

# LCQ14: Hong Kong Section of Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link

Following is a question by the Hon Gary Zhang and a written reply by the Secretary for Transport and Logistics, Ms Mable Chan, in the Legislative Council today (December 11):

Question:

It has been reported that since the Hong Kong section of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link (XRL) resumed services early last year, the demand for cross-boundary passenger services has become increasingly keen, with the daily patronage hitting a record high of over 100 000 passenger trips. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether it knows the respective average daily patronages and the highest daily patronages (with dates) at the XRL West Kowloon Station (WKS) for last year and as at October 31 of this year, and set out in Table 1 a breakdown by train service (i.e. (a) short-haul service (i.e. to and from (i) Futian, (ii) Shenzhenbei, (iii) Humen and (iv) Guangzhounan), and (b) long-haul service) and day of the week (i.e. (I) Monday to Thursday, (II) Friday to Sunday, and (III) all days);

Table 1 Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Train service	Average daily patronage			Highest daily patronage (with date)
	(I)	(II)	(III)	
(a)	(i)			
	.....			
	(iv)			
(b)				
Total				

(2) whether it knows the respective average daily patronages of local and non-local passengers at WKS for last year and as at October 31 of this year, and set out in Table 2 a breakdown by train service (i.e. (a) short-haul service (i.e. to and from (i) Futian, (ii) Shenzhenbei, (iii) Humen and (iv) Guangzhounan), and (b) long-haul service); how such data compare with the forecast data set out in the paper of the Subcommittee on Matters Relating to Railways of this Council ("Subcommittee") in 2018 (LC Paper No. CB(4)268/18-19(05));

Table 2

Train service	Average daily patronage			
	2023		2024 (as at October 31)	
	Local passengers	Non-local passengers	Local passengers	Non-local passengers

(a)	(i)				
	.....				
	(iv)				
(b)					
Total					

(3) as there are views pointing out that the existing layout and queuing arrangements of the waiting hall for departing passengers at WKS cannot cope with the demand arising from an upsurge of travellers during holidays, and the daily patronage forecast for XRL for 2031 was as high as 129 300 according to a previous paper provided by the Government, whether such forecast has been updated and whether the Government has discussed with the MTR Corporation Limited about carrying out enhancement works to cope with the patronage growth over the next decade; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(4) whether it knows (i) the operating revenue (including (a) fare and (b) non-fare revenues), (ii) operating cost (including (c) energy, (d) non-staff operating and maintenance, (e) staff cost, (f) support services, (g) rent and rates, and (h) others), (iii) earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortisation (EBITDA), and (iv) operating margin of WKS respectively for last year and as at October 31 of this year (set out in Table 3); how such data compare with the projected data set out in the aforesaid paper of the Subcommittee; and

Table 3

Operational data item		2023	2024 (as at 31 October)
(i)	(a)		
	(b)		
(ii)	(c)		
	.....		
	(h)		
(iii)			
(iv)			

(5) as there are views pointing out that passengers' experience at WKS is marred by the absence of stores selling cooked food in the waiting hall for departing passengers and the sell-out of food at the cooked food stores in the departing concourse as early as in the evening, whereas the Government has indicated earlier on that discussion with the relevant Mainland authorities had been initiated on how to provide catering facilities for departing passengers, of the progress of the relevant work?

Reply:

President,

Having consulted the MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL), the reply to the question raised by the Hon Gary Zhang is as follows:

(1) Since the commissioning of the Hong Kong Section of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link (XRL) on September 23, 2018, the number of directly connected destinations has increased from 44 to 80. Amongst them, the number of short-haul destinations has increased from six (i.e. Futian, Shenzhenbei, Guangmingcheng, Humen, Qingsheng and Guangzhounan) to 10 currently; the number of long-haul destinations has increased to 70. According to the XRL ticket sales in 2023 and 2024 provided by the MTRCL, the patronage for trips between Hong Kong West Kowloon Station and short-haul and long-haul destinations are tabulated below. For short-haul destinations, more than 60 per cent of short-haul passengers are destined for stations in Shenzhen (i.e. Futian and Shenzhenbei), and nearly 30 per cent are destined for Guangzhoudong and Guangzhounan. Less than 10 per cent travel to the remaining short-haul destinations (i.e. Guangmingcheng, Humen, Qingsheng, Dongguannan, Changping and Dongguan).

XRL Train Services	Average Daily Patronage			Highest Daily Patronage
	Monday to Thursday	Friday to Sunday and Public Holiday	All Days	
<b>2023</b>				
Short-haul Services	39 000	56 000	47 000	105 000 (December 23, 2023)
Long-haul Services	9 000	11 000	10 000	25 000 (September 29, 2023)
Total (Note)	48 000	67 000	57 000	127 000 (December 23, 2023)
<b>2024 (as of October 31)</b>				
Short-haul Services	48 000	70 000	58 000	99 000 (February 12, 2024)
Long-haul Services	12 000	15 000	13 000	26 000 (October 1, 2024)
Total (Note)	59 000	84 000	72 000	120 000 (February 12, 2024)

Note: Individual figures may not add up to the total due to rounding.

(2) The MTRCL does not have a breakdown of the local and non-local patronage.

According to the statistics on daily passenger traffic of the Immigration Department, the average daily ratio of Hong Kong residents and visitors travelling to and from the Hong Kong West Kowloon Station is tabulated below.

Year	Passenger Traffic	
	Hong Kong Residents	Visitors
2023	45%	55%
2024 (as of October 31)	46%	54%

In the first 10 months of 2024, the patronage of the XRL Hong Kong Section exceeded 21 million passenger trips, exceeding the annual total in 2023. As tabulated above, the average daily patronage in the first 10 months of 2024 has reached almost 90 per cent of the forecast in 2018. The patronage of short-haul services resumed to 87 per cent, while that of long-haul services resumed to 95 per cent.

(3) and (5) The layout of the Hong Kong West Kowloon Station was designed based on the blueprint and patronage forecast of the railway development between the Mainland and Hong Kong at the time of project planning. Since the commissioning of the XRL Hong Kong Section and the West Kowloon Station in 2018, the MTRCL, as the Hong Kong operator of the XRL Hong Kong Section, has been closely monitoring the operation of the station, as well as travellers' travelling pattern and demand, and has continuously enhanced station facilities and XRL services as necessary.

Regarding station facilities and layout, in addition to the reconfiguration of the layout on the B1 departure level in early 2023, the MTRCL re-planned the queueing layout and the design of the waiting hall on level B3 in April 2024. They include extending the entrances of some of the boarding gates towards the centre of the hall, enhancing signage and using large-scale electronic displays to provide train information to facilitate passengers to enter the boarding gates and board the train, and providing more seats at the waiting hall for passengers' use.

Furthermore, a wide variety of shops are provided at the Hong Kong West Kowloon Station to meet the needs of travellers, such as duty free shops, catering outlets, souvenir and retail shops, convenience stores, bakeries, travel agents, banks and financial service providers. The MTRCL has ongoing communication with the tenants with a view to enhancing services and customer experience, and reviews the operation of the shops regularly, so as to meet passengers' needs. To provide better services and greater convenience to passengers, the HKSAR Government is actively working with the MTRCL on the details of the arrangement for providing food and beverages services and shops in the waiting hall located in the Mainland Port Area, so as to further enhance passengers' travelling experience at the West Kowloon Station.

On passenger flow management, the MTRCL will, on the eve of festive holidays and peak passenger traffic periods, provide data on ticket pre-sale

for reference by relevant authorities (including control point authorities of Hong Kong and the Mainland) for jointly discussing and formulating the passenger flow management measures on station operation and clearance at boundary control points. The MTRCL and relevant authorities will also strengthen manpower to assist passengers during the peak periods with a view to facilitating passengers' clearance and enjoyment of the fast and convenient XRL services in a safe and comfortable environment.

The HKSAR Government and the MTRCL will closely monitor the operation and patronage of the XRL Hong Kong Section and the West Kowloon Station, and will timely review and upgrade station facilities to meet the long term demand of passengers and development of the XRL. The Government and the MTRCL do not have an updated projection for XRL-related forecast figures.

(4) In 2023, the XRL Hong Kong Section brought about HK\$2.5 billion of revenue from transport operations for the MTRCL. As for the operating costs, while the MTRCL has made projections on various operating costs items during the planning of the XRL project, in the actual operation, the MTRCL does not have a breakdown of the various operating costs figures.