

立法會

Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(4)890/16-17(06)

Ref. : CB4/PS/1/16

Panel on Transport

Subcommittee on Matters Relating to Railways Meeting on 28 April 2017

Updated background brief on MTR station facilities

Purpose

This paper provides background information on MTR station facilities. It also summarizes the major views and concerns expressed by the Legislative Council Members during previous discussions on the subject.

Background

Enhancement of existing station facilities

2. To enhance passenger safety, the pre-merger Mass Transit Railway Corporation announced in 1999 to proceed with the platform screen doors ("PSDs") retrofitting programme at 30 underground stations on the Kwun Tong Line, Tsuen Wan Line and Island Line in phases. The retrofitting works were completed in 2006. For new railway lines started operating since 1998, PSDs or automatic platform gates ("APGs") were included as standard station facilities. Due to the technical difficulties and challenges in retrofitting APGs along East Rail Line ("ERL") (i.e. safety risk associated with wide platform gaps, as well as limitations of platform structures, existing signalling system and trains), the MTR Corporation Limited ("MTRCL") decided to carry out the APG retrofitting works in tandem with the Shatin to Central Link ("SCL") project.¹ According to

¹ According to MTRCL based on the latest works progress as at end December 2016, the target commissioning dates of Tai Wai to Hung Hom Section and Hung Hom to Admiralty Section of SCL are mid-2019 and 2021 respectively.

MTRCL, the retrofitting works of APGs in the stations of Ma On Shan Line ("MOSL") are expected to be completed in 2017.

3. Furthermore, MTRCL has provided a number of additional facilities/services inside stations, including wide gates, benches, public toilets, lifts, LCD passenger information display system to provide real-time information on train operations and other matters, and Wi-Fi hotspots service, for greater convenience and comfort of passengers. MTRCL will also replace 160 sets of chillers, which are used to adjust station temperature, at 36 stations along seven MTR lines, four depots and the Tsing Yi Operations Control Centre in phases in six winters from 2017 to 2023.

4. The installation of wide gates and benches provides convenience to passengers, especially the elderly, wheelchair users and passengers with luggage or prams. There is at least one wide gate at each MTR station, and a total of 84 additional wide gates have been installed at some stations. 326 benches are installed at station platforms and along passageways that are relatively long.

5. Besides, to provide a friendly and pleasant in-station environment for passengers, MTRCL has been allocating space in MTR stations to implement the "art in station architecture" programme since 1998. Art pieces such as sculptures, roof hangings and mosaics have been incorporated by MTRCL into the design and structure of stations. 60 works created by local and international artists have become a part of various MTR stations.

Station facilities of new railway lines

6. To meet the needs and changes of the society, including changes in the age structure of the Hong Kong population, increase in the number of long distance rail passengers, needs of persons with disabilities ("PwDs") and passenger aspirations, MTRCL has been committed to introducing new facilities and designs to the stations of the five new railway lines, namely West Island Line ("WIL"), Kwun Tong Line Extension, South Island Line (East) ("SIL(E)"), the Hong Kong section of Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link and SCL. Station barrier-free facilities such as passenger lifts, tactile guide paths, and tactile station layout maps with audible device will be provided. Other facilities and equipment such as newly-designed ticketing machines, public toilets, and PSDs or APGs, will also be provided.

Major views and concerns of Members

7. Members were briefed on the on-going enhancement of MTR station facilities at the meetings of the Subcommittee on Matters Relating to Railways ("the Subcommittee"). Members also raised Council questions on relevant matters. Their major views and concerns are summarized in the ensuing paragraphs.

Barrier-free access facilities

8. Members urged MTRCL to review and increase the number of lifts and escalators at MTR stations. According to the information paper provided by MTRCL in April 2016,² 47 of 87 MTR stations were equipped with passenger lifts, whilst installation of lifts was not necessary for the other 34 stations because they were either at-grade, equipped with ramps for wheelchair access, or passengers could get access to the MTR stations through nearby facilities (e.g. shopping malls). MTRCL was also actively studying, planning or implementing lift installation works at the remaining stations. Moreover, MTRCL was replacing 24 hydraulic lifts at various stations with new traction lifts in phases to facilitate more efficient and comfortable movement of passengers entering and leaving stations, and between station concourses and platforms. As at April 2016, the replacement of eight of these lifts had been completed and reopened for service. The replacement of the remaining 16 hydraulic lifts at 14 stations was targeted for completion in 2018.

9. Members pointed out that there was only one external lift connecting the station concourse of Admiralty Station with street-level and the podium of Harcourt Garden. They considered that this was definitely inadequate for facilitating access by PwDs. They further pointed out that the train floors did not align with the level of the platforms of SIL(E) at Admiralty Station, causing difficulties for wheelchair users to board and alight trains. They urged MTRCL to enhance barrier-free facilities at Admiralty Station. In response, MTRCL advised that due to geographical constraint, only one external lift could be retrofitted at Admiralty Station. Paying due regard to passengers with special needs, MTRCL had encouraged passengers to let the needy to use the lift first and would make enhancements to barrier-free access facilities based on views collected. Upon commissioning of SCL, more barrier-free access facilities would be available at Admiralty Station and the current situation would be improved.

² LC Paper No. CB(4)854/15-16(05)

10. According to MTRCL, the Corporation had been conducting half-yearly communication meetings with disabled groups for many years to thoroughly understand their needs for station facilities and services. To better cater for their needs, at least one barrier-free access was provided for in every MTR station. Where feasible, one lift connecting the concourse and street-level would be provided.

11. Members pointed out that the wide gates at some MTR stations of WIL remained open even after the passengers had passed through them. They asked if MTRCL had set a standard time for closing of wide gates, and whether they had consulted relevant organizations and PwDs in setting the time limit. MTRCL advised that in operating the wide gates, passenger safety and convenience were given paramount considerations. Apart from setting a standard time for the opening and closing of the gates, each wide gate was equipped with some 19 sensors so that the gates would close only after the passengers had safely passed through the gates.

Public toilets

12. Members urged MTRCL to expedite the installation of public toilets at major interchange MTR stations. They further suggested that public toilets should be made available at all stations in the near future. According to MTRCL, new toilets would be provided in 10 interchange stations alongside major station enhancement works. New toilets in Mong Kok and Prince Edward Stations had been opened for use since January 2015. As for the remaining eight interchange stations not yet equipped with public toilets, including Admiralty Station, Tsim Sha Tsui Station, Yau Ma Tei Station, Lai King Station, Central Station, North Point Station, Yau Tong Station and Tiu Keng Leng Station, public toilets would be provided by 2020. In addition, the refurbishment of toilets in stations along MOSL was completed in 2015.

Retrofitting of platform screen doors/automatic platform gates

13. Subcommittee members in general expressed strong dissatisfaction with the long lead time to retrofit APGs along ERL/MOSL. In this connection, members urged MTRCL to introduce additional safety measures until completion of the retrofitting project to prevent passengers from falling onto the rail track, and employ additional platform assistants to maintain platform order at ERL and MOSL stations.

Wi-Fi hotspots service

14. Subcommittee members welcomed the provision of free Wi-Fi hotspots service at all MTR stations since 7 July 2013. Nevertheless, they

suggested extending the free Wi-Fi hotspots service up to 30 minutes. MTRCL explained that passengers would be able to enjoy the free Wi-Fi hotspots service at all MTR stations for 15 minutes each time and they might renew such service for each eligible device five times per day. MTRCL would review the usage of the free Wi-Fi hotspots at all MTR stations.

Breast-feeding rooms

15. Some Subcommittee members suggested that breast-feeding rooms should be provided at stations, in particular for the new railway lines, to facilitate passengers in need. MTRCL advised that if passengers required breast-feeding facility, they could approach MTR staff for assistance. A dedicated private area could be provided for the parents' use.

Water drinking facility

16. There were some suggestions of installing water drinking facility within MTR stations. MTRCL responded that they would consider members' suggestion. That said, MTRCL advised that the suggestion needed careful consideration taking into account the huge patronage and passenger flow at MTR stations. Any water spillage might lead to slippery floors and therefore pose safety risks to passengers.

Recent flooding incident at South Horizons Station of South Island Line (East)

17. On 14 February 2017, leakage of water from a cracked fresh water main near South Horizons Station of SIL(E) caused serious flooding of the Station. The Station was closed for four hours due to the flooding. A question was raised at the Council meeting of 1 March 2017 on the flooding incident.³ Members were concerned about whether the structure of the South Horizons Station had been affected, and if MTRCL had examined the structural conditions of the water mains near the various railway stations along SIL(E), and also re-examined the water main alignments near railway stations under construction to prevent recurrence of similar incidents. Members also raised concerns about safety issues as flooding inside railway stations could cause electricity leakages.

18. In response, the Administration advised that MTRCL had carried out inspection immediately and found that the connection of a fresh water pipe outside the station was loosened. Fresh water was ejected and

³ Source: <http://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/201703/01/P2017030100365.htm>

damaged part of the roof, which was constructed by fire resistance board, of Entrance/Exit B of South Horizons Station. The Water Supplies Department fixed and strengthened the supports of the pipe shortly that night. After confirming the structural safety of the Station was not affected, MTRCL resumed the services of the Station at around 12:25 am the next day.

19. According to MTRCL, the possibility of flooding in stations had been taken into account when designing all MTR stations. Arrangements had been made to minimize the impact on the important electrical and mechanical equipment of stations in the event of flooding. Besides, MTRCL had established contingency arrangements for various incidents including flooding.

Latest development

20. The Administration and MTRCL plan to brief members on the progress of enhancement of MTR station facilities at the Subcommittee meeting to be held on 28 April 2017. Upon the Subcommittee's request, the Administration and MTRCL will also brief members on the recent incident of flooding from a burst water pipe in South Horizons Station of SIL(E) on 14 February 2017.

Relevant papers

21. A list of relevant papers is at **Appendix**.

Council Business Division 4
Legislative Council Secretariat
21 April 2017

Panel on Transport
Subcommittee on Matters Relating to Railways

List of relevant papers on MTR station facilities

Date of meeting	Committee	Minutes/Paper	LC Paper No.
19.1.2011	Council meeting	Hon WONG Sing-chi raised a question on MTR facilities and services	http://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/201101/19/P201101190133.htm
21.1.2011	Subcommittee on Matters Relating to Railways	The MTR Corporation Limited's paper on facilities and design of MTR train compartments	CB(1)1072/10-11(07) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr10-11/english/panels/tp/tp_rdp/papers/tp_rdp0121cb1-1072-7-e.pdf
		Minutes of meeting	CB(1)1916/10-11 http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr10-11/english/panels/tp/tp_rdp/minutes/rdp20110121.pdf
13.1.2012	Subcommittee on Matters Relating to Railways	The MTR Corporation Limited's paper on design of next generation of railway stations and update on retrofitting platform screen doors	CB(1)785/11-12(03) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr11-12/english/panels/tp/tp_rdp/papers/tp_rdp0113cb1-785-3-e.pdf
		Minutes of meeting	CB(1)2461/11-12 http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr11-12/english/panels/tp/tp_rdp/minutes/rdp20120113.pdf

Date of meeting	Committee	Minutes/Paper	LC Paper No.
2.3.2012	Subcommittee on Matters Relating to Railways	The MTR Corporation Limited's supplementary information on retrofitting automatic platform gates along the East Rail Line and Ma On Shan Line	CB(1)1154/11-12(05) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr11-12/english/panels/tp/tp_rdp/papers/tp_rdp0302cb1-1154-5-e.pdf
		Minutes of meeting	CB(1)1772/11-12 http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr11-12/english/panels/tp/tp_rdp/minutes/rdp20120302.pdf
4.1.2013	Subcommittee on Matters Relating to Railways	The MTR Corporation Limited's paper on railway system for South Island Line (East)	CB(1)363/12-13(03) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr12-13/english/panels/tp/tp_rdp/papers/tp_rdp0104cb1-363-3-e.pdf
		Minutes of meeting	CB(1)522/12-13 http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr12-13/english/panels/tp/tp_rdp/minutes/rdp20130104.pdf
9.1.2013	Council meeting	Dr Hon KWOK Ka-ki raised a question on the footbridge connecting Tsuen Wan and Tsuen Wan West MTR stations	http://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/201301/09/P201301080429.htm
5.7.2013	Subcommittee on Matters Relating to Railways	The MTR Corporation Limited's paper on its service performance	CB(1)1421/12-13(01) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr12-13/english/panels/tp/tp_rdp/papers/tp_rdp0705cb1-1421-1-e.pdf

Date of meeting	Committee	Minutes/Paper	LC Paper No.
		Minutes of meeting	CB(1)534/13-14 http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr12-13/english/panels/tp/tp_rdp/minutes/rdp20130705.pdf
11.6.2014	Council meeting	Dr Hon CHIANG Lai-wan raised a question on MTR station facilities	http://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/201406/11/P201406110360.htm
2.7.2014	Council meeting	Hon TANG Ka-piu raised a question facilities and services provided at MTR stations for persons with disabilities	http://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/201407/02/P201407021155.htm
3.7.2015	Subcommittee on Matters Relating to Railways	The MTR Corporation Limited's paper on the progress update on enhancement of MTR station facilities	CB(4)1228/14-15(03) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr14-15/english/panels/tp/tp_rdp/papers/tp_rdp20150703cb4-1228-3-e.pdf
		Minutes of meeting	CB(4)1491/14-15 http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr14-15/english/panels/tp/tp_rdp/minutes/rdp20150703.pdf
22.2.2016	Subcommittee on Matters Relating to Railways	Administration's paper on the progress update of the construction of the Shatin to Central Link (as at 31 December 2015)	CB(4)610/15-16(05) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr15-16/english/panels/tp/tp_rdp/papers/tp_rdp20160222cb4-610-5-e.pdf

Date of meeting	Committee	Minutes/Paper	LC Paper No.
		Administration's supplementary information paper on the additional toilet facilities provided at the new concourses at the stations along the Shatin to Central Link and the original and latest estimates of the construction costs of the various on-going railway projects (Follow-up paper)	CB(4)960/15-16(01) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr15-16/english/panels/tp/tp_rdp/papers/tp_rdp20160222cb4-960-1-e.pdf
		Minutes of meeting	CB(4)983/15-16 http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr15-16/english/panels/tp/tp_rdp/minutes/rdp20160222.pdf
19.4.2016	Subcommittee on Matters Relating to Railways	The MTR Corporation Limited's paper on enhancement of MTR station facilities	CB(4)854/15-16(05) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr15-16/english/panels/tp/tp_rdp/papers/tp_rdp20160419cb4-854-5-e.pdf
		Minutes of meeting	CB(4)1282/15-16 http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr15-16/english/panels/tp/tp_rdp/minutes/rdp20160419.pdf
10.2.2017	Subcommittee on Matters Relating to Railways	Administration's paper on the progress update of the construction of the South Island Line (East) (as at 31 December 2016)	CB(4)500/16-17(05) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr16-17/english/panels/tp/tp_rdp/papers/tp_rdp20170210cb4-500-5-e.pdf

Date of meeting	Committee	Minutes/Paper	LC Paper No.
1.3.2017	Council meeting	Hon KWOK Wai-keung raised a question on MTR South Island Line	http://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/201703/01/P2017030100365.htm

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