

**Legislative Council Panel on Transport
Subcommittee on Matters relating to Railways**

**Better Co-ordination of Public Transport Services arising from the
Commissioning of Ma On Shan Rail**

Purpose

This paper informs Members of the latest progress in developing a new public transport plan (“PT Plan”) to tie in with the opening of Ma On Shan Rail (“MOSR”).

Objectives of PT Plan

2. The commissioning of MOSR will provide efficient and convenient service to residents in the Ma On Shan area and increase the capacity of external public transport services for the area by 34%. The objectives of proposing the PT Plan upon commissioning of the new railways are to improve the coordination of services to match with changes in passenger travelling pattern, provide feeder services to ensure good connectivity to the new railway, enhance the efficiency of public transport network to relieve traffic congestion and improve air quality and maintain healthy competition among transport service providers to provide commuter choice.

Public Consultation

3. Members were briefed on the preliminary PT plan at meeting on 8 January 2004. Subsequently, Transport Department (“TD”) started local consultation in February 2004 to solicit public views on the preliminary PT Plan. Apart from consulting the relevant District Councils (“DCs”) and Traffic and Transport Committees (“TTCs”), six Area Consultative Forums (“ACFs”) were formed to facilitate wider local consultation. The membership of the ACFs includes DC members, Area Committees members, representatives of Mutual Aid Committees and Incorporated Owners Associations, and other local representatives. Additional meetings with local groups and representatives were also conducted from time to time to foster communication.

4. During the last few months, TD attended around 30 meetings to explain the preliminary plan and listen to the views of the local residents. In general, the local community recognized the need to re-organize the existing public transport services following the opening of the new

railways. They also emphasized the importance of maintaining a reasonable choice of transport modes for passengers. The major concern is about the proposals to discontinue some of the bus routes. Some groups opined that the routes should be retained, especially during peak periods. There were also suggestions that the major service rationalization measures should be implemented progressively after commissioning of the new railways and having taken into account the actual changes in passenger demand.

Modification of PT Plan

5. With reference to the broad transport policy framework and having regard to local feedback received during the public consultation as well as views expressed by some Members of the Legislative Council (“LegCo”), TD has reviewed the preliminary plan and considered how it could be modified.

6. Noting the local concern on the proposed cancellation of three cross harbour routes from Ma On Shan to Central/Sheung Wan, we plan to retain these routes. The proposed cancellation will be replaced by frequency reduction and relocation of the termini to Admiralty in order to improve the traffic conditions and environment in Central. The relocation of the termini is crucial to help reduce bus trips in the central business district, hence reducing congestion and roadside emission in busy urban areas.

7. We also plan to withdraw the cancellation proposals in respect of a few routes with major catchments fallen outside walking distance to MOSR. The cancellation proposals will be replaced by frequency reduction.

8. We will include in the modified plan the provision of section fare and enhancement of bus-bus interchange concessions on services alternative to routes proposed to be discontinued, so that the affected passengers would not be worse-off in terms of fare as a result of the change.

9. Our preliminary PT plan covers a few bus routes which overlap the alignment of MOSR to a relatively small extent. We will pursue the proposed changes to these routes separately and at a later stage.

10. Our planned modifications have fully addressed the concerns of

the local groups and LegCo Members involved. The relevant DCs, TTCs and ACFs will be consulted again on the detail of the modified PT Plan in early July. Our target is to firm up the PT Plan well before the opening of MOSR so that adequate publicity to residents concerned can be mounted.

Way Forward

11. Same as Tseung Kwan O Line and West Rail, we will implement the PT Plan in a progressive manner. On Day One of the commissioning of MOSR, feeder connections will be put in place or strengthened to ensure good connectivity with MOSR. Other changes will be introduced gradually after the first week in light of on-the-ground observation of changes in travel pattern to ensure smooth implementation. Having regard to the actual traffic situation, we may refine the service adjustments and their implementation programme in consultation with parties concerned.

12. To ensure the smooth commissioning of MOSR and implementation of the PT Plan, we shall co-ordinate with transport operators to conduct comprehensive promotion and publicity nearer the opening of the MOSR. During initial period of the rail operation, the franchised bus companies will also ensure that there are adequate bus resources to standby for contingency. In addition, TD will activate its Emergency Transport Co-ordination Centre on key dates to co-ordinate arrangements as appropriate.

13. Separately, taking into account the West Rail experience, KCRC is considering measures to improve the connectivity of MOSR. These include discussion with Green Minibus (“GMB”) operators providing service along the MOSR catchment to explore the possibility of introducing effective GMB–Rail concession for MOSR. KCRC also plans to conduct market survey in early 2005 to assess the public’s travelling pattern after the MOSR has commenced operation.

14. Members are invited to take note of the paper.