



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 68 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. The Legislative Council passed in June 2007 the Rail Merger Ordinance which provides the legal framework for the post-merger corporation to operate both the Mass Transit Railway (MTR) system and Kowloon-Canton Railway (KCR) system. The post-merger Corporation, i.e. the MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL) has been granted a 50-year franchise to operate the MTR and KCR systems with effect from December 2, 2007. Other fixed track systems include the Tramway and the Peak Tram.

MTR: MTR is a heavily patronized railway network consisting of nine lines, including Kwun Tong Line, Tsuen Wan Line, Island Line, Tung Chung Line, Tseung Kwan O Line, Disneyland Resort Line, East Rail Line, West Rail Line and Ma On Shan Line. The East Rail Line was commissioned in 1910. The first passenger train of the Kwun Tong Line started operation in late 1979, followed by the subsequent expansion of the network 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), the Tseung Kwan O Line (2002), West Rail Line (2003), Ma On Shan Line (2004) and the Disneyland Resort Line (2005). Moreover, the East Rail Line was extended to a new boundary crossing at Lok Ma Chau in August 2007. The total route length with 80 stations. The network carries about 3.5 million passenger trips on weekdays.

Airport Express (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 29 000 passenger trips per day.

Light Rail: Light Rail is a local transportation network which started operation in 1988 to meet the transport needs of the residents in the Northwest New Territories. It now has a route length of about 36 kilometres with 68 stops. It 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 Line 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 two new railway projects under construction, namely, Kowloon Southern Link (KSL) and Tseung Kwan O South Station.

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. We are proceeding with the implementation of five passenger railway lines: The West Island Line, the South Island Line, the Shatin to Central Link, the Kwun Tong Line Extension and the Hong Kong Section of Guangzhou – Shenzhen – Hong Kong Express Rail Link. Besides we are reviewing the Northern Link, the North Island Line and the Port Rail Line based on their needs and interfaces with other developments. The rail lines mentioned above involve a total investment of some \$100 billion.

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. The project is being

planned and designed and construction is expected to start in 2010.

West Island Line (WIL): The WIL is an extension of the Island Line from Sheung Wan to Kennedy Town. The government completed the review of the MTRCL's revised project proposal and asked the MTRCL to proceed with detailed design. The railway scheme was gazetted for public consultation in Oct 2007. Construction is expected to start in 2009 for completion in 2013/14.

South Island Line (SIL): The SIL, which comprises the South Island Line (East) (SIL (East)) and the South Island Line (West) (SIL(West)), is a 15-kilometre long medium capacity extension of the Island Line to Southern District. The MTRCL has commenced its preliminary planning and design of the SIL (East) project in February 2008 with the aim of commencing the construction in 2011 for completion in 2015.

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 (NOL): 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 Government is reviewing the project in light of the development of those New Development Areas in the Northeast New Territories to ensure the NOL will be properly integrated with the new developments.

Hong Kong Section of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link (XRL): The Hong Kong Section of the XRL will run in the form an underground tunnel from a new terminus at West Kowloon to the boundary at Huanggang for connection with the Mainland section. The railway scheme was gazetted in November 2008. The MTRCL is now proceeding with the detailed design of the railway. Construction is anticipated to commence by end 2009.

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.

Kwun Tong Line Extension (KTE): The KTE is an extension of the Kwun Tong Line from Yau Ma Tei Station to Whampoa. Construction is expected to start in 2010.