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Ms Sophie LAU
Clerk to Subcommittee on Matters Relating to Railways
Legislative Council Panel on Transport
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central, Hong Kong
(Fax no.: 2840 0716)

3 August 2020

Dear Ms LAU,

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

**Progress update on upgrading signalling system for railway lines and
progress update on enhancement of MTR facilities and customer experience**

The meeting of the Subcommittee on Matters Relating to Railways held on 19 June 2020 discussed the two captioned subjects with the MTR Corporation Limited (“MTRCL”). The supplementary information provided by the MTRCL in response to the questions raised by Members at the meeting is enclosed for Members’ reference.

Yours sincerely,

(Veronica TSE)
for Secretary for Transport and Housing

c.c.:
MTR Corporation Limited

(Attn.: Mr Y C CHAN)

Legislative Council Panel on Transport
Subcommittee on Matters Relating to Railways
Meeting on 19 June 2020

Progress update on upgrading signalling system for railway lines

**Reply on the follow-up question raised by Hon Wilson OR Chong-shing about
the signalling upgrade programme of the MTR's urban railway lines**

Making all-in efforts to speed up the signalling upgrade for Kwun Tong Line

In view of the incident of the new signalling system testing on Tsuen Wan Line (“TWL”) took place on 18 March 2019, the MTRCL is pressing ahead with the implementation of the recommendations made by the Investigation Panel and strictly overseeing the software verification and rectification of the entire signalling system by the software contractor. As safety is of prime concern, we need to attend to fine detail when we proceed with the works with numerous reviews between each step. Unavoidably, there would be a delay in the new signalling upgrade for TWL, which will in turn affect the timetables for signalling upgrade for other lines, including Kwun Tong Line (“KTL”).

In the interest of time, the MTRCL’s teams will in parallel prepare for the installation of the relevant basic infrastructure and hardware on other railway lines. Over 70% of the installation works of the signalling system equipment on KTL has been completed, including the installation of the signalling equipment rooms of various stations and the signalling equipment at trackside areas. Signalling equipment installation tests and static tests have also been frequently conducted during non-traffic hours at night. The upgraded signalling system on KTL is expected to commence service around 2026/27. While ensuring safety, the MTRCL will spare no efforts in completing the signalling upgrade for various lines.

Endeavoring to ensure smooth operation of the existing signalling system

We are aware that the failure of commissioning the new signalling system under the original timetable will disappoint passengers and the residents we serve. The MTRCL apologises for the delay.

Before the commissioning of the new signalling system, the MTRCL will strive to ensure smooth operation of the existing system through the following measures and arrangements, and ease overcrowding of various railway lines, including KTL, during peak periods:

- (1) The MTRCL will maintain the current stringent maintenance work on capital assets and endeavor to ensure normal operation of the existing signalling system facilities, with a view to providing passengers with safe and reliable railway services.
- (2) The MTRCL will closely monitor the passenger flows at and the carrying capacities of various stations along KTL during peak periods and make timely train deployment or arrange for spare trains to enhance services in meeting passenger needs.
- (3) The MTRCL's train service teams will implement crowd management measures where necessary, including deploying platform assistants during peak periods to urge passengers to move into the centre of train compartments as far as possible after boarding, assist passengers in boarding and alighting trains, and ensure smooth opening and closing of train doors. Stanchions will also be erected at the platforms of individual major stations during peak hours where necessary, to divert passengers to less crowded train compartments.
- (4) The MTRCL has been offering various fare concessions, including the "Early Bird Discount"¹, to achieve diversion effect.
- (5) Tuen Ma Line ("TML") Phase 1 was smoothly commissioned in February this year, providing an alternative for passengers riding on East Rail Line and Ma On Shan Line to travel to stations along KTL via Diamond Hill, diverting part of the passengers destined for the same locations from Tai Wai Station to Kowloon Tong Station. The MTRCL is in full steam preparing for the full opening of TML. Upon the full opening of TML in the third quarter of 2021, we expect that the diversion effect will be more significant.

Riding out the difficult times with the public through fare concessions

The MTRCL has all along been providing various fare concessions to share the Corporation's success with passengers. The MTRCL announced on 20 February and 26 March respectively the fare concessions for this year, resulting in no actual adjustment on MTR fares for the passengers in 2020. Subsequently, the MTRCL further announced a new round of relief measures on 8 April, with a view to benefiting MTR passengers of different sectors, including a substantial enhancement in the current "3.3% Rebate for Every Octopus Trip" to "20% Rebate for Every Octopus Trip", and a

¹ Passengers holding Adult Octopus can enjoy a 35% fare discount when they exit from any of the designated core urban stations between 7:15 a.m. and 8:15 a.m. from Mondays to Fridays (except Public Holidays).

price reduction of \$100 for Frequent User Passes. The “20% Rebate for Every Octopus Trip” took effect on 1 July and will last until 1 January 2021. Under this new offer, together with the existing “Early Bird Discount”, Adult Octopus users can enjoy fare discounts of as much as about 55%.

MTR Corporation Limited
August 2020

Progress update on enhancement of MTR facilities and customer experience

The MTRCL strives to enhance MTR facilities and customer experience, including providing additional facilities (e.g. lifts) at the existing stations as far as practicable. Generally speaking, when providing such additional facilities at the stations built in early years, the MTRCL has to first ascertain whether there are sufficient spaces in the station areas, whether the proposed facilities will be related to any private lots, complexities of works, and emergency detrainment, etc.

Regarding the MTR Lam Tin Station, there is a barrier-free ramp connecting Lei Yue Mun Road at the existing Exit/Entrance C with a view to easing the circulation of passengers. The MTRCL has also explored the retrofitting of barrier-free facilities at Exit/Entrance A (Kai Tin Road) and Exit/Entrance D1 (Sin Fat Road) of the station. The space at the location off Exit/Entrance A involves a private lot and is not sufficient for building a lift, while the proposed retrofitting at Exit/Entrance D1 is constrained by inadequate space in the station area and a more suitable and feasible location is situated within a private lot. For the latter, the MTRCL has negotiated with the owners' committees of various housing estates in the relevant private lot. Although individual owners' committees of the housing estates are willing to communicate, it is believed that full support from the owners cannot be secured. Therefore, the MTRCL considers that the programme is infeasible.

Nevertheless, the Government is aware of the community's aspirations for barrier-free facilities and the need for the relevant facilities to be connected with the public transport interchange and the MTR Lam Tin Station. The Highways Department has engaged engineering consultants early this year to commence a feasibility study on the proposed lift system connecting Kai Tin Road and Lei Yue Mun Road (including its alignment and location). The study is in progress and is expected to be completed in July 2021.

To facilitate wheelchair users to access the station as far as possible, the MTRCL has launched a barrier-free connection service programme at Lam Tin Station free of charge since 2016, which enables wheelchair passengers to travel conveniently to and from Exit/Entrance C1 (Lei Yue Mun Road) and two other Exits/Entrances (A and D1) of the station.