

LCQ4: Planning of Cross Harbour Tunnel Toll Plaza

Following is a question by Dr the Hon Hoey Simon Lee and a reply by the Secretary for Transport and Logistics, Mr Lam Sai-hung, in the Legislative Council today (December 4):

Question:

There are views that the Cross Harbour Tunnel (CHT) Toll Plaza is strategically located. With the huge pedestrian and vehicular flows brought about by urban development, the planning and design of the CHT Toll Plaza should also keep abreast of the times to improve the environment of the Hung Hom district and optimise the use of land resources. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) as the Government has indicated that the released spaces from the CHT Toll Plaza will be used to tie in with the development of the neighbouring areas in the long run, whether the Government has formulated long-term development strategies and carried out greening and transformation in respect of the CHT Toll Plaza; if so, of the details and the implementation timetable; if not, the reasons for that;

(2) as it is learnt that a research team from an educational institution has suggested constructing a landscape podium at the CHT Toll Plaza, whether the Government has assessed the feasibility of the suggestion; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(3) whether the Government has plans to reshape the Hung Hom district in accordance with the principle of "single site, multiple use", so as to optimise the redevelopment space of the CHT Toll Plaza and the waterfront resources of the Victoria Harbour, such as developing the district into a tourist hotspot or leisure area?

Reply:

President,

The HKeToll, a free-flow tolling service, has been smoothly implemented at all government-tolled tunnels and the Tsing Sha Control Area. Thanks to the cooperation and support of the members of the public, the overall operation of the HKeToll at all tunnels has been smooth. The HKeToll brings convenience to motorists, and provides the necessary infrastructure for the implementation of time-varying tolls at the three road-harbour crossings, allowing members of the public to experience the convenience of smart mobility.

Having consulted the Development Bureau and the Transport Department

(TD), my reply to the question raised by Dr the Hon Hoey Simon Lee is as follows:

(1) With the implementation of the HKeToll at the Cross-Harbour Tunnel (CHT) since July last year, coupled with the implementation of time-varying tolls at the three road-harbour crossings since December last year, the traffic at tunnel entrances and exits on the Kowloon side of the CHT has been smoother than before. The Highways Department has completed the demolition works of all toll booths, toll islands and toll plaza shelters in the CHT. The TD will make use of the released spaces to accommodate traffic management and road safety needs through straightening the road alignment, with a view to further rationalising the traffic at tunnel entrances and exits on the Kowloon side of the CHT. The relevant works are expected to be completed in early 2025. The TD will continue to review the future traffic condition of the road section and the spaces available, and proactively consider how to complement the development of the neighbouring areas, such as the study mentioned below, and improve the traffic and cross-harbour bus service.

(2) and (3) As proposed in the 2023 Policy Address (PA), in order to revitalise the Hung Hom Station and nearby sites, the Government invited the MTRCL (MTR Corporation Limited) at the end of last year to conduct a study to re-plan and develop around 10 hectares of land covering the Hung Hom Station and the railway facility sites in the vicinity, as well as the waterfront and the former pier facility sites to the south of the Hong Kong Coliseum. The study aims at modernising the supporting facilities for the Hung Hom Station, releasing commercial and residential floor space, and creating a vibrant harbourfront. Having regard to the re-planning of the nearby areas as mentioned above, the study will also explore ways to enhance the pedestrian connectivity between Hung Hom and Tsim Sha Tsui East, as well as improve the waiting environment of the bus stops at the CHT. In addition, the 2024 PA further proposed making use of the waterfront site in the vicinity of the Hung Hom Station as covered under the aforementioned study for promoting yacht tourism. To this end, the Government will invite the private sector to explore their interest in constructing and operating yacht berthing facilities. In order to provide diversified travelling experiences, the proposed yacht berthing facilities will not be standalone yacht club facilities. Instead, it will be developed together with land-based facilities for food and beverages, entertainment and retail. The aforementioned study currently being conducted by the MTRCL is heading in this direction. The MTRCL will submit its proposal to the Government by the end of this year.

We note that the research team of the PolyU (Hong Kong Polytechnic University) once suggested constructing a green deck of about 30 000 square metres over the former toll plaza of the CHT. According to PolyU's design scheme, the deck proposed is sizable, covering the entire former toll plaza of the CHT. The deck has three main levels, offering a total floor area of approximately 45 000 square meters. In addition to green spaces, the project also includes commercial elements, including retail, dining, and exhibition areas. The project also contains proposals relating to multi-purpose community arts spaces and improvement to the bus waiting environment.

Out of technical considerations, costs of works and other reasons, we have not included in any substantial way PolyU's original idea regarding the green deck in our invitation to the MTRCL for conducting the abovementioned re-planning study. That being said, we have in fact incorporated some of the visions as proposed by PolyU's research team into the re-planning study. These include, for example, the provision of more green spaces, activity venues and better cross-harbour bus waiting environment for the public; as well as the enhancement of the connectivity and pedestrian accessibility between the hinterland in Hung Hom and the harbourfront area as well as Tsim Sha Tsui East respectively. We have asked the MTRCL to propose measures with such objectives in mind, which would be technically feasibility and cost-effective, in a bid to re-brand Hung Hom into a new and well-connected landmark for leisure and tourism.

Thank you, President.