Chairman, DS for ETW(T)1 advised that the KSL scheme would be gazetted soon. The public would have 60 days to state their objection to the scheme after gazettal. Member agreed that the Subcommittee would then decide on how to follow up on the project.

**VI Any other business**

43. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 6:25 pm.