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Panel on Transport

Subcommittee on Matters Relating to Railways
Meeting on 2 February 2018

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 members of the Subcommittee on Matters Relating to Railways ("the Subcommittee") during previous discussions on the subject.

Background

2. The MTR Corporation Limited ("MTRCL") has introduced platform screen doors ("PSDs") retrofitting programme to enhance passenger safety. The retrofitting works at 30 underground stations on the Kwun Tong Line, Tsuen Wan Line and Island Line were completed in 2006. PSDs or automatic platform gates ("APGs") were also included as standard station facilities for new railway lines started operating since 1998. 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), MTRCL decided to carry out the APG retrofitting works in tandem with the Shatin to Central Link ("SCL") project.¹ According to MTRCL,

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.

the retrofitting works of APGs in the stations of Ma On Shan Line ("MOSL") were completed in December 2017.²

3. MTRCL has also introduced some enhanced facilities/services inside stations, including public toilets in 10 interchange stations, 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. A massive programme to 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 would also be implemented in phases in six winters from 2017 to 2023.

4. The installation of seats and wide gates provides convenience to passengers, especially the elderly, wheelchair users and passengers with luggage or prams. There are in total over 2 000 seats installed at 93 MTR stations. MTRCL has planned to install additional wide gates at stations by three phases since late 2013, with the aim of installing at least two wide gates in each station. The first two phases involving the addition of wide gates in 55 stations have been completed in early 2016 and the whole programme is expected to be completed by the third quarter of 2018.

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. As at April 2017, 72 works created by local and international artists have become a part of various MTR stations.

Major views and concerns of Members

6. Members of the Subcommittee were briefed on the on-going enhancement of MTR station facilities at its meetings. Members also raised Council questions on relevant matters. Their major views and concerns are summarized in the ensuing paragraphs.

Barrier-free access facilities

7. Members urged MTRCL to review and increase the number of lifts and escalators at MTR stations. According to the latest information

² Annex 2 to LC Paper No. CB(4)538/17-18(07)

provided by MTRCL,³ 56 out of 93 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 planning and implementing lift installation works at the remaining stations. Moreover, MTRCL was replacing 25 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 January 2018, the replacement of 23 lifts had been completed and reopened for service. The replacement of the remaining two hydraulic lifts at two stations was targeted for completion within 2018.

8. Members were concerned 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.

9. 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.

10. 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.

³ LC Paper No. CB(4)538/17-18(03)

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

11. 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, Prince Edward and Admiralty stations had been opened for use in 2015 and 2016 respectively. The installation of new toilets at Tiu Keng Leng and Yau Tong stations has commenced in 2017 and is expected to be completed in the first half of 2019. Relevant works at Lai King and Central stations will commence in March 2018 and are expected to be ready for service in the second half of 2019. As for the remaining three interchange stations, MTRCL would strive to complete the toilet installation works by 2020.

Retrofitting of platform screen doors/automatic platform gates

12. 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 service

13. 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.

14. Some Subcommittee members were also concerned about the progress of the study conducted on the provision of free Wi-Fi service in all MTR trains. MTRCL responded that given the large volume of passengers of MTR, it was technically challenging to cope with the high loading demand if free Wi-Fi service was extended to all MTR trains.

Further feasibility study in this regard would be carried out.

Breastfeeding rooms

15. Some Subcommittee members suggested that breastfeeding rooms should be provided at stations, in particular for the new railway lines, to facilitate passengers in need. MTRCL advised that it would include breastfeeding rooms at new stations when designing and planning for future new railway lines. Both public toilets and baby care rooms would be provided at seven interchange stations alongside with their respective major renovation works. With the support from its staff, MTRCL has set aside some space for breastfeeding purpose at the staff rest rooms located in 20 interchange stations, with a view to providing convenience earlier to passengers in the interim period before the completion of the facilities.

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.

Bicycle parking spaces

17. Responding to a member's enquiry regarding the provision of bicycle parking spaces next to MTR stations, MTRCL advised that such spaces were currently available in the vicinity of some MTR stations. When planning for the provision of bicycle parking spaces near MTR stations, it had to take into account a number of factors, including space and environment constraints and support from the Government.

Latest development

18. The Administration and MTRCL plan to brief members on the latest progress of enhancement of MTR station facilities at the Subcommittee meeting to be held on 2 February 2018.

Relevant papers

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

Council Business Division 4
Legislative Council Secretariat
31 January 2018

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
28.4.2017	Subcommittee on Matters Relating to Railways	MTR Corporation Limited's paper on the latest progress of enhancement of MTR station facilities	CB(4)890/16-17(05) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr16-17/english/panels/tp/tp_rdp/papers/tp_rdp20170428cb4-890-5-e.pdf

		Minutes of meeting	CB(4)119/17-18 http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr16-17/english/panels/tp/tp_rdp/minutes/rdp20170428.pdf
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