

LCQ20: Combatting illegal parking

Following is a question by the Hon James To and a written reply by the Secretary for Transport and Housing, Mr Frank Chan Fan, in the Legislative Council today (January 30):

Question:

Some members of the local communities have relayed that the problem of illegal parking in various districts across the territory has been worsening. Besides, in locations where schools, tutorial schools and interest class studios stand in great numbers, the problem of illegal stopping and waiting of private cars at bus stops or in other restricted zones for picking up and setting down students is serious, thus causing traffic congestion. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the respective numbers of vehicles (i) newly registered and (ii) deregistered in each of the past 10 years, with a tabulated breakdown by class of vehicles; whether it will take measures to suppress the growth rate and number of vehicles;

(2) of the respective numbers of (i) publicly and (ii) privately operated public parking spaces across the territory in each of the past five years; the estimated additional numbers of those two types of parking spaces in each of the coming five years (with a tabulated breakdown by District Council (DC) district and class of vehicles);

(3) of the number of parking spaces needed to be provided in Hong Kong, as calculated using the relevant standards in the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines, as well as the actual number of parking spaces and the ratio of such number to the number of vehicles at present; whether it has plans to amend the relevant standards to raise the number of parking spaces needed to be provided for various types of facilities; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(4) given that some residents in the Kai Tak Development Area have relayed that they are forced to park illegally due to a shortage of parking spaces in the area, whether the Government, when planning for the area, had planned for the number of parking spaces to be provided in the light of the expected demographic characteristics of the area (including residents' income levels); if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; whether it will include this factor in its planning considerations when planning for new development areas and urban renewal projects in future; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(5) whether the number of fixed penalty notices (FPNs) issued last year by the Police for illegal parking varied greatly among various districts; if so, of the reasons for that;

(6) as it has been reported that illegal parking has been rampant round the clock (a) in the vicinity of Hing Wah Street, Sham Shui Po and (b) at the roads near the "Four-Little-Dragon" private housing estates in Lai Chi Kok, blocking one to two traffic lanes, of (i) the number of patrol operations conducted and the average number of illegally parked vehicles found during each operation, and (ii) the number of FPNs issued by the Police in each of the past six months for illegal parking in these two locations; of the measures, other than taking law enforcement actions, put in place to combat illegal parking in these two locations;

(7) of the current number of illegal parking black spots in Hong Kong (with a tabulated breakdown by DC district);

(8) of the number of FPNs issued in each of the past 12 months by the Police to those drivers who had caused traffic congestion, with a tabulated breakdown by DC district and traffic offence;

(9) as it is learnt that at the section of Sham Mong Road outside Harbour Green in the Yau Tsim Mong District, the section of Larch Street outside the centre of the Hong Kong Children's Choir in Tai Kok Tsui, and the section of Wai Tsui Crescent outside the entrance of Hong Kong Shue Yan University in Island East, the problem of illegally stopping and waiting of private cars at bus stops or in restricted zones is serious during the hours of going to and finishing classes each day, of (i) the number of patrol operations conducted and the average number of vehicles involving illegal stopping and waiting found during each operation, and (ii) the number of FPNs issued by the Police, in each of the past six months for illegal stopping and waiting of vehicles in these three locations; apart from stepping up patrol operations, of the Police's other measures to strengthen their efforts in combating illegal stopping and waiting of vehicles in the three locations;

(10) of the current number of black spots for illegal stopping and waiting of vehicles in Hong Kong (with a tabulated breakdown by DC district); and

(11) whether it will consider introducing a system of tiered penalty levels (i.e. the more severe the problem of illegal parking and illegal stopping and waiting of vehicles at a road section is, the higher the penalty imposed in respect of such traffic offences at the road section will be) so as to enhance the deterrent effect; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; whether it will study the introduction of a points system for these two types of offences so as to enhance the deterrent effect; if so, of the details; if not, the other measures put in place to combat such offences?

Reply:

President,

My replies to various parts of the Hon James To's question are as follows:

(1) The numbers of vehicles first registered and deregistered in each of the past 10 years with a breakdown by class of vehicles are tabulated at Annex 1

and Annex 2 respectively.

The Government's transport policy is underpinned by public transport. We encourage the public to make good use of the public transport network for their journeys as far as possible and minimise reliance on private cars. In fact, the continuous increase in private car fleet size is a major factor contributing to road traffic congestion. The Government attaches great importance to tackling road traffic congestion problems and is exploring and taking forward by phases a host of short, medium and long term measures recommended by the Transport Advisory Committee (TAC) earlier in its Report on Study of Road Traffic Congestion in Hong Kong, including containing the growth of private car fleet size.

(2) The number of public parking spaces provided by the Government and parking spaces provided at privately-operated car parks available for public use across the territory in each of the past five years (with a breakdown by District Council district and class of vehicles) is tabulated at Annex 3. As for the projection on the supply of public parking spaces in future, we estimate that in 2019 about 512 additional public parking spaces will be provided by the Government and about 1 692 additional parking spaces will be provided at privately-operated car parks available for public use (including 85 motorcycle, 2 095 private car and 24 commercial vehicle parking spaces). Since the provision of new parking spaces is contingent on the results of district consultation and progress of individual development projects, the Transport Department (TD) does not compile specific projection on the supply of parking spaces beyond 2019.

(3) The standards concerning parking spaces as stipulated in the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines (HKPSG) aim to provide guidelines for individuals and organisations participating in development projects in respect of the parking requirements for development projects. Such standards apply to parking spaces designated for own use of the development projects only. The TD will require the developer of a development project to provide an appropriate number of public parking spaces separately, having regard to the parking needs in the vicinity of the development project and other factors.

As of October 2018, the ratios of the number of licensed private cars (including van-type light goods vehicles) and goods vehicles in Hong Kong and the number of parking spaces available for their use are approximately 1:1.1 and 1:0.65 respectively, meaning that on average there are 1.1 parking spaces for each licensed private car (including van-type light goods vehicles) and 0.65 parking space for each goods vehicle.

As set out in the Chief Executive's 2018 Policy Address, the Government will continue to launch measures to alleviate traffic congestion, including striving to make available parking spaces. The Government will follow the principle of "single site, multiple uses" to provide public car parking spaces in suitable Government, Institution and Community facilities and public open space projects so as to make full use of the sites. In addition, the TD is conducting a consultancy study to assess the parking demand of commercial vehicles (CVs), and will formulate short, medium and long term

measures to address the demand for parking spaces and loading/unloading bays for CVs, including considering the feasibility of revising the respective standards in the HKPSG for parking spaces and loading/unloading bays for CVs.

(4) The TD has been providing advice on the number of parking spaces to be provided in new development projects and redevelopment projects in various districts (including the Kai Tak Development) in accordance with the standards stipulated in the HKPSG. This helps ensure the provision of suitable number of parking spaces in these development projects for their own use in accordance with the standards stipulated in the HKPSG. Pursuant to the standards and guidelines set out in the HKPSG concerning the provision of parking spaces, the number of parking spaces to be provided for a residential development project is determined on the basis of certain parameters in respect of the project (e.g. flat sizes of the residential development, distance between the residential development and railway stations, and the development density), which, to a certain extent, reflect the demographic characteristics of the residential development. For example, bigger flat sizes of the residential development will generally mean that the average household size should be larger, and hence the household income and the ratio of private car ownership should be higher. The Government is actively pursuing a number of measures to increase the provision of parking spaces, including requiring developers for new developments to provide parking spaces at the higher end of the range under the HKPSG.

(5) The Hong Kong Police Force (the Police) issue fixed penalty notices (FPNs) against illegal parking offences in accordance with the Fixed Penalty (Traffic Contraventions) Ordinance (Cap. 237). The number of FPNs issued in 2018 by police region is tabulated at Annex 4. Since July 10, 2017, the Police have stepped up its enforcement operations against illegal parking. As part of the sustained efforts to combat illegal parking in all districts, vehicles causing serious obstruction to traffic flow and danger to other road users will receive FPNs without prior warning. In 2018, the Police issued approximately 2.01 million FPNs against illegal parking in accordance with Cap. 237, an increase of 9 per cent as compared to that in 2017, which reflect the determination and effectiveness of the Police action in combating illegal parking. The Police will take appropriate enforcement actions according to the actual traffic situation on site, manpower resources and the prevailing operational priorities in different districts. Hence, the number of FPNs against illegal parking varied among different police regions.

(6) The Police do not maintain statistics regarding the number of patrols conducted against illegal parking, the number of illegally parked vehicles and the number of FPNs issued on specific road sections.

Apart from stepping up law enforcement by the Police, the TD is concerned about the impact of illegal parking on traffic circulation and road safety. The TD has put in place feasible traffic management measures in the vicinity of Hing Wah Street, Sham Shui Po and the "Four-Little-Dragon" private housing estates in western Kowloon having regard to specific local circumstances. Examples of such measures include designating "No-stopping Restriction Zone" (including the restricted zone at Hing Wah Street West northbound, Sham Shing Road eastbound and Sham Mong Road eastbound from 7am

to midnight, and a 24-hour restricted zone at Sham Shing Road westbound) to prohibit kerbside loading/unloading activities during specified hours. The TD has also imposed yellow boxes at busy road junctions (such as at the junction of Sham Shing Road and Hing Wah Street West) to prevent blockages which cause traffic congestion.

Moreover, the TD has implemented a number of measures to address the parking needs in the district. For instance, night-time parking spaces for goods vehicles and coaches have been provided on suitable roads (including Lai Chi Kok Road near Fat Tseung Street and Tan Lai Street). As for parking spaces for motorcycles, the TD has been actively exploring the feasibility of providing additional motorcycle parking spaces at suitable places underneath footbridges/flyovers, and one of the places being considered is Tung Chau Street near Fat Tseung Street (underneath the West Kowloon Corridor). The TD also endeavours to identify suitable temporary sites for use as temporary public car parks. There are currently three temporary public car parks in the vicinity, including one near Po Lun Street bus depot, one near Lai Po Road / Sham Mong Road and one at the junction of Lai Chi Kok Road / Yuet Lun Street / Tsing Sha Highway.

(7) and (10) The Police have been closely monitoring illegal parking as well as stopping and waiting of vehicles in all districts, and will take stringent enforcement actions against vehicles causing serious obstruction to traffic flow and posing danger. However, since the Police and TD currently have not defined what constitutes a "black spot" of illegal parking and stopping and waiting of vehicles, no information could be provided on the number of "black spots" of illegal parking and stopping and waiting of vehicles in different districts.

(8) In 2018, the number of FPNs issued by the Police against illegal parking offences under Cap. 237 and those issued against the six congestion-related offences under the Fixed Penalty (Criminal Proceedings) Ordinance (Cap. 240) by month, police region and offence are tabulated at Annex 4 and Annex 5 respectively. The Police do not maintain statistics broken down by District Council districts.

(9) The Police do not maintain statistics regarding the number of patrols conducted against illegal stopping and waiting of vehicles, the number of vehicles illegally stopping and waiting, and the number of FPNs issued on specific road sections.

Apart from stepping up law enforcement by the Police, the TD has designated Sham Mong Road outside Harbour Green as "No-stopping Restriction Zone" from 7am to midnight to prohibit kerbside loading/unloading activities during the specified hours so as to prevent obstruction to traffic. The section of Larch Street between Tong Mi Road and Fir Street is also designated as Public Light Bus Restricted Zone, prohibiting loading/unloading activities from 7am to 7pm. Moreover, the section of Larch Street between Fir Street and Lime Street is designated as "No-stopping Restriction Zone" from 7am to 7pm to prevent vehicles staying, thereby causing obstruction.

The TD has been monitoring traffic conditions in the vicinity of the

Hong Kong Shue Yan University. Traffic congestion occurring at this road section was mainly caused by private cars picking up or dropping off students during school peak hours. The TD and the Police have met with representatives of nearby schools to discuss traffic conditions in the area and conducted site inspection. During the discussion, the TD and the Police suggested that the time at which schools start and finish should be coordinated, and that students should be encouraged to make use of school buses or public transport for commuting. These can help ease the traffic load on the roads because of fewer private cars that carry students to/from schools using the roads at the same time. Furthermore, the Police has, where necessary, deployed officers to direct traffic on site during the time before and after school in order to ease the traffic during school peak hours.

(11) The Government introduced legislative amendments into the Legislative Council (LegCo) in February 2017, proposing to increase the penalty charges for illegal parking offences under Cap. 237 and six congestion-related offences under Cap. 240 by 50 per cent to strengthen the deterrent effect. However, LegCo objected to the increase of penalty charges for illegal parking offences under Cap. 237, and only passed the increase of fixed penalty charges of five congestion-related offences under Cap. 240 by 25 per cent to \$400 and \$560 respectively. The amendments took effect on June 1, 2018. We will continue to discuss with LegCo and stakeholders to follow up the proposal on increasing the penalty charges of congestion-related offences and strengthening the deterrent effect.

In addition, the Government has been actively examining the application of new technologies to assist frontline officers in taking enforcement actions against traffic contraventions, as well as enhancing enforcement efficiency and strengthening the deterrent effect. The Energizing Kowloon East Office of the Development Bureau has been collaborating with the Police since 2018 to conduct a Proof of Concept Trial on the "Kerbside Loading and Unloading Bay Monitoring System" in Kwun Tong. The Proof of Concept Trial on "Illegal Parking Monitoring System" is also being conducted since November 2018. The systems for the trials concerned are developed by the consultants engaged, in which video analytics technology are used to monitor illegal parking activities. If the systems are proven to be practicable, the Government will consider installing such systems at suitable locations to facilitate the Police to combat illegal parking.

In addition to the trials being conducted by the Energizing Kowloon East Office to demonstrate the potential use of video analytics technology for traffic enforcement purposes, the Police will conduct another trial to explore the implementation of such technologies for actual enforcement operation by mounting cameras on suitable selected lampposts that provide good vantage points and making use of video analytics technology for certain traffic offences, including illegal stopping of vehicle at a bus stop.