

Customs, Immigration and Quarantine Arrangements of the Hong Kong Section of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link



At a Glance

Advantages of High-speed Rail

- **Speedy:** High-speed trains generally operate at a speed between 200 km/h to 350 km/h – well above the top speed of Hong Kong Airport Express Line trains. The fastest travelling time to Guangzhou will be about 48 minutes; Changsha around 3 hours; Xiamen around 4 hours; Shanghai around 8 hours; and Beijing around 9 hours.
- **Convenient:** High-speed rail stations are generally located closer to city centres. Train services are more frequent, more punctual, and less susceptible to delays caused by bad weather. Passengers generally do not need to check in their baggage.
- **Environmentally friendly:** High-speed rail is a green transport mode. Carbon emissions are only about 15% and 25% of those from aircraft and buses respectively.

Co-location Arrangement

- **One-stop clearance procedures:** Passengers can **complete both Hong Kong and Mainland clearance procedures in one go** at the West Kowloon Station (WKS), and then board trains to **all cities** on the national high-speed rail network.
- **Other examples exist:** There are other overseas examples (such as the arrangement between the United Kingdom and France, or that between the United States and Canada). A co-location arrangement between Hong Kong and the Mainland has been operating smoothly at the Shenzhen Bay Port since 2007.
- **Mainland personnel in “Mainland Port Area” only:** Mainland personnel will carry out duties only inside the “Mainland Port Area” and **cannot** enter other areas at the WKS to perform their duties. They cannot take any enforcement action in other parts of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR).
- **Consistent with the Basic Law:** The Co-operation Arrangement on co-location will be reached by both sides. It will be approved by the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress (NPCSC) and will be fully consistent with the Basic Law.

“Three-step Process” to Implement the Co-location Arrangement

- **Step one:** The Mainland and the HKSAR reach a Co-operation Arrangement
- **Step two:** The NPCSC approves and endorses the Co-operation Arrangement by making a decision
- **Step three:** Implementation in the HKSAR through the enactment of local legislation

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Advantages of High-speed Rail

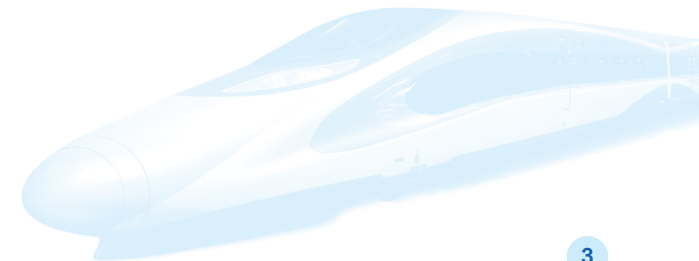
- **Global trend:** Many places, including the Mainland, Taiwan, Japan, Korea, France, Germany and Russia have been operating high-speed rail services. Countries planning new high-speed rail links include the United States, the United Kingdom, Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia. High-speed rail has become a global trend.
- **Merits:** High-speed rail is an important and modern mode of long-distance transport. It has substantial carrying capacity and can greatly shorten the travelling time between cities, which in turn fosters a new mode of living.
 - **Speedy:** High-speed trains generally operate at 200 km/h or above, and at some sections may even operate up to 350 km/h. This more than doubles the highest speed of about 80 km/h and 135 km/h respectively for trains on the Tseung Kwan O Line and the Airport Express Line.
 - **Convenient:** Unlike airports, high-speed rail stations are generally located closer to city centres and passengers do not need to arrive at the station one or two hours earlier as when travelling by plane. Train services are more frequent, more punctual, and less susceptible to delays caused by bad weather. Unlike travelling by plane, passengers generally do not need to check in their baggage.
 - **Environmentally friendly:** High-speed rail is a green transport mode. Carbon emissions are only about 15% and 2.5% of those from aircraft and buses respectively. It is the ideal choice for travellers who care about the environment.

High-speed Rail in the Mainland

- High-speed rail is developing rapidly throughout the world and the development in Mainland China in this area has been quite remarkable. In 2016, the national high-speed rail network surpassed 20,000 km in length and carried more than 1.44 billion passengers. The target is to increase the total network length to 30,000 km and to cover more than 80% of major cities by 2020.

Hong Kong Section of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link (XRL)

- As a regional transport hub, Hong Kong's long-term development potential will be enhanced if connected to the national high-speed rail network. Furthermore, as more people from Hong Kong work, run businesses, study or retire on the Mainland, the Hong Kong Section of the XRL will bring even greater convenience to residents. After years of planning, construction started in 2010 on the Hong Kong Section of the XRL. At a **total length of 26 km**, the Hong Kong Section is completely underground and designed to operate trains at **200 km/h**, similar to tunnel sections in Mainland cities, with short-haul services to Futian, Shenzhen North, Humen and Guangzhou South stations.
- The Hong Kong Section of the XRL connects to the expanding national high-speed rail network, including the **Beijing-Guangzhou Passenger Line** (commissioned in December 2012) running through Guangzhou, Changsha, Wuhan, Zhengzhou and Beijing; and the **Hangzhou-Fuzhou-Shenzhen Passenger Line** (commissioned in December 2013) running through coastal cities such as Shantou, Xiamen, Fuzhou and Hangzhou. The commissioning of the Hong Kong Section of the XRL will greatly shorten travelling time from Hong Kong to major Mainland cities by rail.
- Construction on the Hong Kong Section of the XRL is **about 95% complete** (at end-June 2017). Train testing and trial runs, as well as preparation for the operation stage, are underway. The aim is to **commission services in the third quarter of 2018**.



Alignment of the XRL



"8 Verticals, 8 Horizontals" National High-speed Rail Map



Direct trains to the following Mainland cities will be available upon commissioning of the Hong Kong Section of the XRL

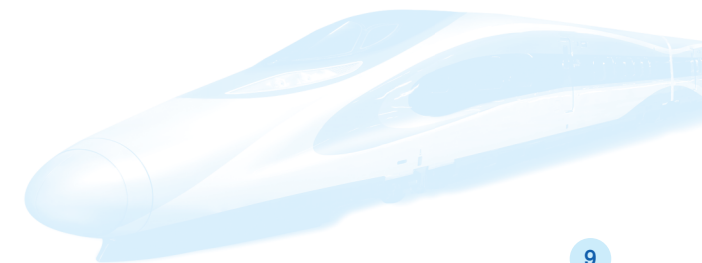
Short-haul services (XRL) (assuming no intermediate stops)

Destination	Estimated travelling time
Futian	14 minutes
Shenzhen North	23 minutes
Humen	33 minutes
Guangzhou South	48 minutes

Long-haul services (estimated travelling time based on current fastest travelling time of Mainland high-speed rail on weekdays)

Destination	Estimated travelling time
Shantou (Chaoshan Station)	around 2 hours 15 minutes
Changsha	around 3 hours
Xiamen	around 4 hours
Wuhan	around 4 hours 30 minutes
Nanchang	around 4 hours 30 minutes
Fuzhou	around 5 hours 15 minutes
Zhengzhou	around 6 hours 15 minutes
Hangzhou	around 6 hours 45 minutes
Shanghai	around 7 hours 45 minutes
Beijing	around 8 hours 45 minutes

- Passengers can reach other Mainland cities, such as Guilin, Kunming, Xian, Nanjing and Chengdu by **interchanging** (the main short-haul interchange stations are Guangzhou South and Shenzhen North).
- After commissioning of the Hong Kong Section of the XRL, we will continue to explore with Mainland authorities additional direct train services to more Mainland cities.



Benefits Brought by the Hong Kong Section of the XRL

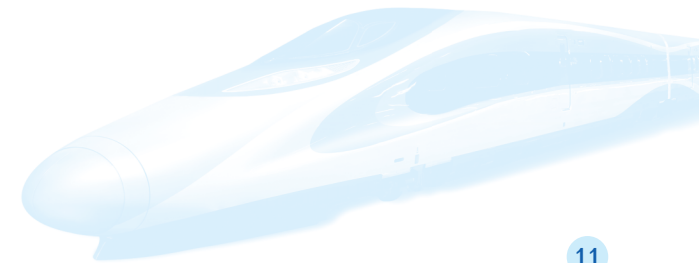
- **Direct benefits:** According to a conservative estimate, over a 50-year operation period, the Hong Kong Section of the XRL can **save passengers about 39 million hours of travelling time per year** on average.
- **Indirect benefits:** Enhancing Hong Kong's connectivity with the Mainland will **boost exchanges** between Hong Kong and major Mainland cities and foster the development of complementary advantages. The pillar industries of Hong Kong, such as financial services, trading and professional services, stand to benefit in particular.
- **Easier travel:** **More tourists will be attracted** to make Hong Kong a starting point or destination of their rail journeys. The location of the WKS adjacent to the West Kowloon Cultural District will also **create a synergy with this world-class integrated arts and cultural district**.
- **Creating jobs:** Jobs will be directly created in railway operation and maintenance as well as in retail, catering, station management and services at the WKS.
- **Green mode of transportation:** If 100,000 passengers per day opt for the XRL over cross-boundary coaches, about 4,700 tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions would be saved annually.

What is a Co-location Arrangement

- Efficient and time-saving customs, immigration and quarantine procedures ("clearance procedures") are crucial to realising the full potential of the XRL in terms of speed and convenience. Under a co-location arrangement, the clearance procedures of two jurisdictions are conducted successively in one place (compared to a traditional separate-location arrangement where clearance procedures are conducted at the places of departure and arrival in each jurisdiction).
- There are **examples** of co-location arrangements overseas (such as that between the United Kingdom and France, or that between the United States and Canada). Hong Kong and the Mainland have also had such an arrangement at the Shenzhen Bay Port since 2007. It has been operating smoothly and has been well received by travellers.

Need for a Co-location Arrangement

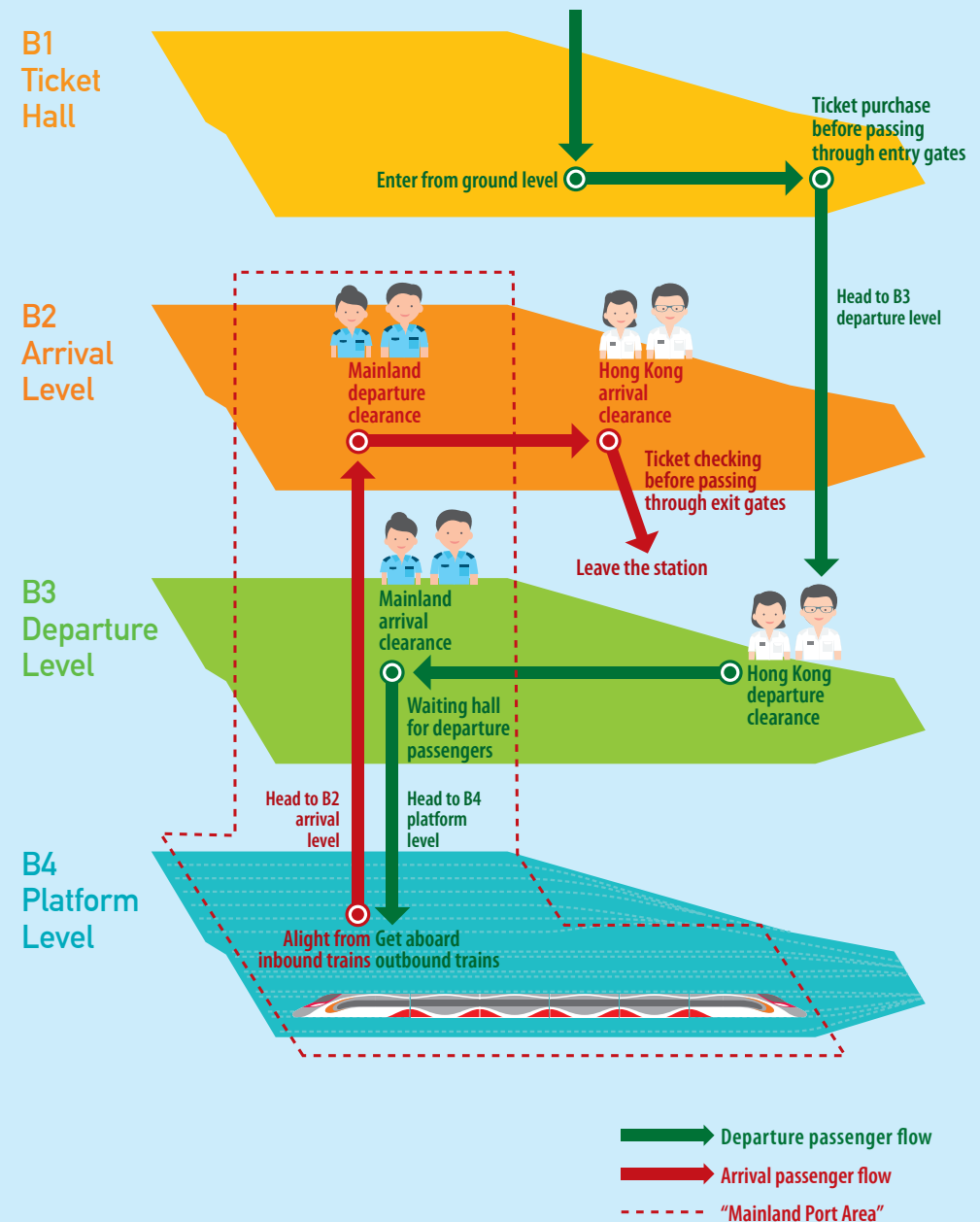
- Under a co-location arrangement, passengers can complete clearance procedures of both Hong Kong and the Mainland at the WKS **in one go**. Passengers departing from Hong Kong can go to **all cities** on the national high-speed rail network without having to undergo clearance procedures again on the Mainland.
- Passengers coming to Hong Kong can freely **board trains at any station** on the national high-speed rail network, and go through Mainland departure clearance and Hong Kong arrival clearance at the WKS. They will not be constrained by whether a particular Mainland city has clearance facilities.
- If a co-location arrangement is not implemented and a separate-location arrangement is implemented as with the intercity through train service between Hong Kong and Guangzhou, XRL passengers may only board or alight at the handful of Mainland stations equipped with clearance facilities. This will hamper the efficiency and flexibility offered by the XRL. In other words, using a separate-location arrangement for the XRL will greatly undermine its benefits and make it just like another intercity express rail without the advantage of easier access to cities throughout the nation.
- In addition to saving time and enjoying the speed and convenience of the XRL services, a co-location arrangement is critical to fully unleashing the transport, social and economic benefits of the XRL project.



Clearance Procedures under the Co-location Arrangement

- Under the co-location arrangement, clearance procedures that passengers need to undergo are essentially the same as those at other railway ports (e.g. Lo Wu and Lok Ma Chau Spur Line control points). Mainland arrival clearance is conducted immediately after departure from Hong Kong and vice versa.
- The WKS has five levels:
 - Concourse on the ground floor
 - Ticket hall at basement level one (B1)
 - Arrival level (with both “Hong Kong Port Area” arrival clearance facilities, and “Mainland Port Area” departure clearance facilities) at basement level two (B2)
 - Departure level (with both “Hong Kong Port Area” departure clearance facilities, and “Mainland Port Area” arrival clearance facilities) at basement level three (B3)
 - Platform level at basement level four (B4).
- For northbound passengers travelling to the Mainland, after entering the WKS, they will:
 - go through entry gates after purchasing tickets at B1
 - head direct to the departure level at B3 to go through Hong Kong departure clearance and leave the “Hong Kong Port Area”
 - proceed to the “Mainland Port Area” on the same level (B3) to go through Mainland arrival clearance
 - go to the waiting hall (B3) until it is time to board trains to the Mainland at the platform level at B4.
- For southbound passengers travelling to Hong Kong, after their trains arrive at the WKS, they will:
 - alight at the platform level at B4
 - head direct to the arrival level at B2 to go through Mainland departure clearance and leave the “Mainland Port Area”
 - proceed to the “Hong Kong Port Area” on the same level (B2) to go through Hong Kong arrival clearance
 - leave the WKS.
- When passengers are within the “Mainland Port Area”, they must abide by Mainland laws. Mainland personnel can **only** perform their duties within the “Mainland Port Area” and have no law enforcement authority in other parts of the HKSAR.

Passenger Flow in the WKS



“Three-step Process” to Implement the Co-location Arrangement

- **Step one:** The Mainland and the HKSAR reach a Co-operation Arrangement
- **Step two:** The NPCSC approves and endorses the Co-operation Arrangement by making a decision
- **Step three:** Implementation in the HKSAR through the enactment of local legislation
- The co-location arrangement is consistent with the Basic Law. The HKSAR and the Mainland will reach a Co-operation Arrangement on co-location, which will be approved and endorsed by the NPCSC, and followed by enactment of local legislation in Hong Kong. The entire legal documentation will provide a sound and clear legal basis for Mainland personnel to conduct clearance procedures for passengers and perform duties in the “Mainland Port Area”.

Q&A on the Co-location Arrangement

Q1 Why not implement a separate-location arrangement for the XRL?

A1 The HKSAR Government and the Mainland Government have explored the feasibility of a separate-location arrangement. However, it is neither practical nor economically viable to set up control points in multiple Mainland high-speed rail stations solely to conduct clearance procedures for northbound/southbound passengers departing from/travelling to the WKS.

If control point(s) are established only in one or a handful of Mainland high-speed rail station(s) near Hong Kong with relatively higher patronage, such station(s) will become “hub station(s)” at which passengers must alight to undergo Mainland clearance procedures before continuing with their journeys. This would be a significant inconvenience to passengers.

Q2 Why not implement “on-board clearance” for the XRL?

A2 The HKSAR Government and the Mainland Government have considered the option of “on-board clearance”, under which Mainland personnel would conduct clearance procedures for passengers when the trains are running on the Mainland. However, clearance procedures do not simply involve observation and examination of passengers, it may also involve inspection of belongings when necessary. There is limited space in train compartments and constraints in terms of manpower and equipment.

In practice, the travelling time between the WKS and the next station (Futian Station) is only 14 minutes, and that between the Hong Kong/Shenzhen boundary and Futian Station is only around 3 minutes. It is not operationally feasible to complete clearance procedures in such a short time for all passengers on a train, considering the short-haul service trains purchased through the MTR Corporation Limited will have 579 seats.

Q3 Is it feasible to implement a co-location arrangement at a Mainland station rather than at the WKS?

A3 If a co-location arrangement is implemented at a Mainland station, both the clearance procedures of Hong Kong and the Mainland will need to be conducted at that station. Both northbound and southbound passengers will need to alight at this Mainland station midway through their journeys to undergo clearance procedures before they re-board trains to continue on their journeys.

This arrangement will be extremely inconvenient for passengers; it will prolong the overall travelling time, diminish the usefulness of the XRL in connecting seamlessly to the national high-speed rail network and greatly impact on the efficiency and functionality of the XRL.

Q4 How is the “Mainland Port Area” defined?

A4 In deciding on the boundary of the “Mainland Port Area” at the WKS, we are guided by the principle of “absolute necessity” and include only the designated areas necessary to implement the co-location arrangement. These include the Mainland clearance area and back offices of the Mainland authorities on B2 and B3 of the WKS, the waiting hall for departure passengers on B3, the platforms (including connecting passageways) on B4, and the connecting passageways/escalators linking these areas. In addition, XRL train compartments in operation are also deemed part of the “Mainland Port Area”.

All railway facilities, tracks and tunnels of the Hong Kong Section of the XRL outside the WKS are not part of the “Mainland Port Area”.

Q5 Can Mainland personnel take enforcement actions outside the WKS?

A5 No. Mainland personnel can only perform their duties within the “Mainland Port Area” and have no law enforcement authority in other parts of the HKSAR.

