

**Legislative Council Panel on Transport
Sub-Committee on Matters Relating to Railways**

**Better Coordination of Public Transport Services Arising from the
Commissioning of Ma On Shan Rail**

PURPOSE

This paper informs Members of our latest plan to better coordinate the provision of public transport services along the catchment area of the Ma On Shan Rail (“MOSR”) of the East Rail Extensions upon the commissioning of the new railway towards the end of this year.

BACKGROUND

2. Members were last briefed at the Sub-committee meeting on 29 June 2004 on the progress of the public consultation conducted by the Administration on the preliminary public transport plan (“the PT Plan”) to better coordinate the provision of public transport services along the MOSR catchment area. The objective of the preliminary PT Plan is to provide a coordinated public transport system to serve passengers following the addition of transport capacity provided by the new railway. The preliminary PT Plan has the following characteristics -

- (a) providing feeder services to ensure good connectivity of MOSR for easy access by passengers;
- (b) maintaining an efficient and viable public transport network by rationalising and improving co-ordination of public transport services to match changing demand and minimise wasteful competition; and
- (c) maintaining healthy competition among service providers to ensure commuter choice.

3. At present, there are 73 franchised bus routes and 13 green minibus (“GMB”) routes operating along the MOSR corridor. The preliminary PT Plan includes re-routeing of three existing franchised bus services to better feed passengers to the MOSR stations, service modification for 33 bus routes and six GMB routes, and route cancellation for 13 overlapping bus services. It is expected that the service changes will help reduce bus trips in the busy urban areas and hence relieve traffic congestion and reduce roadside emission.

4. MOSR is targetted for commissioning in late December 2004. It is necessary to finalise the PT Plan before then, to allow sufficient time for promotion and preparations for implementation.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

5. Since February 2004, the Transport Department (“TD”) has mounted two rounds of consultation to solicit public views on the preliminary PT Plan. In addition to the two briefings given to the Subcommittee in January 2004 and June 2004, 12 relevant District Councils (“DCs”) / Traffic & Transport Committees (“TTCs”) of Shatin and other districts were consulted on the proposed changes to services passing or terminating at their districts.

6. Apart from consultations at DC / TTC level, Area Consultative Forums (“ACFs”) were organised by TD to facilitate wider local consultation. The invitees of the ACFs include members of DCs and Area Committees, representatives of Mutual Aid Committees / Owners’ Corporations, schools principals and other local representatives.

7. During the two rounds of public consultation, TD attended altogether 10 DC / TTC meetings, 12 ACFs meetings and over 60 consultation meetings with local representatives and parties concerned to explain the rationalisation plan and to collect their views.

COMMENTS AND VIEWS RECEIVED

8. In general, the local community recognized the need to re-organise the existing public transport services following the commissioning of the new railway. However, they emphasized the importance of maintaining a reasonable choice of transport modes for passengers. Their major concern was about the proposals to discontinue some of the bus routes. Some groups opined that the routes should be retained, especially during peak periods. There were also suggestions that the major service rationalisation measures should be implemented progressively after the commissioning of the new railway with regard to the actual changes in passenger demand.

THE LATEST PT PLAN

9. Taking into account the comments received during the consultation, we have modified some of our original proposals. Most of these modifications involve services that do not directly duplicate with MOSR, and services that are maintained to provide more choices to passengers. To address the concerns on fare level and capacity of alternative bus routes, section fares, bus-bus interchange concessions and strengthening of alternative bus routes will be arranged where appropriate.

10. The latest PT Plan involves re-routeing of four bus routes to better feed passengers to the MOSR stations, and service modification for 37 bus routes and five GMB routes. Five bus routes for internal and external travel to urban Kowloon will discontinue service. These are mainly routes with low patronage and routes with adequate alternatives or serving a catchment which is similar to that of MOSR. The rationalisation is in line with the objectives of the PT Plan.

11. The Shatin DC was consulted on the latest PT Plan on 30 September 2004. DC members considered that the latest PT Plan was generally acceptable. The only major concern was about our proposal to relocate the terminus of cross harbour bus Route No. 680 (Lee On – Macau Ferry) from Central to Admiralty. Some members suggested that we should defer the relocation to enable better assessment of the actual travel demand upon commissioning of MOSR. Some members also suggested adding special trips between Ma On Shan and East Rail's University Station during evening peak hours. These suggestions have been taken into account in drawing up the implementation plan set out in paragraphs 12 to 17 below.

PHASED IMPLEMENTATION PLAN & PUBLICITY

Implementation Plan

12. As in the cases of the Tseung Kwan O Line and the West Rail, we will implement the PT Plan in a progressive manner, with due regard to the changes in passengers' travel pattern and demand, so as to avoid a mismatch between the demand for and supply of services. In formulating the implementation plan, TD has taken into account the request for a longer observation period for some proposals and also the need to provide wide publicity in advance of the changes to avoid confusion.

13. In one to two weeks before MOSR commences operation, GMB and bus feeder connections will be put in place to ensure good connectivity with MOSR, so that passengers will become familiar with the revised routeings.

14. Taking into account the comments from Shatin DC, a three-phase implementation plan over a period of several months will be adopted after MOSR commences operation.

15. Phase 1 will cover the first four weeks after the commissioning of MOSR. There will be virtually no change in transport services in the first two weeks, except for fine-tuning of feeder services based on demand. TD will closely monitor the changes in passenger demand during these two weeks. From the third week onwards, frequency adjustments on bus routes affected by MOSR will take place in a progressive manner, and it will continue on the basis of actual change in passenger demand.

16. Phase 2 will start from the end of the four weeks after the commissioning of MOSR. Major route changes agreed during the consultation such as cancellation and modification of existing routes will be implemented. In Phase 3, i.e. two months after the commissioning of MOSR, TD will report to Shatin DC on the proposed way forward regarding the proposed relocation of the terminus of Route No. 680.

17. Having regard to the actual situation on the ground, refinements may be made to the PT Plan and / or its implementation programme in consultation with the concerned parties.

Annex

18. The implementation plan is set out at Annex.

Publicity

19. TD will work with the public transport operators and the DCs concerned in organising a publicity campaign on the public transport service changes before the commissioning of MOSR. The campaign will begin in early December 2004 and will include distribution of service booklets and dissemination of updated information on TD's homepage. Nearer the implementation time, TD will coordinate with franchised bus operators to disseminate details of the changes by deploying customer service staff at major bus termini/stops where appropriate, posting notices at major termini/stops and inside buses, issuing press releases and setting up enquiry hotlines.

20. In addition, TD will activate its Emergency Transport Coordination Centre during the first few days of MOSR commissioning to coordinate transport arrangements as appropriate. Observation teams will be deployed on site to monitor the traffic and transport situation, including changes in passenger demand, to enable a prompt response to any problem that may arise.

21. Members are invited to note the contents of this paper.

Environment, Transport and Works Bureau
November 2004

Implementation Plan of the PT Plan

Pre-MOSR Commissioning (starting from 2 weeks before MOSR commissioning)

The focus will be enhancement of transport connections to MOSR stations, including -

- (a) introduction of 3 new shortworking GMB services (803, 807K and 810) to various MOSR stations.
- (b) re-routeing of 4 bus routes (40X, 89D, 99 and 274P) and 3 GMB routes (64K, 68K and 807K) to terminate or operate via the public transport interchanges adjacent to MOSR stations.

Phase 1 (starting from day 1 to end of the 4th week after MOSR commissioning)

The focus will be on monitoring of service provision and demand, and implementation of frequency adjustment.

Phase 2 (starting from end of 4th week to 8th week after MOSR commissioning)

The focus will be on implementation of more major route changes, including discontinuing 5 bus routes for internal and external travel to urban Kowloon, together with strengthening of alternative services. The 5 routes are -

- (a) 83P (Kwong Yuen to Kowloon City Ferry)
- (b) 86A (Sha Tin Wai – Cheung Sha Wan)
- (c) 285 (Bayshore Towers – Heng On) (circular)
- (d) 286P (Heng On – Mei Lam)
- (e) 287K (Ma On Shan Town Centre – University KCR Station) (circular)

Phase 3 (starting from two months onwards after railway commissioning)

To review and report to Shatin DC / TTC on proposed relocation of terminus of cross harbour bus Route No. 680 from Central to Admiralty with free bus-bus interchange.