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Panel on Transport

Subcommittee on Matters Relating to Railways
Meeting on 19 April 2016

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 the Legislative Council Members during previous discussions on the subject.

Background

Station facilities in early years

2. Most of the MTR stations along the urban lines, being built in the 70s and 80s of the last century, were designed to cater for the primary function of addressing the travel need of passengers. For instance, due to shorter travelling distances of usually around 30 minutes at the time and given that toilet facilities were usually available in most commercial buildings and shopping malls in urban areas, public toilets were therefore not included in the station design of that era.

Enhancement of existing station facilities

3. To enhance passenger safety, the pre-merger Mass Transit Railway Corporation announced in 1999 to proceed with the platform screen doors ("PSDs") retrofitting programme at 30 underground stations on the Kwun Tong Line, Tsuen Wan Line and Island Line in phases. The retrofitting works were completed in 2006. For new railway lines started operating since 1998, PSDs or automatic platform gates ("APGs") were included as

standard station facilities in new railway projects. In respect of East Rail Line ("ERL") and Ma On Shan Line ("MOSL"), due to the technical difficulties and challenges in retrofitting APGs along ERL (i.e. safety risk associated with wide platform gaps, as well as limitations of platform structures, existing signalling system and trains), the MTR Corporation Limited ("MTRCL") decided to carry out the APG retrofitting works in tandem with the Shatin Central Link ("SCL") project, with the expected completion dates in 2019 and 2021 for the Tai Wai to Hung Hom Section and Hung Hom to Admiralty Section respectively.

4. Furthermore, a series of service enhancement measures, including upgrade of station facilities, were implemented or planned to be implemented in response to clients' comments received MTRCL's "Listening · Responding" programme. MTRCL has provided a number of additional facilities/services inside stations, including wide gates, benches, public toilets, 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.

5. The installation of the wide gates and benches provides convenience to passengers, especially the elderly, wheelchair users and passengers with luggage or prams. Currently, there is at least one wide gate in every MTR station. Under the "Listening · Responding" programme, MTRCL has completed adding 54 wide gates¹ at different stations and providing 326 benches at station platforms and along passageways that are relatively long.

6. Besides, MTRCL, through public participation, has incorporated local culture into the design of station facilities. For example, "community art galleries", which allow the display of paintings and drawings by students from schools or artists from non-profit making groups, can be found in a number of stations throughout the railway network. In future, local communities will be involved in the station art programmes as far as possible to enhance the connection between the stations and the communities, as well as incorporate local culture and characteristics into the stations.

Station facilities of the new railway lines

7. To meet the needs and changes of the society, including changes in the age structure of the Hong Kong population, increase in the number of long distance rail passengers, needs of persons with disabilities and

¹ According to MTRCL, 30 additional wide gates would be installed by the end of 2015.

passenger aspirations, MTRCL pledged in 2012 to introduce new facilities and designs to the stations of the five new railway lines, namely the West Island Line, Hong Kong section of Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link, South Island Line (East), Kwun Tong Line Extension and SCL. Station barrier-free facilities such as passenger lifts, tactile guide paths, and tactile station layout maps with audible device would be provided. Other facilities and equipment such as newly-designed ticketing machines, public toilets, and PSDs or APGs, would also be provided.

Major concerns over MTR station facilities

8. Members have discussed MTR station facilities in the Fourth and Fifth Legislative Councils. Their major views and concerns are summarized in the ensuing paragraphs.

Retrofitting of PSDs/APGs

9. 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.

Public toilets

10. At the Subcommittee on Matters Relating to Railways ("the Subcommittee") meetings and the Council meetings, 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. The Administration indicated in mid-2014 that 41 stations out of 83 stations operating daily are equipped with public toilets. According to MTRCL, the new toilets in Mong Kok and Prince Edward Stations had been opened for use since January 2015. As for the remaining eight interchange stations not yet equipped with public toilets, including Tsim Sha Tsui Station, Yau Ma Tei Station, Lai King Station, Central Station, Admiralty Station, North Point Station, Yau Tong Station and Tiu Keng Leng Station, public toilets will be provided by end 2020. Besides, the refurbishment of toilets in stations along MOSL was in progress as planned with target completion within 2015²

² LC Paper CB(4)1228/14-15(03)

Lifts and escalators

11. At the Subcommittee meetings and the Council meetings, members expressed concern about the current situation of installation of lifts connecting the station concourse and the street level at MTR stations. They urged MTRCL to review and increase the number of lifts and escalators at MTR stations. MTRCL explained that the Corporation would collaborate with stakeholders to study the possibility to install additional lifts or escalators at some MTR stations.

12. According to the information paper provided by MTRCL in June 2015³, 46 of 87 MTR stations were equipped with lifts, while installation of lifts was not necessary for the other 34 stations as these stations had at-grade concourse, equipped with ramps for wheelchair access, or passengers could get access to the MTR stations through the lifts of nearby shopping malls or stations. MTRCL was also engaging in the study, planning or implementation of lift installation works at the remaining seven stations which were not equipped with lifts connecting station concourse with the street level, and installing one additional lift in each of Tsim Shai Tsui and Lai King Stations. Moreover, MTRCL was replacing 24 hydraulic lifts in various stations with new traction lifts by phase to facilitate more comfortable and fast movement to and from stations, and between station concourse and platforms. As at June 2015, the replacement of eight of these lifts had been completed and reopened for service. The remaining works were expected to be completed in the coming three years.

13. In this connection, members enquired whether the Administration had required MTRCL to provide specified barrier-free facilities at various stations and how it monitored the provision of barrier-free facilities at MTR stations. Members also questioned if MTRCL held regular meetings with representatives from groups for persons with disabilities to listen to their views on the barrier-free facilities at the stations. In response, the Administration explained that there was at least one barrier-free access in every MTR station. MTRCL also strived to, as far as practically feasible, install at each station one lift connecting the concourse and street-level. In addition, MTRCL conducted half-yearly communication meetings with disabled groups for many years to thoroughly understand their needs for station facilities and services.

³ LC Paper CB(4)1228/14-15(03)

Wi-Fi hotspots service

14. 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.

Breast-feeding rooms

15. Some Subcommittee members suggested that breast-feeding rooms should be provided at stations, in particular for the new railway lines, to facilitate passengers in need. MTRCL advised that they would give thought to the suggestion of providing breast-feeding rooms.

Latest development

16. The Administration and MTRCL plan to brief members on the progress of enhancement of MTR station facilities at the Subcommittee meeting to be held on 19 April 2016.

Relevant papers

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

Panel on Transport
Subcommittee on Matters Relating to Railways

List of relevant papers on MTR station facilities

Committee	Date of meeting	Minutes/Paper
Council meeting	19.1.2011	Hon WONG Sing-chi raised a question on MTR facilities and services
Subcommittee on Matters Relating to Railways	21.1.2011	The MTR Corporation Limited's paper on facilities and design of MTR train compartments Minutes of meeting
Subcommittee on Matters Relating to Railways	13.1.2012	The MTR Corporation Limited's paper on design of next generation of railway stations and update on retrofitting platform screen doors Minutes of meeting
Subcommittee on Matters Relating to Railways	2.3.2012	The MTR Corporation Limited's paper entitled "Supplementary information on retrofitting automatic platform gates along the East Rail Line and Ma On Shan Line" Minutes of meeting
Subcommittee on Matters Relating to Railways	4.1.2013	The MTR Corporation Limited's paper on railway system for South Island Line (East) Minutes of meeting
Council meeting	9.1.2013	Dr Hon KWOK Ka-ki raised a question on the footbridge connecting Tsuen Wan and Tsuen Wan West MTR stations
Subcommittee on Matters Relating to Railways	5.7.2013	The MTR Corporation Limited's paper on its service performance Minutes of meeting

Committee	Date of meeting	Minutes/Paper
Council meeting	11.6.2014	<u>Dr Hon CHIANG Lai-wan raised a question on MTR station facilities</u>
Council meeting	2.7.2014	<u>Hon TANG Ka-piu raised a question facilities and services provided at MTR stations for persons with disabilities</u>
Subcommittee on Matters Relating to Railways	3.7.2015	<u>The MTR Corporation Limited's paper on the progress update on enhancement of MTR station facilities</u>

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