

LCQ12: Retrofitting noise barriers on existing roads

Following is a question by the Hon Kwok Wai-keung and a written reply by the Secretary for the Environment, Mr Wong Kam-sing, in the Legislative Council today (February 20):

Question:

Regarding the retrofitting of noise barriers on existing roads to alleviate the traffic noise nuisance caused to nearby residents, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the respective numbers of noise barriers retrofitting works projects that were (i) completed, (ii) in progress and (iii) under planning, in each of the past five years; whether it has studied what factors have contributed to the year-on-year changes in those numbers;

(2) of the following information (if applicable) on the works projects referred to in (1): (i) the (expected) commencement dates of the works, (ii) the (expected) completion dates of the works, (iii) the progress of the works, (iv) the traffic noise levels at the road sections concerned, (v) the (estimated) project costs, and (vi) the (expected) numbers of persons benefitting from the works;

(3) of the order of commencement of those noise barriers retrofitting works projects currently under planning; the mechanisms adopted by the Government for determining the order and design of the noise barriers; as some residents of Heng Fa Chuen have indicated that they have, for many years, been suffering greatly from the noise nuisance caused by the traffic on Island Eastern Corridor, whether the Government will expedite the retrofitting of noise barriers on the road section concerned;

(4) in respect of those road sections on which noise barriers retrofitting works are needed but have yet to commence, of the short-term measures the Government has in place to alleviate, before the completion of the relevant works, the noise nuisance caused by the traffic on the road sections concerned to nearby residents;

(5) whether it will expedite the planning of noise barriers retrofitting works projects, and set a target for the number of such works projects to be completed per year; and

(6) in view of the completion of two major infrastructure projects last year, whether the Government will seize the opportunity presented by the relatively abundant supply of construction workers at present to expedite the implementation of noise barriers retrofitting works projects?

Reply:

President,

Our reply to the question raised by the Hon Kwok Wai-keung is as follows:

(1) The respective numbers of noise barriers retrofitting works that were completed, in progress and under planning in each of the past five years are tabulated below:

Year	Completed	In Progress	Under Planning
2014	7	0	24
2015	0	1	23
2016	0	2	22
2017	0	2	22
2018	0	3	21

Noise barrier retrofitting works on existing roads are public works, the implementation of which follows the procedures of the Public Works Programme. Procedures such as detailed design and tendering work will commence only upon funding approval.

Among the seven noise barriers retrofitting works completed in 2014, six were located at various sections of the Tuen Mun Road. As the retrofitting works were conducted in tandem with the road widening works carried out by the Highways Department (HyD) at those road sections, the six retrofitting works were completed concurrently.

For those works still in progress, they are expected to be completed within the next few years. Details of the retrofitting works are set out in (2) below.

(2) Other information on the retrofitting works referred to in (1) is tabulated as follows:

Retrofitting works completed

Road section	Commencement date (Year)	Completion date (Year)	Works progress	Maximum traffic noise level (dB(A))	Project costs (\$ million)	Approximate number of residents benefitted
--------------	--------------------------	------------------------	----------------	-------------------------------------	----------------------------	--

Tuen Mun Road (Tsuen Wan section)	2009	2014	Completed	85	1 257	12 840
Tuen Mun Road (Yau Kom Tau section)	2010					
Tuen Mun Road (Castle Peak Bay section)	2010					
Tuen Mun Road (Anglers' Beach section)	2009					
Tuen Mun Road (Sham Tseng section)	2009					
Tuen Mun Road (Tsing Lung Tau section)	2010					
Tai Po Tai Wo Road (near Po Nga Court)	2012	2014	Completed	78	97	480

Retrofitting works in progress

Road section	Commencement date (Year)	Expected completion date (Year)	Works progress	Maximum traffic noise level (dB(A))	Project costs (\$ million)	Approximate number of residents benefitted
Tuen Mun Road (Town Centre section)	2015	2020	In progress	86	827	5 450
Tuen Mun Road (Fu Tei section)	2016	2019	In progress	80	786	2 580
Tai Po Road (Sha Tin section)	2018	2023	In progress	81	852	6 660
Long Tin Road	2019 (expected)	2023	Funding application under preparation	77	304	1 360

Retrofitting works under planning

Road section (Note)	Maximum traffic noise level (dB(A))	Preliminarily estimated project costs (at September 2018 prices) (\$ million)	Approximate number of residents benefitted
Castle Peak Road (Hung Shui Kiu section)	74	20	50
Castle Peak Road (Ping Shan section)	78	108	180
Chai Wan Road	76	102	470
Fanling Highway (near Tsung Pak Long)	79	111	280
Hoi On Road	79	347	1 900
Island Eastern Corridor (near Heng Fa Chuen)	81	82	420
Jockey Club Road and San Wan Road (near Fanling Wai)	77	83	190
Ma Wang Road	72	82	260
New Clear Water Bay Road	80	321	4 430
Po Lam Road North	74	364	1 150
Po Lam Road North (near Hong Sing Garden and King Ming Court)	76	188	260
Po Ning Road	76	201	2 420
Po Shek Wu Road	81	180	2 140
San Tin Highway	83	476	1 220
Sha Tin Road	79	519	3 170
Sha Tin Road near Wong Uk Village	76	24	50
Tai Po Road (Sham Shui Po)	78	181	1 080
Tam Kon Shan Road	78	201	1 610
Tsuen Wan Road	79	176	2 850
Yuen Wo Road	77	40	920

Note: Listed in alphabetical order of the road sections concerned. As the works are still under planning, details on their expected commencement and

completion dates as well as works progress are unavailable.

(3) When determining the order of noise barriers retrofitting works, the Government will accord priority to road sections with the greatest noise impact and the largest number of residents affected. Moreover, if other road works (e.g. road widening works) will be carried out near the road sections concerned, the relevant departments will explore the feasibility of combining the works to minimise inconvenience caused to road users and nearby residents.

As to the design of noise barriers, due consideration will be given not only to their effectiveness in noise reduction but also to the following technical factors:

(a) whether the noise barrier will obstruct emergency access or fire fighting;

(b) whether the noise barrier will undermine road safety or impede pedestrian and vehicular movements; and

(c) whether there is adequate space and structural capability (applicable to flyovers) for supporting the noise barrier.

(4) In respect of those road sections on which noise barriers retrofitting works are being planned and not yet commenced, the Government will explore whether other feasible traffic noise mitigation measures can be put in place. For example, a section of the Island Eastern Corridor near Heng Fa Chuen has been resurfaced with low noise material to reduce the traffic noise impact on nearby residents.

(5) and (6) The Government has been looking for ways to expedite the planning of noise barriers retrofitting works. To this end, the HyD had engaged a consultant to conduct a feasibility study for a number of noise barriers retrofitting works under planning. The consultancy report has provided preliminary feasible options for the projects and relevant details on the advance design to enable faster and smoother work at the detailed design stage. To save time, the Government is also combining the detailed design work for noise barriers retrofitting works on different road sections. Given that government works must follow the funding procedures, and that due consideration has to be given to all relevant factors, the Government is unable to set a target for the number of works to be completed per year.