4 new MRT stations in Tuas by 2016

East-West line extension plans include a depot and road viaduct

By Maria Almenoar

UP TO 35 more minutes of sleep time.

That is the good news for commuters when four stations added to the East-West MRT line open in 2016.

News of the extension, costing $3.5 billion, to serve Tuas, Tuas Crescent, Tuas West and Tuas Link was announced yesterday by Transport Minister Raymond Lim after he viewed new platform screen doors at Bedok MRT station.

He said the new link would improve accessibility and connectivity for people who work in Jurong and Tuas.

Travelling from Ang Mo Kio to Tuas West, for example, now takes 1hr 40min by train and bus. Once the extension is up, the trip will take 1hr 5min, saving 35 minutes.

The $3.5 billion will pay for the new stations, depot and trains as well as a road viaduct running parallel to the line.

When completed in 2016, the 7.5km extension from Joo Koon station is expected to cater to 100,000 passengers daily.

The East-West line, from Pasir Ris to Boon Lay, was fully opened in 1990. The extension, from Boon Lay to Joo Koon in 2009, now serves about 60,000 passengers daily.

Initial studies of the Tuas West extension, first released in the Land Transport Masterplan in 2008, called for three stations but further studies found that an extra one would help cater to more commuters.

Plans were also updated to include building a 26ha depot to house the extra trains the Land Transport Authority (LTA) is buying. The new depot – the fourth here – has room for 60 trains compared to Bishan depot's 37.

The bigger space will be needed for the 22 new trains for the East-West line and 13 new ones for the Tuas West extension.

The first of the 22 new trains was delivered this week.

To make way for the new project, nine industrial properties will be acquired along with portions of 49 others.

LTA chief executive Chew Hock Yong said while there was traffic congestion in Tuas during peak periods, it was not "intolerable".