

LCQ20: Traffic congestion problems in Kwun Tong

Following is a question by the Hon Paul Tse and a written reply by the Secretary for Development, Mr Michael Wong, in the Legislative Council today (April 28):

Question:

It has been reported that the traffic congestion problems in Kwun Tong are acute at the roundabout at the junction of Hoi Yuen Road and Kwun Tong Road, on Kwun Tong Road, and in the Kwun Tong industrial area. It takes nine minutes during non-peak hours but 77 minutes during the evening peak hours for buses to complete a journey of departing from Kwun Tong Ferry Pier and arriving at the bus stop adjacent to Millennium City 5 via King Yip Street and Cha Kwo Ling Road, which is merely 1.7 kilometres in length, reflecting that the traffic along the aforesaid roads is almost paralysed during peak hours. In addition, there have been views that the Energizing Kowloon East Office (EKEO) has been focusing solely on the development of commercial land lots, to the neglect of the fact that a number of roads in the district have long reached their maximum capacity, resulting in the traffic congestion problems being aggravated. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) given that the Government had spent 13 years and more than \$92 million to study the proposal of constructing an Environmentally Friendly Linkage System for Kowloon East (which comprised an elevated monorail), which disappeared into obscurity, and that the Government announced in November last year its decision to abandon the construction of the monorail and provide, instead, additional bus/green minibus routes in the district, whether the Government has studied if that decision will make the situation even worse and further aggravate the traffic congestion problems on the aforesaid roads;

(2) whether it will reverse the direction of traffic along Hing Yip Street and Hung To Road where the vehicular flow is relatively low, so as to reduce the number of vehicles turning from Shing Yip Street into Hoi Yuen Road, thereby alleviating the traffic congestion problems on Hoi Yuen Road;

(3) whether it will step up prosecution efforts against vehicles illegally parked on roads in the Kwun Tong industrial area (covering Hing Yip Street, How Ming Street and Shing Yip Street), including the commissioning of the illegal parking monitoring system at smart lampposts expeditiously, and instructing the Police to take law enforcement actions round-the-clock; and

(4) apart from the proposals mentioned in (2) and (3) for alleviating the traffic congestion in the district, of the practicable policies that the EKEO and the relevant government departments have put in place to resolve the traffic congestion problems in the district?

Reply:

President,

The Government has all along been concerned about the traffic condition in the Kwun Tong Business Area (KTBA). Relevant bureaux/departments have continuously been striving hard to improve the pedestrian environment and traffic condition in the area and have proposed an overall improvement framework with recommendations for various short, medium and long-term improvement schemes. Most of the short-term measures have been accomplished whilst the implementation of some other measures are in progress. In response to the question raised by the Hon Paul Tse and in consultation with relevant bureaux/departments, a consolidated reply is provided as follows:

(1) The Government has proposed the implementation of a "multi-modal" environmentally friendly linkage system to complement the increasingly comprehensive road and railway infrastructure, and the efficient public transport services in Kowloon East (KE). The proposed "multi-modal" initiatives comprise a package of green measures that are complementary to the connectivity enhancement functions, which include among others deploying electric vehicles to run new bus/green minibus (GMB) routes in the area. As for the bus/GMB services in the area, having regard to the district developments, demographic changes, completion of transport facilities, existing and planned public transport services in the districts concerned, etc., the Transport Department (TD) will continuously enhance the existing bus/GMB service network to cater for the travelling needs of the public. As such, the TD will review the arrangements of bus/GMB routes in the relevant areas as appropriate while considering whether there is a need to introduce new bus/GMB services or enhance existing services, and consult the relevant councils.

(2) Relevant bureaux/departments will further consider the idea of reversing the direction of traffic along Hing Yip Street and Hung To Road.

(3) Since September 2020, the Police Force has implemented different traffic management measures at the KTBA during weekdays which include deploying police officers to direct traffic at the dominant entrances and exits of the KTBA (viz. Hoi Yuen Road roundabout, Lai Yip Street/Wai Yip Street junction and Chong Yip Street/How Ming Street junction) and to advise/warn the drivers not to violate traffic regulations. In November 2020, Kwun Tong Police District set up the District Traffic Enforcement Team dedicated to handling of traffic complaints and scenes of traffic accidents. Regarding the enforcement against illegal parking, the Police Force is conducting enforcement actions against illegally parked vehicles at irregular hours on a daily basis to enhance the deterrent effect. The relevant Police District has also made use of technologies such as electronic ticketing and mobile video recording to enhance the enforcement efficiency. For illegal parking that causes obstruction to the traffic or endangers other road users, the Police will step up deterrent actions, such as issuing multiple tickets and towing away the vehicles in question. The Police Force will continue to flexibly

deploy resources and take stringent enforcement actions during busy hours, with a view to changing the illegal parking behaviour of drivers.

(4) Under the feasibility study on improving pedestrian environment in the KTBA, we have introduced an overall improvement framework and have proposed 16 short-term traffic improvement schemes of which 13 have been completed, including provision of more kerbside loading and unloading bays where appropriate and amendment of no-stopping restriction zones and signages. We will implement enhancement measures such as improvement works at the How Ming Street/Tsun Yip Street junction to increase its design capacity. In addition, taking the opportunity arising from the development of the former bus depot at KTIL 240, we plan to improve the junction layout of How Ming Street/Chong Yip Street by adding a left-turn traffic lane from How Ming Street, and changing the section of How Ming Street between Chong Yip Street and Hung To Road to two-way traffic so as to relieve traffic at Chong Yip Street towards Kwun Tong Road.

The Government also takes the opportunity of developing the two Action Areas in KE to improve traffic conditions. In association with the Kwun Tong Action Area, we have proposed to form a new through road to divert traffic away from the Wai Yip Street/Hoi Yuen Road roundabout, and convert the roundabout into a signal-controlled junction to rationalise traffic flows. In relation to the Kowloon Bay Action Area, we are considering the feasibility of widening Sheung Yee Road and improving the Hoi Bun Road/Cheung Yip Street junction to enhance the reserve capacity.

By means of the "My Kowloon East" (MyKE) mobile app, we disseminate real-time data in KE including parking vacancy data and location, shortest driving route leading to the entrance of the car park, etc., helping drivers to locate available parking spaces easily without excessive circulation that may cause traffic congestion. Provision of real-time parking vacancy information has been stipulated as a requirement, where appropriate, for new land sale sites in KE since November 2016.

In the long term, the Government is taking forward the Route 6 project comprising the Tseung Kwan O-Lam Tin Tunnel, the Central Kowloon Route, Trunk Road T2 and the Cha Kwo Ling Tunnel. It will provide an east-west express link between Tseung Kwan O and West Kowloon and is anticipated to commission in 2026. By then, the traffic demand on the existing major road links in KE will be relieved.

As for railway, apart from the Kwun Tong Line, the Tuen Ma Line Phase 1 was commissioned in mid-February 2020, extending railway service to the Kai Tak Development Area. Upon the planned commissioning of the entire Tuen Ma Line in the third quarter of this year, a more convenient and efficient railway service between KE, New Territories East and New Territories West will be available to the public, enhancing the transport connectivity and accessibility of KE.

Upon completion of the improvement schemes and the major infrastructure projects, we envisage that the transport network in the area would be able to

cater for the future traffic flow.