

LCQ12: Shortage of parking spaces

Following is a question by the Hon Tang Ka-piu and a written reply by the Secretary for Transport and Housing, Mr Frank Chan Fan, in the Legislative Council today (January 26):

Question:

The problem of shortage of parking spaces in Hong Kong has been plaguing the transport sector. As at the end of May 2021, the number of parking spaces available for use by commercial vehicles (CVs) was only around 45 300, while the number of CVs stood at around 71 000. The ratio between the two numbers was only about 0.64. Besides, some members of the sector are dissatisfied that the Government has adjusted the latest operating time of most parking meters from the original 8pm to 12 midnight in recent years, thus increasing their financial burden and affecting their rest time. Regarding the shortage of parking spaces, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether it will consider reverting the latest operating time of parking meters from 12 midnight to 8pm;

(2) given that parking spaces in some government buildings are currently opened up for public use during non-office hours, whether the Government will consider opening up car parks in other government facilities for parking by CVs during night time, or expediting the provision of additional on-street night-time parking spaces for CVs on road sections with less traffic, so as to address the problem of shortage of parking spaces as soon as possible;

(3) of the total number of additional parking spaces that can be provided upon the Government's implementation of the Automated Parking System (APS) in the following projects: (i) a short-term tenancy (STT) car park at the junction of Hoi Shing Road and Hoi Kok Street in Tsuen Wan, (ii) an STT car park at Pak Shek Kok in Tai Po, (iii) the Joint-user Complex at Chung Kong Road in Sheung Wan, (iv) the District Open Space, Sports Centre cum Public Vehicle Park project at Sze Mei Street, (v) the Joint-user Government Office Building in Area 67 in Tseung Kwan O, and (vi) the project at the junction of Yen Chow Street and Tung Chau Street in Sham Shui Po; and

(4) whether it has plans to expeditiously develop APSs in collaboration with private developers, so as to promote the popularisation of APSs in Hong Kong?

Reply:

President,

The Government's current policy in the provision of parking spaces is to accord priority to considering and meeting the parking demand of commercial vehicles (CVs), and to provide an appropriate number of private car (PC) parking spaces if the overall development permits, but at the same time not to encourage frequent users of public transport to opt for PCs in lieu of

public transport, so as to avoid aggravating the burden on road traffic.

In recent years, the Government has formulated and has been actively pursuing a host of short-term and medium- to long-term measures to increase parking spaces for CVs, including the provision of CV parking spaces in suitable "Government, Institution or Community" facilities and public open space projects in line with the principle of "single site, multiple uses", designating suitable on-street locations as night-time CV parking spaces, stipulating the provision of a minimum number of parking spaces for CVs in the tenancy agreement of suitable short-term tenancy (STT) car parks, etc. Last year, the Transport Department (TD) completed the review of the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines (HKPSG) regarding the standards for the provision of ancillary parking spaces for CVs and PCs, and increased the type and number of parking spaces for CVs in subsidised housing developments. In consultation with the TD, our reply to various parts of Hon Tang Ka-piu's question is as follows:

(1) Currently, most of the on-street metered parking spaces for CVs operate from 8am to 8pm while some may operate from 10am to 10pm on Sundays and public holidays. The longest parking period for each transaction is set at 30 minutes, one hour or two hours. To allow a higher vehicle turnover of the metered parking spaces, the TD has taken into account various factors such as the traffic condition, parking demand and vehicle turnover rates at individual locations when setting the operating periods and longest parking periods of on-street metered parking spaces. Every year, the TD will conduct a survey to review the utilisation of the on-street metered parking spaces and will timely adjust the longest parking periods and operating periods where necessary after taking into account the considerations mentioned above.

In January this year, the TD completed replacing about 9 800 existing roadside parking meters in the whole territory by the new generation parking meters. The TD will continue to identify suitable new locations to install new parking meters by batches. The new parking meters support remote payment through the "HKeMeter" mobile application, so drivers do not need to pay at the parking meters in person.

(2) As at December 2021, the Government Property Agency (GPA) has opened up about 1 220 PC parking spaces in 13 joint-user government buildings under its management for public use during non-office hours. In general, subject to the situation of individual car parks, PC parking spaces can be used by PCs, taxis as well as van-type light goods vehicles with such sizes that can be accommodated within PC parking spaces. As regards CV parking spaces, they cannot be open for public use as they primarily serve the vehicles of relevant government departments. In the "Government, Institution or Community" facilities and public open space projects in the pipeline, we will include CV parking spaces in public vehicle parks in suitable projects following the principle of "Single Site, Multiple Uses".

As at December 2021, around 1 730 on-street night-time parking spaces for CVs have been provided by the Government for use by goods vehicles, coaches and other non-franchised buses. The TD will continue to identify suitable on-street locations for designation as night-time parking spaces for

goods vehicles and coaches. In addition, the Government has specified in the tenancy agreement of suitable STT car parks a minimum provision of parking spaces for CVs, in which about 2 000 parking spaces have been provided so far.

Furthermore, noting that a considerable number of CV drivers live in subsidised housing, the revision of the HKPSG in August 2021 has, in addition to increasing the type (Note) and number of parking spaces for CVs provided in subsidised housing projects, raised the number of loading/unloading bays ancillary to subsidised housing, which will be opened up for overnight parking of large-size CVs (i.e. coaches and medium/heavy goods vehicles) where feasible so as to increase the provision of CV parking spaces.

Since February 2021, the Government has requested to include in the leases condition of suitable new government sale sites the requirements for owners to open up certain portion of the ancillary parking spaces and loading/unloading bays for night-time public parking of CVs. This measure applies to government sale sites zoned for "Commercial", "Industrial", "Other Specified Uses (Business)" and "Other Specified Uses (Mixed Use)".

(3) The Government is actively taking forward automated parking systems (APS) projects in STT car parks and public works projects. The total number of the parking spaces provided (including conventional and APS parking spaces) by the concerned STT car parks raised in the Question and other relevant information are set out as follows:

(i) the APS project at the STT site on Hoi Shing Road in Tsuen Wan was commissioned in November 2021, providing a total of 245 parking spaces; and

(ii) for the STT site at Pak Shek Kok in Tai Po, the tenancy was awarded in December 2021 with the APS expected to be commissioned in Q4 2022. The STT car park will provide about 240 parking spaces.

As regards the concerned public works projects involving APS, save for (iii) the Joint-user Complex at Chung Kong Road in Sheung Wan, of which the total number of parking spaces is to be confirmed, the respective works progress and numbers of parking spaces are as follows:

(iv) the District Open Space, Sports Centre cum Public Vehicle Park project at Sze Mei Street will be submitted to the Legislative Council for funding approval this year. The project is expected to be completed in 2026, providing a total of about 300 parking spaces;

(v) the Joint-user Government Office Building in Area 67 in Tseung Kwan O, construction works of which have commenced and are expected to be completed in 2025, will provide a total of about 300 parking spaces; and

(vi) as regards the project at the junction of Yen Chow Street and Tung Chau Street in Sham Shui Po, we plan to seek funding approval from the Legislative Council within the next legislative year. It is expected to be completed in 2026, providing a total of about 200 parking spaces.

The Government will examine the feasibility of adopting APS when inviting tenders for new STT car parks or carrying out re-tendering for the existing STT car parks. Meanwhile, we will actively consider promoting the use of APS in more public works projects.

(4) While considering the adoption of APS, private developers have to ensure the compliance of systems with legal requirements, land leases, etc. Earlier on, the TD gathered valuable feedback on how to facilitate the adoption of APS in private car parks from consulting various stakeholders, including the Real Estate Developers Association of Hong Kong, professional bodies, the Hong Kong Automobile Association, car park operators and APS suppliers. Currently, through taking forward different types of APS projects, the Government is accumulating experiences in building, operating and managing the systems and the application of regulations and administrative guidelines to facilitate the development of APS. The TD will timely share with stakeholders the experience in the implementation of the APS projects and collaborate with relevant departments to look into and review the relevant practice notes, so as to streamline the application procedures for the adoption of APS in privately-owned car parks.

Note: In order to make optimal use of spaces and to improve utilisation rates, the revised standards introduce two types of "shared-use" parking spaces with reference to the similar vehicle dimensions of CVs, one of which to be shared by light goods vehicles and light buses and another shared by medium/heavy goods vehicles and coaches. The "shared-use" parking spaces offer flexibility to the supply of parking spaces by allowing CVs of similar dimensions to share parking spaces when needed.