

LCQ18: MTR Kwun Tong Line and Tseung Kwan O Line

Following is a question by the Hon Luk Chung-hung and a written reply by the Secretary for Transport and Housing, Mr Frank Chan Fan, in the Legislative Council today (April 21):

Question:

Some members of the public have relayed that the loadings of MTR Kwun Tong Line (KTL) and Tseung Kwan O Line (TKOL) during morning and evening peak hours have reached saturation. Also, with a number of developments along KTL being completed one after another, the train compartments of KTL as well as the station concourse and train platforms of Kwun Tong (KT) Station during peak hours are increasingly crowded. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether it knows, in respect of the critical links of (a) KTL and (b) TKOL, the average hourly carrying capacities and actual patronages, as well as the loadings calculated respectively on the bases of six persons and four persons (standing) per square metre, during morning and evening peak hours (i) in each of the past four years and (ii) from January to March this year;

(2) whether it knows the respective hourly passenger flows during morning and evening peak hours at the (a) entrances/exits and (b) train platforms of KT Station (i) in each of the past four years and (ii) from January to March this year;

(3) whether it has assessed if, in the coming five years, the carrying capacity of KTL can cope with the transport needs arising from the increased population along the railway line; if it has, of the assessment outcome; if not, whether it will conduct such an assessment immediately and publish the relevant data;

(4) given that the Government has proposed to construct an elevated landscaped deck of about 120 metres in length to link up KT Station with adjacent new developments, of the projected (i) increase in passenger flows that the station concourse and train platforms of KT Station can accommodate as compared with the current levels, and (ii) extent to which the crowdedness of the train platforms of the Station will be alleviated as compared with the current situation, upon the completion and commissioning of the deck; whether the Government will consider extending the existing train platform of KT Station; and

(5) whether it knows the anticipated increase in the train frequencies and carrying capacities of KTL and TKOL upon the service commencement of the new signalling systems of the two railway lines in 2026-2027; the measures put in place by the MTR Corporation Limited to increase the carrying capacity of KTL before the service commencement of the new signalling system?

Reply:

President,

Having consulted the MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL) and relevant bureau and department, my reply to the Hon Luk Chung-hung's question is as follows:

(1) and (2) In general, the highest passenger loading of a railway line occurs during the morning peak hours when more passengers travel around the same time. The travelling pattern of passengers in the evening peak hours is relatively more dispersed, hence the peak loading is usually lower in the evening peak hours than that in the morning peaks. As such, when evaluating the service demand for individual railway lines, the MTRCL will assess the most crowded scenario for the railway line concerned mainly on the basis of the passenger loading during the morning peak hours.

The carrying capacity and loading during the busiest hour in the morning per direction for critical links on the Kwun Tong Line and Tseung Kwan O line are set out in the Annex.

Carrying capacity and loading of railway lines are effective indicators commonly used for measuring levels of railway services. As regards the design and arrangement of various "hardware" components (including platforms and station entrances), they will be designed and constructed in such a way as to ensure adequate capacity to handle passenger flow. The MTRCL will flexibly implement passenger flow control measures in the light of volume of passenger traffic, including changing the entry and exit arrangements of ticket gates, adjusting the upward or downward direction of escalators between the concourse and the platform, and implementing one-way passenger flow at station entrances, so as to alleviate bottlenecks at certain locations in concourses or platforms to ensure that the station is kept in good order.

It was observed that Exit A of Kwun Tong Station has a higher passenger flow during peak hours. In December 2018, additional ticket gates were installed at this exit to divert passenger flow. Moreover, additional staircase and lift between the concourse and the platform are being retrofitted at Kwun Tong Station to ease congestion during peak hours. The relevant works are scheduled for completion in the fourth quarter of 2023.

(3) With the gradual development and transformation of Kowloon East into the second core business district of Hong Kong, there is progressive rise in the residential and working population in the area. Various government departments have been striving hard to provide comprehensive railway and road infrastructural facilities and appropriate public transport services including franchised buses and green minibuses to cope with the traffic demand in the area. The MTRCL will continue to closely monitor the carrying capacity of the overall railway network including the Kwun Tong Line and make timely adjustment to train services in light of changes in patronage to meet passenger demand.

(4) The Government has proposed to construct an elevated landscaped deck of

about 120 metres in length to link up Kwun Tong Station with the two new developments in the vicinity, so as to enhance pedestrian accessibility in the area, provide pedestrians with more convenient facilities and better direct passenger flow between Kwun Tong Station and neighbouring facilities. In the future, passengers may travel between Exits C and D of Kwun Tong Station via the deck and reach the existing walkway that leads to Yuet Wah Street, thereby reducing passenger flow in the station. The Civil Engineering and Development Department is commencing relevant investigative study and planning work.

On the proposed expansion of Kwun Tong Station platforms, according to the MTRCL's assessment, existing platforms have enough capacity to handle the projected patronage in the future. Besides, platform expansion works would disrupt the existing operation of the station, bringing risk to railway services and safety.

(5) The MTRCL is gradually replacing the signalling systems of seven railway lines (Tsuen Wan Line, Island Line, Kwun Tong Line, Tseung Kwan O Line, Disneyland Resort Line, Tung Chung Line and the Airport Express). Upon completion of the project, it is expected that the overall carrying capacity can be increased by about 10 per cent.

Before the commissioning of the new signalling systems of various railway lines, the MTRCL will continue to closely monitor the patronage of the lines, and adopt a multipronged approach to improve passenger flow and enhance passengers' travelling experience, including flexible adjustment of train service, strengthening of passenger flow control measures, and improvement of the station layout in the light of changes in patronage.