

LCQ3: Traffic noise nuisance caused to residents

Following is a question by the Hon Holden Chow and a written reply by the Secretary for the Environment, Mr Wong Kam-sing, in the Legislative Council today (May 15):

Question:

Quite a number of Tung Chung residents have relayed to me that there are often heavy vehicles travelling at a high speed on the North Lantau Highway (which has a speed limit of 110 kilometres per hour), causing serious noise nuisance to them. They therefore request the Government to retrofit noise barriers at the relevant road section. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the respective names of the expressways in the territory which have currently (i) been installed with and (ii) not been installed with noise barriers, and set out in a table by name of expressway of the road sections which (iii) have been installed with noise barriers and (iv) will be retrofitted with noise barriers in the coming three years;

(2) whether it regularly measured, in the past three years, the traffic noise levels at the Tung Chung section of the North Lantau Highway; if so, of the approach adopted for the measurement, and the traffic noise levels recorded at different hours; and

(3) whether it will consider retrofitting noise barriers at the Tung Chung section of the North Lantau Highway or taking other measures, so as to alleviate the traffic noise nuisance caused to Tung Chung residents; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

The Government is committed to mitigating traffic noise impact on members of the public through various means. They include (i) requiring carrying out of noise impact assessments to reduce potential noise problems when planning new developments (such as roads and residential developments); (ii) regulating by law the noise emission levels of vehicles for first registration; and (iii) where practicable and subject to resource availability, resurfacing with low-noise materials and/or retrofitting noise barriers/enclosures on existing roads generating excessive traffic noise.

My reply to the question raised by the Hon Holden Chow is as follows:

(1) (i) Names of expressways which have been installed with noise barriers:

Sha Tin Road (Lion Rock Tunnel Road to Tai Po Road – Sha Tin)
Tolo Highway (Tai Po Road – Sha Tin to Lam Kam Road Interchange)
Fanling Highway (Tolo Highway to San Tin Interchange)
San Tin Highway (San Tin Interchange to Castle Peak Road – Tam Mei)
Yuen Long Highway (Shap Pat Heung Interchange to Lam Tei Interchange)
Tuen Mun Road (Wong Chu Road to Tsuen Wan Road)
Sha Tin Wai Road (Flyover and Tate's Cairn Highway, Sha Tin Road to Tolo Highway)
Kwun Tong Bypass
Island Eastern Corridor
North Lantau Highway (Lantau Link Toll Plaza to Tung Chung Eastern Interchange)
Tsing Kwai Highway (West Kowloon Highway to Cheung Tsing Tunnel)
Tsing Long Highway (North West Tsing Yi Interchange to San Tin Highway)

(ii) Names of expressways which have not been installed with noise barriers:

Tsuen Wan Road (Tuen Mun Road to Kwai Chung Road)
Tai Po Road – Sha Tin (Fo Tan Road to Tolo Highway)
Lantau Link (North West Tsing Yi Interchange to Lantau Link Toll Plaza)
Cheung Tsing Highway (Cheung Tsing Tunnel to North West Tsing Yi Interchange)

(iii) Sections of expressways which have been installed with noise barriers:

Names of Expressways	Road sections installed with noise barriers/noise enclosures
Sha Tin Road	near Pok Hong Estate
Tolo Highway	from Classical Gardens to Kwong Fuk Estate; and near Pak Shek Kok
Fanling Highway	from Pak Wo Road to Po Shek Wu Road; and near Hong Lok Yuen
San Tin Highway	near Fairview Park

Yuen Long Highway	from Shap Pat Heung Interchange to Lam Tei Interchange
Tuen Mun Road	near Tsuen Wan; near Yau Kom Tau; near Sham Tseng; near Angler's Beach; near Tsing Lung Tau; and near Castle Peak Bay
Sha Tin Wai Road	near Shek Mun; and near Sha Tin Fishermen's New Village
Kwun Tong Bypass	near Laguna City; near Richland Gardens; and near Choi Hung Estate
Island Eastern Corridor	near City Garden; and near Taikoo Shing
North Lantau Highway	near Caribbean Coast; and near Coastal Skyline
Tsing Kwai Highway	near Nam Cheong Estate; near Mei Foo Sun Chuen; and near Lai King Estate
Tsing Long Highway	near Ko Po San Tsuen

(iv) Regarding traffic noise impact of existing roads on neighbouring residents, it is the Government's policy, where practicable and subject to availability of resources, to study the implementation of direct noise mitigation measures on existing roads generating traffic noise at neighbouring residents at levels exceeding 70 dB(A)(note). Such measures include retrofitting of noise barriers/enclosures, and road resurfacing with low noise materials. Following this policy, the noise barrier retrofitting projects on three existing roads (not expressways) are under construction. For other noise barrier retrofitting projects on expressways, they are currently still in planning stage.

Note: Road traffic noise level is specified in terms of L10 (one hour) which is the noise level exceeded for 10 per cent of a one-hour period and is generally measured at peak traffic flow. The traffic noise limit of 70 dB(A) for residential premises as stipulated in the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines is adopted as the criterion for studying the implementation of noise mitigation measures under existing policy.

(2) When planning the North Lantau Highway and the residential developments in Tung Chung New Town, the Government and developers have based on the maximum projected traffic flow within 15 years after development commencement to assess the traffic noise levels of the North Lantau Highway at nearby residential units and, in accordance with the relevant requirements of the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines, have proposed appropriate measures to mitigate traffic noise impacts. Therefore, there is no need to conduct regular measurements of traffic noise levels at the Tung Chung section of the North Lantau Highway.

To let the public know about the traffic noise situations of roads in various districts over the territory (including the North Lantau Highway), the Environmental Protection Department has based on the statistical traffic data published by the Transport Department to estimate the traffic noise

regularly. The spatial distributions have been uploaded to the website of the Environmental Protection Department for public reference. As the relevant road traffic noise levels were assessed based on the yearly averaged statistical traffic data, they could better reflect the overall situations than the traffic noise levels measured over certain periods of time.

(3) As mentioned above, the Government, when planning the Tung Chung New Town, has followed the requirements of the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines and the above principles to propose appropriate measures to mitigate traffic noise impacts. Apart from placing noise tolerant uses (such as shopping malls and parks) in between the residential developments (such as the current Coastal Skyline, Caribbean Coast and Seaview Crescent) and the North Lantau Highway in order to increase the buffer distances as far as possible, thereby reducing the potential traffic noise impacts on residential developments, the Government also proposed to pave the North Lantau Highway with low-noise material and to construct noise barriers along the road sections in front of the current Coastal Skyline and Caribbean Coast to reduce traffic noise impacts on these two residential developments. Furthermore, in planning for the residential developments in the Tung Chung New Town, the developers have assessed the traffic noise levels at the residential units and adopted practicable designs and measures to further mitigate the traffic noise impacts, and properly address the traffic noise problems in accordance with the requirements of the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines. Since the traffic noise mitigation measures proposed at the planning stages have been progressively implemented, there is no need to retrofit additional noise barriers or enclosures on the above road sections.