

## LCQ20: Traffic demand of Kowloon East

Following is a question by the Hon Luk Chung-hung and a written reply by the Secretary for Transport and Housing, Mr Frank Chan Fan, in the Legislative Council today (May 12):

Question:

The Government is currently implementing a number of development projects in Kowloon East, such as Kai Tak Development and the Development of Anderson Road Quarry (ARQ) Site project. The housing development related to the latter, expected to be completed in phases from the 2023-2024 financial year onwards, can accommodate a population of about 30 000. On the other hand, the Government put forward in the Railway Development Strategy 2014 new railway projects which included the East Kowloon Line (EKL), and pointed out that as the EKL would be built in hilly terrains and, constrained by the climbing capability of railways, some sections of it had to be built deep underground. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) as the Government indicated in November last year that it had requested the MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL) to further assess the nearby environment of the EKL and other factors in order to improve the technical design set out in the proposal submitted earlier on by the MTRCL on the EKL, and had urged the MTRCL to explore the feasibility of expediting the relevant work, of the progress of the relevant work;

(2) whether it will request the MTRCL to explore the option of adopting elevated light monorails for the steeper sections; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(3) whether it will introduce market competition (e.g. inviting foreign railway companies to submit proposals for the EKL and participate in bidding for the design and build contracts), with a view to expediting the implementation of the EKL;

(4) of the measures to further divert the traffic in Kowloon East before the completion of the EKL (e.g. whether it will enhance shuttle bus services, improve bus interchange arrangements, and construct a flyover connecting Prince Edward Road East with nearby streets);

(5) whether it has estimated, on the premise that the EKL is not available, the increase in the vehicular flow on all major roads in Kowloon East upon the full intake of the housing development related to the ARQ site; if so, of the relevant figures; if not, whether it will conduct such an estimation; and

(6) whether, apart from implementing the EKL, the Government has studied other proposals in parallel for solving the traffic congestion problem in Kowloon East in the long run?

Reply:

President,

The Government has been closely monitoring the traffic conditions of Kowloon East and will plan and implement in a timely manner relevant public transport arrangements to meet the passengers' demand in the new development areas, subject to the progress and commissioning dates of various new development projects.

After consulting the Highways Department (HyD), the Transport Department (TD) and the Civil Engineering and Development Department (CEDD), our reply to the various parts of the Hon Luk Chung-hung's question is as follows:

(1) Regarding the East Kowloon Line (EKL) proposed under the Railway Development Strategy 2014 (RDS-2014), the Transport and Housing Bureau (THB), the HyD and other relevant bureaux/departments offered comments on the proposal submitted by the MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL) and requested the MTRCL to improve the technical design as given in the proposal for resolving the technical difficulties of the EKL project. In response to our comments, the MTRCL is exploring feasible options for the improvement of the project design. We will continue to follow up with the MTRCL and announce the way forward of the project in due course.

(2) and (3) The Government is open to different feasible options and is considering the proposal submitted by the MTRCL in a prudent manner for resolving the technical difficulties of the EKL project. According to the current mechanism, a new railway project should be implemented in accordance with the Operating Agreement signed between the Government and the MTRCL in 2007. Nevertheless, if the new railway project is a separate railway line, we will not rule out the possibility of introducing new operators. However, we will consider practically whether there are other companies in the market that have sufficient ability and capacity to undertake a new railway project, as well as the robustness and compatibility of the entire railway network in respect of hardware and operational services. The Government is now following up with the MTRCL. When the details of the proposed railway scheme, such as alignment, implementation timetable and mode of implementation, are available, the Government will consult the public in line with established procedures.

(4)

Road improvement works

When drawing up transport arrangements for new development areas, the Government will take into account factors such as the traffic impact assessment, proposals from the public transport operators, traffic conditions of the roads nearby, and views from the local community, and will consult the relevant District Councils on the proposed arrangements. To meet the traffic demand generated by the additional population moving into the Anderson Road Quarry (ARQ) site development, the CEDD is implementing the necessary road/junction improvement works to tie in with the schedule of population intake of the development. These works include:

(a) improvement works at Lin Tak Road/Sau Mau Ping Road junction, including the construction of a new vehicular flyover of about 390 metres long from Lin Tak Road to Sau Mau Ping Road, and the lengthening of laybys at Lin Tak Road near Hong Wah Court and Hing Tin Estate in Lam Tin;

(b) improvement works at Clear Water Bay Road/On Sau Road junction, including the provision of a U-turn facility at Clear Water Bay Road near Fei Ngo Shan Road;

(c) widening of a section of New Clear Water Bay Road (Kowloon bound) near Shun Lee Tsuen Road from a single-lane to two-lane carriageway; and

(d) a series of road/junction improvement works being undertaken by the CEDD, including those at the junctions of Wai Yip Street/Wai Fat Road, Cha Kwo Ling Road/Wai Yip Street, and Hoi Bun Road/Cheung Yip Street. The improvement works at the junction of Wai Yip Street / Wai Fat Road was completed in end 2020, whilst the improvement works at the junctions of Cha Kwo Ling Road/Wai Yip Street, and Hoi Bun Road/Cheung Yip Street are scheduled for completion by 2021 and 2022 respectively. Upon completion of these works, the traffic conditions in the areas will be further improved.

#### Traffic improvement measures

The TD has been taking the following traffic improvement measures to ameliorate the traffic conditions of New Clear Water Bay Road, Clear Water Bay Road and Choi Hung Interchange (CHI):

(a) additional traffic signs installed at the junction of New Clear Water Bay Road/Choi Hing Lane, providing guidance to drivers on using Choi Hing Lane and Choi Hing Road to Kwun Tong and Mong Kok respectively via Choi Shek Lane, Choi Wing Road and Choi Ha Road in order to reduce the traffic flow at the junction of New Clear Water Bay Road/Clear Water Bay Road and CHI. The TD has planned the addition of traffic signs at the junction of New Clear Water Bay Road/Clear Water Bay Road directing drivers destined to Kwun Tong to use the above alternative route to further reduce the traffic at CHI. The above-mentioned installation of traffic signs is anticipated to be completed in mid 2021;

(b) To further improve the traffic situation at New Clear Water Bay Road, the CEDD would extend the existing bus layby near Sing Yin Secondary School at New Clear Water Bay Road, from 2 bus stopping spaces to 4 bus stopping spaces, with a view to easing traffic congestion due to bus queuing for boarding/alighting, and smoothen the traffic along New Clear Water Bay Road westbound to CHI; and

(c) To reduce weaving of minibuses at trunk road and to smoothen traffic for the rationalisation of lanes, the TD proposed an extension of the existing minibus terminus along Clear Water Bay Road westbound outside Hung Shek House of Ping Shek Estate, and the relocation of the minibus drop-off area outside Exit A2 of Choi Hung MTR Station to a place beside the existing minibus terminus. The relevant departments are arranging the related advance works.

(5) The CEDD has assessed the traffic impact of the ARQ site development and carried out the above road/junction improvement works, taking into account the overall planned population in Sai Kung District and Kwun Tong District. Upon completion of the improvement works, both traffic from Sau Mau Ping to Tseung Kwan O Road and from Lin Tak Road to Sau Mau Ping will become free-flow to Tseung Kwan O Road and Sau Mau Ping Road respectively. In addition, a section of New Clear Water Bay Road (Kowloon Bound) near Shun Lee Estate will be widened from single lane to two-lane. Furthermore, a U-turn facility at Clear Water Bay near On Sau Road will be added to improve the performance at the junction of On Sau Road/New Clear Water Bay Road/Clear Water Bay Road. According to the findings of the traffic review, upon the completion of all proposed works, the proposed development at the ARQ site will not cause unacceptable traffic impact in the area.

(6) The Government has formulated a number of measures to cope with the transport demand of Kowloon East. For instance, taking the opportunity of the massive redevelopment of Kwun Tong Town Centre by the Urban Renewal Authority, there are a number of traffic improvement measures to be implemented in phases, such as the completion of an exclusive left-turn lane from Hip Wo Street southbound to Kwun Tong Road eastbound at the Hoi Yuen Road/Kwun Tong Road roundabout.

In addition, the Government takes the opportunity of developing the two Action Areas in Kowloon East, i.e. Kwun Tong Action Area (KTAA) and Kowloon Bay Action Area (KBAA), to further improve the traffic conditions of Kowloon East, which will include building a new road extending from Kei Yip Lane in KTAA to divert traffic from the Wai Yip Street/Hoi Yuen Road roundabout and converting the roundabout into a signal-controlled junction to rationalise traffic flows. As for KBAA, the Government is studying the widening of Sheung Yee Road and the improvement to the Hoi Bun Road/Cheung Yip Street junction to increase the traffic capacity. In addition, the two feasibility studies on improving the pedestrian environment in the Kwun Tong Business Area and the Kowloon Bay Business Area included formulation of 22 traffic improvement schemes, of which 16 have been completed, such as provision of kerbside loading and unloading bays as well as enhancement of road junction layouts, which are conducive to improving road usage and junction capacity. The Government is striving to complete the remaining improvement works as soon as possible.

On inter-district road projects, the Government is taking forward the Route 6 projects, which comprise the Tseung Kwan O-Lam Tin Tunnel, the Central Kowloon Route, and the Trunk Road T2 and the Cha Kwo Ling Tunnel, to provide an east-west express link between Tseung Kwan O and West Kowloon. Expected to be fully open to traffic by 2026, the projects will rationalise the east-west traffic in Kowloon and help relieve the traffic burden on the existing major road links in Kowloon East.

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 Kowloon East, New Territories East and New Territories West will be available to the public, enhancing the transport connectivity and accessibility of Kowloon East.