

LCQ15: Cycle track networks and cycling economy

Following is a question by the Hon Luk Chung-hung and a written reply by the Secretary for Development, Mr Michael Wong, in the Legislative Council today (November 11):

Question:

The Tuen Mun-Ma On Shan cycle track (Tuen-Ma Track), which is part of the New Territories cycle track network, has been linked up since September 29 this year. Some members of the public have pointed out that due to incomprehensive planning of Hong Kong's cycle track networks, the cycle tracks are disjointed and do not have enough ancillary facilities, which is not conducive to the development of a "cycling economy". In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) of the number of user-times to date for the Tuen-Ma Track since it was linked up, and the estimated monthly numbers of user-times in the coming year;
- (2) of the publicity and promotional activities conducted for the Tuen-Ma Track in the past three months;
- (3) as some members of the public have relayed that bicycle accidents are prone to occur since the plastic bollards at the junctions of the pedestrian crossings and the cycle tracks are too close to each other and no ramps are provided despite the vertical differences of the road surfaces at such junctions, whether the Government will carry out related improvement works;
- (4) whether it will enhance the cycle track-related information (e.g. maps for the tracks, locations of toilets, scenic spots in the vicinity and feeder transport means) provided in the Government's mobile application "HKeMobility"; and
- (5) whether it has plans to (i) develop a cycling economy for job creation, including developing trades such as maintenance, storage, conveyance, rental, trading, sale of apparel and accessories of bicycles; and (ii) provide additional leisure and recreational facilities (e.g. barbeque sites, open air cafes and food kiosks), alongside various cycle tracks in the coming three years; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

The Government is striving to develop the cycle track network in the New Territories with a total length of about 82 kilometres, including the main

section from Ma On Shan in the east, via Sha Tin, Tai Po, Fanling, Sheung Shui and Yuen Long to Tuen Mun in the west (Tuen Ma Cycle Track), and another main section from Tuen Mun to Tsuen Wan (Tuen Tsuen Cycle Track).

The Civil Engineering and Development Department is responsible for carrying out the above works in phases. The cycle track network passes through scenic heritage, ecological and countryside spots. Ancillary facilities are provided along the track, including resting stations at suitable locations for cyclists to take rest or enjoy the scenery, and cycling entry/exit hubs in the vicinity of public transport interchanges for provision of bicycle parking spaces, bicycle rental and repair kiosks, practising areas, toilets, first aid stations or information kiosks, to encourage and promote cycling recreational activities, and help drive local tourism and vibrant economy along the cycle track and in the nearby areas.

The cycle track network is designed and constructed in accordance with the Transport Planning and Design Manual and the relevant design guidelines for cycle track, with due consideration of its curvature, gradient, width, sightline and continuity, and provided with appropriate traffic signs, road markings and facilities to ensure cycling safety. Wherever technically feasible, the Government provides cycle bridges and cycle subways to minimise the need for cyclists to get off their bicycles while crossing road junctions and vehicular accesses.

Since the full completion and opening of the about 60km-long Tuen Ma Cycle Track in September this year, lots of people have been eager to take a trial and enjoy the ride, particularly during weekends and holidays. For the Tuen Tsuen Cycle Track, the first 2.3km-long section along the Tsuen Wan Promenade is being constructed in full swing and will be opened early next year.

Our responses to various parts of the question raised by the Hon Luk Chung-hung, having taken into account the inputs of relevant bureau/departments, are as follows:

(1) The Government implements the cycle track network in the New Territories, which is a public recreational facility for leisure and recreational purposes. The need and implementation of the project are not governed by the utilisation rate. Therefore, relevant departments do not collect any utilisation data of the Tuen Ma Cycle Track.

(2) To tie in with the full opening of Tuen Ma Cycle Track, the Government actively promoted the track via various means, including press release, blog and "HKeMobility" mobile application. Besides, the Hong Kong Tourism Board introduced in their website and "Hiking & Cycling Guidebook 2020-2021" that the cycle track section along Yuen Long to Butterfly Beach offers terrific encounters with the countryside and new towns, taking in the area's cultural heritage.

(3) Generally speaking, bollards are installed on cycle tracks to remind cyclists of slowing down at locations such as pedestrian crossings. The

spacing of bollards is determined by factors including road environment and traffic conditions at individual places. The bollard spacing would be smaller where the risk is high and deceleration by cyclists is required.

Regarding the transition between cycle tracks and footpaths, according to Section 4(8) of the Summary Offences Ordinance, cycling on footpath without obvious necessity is an offence. For a clear demarcation, road kerb is generally provided between the cycle track and the footpath, so that cyclists would dismount and push their bicycles on the footpath but not pass the footpath while riding.

As mentioned above, the Tuen Ma Cycle Track is designed and constructed in accordance with the relevant guidelines. At the junctions where cyclists have to dismount, road kerb of at least 50 millimetres high, and bollards for narrowing the end width of cycle track to 750mm, are provided to remind cyclists to get off their bicycles for ensuring the safety of all road users.

(4) "HKeMobility" is an all-in-one traffic and transport mobile application. From its latest version, the public can search different commuting modes (including public transport, driving and walking) to and from the cycle track, and obtain relevant cycling-related information, covering cycling routes, bicycle parking spaces, cycling entry/exit hubs, nearby attractions and toilets, etc.

(5) Currently along the Tuen Ma Cycle Track network, resting stations are provided for cyclists to take a break. There are also a number of cycling entry/exit hubs offering bicycle rental and repair services with some equipped with food kiosks. Besides, in the neighbouring communities of the cycle tracks near the MTR stations of Sha Tin, Ma On Shan, Tai Wai, Tai Po, Sheung Shui, Yuen Long and Tuen Mun, etc., there are private shops renting and selling bicycles and associated accessories, and private café and food stalls for cyclists to take rest, enjoy the scenery and dine. All these could help boost cycling-related business and create jobs.