

LCQ2: Shortage of parking spaces for commercial vehicles

Following is a question by the Hon Frankie Yick and a reply by the Secretary for Transport and Logistics, Mr Lam Sai-hung, in the Legislative Council today (October 18):

Question:

Some members of the transport industry have relayed that the Government has been slow in the progress of increasing parking spaces for commercial vehicles (CVs). As at February this year, the ratio of parking spaces to licensed vehicles in Hong Kong was 1.01, while the ratio of CV parking spaces to licensed CVs was 0.64. In addition, with more brownfield sites and sites on short-term tenancies being resumed for development purposes, the shortage of CV parking spaces has been aggravated. Some CV drivers are forced to park illegally and hence incur fines frequently, which has a serious impact on their operations. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the current numbers of parking spaces for various vehicle classes; the numbers of additional parking spaces provided by the Government for various vehicle classes in the past two years and, among them, the numbers of night-time parking spaces;

(2) whether it will set a target for the ratio of CV parking spaces to licensed CVs and draw up a timetable for gradually achieving a ratio of at least 1:1; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(3) whether it will consider formulating performance indicators for the increase of CV parking spaces; if so, of the details; if not, how it can resolve the shortage of CV parking spaces within a short period of time?

Reply:

President,

Commercial vehicles (CVs), which carry both passengers and goods, play an important role in various industries as well as the overall economy. The Government will strive to meet the parking demand of CVs as far as possible, and has been actively pursuing a host of short-term and medium-to-long-term measures regarding the provision of the parking spaces concerned, including the following six items:

(i) Continuing to provide additional on-street CV parking spaces at suitable locations and designate night-time CV parking spaces while ensuring that traffic flow, road safety or the loading/unloading activities of vehicles will not be affected;

(ii) Continuing to actively utilise idle government lands, such as those in new development areas where construction works have not yet commenced, by exploring the feasibility of providing more short-term tenancy (STT) car parks. Meanwhile, the Government has been stipulating the minimum provision of CV parking spaces in the tenancy agreements of STT car parks;

(iii) Encouraging schools to open for parking of student service vehicles during non-school hours;

(iv) Providing additional public parking spaces including those for CVs in suitable "Government, Institution or Community" facilities and public open space projects following the principle of "single site, multiple use". Subject to the results of the technical feasibility assessments and progress of seeking required approvals for the projects under planning, as well as the construction progress of the approved projects, it is expected that about 20 suitable works projects will be completed by batches, providing additional CV parking spaces starting from 2024-25.

(v) Revising the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines in 2021, which increased the type and number of parking spaces for CVs in subsidised housing development projects; and

(vi) Requiring that a certain number of ancillary parking spaces and loading/unloading bays in suitable new development projects be opened for public night-time parking of CVs.

In consultation with the Transport Department (TD), my consolidated reply to the various parts of the question raised by the Hon Frankie Yick is as follows:

For the period from June 2021 to June this year, there was a growth in the number of parking spaces for CVs. In particular, the total number of parking spaces for goods vehicles increased to over 40 000 with some 1 500 new parking spaces provided, while the total of those for coaches/non-franchised buses almost reached 4 700 with some 400 new parking spaces added. Amongst these parking spaces, for night-time parking spaces, as at June 2023, there were over 1 500 night-time parking spaces for goods vehicles and nearly 200 for coaches/non-franchised buses, with 67 and 23 parking spaces newly provided respectively compared to those of June 2021. Nonetheless, land resources in Hong Kong are precious and we need to consider the priority of different land uses. As quite a number of STT car park sites have been gradually resumed for other long-term developments such as housing development and construction of community facilities to meet the development needs of Hong Kong, the overall increase in the supply of CV parking spaces remains moderate. Taking into account the loss of relevant CV parking spaces, the net increase in the number of parking spaces are around 50 for goods vehicles and 120 for coaches/non-franchised buses.

The demand for CV parking spaces hinges on many factors, such as the overall economic situation, the supply and demand for parking spaces in

individual districts, mode of operation of CVs, and places of residence and work of CV drivers. At present, many CVs are parked not only at brownfield sites, but also on the Mainland where drivers are engaged in cross-boundary operations. Moreover, some CVs like those for food transportation and distribution have to operate during night time to meet industry needs. Therefore, setting a rigid target for the ratio of CV parking spaces is not only lacking in flexibility, but also unable to accurately reflecting the actual circumstances in individual districts, including the aforementioned situations.

On the supply of CV parking spaces, the Government has been proactively taking forward the measures mentioned in the beginning of the reply to increase the CV parking provision. However, as the number of additional available parking spaces and the implementation progress of respective measures are affected by various factors including the development pace and scale of individual projects as well as the views of local stakeholders, it is technically difficult to give a projection of the long term supply and demand as the basis for setting a relevant key performance index.

Nevertheless, the TD has been adopting suggestions from the trade for implementing short-term and medium-to-long-term measures on the provision of CV parking spaces. Regarding the handling of the parking provision problem in the short term as raised in the question, the TD has been closely monitoring the changes in the short-term supply of parking spaces in various districts, and paying heed to the needs of individual sectors. On short-term supply, the TD has proactively examined the feasibility of adding suitable on-street CV parking spaces or night-time parking spaces in various districts, as well as requiring the number of CV parking spaces be stipulated in the tenancy agreements of suitable STT car parks. While the progress may be affected due to the safety or noise concerns raised by local stakeholders in the consultation process, the TD will continue to step up its efforts to increase the provision of on-street, night-time or STT parking spaces for CVs continuously as far as practicable. Besides, if a STT car park is to be resumed for long-term development, the TD will require the project proponent to review the impact of the project on the supply and demand for parking spaces at the planning stage of the relevant development project, and take appropriate short-term mitigation measures, including identifying an alternative location or providing an appropriate number of public parking spaces in the relevant development projects, so as to make up for the shortfall in parking spaces as far as possible.

Thank you, President.