

LCQ22: Provision of parking spaces

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 (November 13):

Question:

It is learnt that car parking spaces in Hong Kong are persistently in short supply, and the shortfall of parking spaces for commercial vehicles is particularly severe. The Transport Department (TD) is taking forward pilot projects of automated parking systems (APSs) involving six sites (pilot projects) with a view to providing more car parking spaces. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the shortfall of car parking spaces in each District Council (DC) district in each of the past three years, together with a tabulated breakdown by whether the parking spaces in question are for use by (i) private cars or (ii) commercial vehicles; if such figures are not available, whether it will compile such statistics expeditiously;

(2) whether it has set the target completion dates for the assessments on the technical feasibility and financial viability for the various pilot projects; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(3) of the new initiatives which will make use of innovation and technology, apart from the introduction of APSs, to be taken by TD in the coming three years for providing more car parking spaces;

(4) as it was pointed out in Report No. 72 of the Director of Audit published in April this year that, as at the end of last year, a number of car parking spaces in five government car parks had been occupied prolongedly by abandoned vehicles, whether the relevant government departments regularly deployed staff to conduct inspections on government car parks in the past three years, to prevent the prolonged occupation of car parking spaces by abandoned vehicles; if so, of the details (including the numbers of inspections conducted and prosecutions initiated);

(5) as the Government will explore, under the principle of "single site, multiple uses", the provision of new public car parks in about 20 works projects, of the public facilities involved in such works projects and the respective numbers of car parking spaces to be provided; and

(6) of the respective numbers of car parking spaces (i) to be added and (ii) to be cancelled, in each DC district in each of the coming three years?

Reply:

President,

Given the hard fact that land resources are limited in Hong Kong,

coupled with the need to cater to competing demands for land for community and economic development, objectively speaking, it is virtually impossible for the Government to increase car parking spaces continuously to catch up with the growth rate of the vehicle fleet.

The Government's current policy on the provision of parking spaces is to accord priority to considering and meeting the parking demand of commercial vehicles (CVs), and to provide an appropriate number of private car parking spaces if the overall development permits, but at the same time not to attract passengers to opt for private cars in lieu of public transport, so as to avoid aggravating the road traffic. The Transport Department (TD) is conducting a consultancy study on parking for CVs to comprehensively assess the shortfall situation, and formulate short-, medium- and long-term measures to address the anticipated demand.

My reply to the various parts of the Hon Luk Chung-hung's question is as follows.

(1), (5) and (6) The numbers of parking spaces by vehicle types in various districts of Hong Kong as at August 2019 are at Annex. As the demand for parking spaces in various districts fluctuates with time and is not static, TD is not able to provide information on the shortfall of parking spaces in each District Council (DC) district.

The Government will continue to closely monitor the parking needs of different districts and to take forward measures to increase the provision of parking spaces, including taking forward pilot projects on automated parking systems (APSs).

In accordance with the "single site, multiple uses" principle, TD is proactively exploring the incorporation of new public car parks in about 20 suitable works projects involving "Government, Institution or Community" facilities, public open space, etc. Subject to technical feasibility, it is expected that the relevant projects will provide a total of around 5 100 parking spaces by batches.

Since the number and progress in the provision of new parking spaces through the various measures hinge on a host of factors, TD is not in a position to make a precise projection on the number of parking spaces to be provided in each of the coming three years.

(2) TD is conducting a consultancy study on APSs to ascertain the feasibility and applicability of APSs in Hong Kong. The study is scheduled for completion in early 2020.

Meanwhile, TD is taking forward six APS pilot projects so as to acquire and consolidate experience in building, operating and managing different types of APSs and the associated financial arrangements. This will pave the way for wider application of APSs in government and privately operated public car parks in future.

So far, TD has identified four sites for launching APS pilot projects,

having regard to such criteria as parking demand, geographical environment, planning restrictions and impact on local traffic, etc. The identified sites include a short-term tenancy (STT) site in Tsuen Wan, an open space at the junction of Yen Chow Street and Tung Chau Street in Sham Shui Po, the proposed government building on Chung Kong Road in Sheung Wan and the proposed government building on Sheung Mau Street in Chai Wan. For the STT site in Tsuen Wan, TD has already secured support from the Tsuen Wan DC, and it is expected that tender invitation for the site may take place in early 2020. As regards the pilot project in Sham Shui Po, TD is currently assessing the technical feasibility after securing support from the Sham Shui Po DC. For the proposed government buildings in Sheung Wan and Chai Wan, TD will consult relevant DCs in due course.

(3) To promote smart mobility and assist motorists in finding parking spaces, TD has disseminated parking vacancy information of public car parks to the public through its "HKERouting" mobile application since 2016. Subsequently, TD launched in July 2018 an all-in-one mobile application "HKEMobility", integrating "HKERouting" and two other mobile applications in relation to public transport and driving information, to provide one-stop public access to traffic information. As at end September 2019, "HKEMobility" provided parking vacancy information of 330 public car parks.

On the other hand, TD plans to install a new generation of parking meters by batches starting from the first half of 2020. The new parking meters will be equipped with sensors to detect whether individual parking spaces are occupied, and such real-time information and data will be disseminated through "HKEMobility" and the Government's Public Sector Information Portal "data.gov.hk". We expect that the installation works for the new parking meters will be fully completed in the first half of 2022.

With the provision of more real-time parking vacancy information of public car parks and on-street metered parking spaces equipped with the new generation of parking meters through "HKEMobility", motorists will be able to locate vacant parking spaces more conveniently, thereby reducing the traffic generated by vehicles circulating on roads in search of parking spaces.

(4) Currently, the day-to-day management and operation of government car parks under TD, including the handling of abandoned vehicles, are discharged by outsourced contractors. TD has been deploying staff regularly to inspect each of its car parks one to two times per month to monitor the work of the operators, including manpower deployment, inspection of crucial facilities in the car parks, follow-up of repair items, collection of parking fees, handling of abandoned vehicles and the overall operation of the car parks, etc. In response to the Audit Commission's recommendation, TD has requested the operators to submit monthly reports on their handling of abandoned vehicles starting from February 2019 with a view to enhancing the monitoring of the operators' arrangement in this respect. In addition, in order to speed up the process for handling abandoned vehicles, TD has enhanced the procedures whereby the operators can act in accordance with the "Conditions of Parking and Use" displayed at the car parks concerned. When an abandoned vehicle is found, the operator will send a letter to the address registered by the car owner concerned by registered mail, asking him/her to settle the

parking fees payable and remove his/her vehicle from the space it has been occupying, so as to vacate the parking space for public use as soon as possible. As at end October 2019, there were no outstanding cases of abandoned vehicles in TD's multi-storey car parks.