

## LCQ21: Roadside railings

Following is a question by the Hon Andrew Lam and a written reply by the Secretary for Transport and Logistics, Mr Lam Sai-hung, in the Legislative Council today (November 20):

Question:

On issues relating to roadside railings, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) of the current number of roadside railings in Hong Kong, together with a breakdown by District Council district and type of railing;
- (2) of the average fees in respect of the installation and maintenance of each railing in each of the past three years, together with a breakdown by type of railing;
- (3) of the average cycles of maintenance and replacement for each railing; and
- (4) given Hong Kong's development towards smart roads and smart traffic management, whether relevant departments of the Government will review the original functions and needs of the railings on each road section in a timely manner?

Reply:

President,

In consultation with the Transport Department (TD) and Highways Department (HyD), my reply to the various parts of the question raised by the Hon Andrew Lam is as follows:

(1) As at October 2024, the total length of roadside railings on public roads in Hong Kong managed and maintained by the TD and the HyD respectively was about 1 600 kilometres. A breakdown by district and type of railings is at Annex.

(2) The HyD is responsible for the repair and maintenance of public roads and ancillary road facilities (including roadside railings) under its purview. In the past three years (i.e. from 2021 to 2023), the average expenditure on installing and replacing various types of roadside railings by the HyD was about \$600 per metre, which included the relevant costs such as materials and labour. As the expenditure on maintenance works for railings is included in the expenditure on routine road maintenance, the HyD does not maintain a breakdown of the expenditure on routine maintenance of each type of railings.

(3) The roadside railings of the HyD are mainly made of galvanised steel,

which can normally last for more than a few decades, except under abnormal circumstances such as damages caused by collision due to traffic accidents or improper use of roadside railings as load bearing points. The HyD conducts regular inspections on public roads and ancillary road facilities under its purview to ensure, among other things, that the railings are in good condition, e.g. no rusting of steel and no loosening of screws, etc. If the HyD discovers during regular inspections or receives reports of wear and tear or damage to the railings, it will arrange contractors to carry out repairs or replace them as soon as possible.

(4) The provision of pedestrian railings is meant to guide pedestrians to cross the roads and prevent them from inadvertently moving away from footpaths onto carriageways, thereby ensuring road safety and achieving traffic management. Meanwhile, the HKeMobility mobile application of the TD provides walking routes across all districts in Hong Kong. Members of the public can look up the locations of pedestrian crossing facilities and use the walking route search function to plan walking routes. By planning walking routes in advance, the chance of pedestrians inadvertently walking into the carriageway can also be minimised.

Pedestrian railings are mainly erected at road junctions, pedestrian crossings, transport interchanges, school entrances/exits, central medians and pedestrian refuge islands, etc. At present, the TD adopts a "minimal approach" in the provision of pedestrian railings, which aims at stripping away excessive railings that are not bringing value to the implementation of the policy of enhancing walkability of the pedestrian environment and reducing street cluttering, with a view to releasing more space for pedestrians on footpaths. The TD will conduct reviews of pedestrian railings under its purview as necessary to assess whether they should be maintained, removed or replaced, taking into account the functions of the railings, prevailing guidelines, accident records of the locations concerned, public views, etc. On matters relating to the decluttering of pedestrian railings, the TD will consult local stakeholders through District Offices as and when necessary.