

## LCQ2: Shatin to Central Link

Following is a question by the Hon Kenneth Lau and a reply by the Secretary for Transport and Housing, Mr Frank Chan Fan, in the Legislative Council today (March 18):

Question:

The Shatin to Central Link (SCL), which is under construction, is divided into the Tai Wai to Hung Hom Section and the Hung Hom to Admiralty Section. The former links up the existing West Rail Line (WRL) with the Ma On Shan Line to form the Tuen Ma Line (TML), and a section of TML from Wu Kai Sha Station to Kai Tak Station is named TML Phase 1. TML Phase 1 was commissioned on the 14th of last month, and Hin Keng Station, the expanded part of Diamond Hill Station and Kai Tak Station were also put into operation at the same time. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether it has assessed the passenger throughput of the various stations along TML Phase 1 during peak and non-peak hours at the initial stage of commissioning of the line, as well as the impacts on the passenger throughput of the various stations along WRL and the effect of diverting road traffic in the Tuen Mun district to be brought about by the commissioning of TML Phase 1; if so, of the details;

(2) given that in recent months, train services have been repeatedly disrupted owing to demonstrations and the facilities of MTR stations have been vandalised repeatedly, of the measures to be taken by the authorities to protect the facilities of the various stations along TML Phase 1 and minimise the impacts of demonstrations on train services; and

(3) of the latest timetable for the full commissioning of SCL, and the new measures in place to ensure the quality of the construction works and the completion of the works on schedule?

Reply:

President,

Thanks for the Hon Kenneth Lau's question.

(1) Tuen Ma Line Phase 1 (TML1), i.e. extending the existing Ma On Shan Line to three new stations, namely Hin Keng, Diamond Hill and Kai Tak Stations, was commissioned on February 14, 2020. The travelling time between Tai Wai Station and Diamond Hill Station has been substantially reduced from 17 minutes to around nine minutes, providing passengers of the East Rail Line (EAL) and Ma On Shan Line (MOSL) an alternative to access the urban districts. The commissioning of TML1 will facilitate passengers to travel along the stations in Ma On Shan areas and East Kowloon more efficiently and conveniently, as well as to divert part of the EAL passengers destined to East Kowloon and Hong Kong Island East, contributing to relieve the most

congested section of EAL from Tai Wai Station to Kowloon Tong Station.

Upon the commissioning of TML1, as at March 13, 2020, the average daily patronage using the new Hin Keng Station and Kai Tak Station in the first month was about 38 000; about 5 000 passengers interchanged from TML1 to Kwun Tong Line at Diamond Hill Station during peak hours. In view of the short operation period of TML1 since its commissioning, we will continue to observe the change of the travelling patterns of passengers, in particular the travelling mode of the passengers plying between New Territories East and East Kowloon or Hong Kong Island East. In addition, as the passengers' travelling patterns have been affected by the recent novel coronavirus outbreak, we need more time to identify if there is a more stable diversion effect. The Transport Department and the MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL) will continue to closely monitor the diversion effect upon the commissioning of TML1.

Furthermore, MTRCL will continue to maintain smooth operations of the stations along Kwun Tung Line by adopting various measures, including introducing short trips for busy stations as far as possible during peak hours; improving station facilities and platform management, etc.

Regarding the concern of the Hon Kenneth Lau about West Rail Line (WRL), in preparation for the commissioning of Tuen Ma Line in the future, all 7-car trains in WRL and 4-car trains in MOSL were upgraded and converted to 8-car trains in advance to enhance overall passenger carrying capacity. MTRCL has been monitoring the patronage and the usage of facilities in various stations, and will adopt various patronage management measures to ensure smooth train operations and passenger flow. These measures will be reviewed from time to time.

(2) In view of the large scale public order events over the last few months, some of the TML1 station facilities have been damaged in varying degree, including the damage to the glazing at the station entrances and graffiti on the walls outside the stations. To safeguard public safety, the damaged station facilities have been fenced off with fire-proof hoarding. In light of the current situation, new stations have been protected by temporary installations, including strengthening and protective measures at new station entrances. Further to the smooth commissioning of TML1 on February 14, the Government and MTRCL will continue to closely monitor the situation, endeavour to ensure the safety and smooth operation after the commissioning of TML1, and safeguard the safety of the passengers and members of the staff of MTRCL.

(3) Due to the quality issue of works of the Hung Hom Station Extension revealed in May 2018 and the spate of incidents, there was a need to conduct relevant investigations and propose suitable measures. MTRCL assessed that the target commissioning date of "Tai Wai to Hung Hom Section" should be at most deferred to the end of 2021.

As regards "North South Corridor" of the Shatin to Central Link (SCL), since October 2019, there had been multiple damages to the EAL facilities necessitating maintenance and cancellation of works originally planned during

non-traffic hours. Therefore, MTRCL considered that the commissioning date for Hung Hom to Admiralty Section had to be deferred to the first quarter of 2022. In addition, due to serious damages to the facilities at the University Station of EAL and adjacent railway section at the end of last year and the impact of the recent novel coronavirus outbreak on the works progress, the Highways Department (HyD) and MTRCL are reviewing the construction schedule of the North South Corridor and exploring the feasibility of accelerating key activities.

HyD and its monitoring and verification consultant completed the review of supervision records for Tai Wai Station, Hin Keng Station, Diamond Hill Station, Kai Tak Station, Sung Wong Toi Station and To Kwa Wan Station along East West Corridor under the SCL project. HyD also implemented measures to assure works quality and progress, including arranging monthly site inspections, conducting surprise checks, and engaging audit sampling for the progress, procedures and quality of the works by MTRCL. The Government also conducted stringent acceptance work for each new railway line. For example, TML1 was commissioned smoothly on February 14, after conducting trials, acceptance tests and inspections since the end of October 2019, and the concerned railway facilities were confirmed as safe and in sound condition by Electrical and Mechanical Services Department.