

LCQ11: The New Territories cycle track network

Following is a question by the Hon Kenneth Lau and a written reply by the Secretary for Transport and Housing, Mr Frank Chan Fan, in the Legislative Council today (January 20):

Question:

The Government is developing a cycle track network in the New Territories with a total length of about 82 kilometres, comprising the Tuen Mun to Ma On Shan backbone section (Tuen Ma Cycle Track) which was linked up last year, and the Tuen Mun to Tsuen Wan backbone section (Tuen Tsuen Cycle Track) which is under construction. Some members of the public have complained that cyclists have to dismount at a number of sections along the Tuen Ma Cycle Track and some of the sections are even at the junctions with roads, leading to the dangerous situation of bicycles and vehicles competing for road space. Besides, as there are too many bollards installed at the junctions of the Tuen Ma Cycle Track and the various pedestrian crossings and the bollard spacing is too small, accidents are prone to occur. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the number of complaints about the ancillary facilities of the New Territories cycle track network received by the Government in each of the past three years, with a breakdown by type of facilities; what follow-up actions that the Government has taken (including whether it has carried out improvement works);

(2) of the number of traffic accidents which occurred in the New Territories cycle track network and the resultant casualties in each of the past three years, with a breakdown by type of accidents; what follow-up actions that the Government has taken (including whether it has carried out improvement works); and

(3) whether the cycle track section of the Tuen Tsuen Cycle Track from Tsing Tsuen Bridge to Bayview Garden in Tsuen Wan can be completed within this year on schedule, and of the latest implementation timetable of the cycle track section from Bayview Garden to Tuen Mun?

Reply:

President,

It is the Government's policy to, where road safety considerations and circumstances permit, foster a "bicycle-friendly environment" by constructing cycle tracks and related facilities in new development areas and new towns, and improving existing facilities for the public to use bicycles for recreational or short-distance commuting purposes, thereby reducing the use of mechanised transport. Besides, the Government has been making effort in

implementing the cycle track network in the New Territories to connect New Territories East with New Territories West for leisure and recreation purposes.

In consultation with relevant bureaux and departments, my reply to the various parts of the question is as follows:

(1) and (2) According to the records of the Transport Department (TD), the numbers of complaints about the ancillary facilities of cycle tracks in the New Territories in the past three years are set out at Annex 1; and the numbers of traffic accidents involving bicycles which occurred in cycle tracks in the New Territories and the resultant casualties in the past three years are set out at Annex 2. As the Government observes a significant increase in the number of cycling accidents last year, the Government will continue its commitment to improve the ancillary facilities for existing cycle tracks, closely monitor the situation, as well as promote and raise the safety awareness of citizens with a view to enhancing cycling safety.

On the planning and design of cycle tracks, the Government makes reference to relevant guidelines and duly considers the factors of curvature, gradient, width, sightline and continuity, etc. to minimise the need for cyclists to dismount while crossing road junctions and vehicular accesses, and provides appropriate traffic signs, road markings and facilities for ensuring cycling safety. Moreover, the Government has been replacing metal speed reducing bollards with plastic ones at appropriate locations of cycle tracks throughout the territory to minimise accidental injuries to cyclists, and providing new bicycle parking areas at appropriate places.

On the promotion of cycling safety, the TD has been working with the Road Safety Council and the Hong Kong Police Force (the Police) to raise the safety awareness of cyclists through diversified publicity and education activities. In view of the increase in cycling accidents last year, the Police held a cycling safety press conference in collaboration with the TD, the Auxiliary Medical Service (AMS) and the Cycling Association of Hong Kong, China at the end of last year. In the press conference, the findings of a focus study conducted by the Police on cycling accidents involving fatalities and serious injuries in the first three quarters of last year, the data on cycling traffic accidents and the first aid services provided by the AMS on cycle tracks were released to the public. Besides, the public were reminded not to overstretch themselves, and that they should take sufficient safety measures when riding bicycles and to maintain "attentive, patient and law-abiding" attitude at all time. The Police will also step up law enforcement against cycling violations.

(3) Under the cycle track network in the New Territories, the backbone section between Tsuen Wan and Tuen Mun is being implemented in stages. The section between Tsing Tsuen Bridge and Bayview Garden in Tsuen Wan will be completed in the middle of this year, providing an around two-kilometre-long cycle track along the waterfront for public enjoyment. As for the section between Bayview Garden and Ting Kau, detailed design is underway and suitable design options to address the local views and site constraints are being formulated for further consultation with the public, tentatively by the end

of this year.

As for the section between Tuen Mun and So Kwun Wat and the section between So Kwun Wat and Ting Kau, the former is now under detailed design, and the public consultation and statutory gazettal process is scheduled to proceed in this year. Upon completion of the statutory process, funding application from the Legislative Council will follow to enable early commencement of construction works. The latter section has, however, encountered very challenging site constraints and strong local objections. The Civil Engineering and Development Department is endeavouring to explore feasible and cost effective alignment options, and to gain support from the relevant stakeholders.