



Railway Network

Railways play a vital role in serving the transport needs of Hong Kong. They account for about 35% of domestic public transport and some 65 per cent of the land-based cross-boundary passenger trips. Being high speed off-road mass carriers, railways provide fast, reliable and comfortable services, reduce the pressure on the road network, and avoid many of the environmental problems associated with road traffic. They are therefore the backbone of our public transport network.

Existing Network: The existing railway network in Hong Kong has a total rail length of over 200 kilometres. It includes two major railway systems, separately run by MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL) and Kowloon-Canton Railway Corporation (KCRC). Other fixed track systems include the Tramway and the Peak Tram.

Mass Transit Railway (MTR) System: The MTR system is a heavily utilised underground railway network consisting of five urban lines. The first passenger train of the Kwun Tong Line of the MTR started operation in late 1979. The MTR network was subsequently expanded to include Tsuen Wan Line (1982), Island Line (1985), the Eastern Harbour Crossing connecting Lam Tin to Quarry Bay (1989), the Tung Chung Line (1998) and the Tseung Kwan O Line (2002). The total route length of the MTR together with the Airport Express Line and Disneyland Resort Line is now about 91 kilometres and the number of stations is 53. The network carries about 2.4 million passenger trips on weekdays.

The Mass Transit Railway Corporation was established by statute in 1975 to operate the MTR. The Legislative Council passed in February 2000 the Mass Transit Railway Ordinance which provides the legal framework for the privatisation. The privatised MTRCL has been granted a 50-year franchise to operate the MTR system with effect from June 30, 2000.

Disneyland Resort Line (DRL) (previously called Penny's Bay Rail Link): To provide rail services for the Hong Kong Disneyland at Penny's Bay in Lantau Island, an approximately 3.5-kilometre long DRL was constructed from a new station at Sunny Bay along the existing MTR Tung Chung Line to Penny's Bay. The journey time is less than four minutes. The new railway was opened to the public in August 2005 to tie in with the opening of the Disneyland in September 2005.

Airport Express Line (AEL): The AEL, which came into service in 1998, provides services to the Hong Kong International Airport and also in-town check-in facilities in some stations. The AEL has a route length of 35.3 kilometres and a maximum speed of 135 kilometres per hour. An average journey between the Airport Station and the Hong Kong Station takes about 24 minutes. In end 2005, the AEL was further extended to an in-venue station in the AsiaWorld-Expo located at the northeast corner of

the Airport. The AEL carries about 24 000 passenger trips per day.

Kowloon-Canton Railway (KCR) System: The Kowloon-Canton Railway (KCR) system is run by the KCRC, which was established as a statutory body to operate the rail in accordance with prudent commercial principles. The system consists of two heavy rails, namely, East Rail and West Rail, and one light rail, the Light Rail Transit (LRT) running through Tuen Mun and Yuen Long. The two heavy rails and light rail now carry about 1.1 million and 0.37 million passenger trips every day respectively.

East Rail: The East Rail has commenced operation since 1910 to provide services from Kowloon, through the New Territories via the Lo Wu crossing into the Mainland. It has a track length of 34 kilometres. It started as a single track system, and was completely electrified and double-tracked by 1983. Apart from domestic passenger services, East Rail also carries freight services, boundary train services and inter-city through train services.

Ma On Shan to Tai Wai Rail Link (MOSR) and KCR Extension to Tsim Sha Tsui (TSTE): As part of the East Rail Extensions project, the 1.1-kilometre long TSTE and the 11.4-kilometre long MOSR were commissioned in October 2004 and December 2004 respectively. The TSTE is an underground extension of the East Rail from the existing Hung Hom terminus to a new station underneath Salisbury Road at East Tsim Sha Tsui. The MOSR connects the East Rail at Tai Wai Station to a terminal station at Wu Kai Sha.

West Rail: West Rail has a track length of 30.5 kilometres and was opened for passenger service on 20 December 2003, connecting Northwest New Territories and West Kowloon. An average journey takes about 30 minutes. Daily patronage of the West Rail is now about 190 000.

Light Rail: Light Rail is a local transportation network run by the KCRC. Light Rail started operation in 1988 to meet the transport needs of the residents in the Northwest New Territories. A 4.4-kilometre extension of Light Rail to the newly developed areas of Tin Shui Wai was opened in December 2003. It now has a route length of about 36 kilometres with 68 stops. Light Rail has a maximum speed of 80 kilometres per hour and carries about 370 000 passenger trips every day. It has four interchange stations in Yuen Long, Tin Shui Wai, Siu Hong and Tuen Mun to facilitate passenger interchange between the Light Rail and West Rail networks.

Tramway and Peak Tram: Electric trams have been operating on Hong Kong Island since 1904. The tramway operates six routes on 16 kilometres of double track. Its average daily passenger trips are about 240 000. The Peak Tram is a cable-hauled funicular railway running

between Central and the Peak. Beginning operation in 1888, it operates at a gradient ranging from four to 27 degrees, and is one of the popular tourist attractions in Hong Kong.

Railway Projects under implementation: There are three new railway projects under construction, namely, the Sheung Shui to Lok Ma Chau Spur Line (Spur Line), Kowloon Southern Link (KSL) and Tseung Kwan O South Station. The Spur Line and KSL are KCRC's projects while the Tseung Kwan O South Station is MTRCL's project.

Sheung Shui to Lok Ma Chau Spur Line (Spur Line): The Spur Line is about 7.4-kilometre long and will connect the existing KCR East Rail Sheung Shui Station to a new terminus at Lok Ma Chau. It will connect to a new boundary crossing at Lok Ma Chau/Huanggang to relieve the increasingly congested Lo Wu crossing. The Spur Line is expected to be completed by mid 2007.

Kowloon Southern Link (KSL): The 3.8-kilometre long KSL is an extension of West Rail from its Nam Cheong Station to the East Rail East Tsim Sha Tsui Station and includes an intermediate station at West Kowloon. Upon its completion which is scheduled in 2009, the one million population in the Northwest New Territories will have a direct railway access to urban Kowloon areas without a need for any railway interchange.

Tseung Kwan O South Station: The project will extend the Tseung Kwan O Line with a branch from Tseung Kwan O Station to Tseung Kwan O South Station. The project is expected to be completed in 2009.

Railway Projects under Planning or Review: The Railway Development Strategy 2000 announced in May 2000 aims to meet the increasing transport needs due to Hong Kong's population growth, continued developments and strengthened links with the Mainland, in a sustainable manner. It maps out a blueprint for the further expansion of Hong Kong's railway network. This involves a total investment of some \$100 billion to complete six new passenger railway projects and a Port Rail Line subject to traffic growth and project interfaces. The six new passenger railways are: Shatin to Central Link; West Island Line; South Island Line; North Hong Kong Island Line; Kowloon Southern Link and Northern Link/Hong Kong Section of the Guangzhou – Shenzhen – Hong Kong

Express Rail Link. The works for the Kowloon Southern Link have commenced.

Upon the completion of the various railway projects under the Railway Development Strategy, Hong Kong's railway network will expand to about 300 kilometres. The railway share in the public transport system will be boosted from about 35 per cent now to about 45 per cent.

Shatin to Central Link (SCL): The SCL, which comprises the East Kowloon Line, Tai Wai to Diamond Hill Link and the Fourth Rail Harbour Crossing, is a new rail corridor from Tai Wai to Central. Subsequent to an open-tender exercise, KCRC was awarded the right to build and operate this rail link in 2002. The project is being reviewed in the context of the impending merger of the two railway systems and the development of the Kai Tak Planning Review.

West Island Line (WIL): The WIL is an extension of the MTR from Sheung Wan to Kennedy Town. The MTRCL has completed the preliminary design and submitted the Revised Project Proposal in August 2006 which is being considered by the Government.

South Island Line (SIL): The SIL is an extension of the MTR to Southern District. The Government is looking at the impact of the proposed railway services on other public transport modes. The Government will consider the way forward for the proposed SIL with due regard to public views and in light of the results of the above study.

North Hong Kong Island Line (NIL): The NIL will provide an additional rail corridor along the new north shore of Hong Kong Island between the MTR Hong Kong Station and Fortress Hill Station.

Northern Link/Hong Kong Section of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link (NOL/ERL): The NOL will connect the West Rail Kam Sheung Road Station to the Lok Ma Chau boundary crossing with an intermediate interchange with the Spur Line for accessing Sheung Shui. The ERL runs from a new terminus at West Kowloon to the boundary at Lok Ma Chau for connection with the Mainland section of the ERL. The KCRC is now embarking on a consultancy study and preliminary site investigations of the NOL and the Hong Kong section of the ERL. The KCRC will submit the study report to the Government by mid 2007.

Port Rail Line (PRL): The PRL is a planned freight rail connection from Lo Wu, via either West Rail or East Rail, to a new port rail terminal at KwaiChung.