

LCQ13: Shatin to Central Link and Kwun Tong Line

Following is a question by the Hon Wu Chi-wai and a written reply by the Secretary for Transport and Housing, Mr Frank Chan Fan, in the Legislative Council today (June 5):

Question:

The commissioning date of the Shatin to Central Link (SCL), now under construction, has been postponed due to, among others, works quality problem of the project. It has been reported that the MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL) has planned for a partial commissioning of SCL by first opening up train services from Tai Wai Station to Diamond Hill Station, and providing limited train services plying between Diamond Hill Station and To Kwa Wan Station by non-stop trains. On the other hand, the Chief Executive has announced in the 2018 Policy Address that a "Government, Institution or Community" site with an area of about 11 000 square metres in Kwun Tong has been identified for redevelopment to construct a civil service college and other community facilities, and the Government is exploring with MTRCL the feasibility of widening the station platform and/or concourse of Kwun Tong Station, so as to divert the passenger flow from Kwun Tong Station. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) whether it knows the details of MTRCL's plan for partial commissioning of SCL;
- (2) whether it has assessed the impact of partial or full commissioning of SCL on the passenger throughput of the Kwun Tong Line and that of the various railway stations along the Line; if it has assessed, of the outcome;
- (3) as it has been reported that in order to divert excessive passenger flow from some railway stations along the Kwun Tong Line, MTRCL has been running, during the morning peak hours in recent years, empty trains from Tiu Keng Leng Station or Whampoa Station heading directly to Wong Tai Sin Station or Kowloon Tong Station to pick up passengers, whether it knows the details of such arrangement and the other measures currently in place to divert excessive passenger flow from some railway stations along the Kwun Tong Line; whether it knows the measures to be put in place by MTRCL to cope with an additional passenger throughput of the Kwun Tong Line to be generated by SCL upon its partial commissioning;
- (4) of the commissioning dates, based on the latest projection, of the Tai Wai to Hung Hom Section and the Hung Hom to Admiralty Section of SCL, as well as the various railway stations of these two Sections; and
- (5) of the new proposals of the Government and MTRCL to divert the passenger flow from Kwun Tong Station; as the Government indicated in reply to my question on 29 November 2017 that the Urban Renewal Authority had put forward

a proposal to MTRCL the construction of a "podium" connecting the Kwun Tong Town Centre redevelopment project with Kwun Tong Station, with a view to providing additional circulation area for the Station, whether it knows the latest progress of the proposal?

Reply:

President,

My reply to the five parts of the Hon Wu Chi-wai's question is as follow:

(1), (2) and (4) The Shatin to Central Link (SCL) is a strategic railway project connecting a number of existing railway lines. The "Tai Wai to Hung Hom Section" will connect the existing West Rail Line and Ma On Shan Line to form the "Tuen Ma Line"; and the "Hung Hom to Admiralty Section" will extend the existing East Rail Line from Hung Hom through the fourth cross harbour railway tunnel to Hong Kong Island (see Annex I). Tuen Ma Line will connect the East Rail Line at Tai Wai Station and Hung Hom Station, and connect Kwun Tong Line at Diamond Hill Station and Ho Man Tin Station. Furthermore, apart from connecting the East Rail Line with Kwun Tong Line at Kowloon Tong Station, its "Hung Hom to Admiralty Section" will connect the Island Line, Tsuen Wan Line and South Island Line at Admiralty Station (see Annex II). Tuen Ma Line and the East Rail Line that extends to Hong Kong Island will not only provide more alternative routes to passengers, but also divert the patronage from existing railway lines such as Kwun Tong Line and East Rail Line, which will help enhance the overall carrying capacity of the railway network.

Due to the concerns about the quality of works of Hung Hom Station Extension and the associated investigations since the end of May 2018, the target commissioning date of "Tai Wai to Hung Hom Section" and "Hung Hom to Admiralty Section" will need to be further reviewed in light of the final results of the proposed holistic assessment strategy for the Hung Hom Station Extension.

The MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL) is studying the feasibility and different options for partial commissioning of the East West Corridor of the SCL at the request of the Government. These options should take into account the technical feasibility of opening part of the railway section, the capacity of the railway system, the modification to the signalling system, the compatibility of the road transport, etc. We have no decision made at this moment. In light of the practical feasibility and railway operation safety as first priority, the Government will continue to explore it with MTRCL proactively; and will make decision and public announcement in due course.

(3) The Government and the MTRCL have been closely monitoring the carrying capacity and patronage of various stations and train services along the Kwun Tong Line. The Government has requested the MTRCL to adopt various measures to ease the passenger flow during peak hours. The MTRCL has been implementing various measures, including arranging short-haul trips to run between busy

stations as far as possible during peak hours (for instance during the morning peak hours, some of the trains running along the Kwun Tong Line will not carry passengers after dropping-off at terminal station and go direct to Kowloon Tong Station, Wong Tai Sin Station, Prince Edward Station or Ngau Tau Kok Station to take passengers. Such arrangement has been incorporated into the daily schedule of train services.), improving station facilities and platform management, etc. to ensure the operation of every station of Kwun Tong Line is maintained in a smooth manner.

For Kwun Tong Station, the MTRCL plans to enhance its station facilities by phases. In addition to the installation of additional ticket gates and relocation of some ticket gates at designated exits which was completed in end 2018, the MTRCL is planning for the preliminary works of a large-scale station improvement project in Kwun Tong Station, including the construction of new escalators, re-provisioning of lifts connecting station concourse and platform, etc. Tendering for the preliminary works has commenced and the overall project is expected to be completed by the fourth quarter of 2022.

As regards the impact of partial commissioning of SCL on Kwun Tong Line, the MTRCL has been closely monitoring the operation of various stations along Kwun Tong Line and will study the effect of potential partial commissioning options on the station capacity, passenger flow direction, future improvement to passenger flow etc.

(5) As regards the proposed elevated pedestrian deck connecting the Kwun Tong Station with the Kwun Tong Town Centre Redevelopment Project (Development Area 4), the Urban Renewal Authority (URA) has commenced its liaison with the MTRCL with respect to the approved redevelopment master layout plan in the fourth quarter of 2018. The URA has later in the first quarter of 2019 provided the Deck Connection Study Report to the MTRCL for consideration. The URA is closely liaising with the MTRCL and hopes to gazette the relevant roadworks regarding the Pedestrian Deck and the Redevelopment Project in the fourth quarter this year, upon securing the support from the MTRCL and the Kwun Tong District Council. It is believed that the completion of the Pedestrian Deck will provide additional space to the Kwun Tong Station, thereby help diverting passengers to other entrances and exits.

In the long run, to strengthen the pedestrian connectivity within the Kwun Tong district and to ease the pedestrian flow with important facilities nearby, the Government and the URA will carry out preliminary feasibility study of the linkage among the Kwun Tong Station, the redevelopment project of Kwun Tong Town Centre, and the proposed integrated development project nearby. These include the possibility of extending the station concourse or platform of the Kwun Tong Station, in order to further enhance the connectivity of Kwun Tong Town Centre.