

LCQ3: Easing shortage of parking spaces

Following is a question by the Hon Yung Hoi-yan and a written reply by the Secretary for Transport and Logistics, Mr Lam Sai-hung, in the Legislative Council today (February 28):

Question:

Many motorists have relayed that the shortage of parking spaces in various districts had caused them inconvenience when going out. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of (i) the ratio of private car (PC) and motorcycle parking spaces to the relevant licensed vehicles, (ii) the number of PC and motorcycle parking spaces available in public car parks in each of the 18 districts across the territory as well as their usage, (iii) the number of on-street PC parking spaces with parking meters in each of the 18 districts across the territory as well as their usage, (iv) the number of on-street motorcycle parking spaces with parking meters in each of the 18 districts across the territory as well as their usage, (v) the number of prosecutions instituted against illegal parking in each of the 18 districts across the territory, and (vi) the ratio of parking spaces for village housing to standard New Territories Exempted Houses, in each of the past three years;

(2) given that according to the parking standards of the Planning Department, up to one car parking space can be provided for each standard New Territories Exempted House with a size not exceeding 65 square metres, yet some rural residents have relayed that the provision of parking spaces in rural residential areas has long been insufficient, and no additional parking spaces can be provided for some adjacent village houses as they do not meet the relevant parking standards, of the Government's plans to provide additional parking spaces in rural residential areas, and whether it will review and make timely adjustments to the relevant standards so as to meet the needs of the residents; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(3) as it has been reported that the shortage of parking spaces has undermined motorists' desire to go out, adversely affecting the Government's promotion of the night-time economy, of the Government's plan to facilitate parking by members of the public, including whether consideration will be given to providing more temporary parking spaces in designated areas and during specified periods; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(4) as some members of the public have relayed that they had been prosecuted for occasionally stopping their vehicles outside the "Where not to stop" areas designated by the Transport Department or in the "No stopping" zones during non-restriction time, and such enforcement actions had left them at a

loss, how the Government can ensure that law enforcement officers can pinpoint specifically the contravention of legal requirements by the relevant vehicles when instituting prosecutions against illegal parking, and whether it will consider leveraging technology to assist law enforcement, with a view to improving the accuracy of prosecutions; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

It is the Government's transport policy to centre on public transport with railway as the backbone. Hong Kong enjoys a well-developed public transport network, and the Government encourages the public to make good use of the public transport services as far as possible, so as to avoid aggravating the burden on road traffic resulting from excessive private cars (PCs) and motorcycles. Nevertheless, the Government understands that some members of the public choose to commute by PCs or motorcycles for various reasons. Hence, the Government has been actively pursuing a host of short-term and medium-to-long-term measures to suitably increase the supply of parking spaces where circumstances permit, which include but are not limited to the following measures:

- (a) Utilising spaces underneath flyovers for designation of parking spaces;
- (b) Opening up more parking spaces at government buildings for public use during non-office hours;
- (c) Providing additional on-street parking spaces at suitable locations while ensuring that traffic flow, road safety and the loading/unloading activities of other road users would not be compromised;
- (d) Providing more parking spaces for public use in suitable "Government, Institution or Community" facilities and public open space projects in accordance with the principle of "single site, multiple use". Subject to the results of technical feasibility assessments and the progress of seeking required approvals for the projects under planning, as well as the construction progress of the approved projects, it is expected that about 20 suitable development projects will be completed by batches to provide additional parking spaces starting from 2024-25;
- (e) Taking forward automated parking system projects in newly-built government carparks and short-term tenancy carparks, so as to increase parking density and make parking more convenient for the public; and
- (f) Revising the parking facilities standard for PCs in the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines (HKPSG) in 2021, which provides more parking spaces in private and subsidised housing development projects.

As regards the Member's question, in consultation with the Transport Department (TD), the Hong Kong Police Force (HKPF), the Lands Department (LandsD) and the Government Property Agency (GPA), a consolidated reply is as

follows:

(1) For the period between 2021 and 2023, (i) the ratio of the number of parking spaces of PCs and motorcycles to the number of licensed PCs and motorcycles; and for the 18 districts, in respect of (ii) the number and utilisation of PC and motorcycle parking spaces in public car parks, (iii) the number and utilisation of metered parking spaces for PCs, and (iv) the number and utilisation of on-street motorcycle parking spaces, please refer to Annex I to IV respectively.

The HKPF handles statistics on fixed penalty notices (FPNs) issued against illegal parking and other traffic offences by Police Region. Therefore, the prosecution figures by 18 District Council districts is not available. From 2021 to 2023, the figures of FPNs issued against illegal parking by the HKPF by Police Region are tabulated in Annex V. For the ratio of parking spaces in village housing to the number of New Territories Exempted Houses, the LandsD does not maintain the relevant statistics.

(2) Under the prevailing HKPSG, each standard New Territories Exempted House (65 square metres) is allowed to provide up to one private car parking space, which in general should be in communal parking area within the village environs. Moreover, if any village wishes to provide additional parking facilities, it may lodge an application to the Town Planning Board for a planning permission under section 16 of the Town Planning Ordinance (Cap. 131) for the provision of a temporary car park on a rural site for villagers' use.

(3) Hong Kong has a well-developed public transport network. As the locations for activities associated with night-time economy are accessible by public transport, we encourage members of the public to make good use of the public transport services to travel to those locations as far as possible. For those who need to travel by car, they may consider using on-street parking spaces or car parks nearby, including car parks of government office buildings which are opened to the public during non-office hours (e.g. nighttime). Members of the public may also gain the latest information on special traffic arrangements and parking vacancy on the TD's website (www.td.gov.hk) or via the "HKeMobility" mobile application.

(4) Road safety is one of the HKPF's operational priorities, and changing the irresponsible behaviour of road users (such as obstruction to traffic or illegal stopping at restricted zone which may cause inconvenience or even hazard to other road users) is also among the HKPF's Selected Traffic Enforcement Priorities. The HKPF aims to raise the law-abiding awareness of commuters and combat improper traffic obstruction behaviour through publicity, education and enforcement.

The HKPF has clear guidelines, training and supervision on the enforcement procedures of traffic offences to ensure that frontline officers comply with operational needs and statutory requirements when taking enforcement actions. The HKPF will also review and update the relevant procedures and guidelines from time to time to meet the actual needs.

The HKPF has been working closely with relevant departments, adopting new technological solutions for traffic enforcement to enhance the efficiency of frontline officer in combating illegal parking and obstruction-related moving offences. For instance, to raise the enforcement effectiveness and strengthen the deterrent effect, the HKPF has launched in phases the "e-Ticketing Scheme" across the territory since March 2020. Frontline enforcement officers are now able to access or input information of illegally parked vehicles via their mobile devices, take photos of non-compliance as evidence and instantly print out FPNs in order to reduce human errors in issuing handwritten FPNs. Besides, the HKPF has launched the first WeChat mini-programme for online reporting of traffic offences – "Project PROVE – Public Reporting Offences with Video Evidence", since April 2023. Members of the public can report non-emergency traffic related offences, including dangerous driving, careless driving, failing to comply with traffic signals, traffic signs and road markings, etc. by uploading relevant video clips to "Project PROVE". The HKPF will examine each report, and if prima facie evidence is established, it will follow up and investigate the case, or even take enforcement action.

The HKPF will continue to explore the use of more new technologies with relevant departments to enhance the effectiveness of enforcement against offences relating to illegal parking and traffic obstruction.