

**Legislative Council Panel on Transport**  
**Subcommittee on Matters Relating to Railways**

**The MTR Corporation Limited's Community Liaison Work**  
**Associated with the Railway Projects**

**Purpose**

This paper provides information on the community liaison works carried out by the MTR Corporation Limited ("MTRCL") for railway projects under implementation.

**Background**

2. There are five new railway projects under construction in Hong Kong, namely the West Island Line (WIL), South Island Line (East) (SIL(E)), Kwun Tong Line Extension (KTE), Hong Kong section of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link (XRL) and Shatin to Central Link (SCL).

3. Constructing new railways in densely-populated communities not only requires precise alignment design, detailed construction arrangement and stringent monitoring. As most works sites are close to residential areas, the works are inseparable from the daily lives of residents. Therefore, the crucial element in successfully carrying out railway projects is to facilitate the community's understanding of the nature of the construction programme, the works progress and possible impacts.

4. MTRCL is committed to maintaining close communication with the community throughout the implementation of new railway projects. With an open attitude, the projects teams proactively communicate with

the community with the aim of enhancing public understanding of the works in the design, construction and commissioning stages. In order to establish mutual respect with the community, the teams proactively maintain direct or interactive communication with neighbourhood residents. Wherever practicable, the teams would consider the opinions raised by the community and adjust and enhance the construction method to make the railway projects be part of the community.

### **Community Liaison Works in Different Project Stages**

5. The implementation of new railway projects could be categorised into three stages, namely design, construction and commissioning. Different objectives and communication channels will be deployed in different stages.

#### Design Stage

6. In the design stage, MTRCL needs the public to understand the planning concept and blueprint, alignment design and land use arrangements of the project. Different channels are used to communicate this information including public forums, residents' meetings, briefings to district councils, roving exhibitions, publications and featured websites, etc. Taking the SCL as an example, MTRCL and relevant government departments held more than 100 consultation meetings with residents, district councils, local parties, professional institutes, concern groups and media to share and discuss the blueprint of the SCL in its design and gazettal stage.

7. Apart from the design of the railway alignment, local stakeholders generally pay close attention to the location of stations and related facilities, entrance and exit arrangements and the construction method. Whilst presenting the relevant arrangements to the public, MTRCL studies and balances the opinions made by members of the community. Revisions and enhancements will be incorporated into the design when feasible. All the railway schemes under implementation have taken into account elements of public opinion in various aspects.

## Construction Stage

8. As Hong Kong is a densely developed city, it is inevitable that railway construction might cause some impacts to the community. Besides endeavouring to minimize possible impacts through enhanced construction methods and project management, it is necessary to let the community fully understand the nature of each project and its possible impacts on the community and environment. By communicating closely with the community, listening to their needs and providing timely responses and enhancements, trust and understanding are established between the community and the project team.

9. For this reason, the MTRCL's community liaison work prior to the commencement of construction includes presentation of the latest projects update using different channels in order to learn the concerns of the local stakeholders. One example of these efforts is the establishment of Community Liaison Group with district council members, village representatives, property owners' representatives, local parties, schools and government officials. To help stakeholders grasp the latest construction progress, regular updates are provided to district councils, while project newsletters and works notice are distributed to the community, and site visits are organized for councillors in some areas. To further enhance our communication, MTRCL has set up featured websites and a hotline (2993 3333) for the five new railway projects. Based on the construction progress and local needs, information centres are also set up at the district level to facilitate the public to make enquiries and receive timely information.

10. Temporary traffic arrangements are commonly required during the construction of new railway projects. These arrangements would affect the local district and can also have an effect on a broader scale. To prepare for the implementation of new traffic arrangements for each railway project, communication works have to be extended to relevant government departments including the Highways Department, Transport Department, Police Force, Home Affairs Department, and public

transport operators, like franchised buses, minibuses and taxis, to ensure the arrangement can be implemented smoothly.

11. Environmental impacts brought by construction works are one of the concerns of local communities. Before works commencement, environmental monitoring arrangements and mitigation measures to control the impact of noise, dust and waste water generated by the works are established by project teams under relevant regulations. These measures include erecting noise barriers, spraying water regularly at works sites, and using covered dump trucks. If there is a school near to a works site, the project teams will explain the construction details to the school in advance and discuss the works arrangement to avoid carrying out noisy works during examination periods to reduce the impact. For those new railways projects built in residential communities, like WIL, SIL(E) and KTE, noise enclosures are erected to mitigate the noise and dust impacts upon residents if practicable. “Water” is just used in WIL as a buffer to absorb vibration, noise and dust generated during the construction of the vertical shaft by blasting.

### Commissioning Stage

12. It takes several years for a railway project to go from planning to construction and completion. To prepare for the commissioning of a new railway project, the liaison work will focus on helping the public to understand the service, layout and function of new railway facilities, as well as the coordination between the new railway service and the existing transport service. Effective communication at the commissioning stage can ensure the public are able to use the new railway service effectively, and help enhance Hong Kong’s transportation network.

13. Among the five new railway projects, the WIL will be the first to be commissioned and now scheduled for end-2014. The relevant community liaison works have commenced in phases to prepare for the commissioning of service. MTRCL plans to recruit ambassadors to give school talks and visits to explain new stations’ facilities and the locations of entrances in order to introduce the WIL services to the residents in Western District. MTRCL will also arrange station visits and publish

brochures to let the general public understand the new station services and facilities.

### **Territory-wide Public Engagement Activities**

14. With the new railway services, the connection between railway transport and the daily life of the Hong Kong people will be closer. Besides local community liaison works for the five new railway projects, MTRCL organizes territory-wide public engagement activities at various levels to facilitate understanding of railway planning, design, construction and commissioning.

#### Public Education Activities

15. The public's knowledge about the railway is further strengthened through interactive computer and mobile games, social networks and comic strips designed by students from the Hong Kong Design Institute and Technological and Higher Education Institutions of Hong Kong.

16. MTRCL goes to kindergartens, primary and secondary schools regularly to present information and activities relating to railway services. By organizing territory-wide competitions, like XRL tunnel boring machine naming competitions and computer game, the public gets in touch with the tunnel boring construction methods. MTRCL also collaborates with social service groups, like elderly centres, youth centres and ethnic minority organisations to enhance railway construction knowledge of the public through visits and games.

#### Public Engagement Activities

17. To let the public participate in new railway projects and ensure the railway truly serves as a Community Railway, reflecting the local culture and historical features, MTRCL organizes various forms of public engagement activities. In 2012, MTRCL held "MTR New Railway Lines Art in Station 2012" to invite artists to create artworks for the WIL, SIL(E) and KTE stations. Providing a more comprehensive art

programme in the railway network will offer more room to show the talent of local artists and bring a diversity of art into the daily lives of local communities.

### Exchange with Practitioners

18. As Hong Kong has a world leading position in railway construction techniques and project management, MTRCL regularly shares up to date information with practitioners in related industries, including engineers and academics, to enhance their understanding of railway projects. Interactive discussions and exchanges on different topics are held with industry professionals to enhance the standard of Hong Kong railway construction. In addition, MTRCL has also published an engineering periodical to strengthen communication with practitioners.

### **Conclusion**

19. Effective community liaison helps facilitate the implementation of new railway projects as well as the development of the community. It helps ensure that the design and construction of railway projects are able to meet local needs. It also enhances the public's understanding of the projects and the need to make allowances for any unavoidable inconvenience and impacts created by the construction works. Projects teams can collect public opinion during communication exercises and strike a balance between the railway works and residents' needs, with a view to minimising the works impact on the community and the environment.

20. Relying on its experience in community liaison works, MTRCL strives to ensure that it maintains a close connection with the community when implementing new railway projects. We will bring the benefits of community liaison works into full play and implement the new railway projects smoothly.

**MTR Corporation Limited**  
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