

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

**Progress update on Kowloon Southern Link (KSL)
and
Co-ordination of Public Transport Services arising from
the Commissioning of KSL**

Purpose

The Kowloon Southern Link (“KSL”) is expected to be commissioned in the second half of 2009. This paper informs Members of the progress of the KSL and the Administration’s plan to consult the concerned District Councils (“DCs”) about the proposed public transport service plan to tie in with the opening of KSL.

Background

2. The KSL will link Nam Cheong Station to East Tsim Sha Tsui Station, connecting the West Rail Line (WRL) and the East Rail Line (ERL). The new 3.8-kilometer long rail link will have one intermediate station at West Kowloon – Austin Station.

3. The rail alignment of the KSL is set out in Annex A. The project progress report on the KSL as prepared by the MTR Corporation Limited, is attached in Annex B.

4. Upon completion, the KSL will provide a direct link between the Northwest New Territories (NWNT) and the heart of the Kowloon peninsula. It will take only 30 minutes to travel from Tin Shui Wai to Tsim Sha Tsui East. The WRL from Tuen Mun will then connect all the way to Hung Hom, where WRL passengers will also have convenient interchange to the ERL to the Northeast New Territories (NENT).

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 is capable of supporting sustainability and the future development of Hong Kong. The prevailing

transport strategy is to use railway as the backbone with the co-ordination of public transport services. Franchised buses will continue to be major transport service providers in areas not conveniently served by the railways, and their role in providing feeder services to the railway stations will be strengthened. Other modes including public light buses (“PLBs”), taxis and non-franchised buses will continue to supplement the railways and franchised buses. The different public transport services will be better co-ordinated to enhance network efficiency, maintain reasonable fares, relieve congestion and address environmental concerns.

6. The KSL will provide a direct link between NWNT and Jordan, Tsim Sha Tsui and Hung Hom areas. At present, since passengers travelling between NWNT and Kowloon (western and southern) can already make use of the existing rail network by interchanging between WRL with Tsuen Wan Line (TWL), the impact of the opening of the KSL on other road-based public transport modes is expected to be insignificant. It is forecast that only about 2% of the existing passengers from other road-based public transport would switch to use KSL.

7. Transport Department (“TD”) has examined the possible changes to passengers’ travel pattern upon the opening of KSL. We expect that some of the existing bus and GMB passengers will switch to use KSL. The utilisation of the affected routes is therefore expected to decrease in varying degrees. On the other hand, GMB’s key role as rail feeder will mean that the KSL related losses of GMB ridership would be offset by new GMB feeder demand both due to population growth in areas outside the walk-in catchment of railway stations, as well as new catchment niche created after the reorganization of bus services. On the basis of the new travel pattern of passengers after the opening of the KSL, changes will need to be made to the public transport services, taking into account relevant factors including -

- (a) the broad transport policy framework described in paragraph 5 above;
- (b) the maintenance of an efficient public transport network by rationalising and improving the co-ordination of public transport services to better match changing demand and minimise wasteful competition;
- (c) the provision of feeder services to ensure good connectivity of the railway stations for easy access by passengers;
- (d) the maintenance of viable networks of franchised bus and

GMB services; and

- (e) the maintenance of healthy competition among service providers to provide choice to commuters.

8. The public transport service adjustments will include new feeder services to better feed passengers to the railway stations, and route modification/cancellation or frequency adjustments for overlapping services or to help improve operational efficiency and utilisation. It is expected that the service changes will reduce bus trips in busy urban areas and hence relieve traffic congestion and reduce roadside emission.

Consultation and Implementation

9. The relevant DCs will be consulted on the public transport service plan starting from December 2008. TD will also examine and discuss with DC members and relevant stakeholders on details of the arrangements. The Administration's target is to finalise the public transport service plan before the second quarter of 2009 so that adequate publicity can be mounted before the opening of the KSL.

10. The public transport service plan will be implemented in a progressive manner. Upon the commissioning of the KSL, those recommended modified bus services and new GMB feeder services will be introduced to enhance connectivity with the new rail link, while other changes will be made gradually in the light of on-the-ground observation to ensure smooth implementation and avoid confusion. If necessary, refinements may be made to the phased implementation programme and other service adjustments may be implemented in consultation with the concerned parties having regard to the actual situation on the ground. There will be comprehensive publicity before implementation of the changes.

Transport and Housing Bureau
Transport Department
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The Kowloon Southern Link

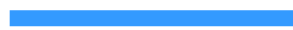


LEGEND:

West Rail Line



East Rail Line



Progress Update on Kowloon Southern Link

The progress of the Kowloon Southern Link (KSL) is set out below.

General Progress

2. Works commenced in August 2005. By the third quarter of 2008, civil construction of the railway facilities is largely complete. Railway systems installation is progressing well. Testing and commissioning activities have commenced, with target commissioning of the rail link for revenue service in the second half of 2009.

3. Manpower participating in the project now reaches 1,900 in total.

4. The 3.8 km-railway is 95% complete overall after 39 months of construction.

Civil Works

5. The passenger station (Austin Station) was topped out in April 2008. Building services installation and builder's works are 85% complete. Power transformers of the China Light Power have been energised to provide permanent electricity power supply to the station facilities.

6. All railway tunnel structures were completed, including the connections with the existing tunnels at Nam Cheong Station and East Tsim Sha Tsui Station. Road reinstatement along the tunnel alignment is being carried out in stages.

7. Following the completion of the cut-and-cover tunnel at Salisbury Road, the New World Subway No. 1 was reinstated and open for public use in late September 2008.

8. Statutory inspection of the Yau Ma Tei Ventilation Building by the Fire Services Department was completed successfully in September 2008. Statutory inspections for other railway facilities will continue in early 2009.

Railway Systems

9. Trackwork is 100% completed. Trackside cabling and equipment installation is nearing completion. The overhead line system has been installed and is targeted for energisation in November 2008 to allow testing of the signalling system with trains.
10. Installation of equipment inside the station is progressing at full speed. Testing and commissioning activities have commenced.
11. Testing of the retrofitted West Rail signalling system on the tracks between East Tsim Sha Tsui and Hung Hom stations were carried out during non-traffic hours since April 2008. Test results have been satisfactory.
12. The six new passenger trains had been delivered and launched progressively between May and October 2008 for passenger services on the West Rail Line.

MTR Corporation Limited
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