

LCQ14: Retrofitting of Platform Screen Doors and Automatic Platform Gates at MTR stations

Following is a question by the Hon Wong Sing-chi and a written reply by the Secretary for Transport and Housing, Ms Eva Cheng, at the Legislative Council meeting today (November 3):

Question:

Since July 3, 2000, the then Mass Transit Railway (MTR) Corporation and the MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL) have respectively collected an extra charge of \$0.1 for each Octopus journey from passengers (the collection arrangement) to fund the project of retrofitting platform screen doors or automatic platform gates at 30 underground stations as well as eight aboveground and at-grade stations (the retrofitting project). The expenditure of the retrofitting project is about \$2.3 billion, half of which is contributed by passengers through the collection arrangement, and MTRCL had collected \$730 million as at the end of 2009. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(a) given that in their reply to a question raised by a Member of this Council on June 9, 2010, the authorities stated that according to the estimate by MTRCL with reference to its financial records of the past few years, the collection arrangement will continue until 2017 to enable full recovery of the retrofitting project cost, whether the Government knows if there is any change to the cost of the retrofitting project at present; if there is, of the latest estimation and the reasons for such a change, as well as when the collection arrangement will last;

(b) whether it knows the accrued amount collected by MTRCL to date through the collection arrangement; whether the amount is sufficient to cover half of the expenditure of the retrofitting project; if so, of the progress and timetable of the retrofitting project; if not, whether MTRCL will revise its original option of sharing half of the project cost only and put in more resources to speed up the progress of the retrofitting project in order to protect passengers' safety;

(c) whether it knows the details of the works which MTRCL decided in 2008 to carry out at the eight aboveground and at-grade stations of the pre-merger MTR system, including the progress, timetable and expenditure, etc. of the works (list by the name of the stations); and

(d) of the number of accidents of passengers falling onto rail tracks due to various reasons in each of the past five years and the number of passengers involved; among them, the number of accidents which happened at stations without platform screen doors or automatic platform gates as well as the number and percentage of passengers involved?

Reply:

President,

For the various parts of the question, our reply is set out below:

(a) and (b) The pre-merger MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL) announced in early 1999 the retrofitting of platform screen doors (PSDs) at 30 underground stations. The retrofitting programme was completed in 2006. As the works required a high capital cost of \$2 billion which was not covered in the original investment plan of the MTR urban lines, after discussion with the Legislative Council, half of the project cost would be borne by MTRCL while the remaining half of the project cost (i.e. \$1 billion) would be met through collecting 10 cents per trip from passengers using Octopus card. As such, collection of the 10 cents per trip from passengers using Octopus card travelling on the pre-merger MTR lines began in July 2000 and the arrangement will continue until the cost of \$1 billion is recovered in full.

In 2008, MTRCL decided to retrofit automatic platform gates (APGs) at the eight aboveground and at-grade stations in the former MTR system. These stations are Heng Fa Chuen, Chai Wan, Kwai Fong, Kwai Hing, Tsuen Wan, Kowloon Bay, Ngau Tau Kok and Kwun Tong Stations. The cost of the retrofitting works is about \$300 million, half of which would continue to be borne by passengers using Octopus card through collecting 10 cents per trip and the other half would be borne by MTRCL.

By June 2010, \$775 million had been collected by MTRCL. Based on the financial records of the past few years, it is projected that the 10-cent collection arrangement will continue until 2017, which is the same as the projection announced previously.

(c) The works of retrofitting APGs at the eight aboveground and at-grade stations started in 2010, and are expected to be completed by the end of 2011, one year earlier

than originally scheduled. The progress of the works is tabulated in appendix 1.

According to MTRCL, the contracts for the aforementioned works with an overall cost of \$300 million do not have cost breakdown by stations.

(d) Passenger-on-track cases include accidents in which passengers fall onto the track (e.g. under the influence of alcohol or medicine, due to sickness etc); suicides and attempted suicides; and trespasses onto the track (e.g. passengers trying to retrieve items fallen onto the track, crossing the track to the platform on the other side etc). Over the past five years, all such cases happened at stations without PSDs (Note). The number of cases is set out in appendix 2.

(Note) The cases for 2006 include two cases involving contractor staff at stations with PSDs. One was a case of a contractor staff fallen onto the track by accident, and the other was a trespass onto the track involving 10 contractor staff.

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