

LCQ13: Tai Chung Kiu Road in Sha Tin

Following is a question by the Hon Frankie Yick and a written reply by the Secretary for Transport and Housing, Mr Frank Chan Fan, in the Legislative Council today (October 23):

Question :

It has been reported that in recent years, a number of serious traffic accidents have occurred at a number of junctions along Tai Chung Kiu Road in Sha Tin. Although the Transport Department has been implementing a number of improvement measures progressively following a comprehensive review on the road safety of the road last year, traffic accidents still happen on the road from time to time. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the respective numbers of traffic accidents which happened on Tai Chung Kiu Road, and the resultant casualties, in each of the past five years and this year to date, together with a breakdown by (i) the cause of accident and (ii) the type of vehicle involved; and

(2) whether it will consider lowering the vehicular speed limit for Tai Chung Kiu Road, and providing additional cautionary crossings on the road, so as to better safeguard the safety of pedestrians crossing the road; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

The Government attaches great importance to the safety of roads (including Tai Chung Kiu Road in Sha Tin). In 2018, the Transport Department (TD) conducted a comprehensive review of the conditions along Tai Chung Kiu Road and put forward a number of short and medium term traffic improvement measures to enhance the safety of the road section concerned.

In the short term, the TD has implemented at a total of seven junctions along the section of Tai Chung Kiu Road between Lion Rock Tunnel Road and Siu Lek Yuen Road a number of short-term improvement measures, including (1) adding double white lines to separate traffic lanes with different traffic movements at the junction approaches; (2) adding advance traffic signs Traffic Lights Ahead at the junction approaches to alert motorists to the presence of signalised junctions ahead; (3) relocating or removing those traffic signs or street name plates that may obscure the sight-lines of motorists; (4) installing railings at the junctions to channelise the pedestrians to use crossings; and (5) installing backing boards at traffic lights to enable motorists to see traffic light signals more clearly. All related works were completed in April 2019.

Medium-term improvement measures include (1) adjusting the location of individual traffic lights, in particular those with "green arrow signs" (also

known as Traffic Lights with Split Phase), to make the traffic signals clearer; (2) adding channelising islands at the junctions to separate traffic lanes with different traffic movements; and (3) installing additional red light cameras (RLCs). In respect of the above-mentioned measures, the installation works of RLCs at the southbound of Tai Chung Kiu Road near the junction at Sha Tin Wai Road and the junction at Fo Tan Road were completed by the TD in December 2018 and March 2019 respectively. The Government is expediting the implementation of other improvement measures, including adjusting the location of traffic lights.

Since adjusting the location of traffic lights involves the construction of new cross road ducts, it is necessary to implement temporary traffic arrangements by phases at the road sections concerned to facilitate the construction works. In view of the busy traffic and relatively high vehicular speed on Tai Chung Kiu Road, the TD and the Hong Kong Police Force have to be extremely cautious in approving the related temporary traffic arrangements. To this end, relevant government departments conducted a trial run on lane closure arrangements at the junction of Tai Chung Kiu Road and Sha Tin Wai Road/Shatin Rural Committee Road in May 2019. The improvement works for the junction commenced in July 2019 and are anticipated to be completed in October 2019. Improvement measures for other major junctions along Tai Chung Kiu Road will commence progressively with scheduled completion by phases between 2019 and 2020.

My reply to the various parts of the Hon Frankie Yick's question is as follows:

(1) According to the TD's records, during the period from January 2014 to September 2019, the numbers of traffic accidents which occurred on Tai Chung Kiu Road in Sha Tin (a road section of approximately three kilometres in length between Lion Rock Tunnel Road and Shek Mun Interchange), the resulting casualties as well as the classes and numbers of vehicles involved are tabulated at Annex. These traffic accidents were mainly caused by driver contributory factors, including "driving inattentively", "disobeying traffic signal/light" and "careless lane changing". At present, the road section concerned is not a traffic black spot.

(2) At present, vehicular speed limits of 50 kilometres per hour (km/h) and 70 km/h are imposed on different sections of Tai Chung Kiu Road. In mid-2018, the TD conducted a review of the above-mentioned speed limits, taking into account various relevant factors, including the design travel speed of the road, the number and nature of traffic accidents, and the actual average speed of vehicles travelling on the road. Based on the outcome of the review, the TD concludes that the speed limits currently in force remain appropriate. Upon full implementation of the above-mentioned traffic improvement measures, the TD will conduct another review of the speed limits of Tai Chung Kiu Road in due course. On those sections of Tai Chung Kiu Road where a speed limit of 70 km/h is currently imposed, the TD has already provided grade-separated crossing facilities (e.g. footbridge and pedestrian subway) at suitable locations for pedestrians to cross the road safely.