



Railway Network

Railways play a vital role in serving the transport needs of Hong Kong. They account for about 35% of domestic public transport and some 62 per cent of the land-based cross-boundary passenger trips. Being high speed off-road mass carriers, railways provide fast, reliable and comfortable services, reduce the pressure on the road network, and avoid many of the environmental problems associated with road traffic. They are therefore the backbone of our public transport network.

Existing Network: The existing railway network in Hong Kong has a total rail length of over 200 kilometres. The Legislative Council passed in June 2007 the Rail Merger Ordinance which provides the legal framework for the post-merger corporation to operate both the Mass Transit Railway (MTR) system and Kowloon-Canton Railway (KCR) system. The post-merger Corporation, i.e. the MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL) has been granted a 50-year franchise to operate the MTR and KCR systems with effect from December 2, 2007. Other fixed track systems include the Tramway and the Peak Tram.

MTR: MTR is a heavily patronized railway network consisting of nine lines, including Kwun Tong Line, Tsuen Wan Line, Island Line, Tung Chung Line, Tseung Kwan O Line, Disneyland Resort Line, East Rail Line, Ma On Shan Line, West Rail Line and its extension, Kowloon Southern Link. The East Rail Line was commissioned in 1910. The first passenger train of the Kwun Tong Line started operation in late 1979, followed by the subsequent expansion of the network to include Tsuen Wan Line (1982), Island Line (1985), the Eastern Harbour Crossing connecting Lam Tin to Quarry Bay (1989), the Tung Chung Line (1998), the Tseung Kwan O Line (2002), West Rail Line (2003), Ma On Shan Line (2004) and the Disneyland Resort Line (2005). Moreover, the East Rail Line was extended to a new boundary crossing at Lok Ma Chau in August 2007. The West Rail Line was extended to terminate at Hung Hom Station in August 2009, and could be interchanged with the East Rail Line there. The total route length is about 175 kilometers with 82 stations. The network carries about 3.5 million passenger trips per day.

Airport Express (AEL): The AEL, which came into service in 1998, provides services to the Hong Kong International Airport and also in-town check-in facilities in some stations. The AEL has a route length of 35.3 kilometres and a maximum speed of 135 kilometres per hour. An average journey between the Airport Station and the Hong Kong Station takes about 24 minutes. In end 2005, the AEL was further extended to an in-venue station in the AsiaWorld-Expo located at the northeast corner of the Airport. The AEL carries about 29 000 passenger trips per day.

Light Rail: Light Rail is a local transportation network which started operation in 1988 to meet the transport needs of the residents in the Northwest New Territories. It

now has a route length of about 36 kilometres with 68 stops. It carries about 370 000 passenger trips every day. It has four interchange stations in Yuen Long, Tin Shui Wai, Siu Hong and Tuen Mun to facilitate passenger interchange between the Light Rail and West Rail Line networks.

Tramway and Peak Tram: Electric trams have been operating on Hong Kong Island since 1904. The tramway operates six routes on 16 kilometres of double track. Its average daily passenger trips are about 240 000. The Peak Tram is a cable-hauled funicular railway running between Central and the Peak. Beginning operation in 1888, it operates at a gradient ranging from 4 to 27 degrees, and is one of the popular tourist attractions in Hong Kong.

Railway Project under implementation: There is one new railway project under construction, namely, West Island Line (WIL).

West Island Line (WIL): The WIL is an extension of the Island Line from Sheung Wan to Kennedy Town. The project is expected to be completed in 2014.

Railway Projects under Planning or Review: To meet the increasing transport needs due to Hong Kong's population growth, continued developments and strengthened links with the Mainland, in a sustainable manner, we are proceeding with the implementation of four railway lines: The South Island Line (East), the Shatin to Central Link, the Kwun Tong Line Extension and the Hong Kong Section of Guangzhou – Shenzhen – Hong Kong Express Rail Link. Besides we are reviewing the South Island Line (West), the Northern Link, the North Island Line, the Port Rail Line, and Hong Kong – Shenzhen Western Express Line based on their needs and interfaces with other developments. The rail lines mentioned above involve a total investment of over \$100 billion.

Upon the completion of the various railway projects under the Railway Development Strategy, Hong Kong's railway network will expand to about 300 kilometres. The railway share in the public transport system will be boosted from about 35 per cent now to about 45 per cent.

Shatin to Central Link (SCL): The SCL, which comprises the East Kowloon Line, Tai Wai to Diamond Hill Link and the Fourth Rail Harbour Crossing, is a new rail corridor from Tai Wai to Central. The project is being planned and designed and construction is expected to start in 2010.

South Island Line (SIL): The SIL, which comprises the South Island Line (East) (SIL(East)) and the South Island Line (West) (SIL(West)), is a 15-kilometre long medium capacity extension of the Island Line to Southern District. The SIL (East) railway scheme was gazetted for public consultation in July 2009 and the MTRCL has

commenced its detailed planning and design of the SIL (East) project in August 2009 with the aim of commencing the construction in 2011 for completion in 2015.

North Hong Kong Island Line (NIL): The NIL will provide an additional rail corridor along the new north shore of Hong Kong Island between the MTR Hong Kong Station and Fortress Hill Station.

Northern Link (NOL): The NOL will connect the West Rail Kam Sheung Road Station to the Lok Ma Chau boundary crossing with an intermediate interchange with the Spur Line for accessing Sheung Shui. The Government is reviewing the project in light of the development of those New Development Areas in the Northeast New Territories to ensure the NOL will be properly integrated with the new developments.

**Hong Kong Section of
Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link**

(XRL): The Hong Kong Section of XRL will run in the form an underground tunnel from a new terminus at West Kowloon to the boundary at Huanggang for connection with the Mainland section. The railway scheme was gazetted in November 2008 and the amended scheme was gazetted in April 2009. The MTRCL is now proceeding with the detailed design of the railway. Construction is anticipated to commence by end 2009.

Kwun Tong Line Extension (KTE): The KTE is an extension of the Kwun Tong Line from Yau Ma Tei Station to Whampoa. Construction is expected to start in 2010.

Hong Kong – Shenzhen Western Express Line (WEL): The proposed WEL will be a multi-function cross-boundary railway, linking the western part of Hong Kong and Shenzhen, including the two airports.