

Joint News Release

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Completion of North-South Line sleeper replacement by end-April Works for East-West Line to start in mid-May

1. The sleeper replacement programme on the North-South Line (NSL) will be completed by the end of this month. With all 96,000 timber sleepers replaced with concrete ones and speed restrictions lifted, commuters will enjoy faster and more comfortable train rides.
2. The sleeper replacement programme is part of a multi-year effort to improve commuter experience on the North-South and East-West Lines (NSEWL). Together with projects such as the replacement of the third rail, the upgrading of the signalling system and of existing trains, as well as the injection of new trains, the reliability and availability of the network will be enhanced.
3. The end of re-sleepering works will significantly shorten journey times on the NSL. During the sleeper replacement programme, trains had to travel at slower speeds of around 40 to 60 km/hour on some stretches, to ensure the safety of passengers. With the completion of works and the lifting of the speed restrictions, the trains will now travel at about 80 km/h, shortening journey times by around 10 to 15%¹.
4. In addition, with the deployment of 13 new trains and the tightening of the Operating Performance Standards last year, the number of weekly train trips on the NSEWL has increased by 10%. Average wait times have come down from 2.5 minutes to 2.3 minutes, and from 5-7 minutes to 4-5 minutes, during peak and non-peak periods respectively.
5. With works on the NSL nearing completion, sleeper replacement works on the East-West Line (EWL) will commence from mid-May 2015. In total, more than 92,000 timber sleepers between Boon Lay and Tiong Bahru, as well as between Lavender and Pasir Ris, will be replaced with concrete sleepers. Works are expected to be completed by end-2016.

¹ For example, the journey from Jurong East to Marina Bay will now take about 67 minutes, compared to about 77 minutes when speed restrictions were imposed.

6. SMRT has started to apply temporary speed restrictions at stretches of the EWL as part of the preliminary track works, which will increase total end-to-end travel time by about 10 minutes. Noise mitigation measures such as portable acoustic screens will be installed at work sites to reduce the inconvenience to residents while the works are being carried out.

7. Mr Chua Chong Kheng, LTA's Deputy Chief Executive (Infrastructure and Development), said: "Sleeper replacement is a key component of our efforts to upgrade and renew the NSEWL rail network, together with the replacement of the existing signalling system, third rail system and the installation of permanent noise barriers. With works on the NSL coming to an end, the speed of the trains will be brought back to what it was before these works started. This would mean a shorter end-to-end journey time for commuters."

8. "We would like to thank residents and commuters living along the NSL for their patience and understanding over the past few years. Lessons learnt from our experience on the NSL will lead to engineering and service improvements as we embark on works on the EWL," said SMRT Trains Managing Director, Mr Lee Ling Wee. "The upcoming track renewal works on the EWL will lead to better safety and reliability for passengers, as ageing rail infrastructure such as sleepers, signalling equipment and third rails are replaced. As speed restrictions are imposed for newly-laid sleepers to let them settle down safely and as work takes place after midnight, this project may lead to temporary inconvenience. Our team looks forward to working closely with residents and commuters as we renew the line from Pasir Ris to Boon Lay quickly and safely so that our trains can serve the commuting public better for years to come," he added.

9. To facilitate track renewal works and enable them to be carried out safely and efficiently, SMRT may end train services earlier at certain stations of the EWL. To enable commuters to plan ahead, information about the early station closures will be announced nearer the date.

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