

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(1)1333/04-05
(These minutes have been seen
by the Administration)

Ref: CB1/PS/1/04/1

Panel on Transport

Subcommittee on Matters Relating to Railways

**Minutes of meeting on
Friday, 4 March 2005, at 10:45 am
in the Chamber of the Legislative Council Building**

- Members present** : Hon Miriam LAU Kin-ye, GBS, JP (Chairman)
Ir Dr Hon Raymond HO Chung-tai, S.B.St.J., JP
Hon LAU Kong-wah, JP
Hon Andrew CHENG Kar-foo
Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, JP
Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, JP
Hon Albert CHAN Wai-yip
Hon WONG Kwok-hing, MH
Hon LEE Wing-tat
Hon Patrick LAU Sau-shing, SBS, JP
- Member attending** : Hon CHEUNG Man-kwong
- Members absent** : Hon Mrs Selina CHOW LIANG Shuk-ye, GBS, JP
Hon TAM Yiu-chung, GBS, JP
Hon Jeffrey LAM Kin-fung, SBS, JP
- Public Officers attending** : **Agenda item IV**
Dr Sarah LIAO
Secretary for the Environment, Transport and Works

Mr Joshua LAW
Permanent Secretary for the Environment, Transport and
Works (Transport)

Miss Cathy CHU
Deputy Secretary for the Environment, Transport and
Works (Transport)2

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

Mr K H LO
Chief Inspecting Officer (Railways)
Environment, Transport and Works Bureau

Miss Alice AU-YEUNG
Principal Transport Officer
Transport Department

Agenda item V

Miss Cathy CHU
Deputy Secretary for the Environment, Transport and
Works (Transport)2

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

Mr K H LO
Chief Inspecting Officer (Railways)
Environment, Transport and Works Bureau

Miss Alice AU-YEUNG
Principal Transport Officer
Transport Department

Mr Louis CHAN
Officer i/c (Noise Management & Planning)
Environmental Protection Department

Agenda item VI

Mr Thomas CHOW
Deputy Secretary for the Environment, Transport and
Works (Transport)1

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

Mr WAN Man-lung
Principal Government Engineer/Railway Development
Highways Department

**Attendance by
invitation**

: Agenda item IV

MTR Corporation Limited

Mr C K CHOW
Chief Executive Officer

Mr Phil GAFFNEY
Managing Director –
Operations & Business Development

Mr Andrew MCCUSKER
Deputy Operations Director

Mrs Miranda LEUNG
General Manager – Corporate Relations

Lloyd's Register Rail Asia Pacific

Mr Michael HAMLYN
President

Ms Karen PRIESTLEY
Senior Consultant

Kowloon-Canton Railway Corporation

Mr Y T LI
Senior Director, Transport

Mrs Grace LAM
General Manager, Corporate Affairs

Agenda item V

Kowloon-Canton Railway Corporation

Mr Y T LI
Senior Director, Transport

Mr K K LEE
Senior Director, Capital Projects

Mrs Grace LAM
General Manager, Corporate Affairs

Agenda item VI

Kowloon-Canton Railway Corporation

Mr K K LEE
Senior Director, Capital Projects

Mr Stephen CHIK
General Manager, Capital Works Planning

Mrs Grace LAM
General Manager, Corporate Affairs

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

Staff in attendance : Mrs Mary TANG
Senior Assistant Secretary (1)2

Miss Winnie CHENG
Legislative Assistant (1)5

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I Confirmation of minutes of meeting and matters arising

(LC Paper No. CB(1)997/04-05 - Minutes of meeting held on
11 December 2004

LC Paper No. CB(1)1002/04-05 - Minutes of meeting held on 7 January
2005)

The minutes of the meetings held on 11 December 2004 and 7 January 2005 were confirmed.

II Information papers issued since last meeting

2. Members noted that no information paper was issued since the last meeting.

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III Items for discussion at the next meeting scheduled for 6 May 2005

- (LC Paper No. CB(1)1012/04-05(01) - List of outstanding items for discussion
LC Paper No. CB(1)1012/04-05(02) - List of follow-up actions)

3. Members agreed that the following items would be discussed at the next meeting scheduled for 6 May 2005-

- (a) Progress update on Disneyland Resort Line as proposed by the Administration;
- (b) Retrofitting of platform screen doors at Mass Transit Railway (MTR) stations as proposed by Mr Albert CHAN; and
- (c) Open fare system for Light Rail Transit stations as proposed by Mr Albert CHAN.

4. Mr CHENG Kar-foo suggested that the Administration should be invited to brief members on the latest development of South Hong Kong Island Line (SIL) and West Hong Kong Island Line (WIL).

5. The Chairman said that at the Panel meeting held in February 2005, the Administration advised that it would take a few months' time to examine the revised proposal put forward by MTR Corporation Limited on SIL and WIL. As such, the Administration might not be ready to update members on the progress of SIL and WIL at the next meeting scheduled for 6 May 2005. Depending on the circumstance, the Subcommittee would decide on whether SIL and WIL should be included in the agenda for the meeting on 6 May 2005.

IV Railway incidents and performance of the railway systems in Hong Kong

- (LC Paper No. CB(1)1012/04-05(03) - Information paper provided by the Administration
LC Paper No. CB(1)1023/04-05(01) - Information paper on "MTR Performance and Asset Management – Follow up measures to Lloyd's Report by MTRCL" provided by MTR Corporation Limited
LC Paper No. CB(1)873/04-05(01) - Executive Summary on Performance and Asset Management Review provided by

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LC Paper No. CB(1)873/04-05(02) - Lloyd's Register Rail
Report on Performance and Asset Management Review provided by Lloyd's Register Rail)

6. By way of background, the Chairman said that following the spate of incidents occurring in the MTR network in the latter half of 2004 which had caused considerable public concerns over the safety and reliability of railways, the MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL) commissioned the Lloyd's Register Rail (Lloyd's) in mid-October 2004 to carry out an independent review on the performance and asset management of the MTR system. The review was completed in end-January 2005 and the final report of the review was submitted to the Government on 4 February 2005.

7. The Secretary for the Environment, Transport and Works (SETW) said that the Government had assessed the Lloyd's report which had provided a comprehensive and objective assessment on the performance of the MTR system. It had also exchanged views with local experts on the findings and recommendations of the report. While most incidents occurring in the later part of 2004 did not have any safety implications, the Government was aware that these did cause much concern among passengers, in particular when emission of smoke and generation of loud noise were involved. MTRCL had been requested to take improvement measures and to monitor its performance to upkeep public confidence in its operation.

8. Mr CK CHOW, Chief Executive Officer of MTRCL (CEO/MTRCL) said that to address public concerns over the MTR system's reliability following the incidents in the last quarter of 2004, the 16 recommendations contained in the Lloyd's report had been accepted by MTRCL and had since been implemented. The improvement initiatives could be broadly be categorized as follows-

(a) System and technical upgrading

This would include upgrading of signalling systems and enhancement of track maintenance and rail replacement programmes etc.

(b) Improved asset management

This would include integration of new projects into existing operations and improvements in the rail asset management plan.

(c) Management of human factors

This would include surveys on customers' concerns, including customer distress issues arising from noise or smoke events, and enhanced staff training and improved communication systems to deal with these events.

9. CEO/MTRCL said that MTRCL was encouraged to note that the Lloyd's report had found no evidence to suggest that MTR assets were declining as the system

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entered its 25th year of operation. It was pleased to note that its asset management system was recognized to be in line with international best practice. MTRCL would continue to provide better service and was committed to operating a safe, reliable and efficient mass transit service.

10. Mr Y T LI, Senior Director, Transport, Kowloon-Canton Railway Corporation (SDT/KCRC) thanked CEO/MTRCL for sharing the findings and recommendations of the Lloyd's report. He said that where applicable, the improvement initiatives as contained in the report would be implemented to improve the service performance of the Kowloon-Canton Railway Corporation (KCRC).

11. Mr WONG Kwok-hing said that since service disruptions lasting more than eight minutes were mostly due to door failure and errors in the signalling system, he enquired about the efforts made to improve the situation. Mr Phil GAFFNEY, Managing Director, Operations & Business Development (MD/OBD/MTRCL) said that an Internal Task Force was set up to oversee the improvements works. To address the problem of door failure, new rubber nosing would be installed on all the doors of the original fleet and the installation would expect to be completed by end-2005. As for the signalling system, the weather protection of the signalling antenna was progressing well and would be completed in mid-2005. The standards of track side cables had been upgraded with an accelerated programme which was targeted for completion by end-2005. Meanwhile, the software for the train information system had been upgraded and the track side signalling equipment of micro-switches had been replaced.

12. Referring to the annual report of MTRCL which indicated that the number of engineering and project staff had been reduced from 978 in 2001 to 402 in 2003, Mr WONG Kwok-hing was concerned whether the staff retrenchment would impact on the repair and maintenance of the rail systems, particularly at the Tseung Kwan O Line. He requested for a more detailed breakdown on the staff establishment with information on the type of services which were outsourced. CEO/MTRCL explained that the engineering and project staff were part of the maintenance unit of MTRCL which had all along maintained a staff count of between 2 000 to 2 100. MD/OBD/MTRCL explained that the engineering and project staff referred to in the annual report were part of the major projects team responsible for the Tseung Kwan O Extension which was commissioned in 2002. There had since been a reduction of staff in the major projects team but there had not been any reduction in maintenance staff, the number of which had remained constant over the past three years. With regard to the outsourcing arrangements, both the Government and Lloyd's had confirmed that there was no evidence to suggest that the performance of the outsourced part of the system was adversely affected. Notwithstanding, MTRCL would continue to monitor the service performance of the contractors. At members' request, MTRCL would provide information on the percentage of services which had been outsourced and a breakdown on the outsourced services as against the number of staff involved.

MTRCL

13. Referring to the "Train Punctuality Rate", which measured punctual train trips

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against actual train trips in a month, Mr Andrew CHENG said that such measurement could not reflect the actual duration of the delay, and hence, the degree of seriousness of individual service disruptions to passengers. The effect was that a delayed trip, be it lasted for two minutes or two hours, would only be counted as one trip for the purpose of calculation. Given that there was a time when the aggregate duration of service disruption amounted to some 1 700 minutes within a period of six months and that the train punctuality rate could still stand at 99% or more, he questioned the efficacy of the existing performance indicators in reflecting the service performance of rail systems. He therefore urged the Administration to introduce an additional performance indicator on train service disruptions for monitoring purpose.

14. SETW said that the performance indicators were based on performance criteria that were set in line with international practice. To maintain the international image of the MTR system of Hong Kong, there was a need to compare its performance using internationally accepted standards. Therefore, it would not be appropriate for Hong Kong to set its own performance indicators lest a fair comparison with international standards could not be made. As the international standard of punctuality rates were calculated based on the number of delayed trips rather the duration of delay, the latter should not be included in the calculation of punctuality rates as otherwise the MTR system in Hong Kong, despite its efficient performance, would be placed in a disadvantaged position. Incidents involving exceptionally long delays or those which had caused customer distress should be dealt with and followed up separately. Mr Andrew CHENG remained unconvinced with SETW's explanation. He said that as extended delays had caused considerable inconvenience to the travelling public, there was a need to work out a more objective assessment criteria taking account of the duration of delays to enable more effective monitoring on train performance.

15. Mr Andrew CHENG noted the discrepancies of the figures provided by the Administration on the performance of the signalling system. While paragraph 26 of the paper indicated that that there were 37 incidents caused by the signalling system in 2004, a comparison of the services at Annex IV to the paper showed that Korean trains (K-trains) in Kwun Tong Line (KTL) had incurred 281 train-borne signalling incidents from August 2002 to December 2004. The figures showed that the occurrence of incidents caused by the signalling system of K-trains was almost 10 times that of other trains. He sought explanation on the discrepancies as well as the performance of the cheaper K trains. MD/OBD/MTRCL explained that Annex IV set out the number of equipment failures in trains in different lines from August 2002 to December 2004. The vast majority of the failures of the train-borne signalling system of K-trains dated back to the early days when these were running on KTL. There had been a comprehensive upgrading of computer hardware and software of the train-borne signalling system in the latter part of 2004. Since then the performance of K-trains at KTL was no different from other lines. As of January/February 2005, there had been no failure of train-borne signalling system of K-trains at KTL.

16. Mr LAU Kong-wah expressed disappointment at the Lloyd's report which was focused on figures. While the total number of train failures in 2004 was much lower as compared to earlier years, the frequency and severity of incidents had aroused much

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public concern, particularly in the latter part of 2004 when train failures had occurred almost every day. He failed to agree with the Lloyd's report that the perception of an upsurge in problems might have been influenced over the long term by other factors such as the memory of earlier incidents. He enquired whether passengers' views were sought over the spate of incidents. He also noted that while SETW had openly stated that the spate of incidents in the latter part of 2004 was unacceptable, the Administration had nevertheless agreed with the Lloyd's report on the reliability of MTR performance. He was concerned that the Administration had been over complacent and questioned how, apart from issuing warnings to MTR the statutory control over the performance of MTR could be exercised so as to ensure its competence.

17. SETW explained that there was a need to rely on figures in assessing train performance as these would serve to show the frequency of railway incidents and hence the need for remedial actions. The Administration had accepted the Lloyd's report which had adopted a scientific method in its assessment and had taken into consideration the passengers' perception and other human factors. In addition to overseeing the implementation of the 16 recommendations of the Lloyd's report, the Administration had, in consultation with local experts, requested MTRCL to further implement improvement initiatives. The Administration would closely monitor the implementation of these recommendations. She also said that as the performance of MTR was governed by the Mass Transit Railway Ordinance (Cap 556), penalties would be imposed in cases of non-compliance.

18. Mr Albert CHAN was concerned about the cost effectiveness of MTR services in terms of quality and safety. He opined that, given the high remuneration of MTR's senior management, the public had been paying a lot for MTR services which did not represent best value for money. He also expressed dissatisfaction that MTRCL had failed to pay regard to the ecological importance of Ngong Ping, as a result of which a large number of rare species of plants were destroyed by the cable car project. He pointed out that the use of iron bars for fencing at the Tsuen Wan MTR station was an eyesore to the public. In response, CEO/MTRCL referred members to paragraph 5.2.2.1 of the Lloyd's report which indicated that MTR was way above average in terms of labour efficiency, reliability, service quality and safety as compared to ten other metros in the world. This served to confirm the cost effectiveness of MTR services. Mr Michael HAMLIN, President of Lloyd's Register Rail Asia Pacific (PLRR) added that the Lloyd's report concluded that MTRCL had provided a safe and reliable service at a reasonable cost. The report also revealed that the operating cost of the most reliable metro system was 50% more than that of MTR. He could not comment on the salary scale of MTR's senior management as this was not within the scope of Lloyd's review.

19. Ir Dr Raymond HO commended Lloyd's for its professional analysis on MTR performance which was based on comparisons with other members of the Community of Metros. As a daily user of MTR services, he shared passengers' concern about the inconvenience associated with extended delays. He enquired about the measures taken to improve staff awareness and ability to respond to passenger distress issues

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and other human factors and considered it necessary that some mock exercise should be conducted for the purpose. MD/OBD/MTRCL said that MTRCL had put in a lot of efforts in staff training. Last year, it had carried out a major staff attitude survey to understand how staff felt about their jobs, with particular reference to passenger safety. It had taken on board Lloyd's comments regarding human factors and had engaged external consultants to study behavioral patterns and interactions between staff and passengers in an attempt to seek improvements to the overall performance. Computer-based training and simulation models were used for staff training in train and station operation. Train operators were required to report to the training centres twice a year and their performances were assessed using sophisticated simulators.

20. SDT/KCRC said that apart from implementing regulations pertaining to rail safety, KCRC had been providing training to staff to enhance their awareness and ability to respond to emergency situations. Efforts would be made to ensure that the situation could be attended to immediately and that the passengers could be alerted on any emergencies and given directions to follow. Mock exercises were conducted as part of the training to deal with emergency situations and some times these exercises were carried out without much advance notification. Performance reviews were conducted upon completion of the exercises to see what further improvements could be made. SETW added that in providing training to staff, both corporations had been asked to assess the effectiveness of training programmes.

21. Mr LEE Wing-tat said that given MTRCL's preventive maintenance regime, incidents such as the rail crack incident near Shek Kip Mei Station should not have happened. PLRR said that Lloyd's found the maintenance activities were perfectly acceptable and there was no safety risk due to the design of the rail containment system. The said rail crack problem was very unusual and could not have been detected by any automated or manual means. Responding further to Mr LEE as to whether the problem could have been detected through the use of ultrasonic equipment, PLRR said that while most defects could be detected by ultrasonic or visual inspection, the rail crack at the bottom of the rail which was a result of the manufacturer's defect could not have been detected by any means. At members' request, the MTRCL would provide an incident report for the rail crack incident near Shek Kip Mei Station for members' reference.

MTRCL

22. Mr Patrick LAU noted the Lloyd's conclusion that the occasional occurrence of incidents did not suggest that the MTR system was ageing or suffering from systemic problems. Since there was a need for preventive maintenance, he enquired if there was any international criteria in determining the ageing of rails and if so, when a major overhaul would be needed. PLRR said that preventive maintenance for rails was an ongoing process and assets were replaced in accordance with the asset management system. As different assets would have different services lives, these would be replaced accordingly before their performance was no longer acceptable. MD/OBD/MTRCL added that while the design life of trains was 40 years, preventive maintenance was carried out to ensure the safety and reliability of train performance. The motor system, electric supply system, internal lighting system and communication system of the original fleet had been completely replaced over the last 10 years.

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Meanwhile, the signalling system which had a service life of 25 years had been replaced in 1997. Large elements of the rail system were continuously monitored for their performance using ultrasonic equipment and replaced ahead of deterioration.

V Ma On Shan Rail

- (LC Paper No. CB(1)1012/04-05(04) - Information paper provided by the Administration
LC Paper No. CB(1)899/04-05(01) - Information paper provided by the Administration for the Panel)

23. Mr WONG Kwok-hing enquired about the impact of the commissioning of Ma On Shan Rail (MOSR) on other public transport services and whether its patronage had reached the designed capacity. The Deputy Secretary for the Environment, Transport and Works (Transport)2 (DS/ETW(T)2) said that there had been changes in the traveling patterns of Ma On Shan (MOS) residents upon the commissioning of MOSR which had been attracting an average daily patronage of 80 000 to 90 000 passenger trips. This was very close to the KCRC's estimated patronage of 100 000 passenger trips per day for MOS Rail during the initial period after commissioning. On the other hand, the 73 public buses servicing MOS and nearby areas had been losing about 60 000 passenger trips per day, representing approximately 10% of their patronage. It was not easy to assess the implications of the commissioning of MOSR on services provided by minibuses since they varied with different routes. Prior to the commissioning of MOSR, the Transport Department (TD) had discussed with KCRC on ways to coordinate transport services. As a result, four additional minibus routes had been introduced to provide feeder services to MOSR passengers. Apart from offering inter-modal discounts as well as sectional fares, TD had been working out with minibus operators on arrangements that could be introduced to boost their patronage. Meanwhile, at the request of the taxi trade, more taxi stands and alighting points were made available to facilitate MOSR passengers in continuing their onward journeys by taxi. So far, no complaints had been received from the taxi trade on the adverse impact of the commissioning of MOSR on their business. This was probably due to the fact that taxis were more flexible as compared to minibuses which operated on fixed routes.

24. On Mr WONG Kwok-hing's suggestion of extending the inter-modal discounts to buses, SDT/KCRC said that prior to the commissioning of MOSR, KCRC had discussed with operators of buses, minibuses and taxis on inter-modal discounts. While minibus and taxi operators were willing to provide inter-modal discounts, bus companies did not consider that these discounts should be applied to buses. KCRC would be willing to work with minibus operators on the provision of inter-modal discounts for MOSR passengers.

25. Mr LAU Kong-wah said that MOSR was very well patronized by MOS residents, as it was very convenient for those who travelled frequently between MOS and Shatin. He opined that its patronage could be further improved if more

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concessions such as monthly passes were introduced. More publicity should be conducted on the use of MOSR, and the public should be made aware that a certain section of MOSR was free of charge when interchanging to East Rail (ER). On the other hand, he was gravely concerned about the noise impact arising from the operation of MOSR. According to latest measurements, the levels of noise generating from the MOSR service was over 56 decibels and was considered unacceptable by affected residents. He had requested at an earlier meeting that more efforts should be made to reduce the noise levels to an acceptable level. He understood that some additional noise mitigating measures would be implemented in June/July 2005 and he hoped that these would be able to reduce the noise levels to below 55 decibels.

26. SDT/KCRC explained that the train noise monitoring at the sensitive locations conducted by KCRC before and after the commissioning of MOSR indicated that the noise levels were within statutory limits. KCRC would inspect the track and wheels regularly and make improvements as necessary to the contact surface, and would continue to monitor the noise levels in ensuring compliance with statutory limits. Meanwhile, additional two-metre high visual barriers would be installed near the Shatinpark to shield the nearby residential blocks from the glaring effect of train lights. These barriers would have the added benefit of reducing the noise levels generated by trains. It was hoped that with the completion of the barriers in June/July 2005 coupled with the additional noise mitigation measures such as reduction of train speed and application of noise absorbing lining, the noise levels could be further reduced. He agreed to provide a report on the noise monitoring of MOSR service after completion of the barriers.

KCRC

27. Mr Patrick LAU sought clarification on the visual barriers to be installed as he was concerned that these might create an unacceptable visual impact. Mr K K LEE, Senior Director, Capital Projects, KCRC (SDCP/KCRC) explained that to ensure uniformity, the visual barriers would be made from the same materials as those used for the noise barriers at MOSR.

28. Mr Andrew CHENG said that as KCRC had decided to respond positively to the public request for monthly passes on MOSR which would serve the dual purpose of boosting patronage and reducing pressure on fare increases, he queried why KCRC would still have to collect data on MOSR passengers' travelling patterns instead of introducing the concession right way. SDT/KCRC explained that as MOSR passengers could interchange to either southbound or northbound section of ER which would have different fares, therefore an analysis on the passengers' travelling patterns would need to be conducted before deciding on the pricing of the month passes. As a large amount of data had already been collected since the commissioning of MOSR, KCRC would try to complete the analysis as soon as possible.

29. Given the financial gains which KCRC had secured in the past, Mr Andrew CHENG was of the view that the analysis on the pricing of the monthly passes needed not be made on commercial principles. The monthly pass scheme should be equitably applied to MOSR and ER passengers to relieve the high fare pressure of

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those residing in the New Territories East. DS/ETW(T)2 said that the Administration had all along encouraged transport operators to provide concessions to the travelling public. She believed that KCRC would positively and proactively respond to concession arrangements based on prudent commercial principles. On the extension of the monthly pass scheme to include passengers of ER in addition to MOSR, SDT/KCRC explained that a comprehensive analysis on the data collected was being conducted and the extension would be considered if it was satisfied that the efficacy of the scheme could be improved if it were to cover ER passengers as well.

30. Given that there were a number of Country Parks along MOSR, Mr WONG Kwok-hing sought KCRC's views on his earlier suggestion on the provision of concessionary fares for MOSR passengers to promote eco-tourism in the area. SDT/KCRC said that the suggestion was worth pursuing as there were quite a number of tourists visiting the nearby Country Parks. It was noted that during public holidays, passengers alighting from Wu Kai Sha Station would like to make their way to Sai Kung using feeder services. Instead of providing concessionary fares, consideration had been given to introducing measures to facilitate connection of transport services. In this connection, TD and other transport providers would be consulted on the provision of connection services and advice would be sought from the District Councils on their routing. It was hoped that the said arrangement would be implemented in the summer of 2005 and this would expect to boost the patronage of MOSR during public holidays.

31. Mr WONG Kwok-hing enquired if consideration could be given to the provision of concessionary fares to elderlies travelling on MOSR during public holidays. SDT/KCRC said that there were a number of concessionary arrangements which were under consideration. At present, elderlies were able to travel on West Rail at a concessionary fare of \$2 during public holidays and consideration was being given as to whether such concession should be extended to MOSR and ER as well.

VI Shatin to Central Link

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| (LC Paper No. CB(1)609/04-05(05) | - Information paper provided by the Administration for the meeting on 7 January 2005 |
| LC Paper No. CB(1)610/04-05 | - Background brief prepared by the Secretariat) |

32. With the use of a power point, SDCP/KCRC gave a presentation on the current position of the proposed Shatin to Central Link (SCL).

(Post meeting note: The power point presentation materials tabled at the meeting was circulated under LC Paper No. CB(1)1046/04-05(01) on 7 March 2005.)

33. Mr WONG Kwok-hing said that residents of To Kwa Wan and Whampoa were

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disappointed to learn that the To Kwa Wan Station would be combined with Ma Tau Wai Station under the Preferred Scheme on SCL. Despite the provision of the Automated People Mover System at Whampoa, residents would much prefer to preserve the Ma Tau Wai Station to serve the dense population in the area. He therefore urged for a reconsideration of residents' request. He also enquired if the proposed Causeway Bay North Station would be connected underground to MTR's Causeway Bay South Station.

34. SDCP/KCRC said that KCRC had considered the provision of the To Kwa Wan Station. However, this was considered not technically feasible. It had therefore decided that the To Kwa Wan Station should be combined with the Ma Tau Wai Station since both stations were very close and were serving overlapping catchment areas. Meanwhile, the underground connection of the proposed Causeway Bay North Station with MTR's Causeway Bay South Station would be examined, taking into account their exit locations to the landmark areas in Causeway Bay. The Chairman was of the view that the said connection would hinge upon the merger between KCRC and MTRCL.

35. Mr LAU Kong-wah was concerned about the time frame for the commissioning of SCL, and the planning for the rail link proposals for Whampoa areas as he was aware that both KCRC and MTRCL had expressed interest for the said rail link. The Deputy Secretary for the Environment, Transport and Works (Transport)1 (DS/ETW(T)1) said that in view of the complexity of the proposed merger between KCRC and MTRCL, he was not able to disclose further details such as the time table for SCL at this stage. The Administration was actively studying the Joint Merger Report with the two railway corporations, taking into account the need to balance public interest as well as those of shareholders. The interchange arrangements of the SCL scheme in the Joint Merger Report had yet to be decided but these would likely bring about more benefits to the travelling public as compared to the original proposal. As for the design of the rail link proposal for Whampoa areas, this would be revealed when a decision was made on SCL. SDCP/KCRC said that under the Preferred Scheme on SCL, MOSR passengers could proceed direct to Tsimshatsui without any railway interchange. In reply to Mr LAU Kong-wah's question on the forecast patronage of passengers traveling between the east-west railway corridor from Wu Kai Sha to Tuen Mun, SDCP/KCRC said that it was not expected that many MOS residents would travel between Wu Kai Sha and Tuen Mun but many of them would travel between Tsim Sha Tsui and West Kowloon.

36. Mr Andrew CHENG was concerned that SCL would be aborted after the proposed merger of KCRC and MTRCL as the two corporations would no longer have to compete with each other on the provision of train service. In this connection, he requested the Administration to give an undertaking that SCL would be the first rail project to proceed after the merger and that its implementation should not be hindered by contentions over alignment, extent of reclamation and balance of public and shareholders' interests. He said that if SCL could not materialize, MOSR would only be serving the MOS catchment and could not be extended to the urban areas.

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DS/ETW(T)1 said that the Administration was committed to the provision of SCL and had been actively discussing with KCRC on the proposed options. Therefore it was not a question of whether SCL would be built but rather which option to adopt. The preferred SCL option would be made known to the public at the same time when a decision on the merger was announced.

37. Given the unacceptable delay in the provision of SCL, Mr Albert CHAN enquired whether, in the event that a decision on the proposed merger could not be reached in six months' time, consideration could be given to proceeding with the construction of SCL. While acknowledging members' concerns about the need for early provision of SCL, DS/ETW(T)1 reiterated that in view of the complexities of the proposed merger, a longer time was needed to resolve the issues involved but efforts would be made to complete the merger talks as soon as possible.

VII Any other business

38. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 12:43 pm.

Council Business Division 1
Legislative Council Secretariat
21 April 2005