

LCQ5: Ancillary transport facilities for hospitals at Kai Tak Development Area

Following is a question by the Hon Chan Hoi-yan and a reply by the Acting Secretary for Transport and Logistics, Mr Liu Chun-san, in the Legislative Council today (July 3):

Question:

Some healthcare personnel have relayed to me that there is no rail station in the vicinity of the Hong Kong Children's Hospital (HKCH), and this, coupled with inadequate provision of public transport services and road planning issues, etc., has caused inconvenience to patients and their families as well as healthcare personnel. Moreover, with the construction of the New Acute Hospital in Kai Tak (the Kai Tak Hospital), which is adjacent to HKCH and due to complete in 2026, there will be a further increase in the pressure on traffic within the area by then. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether it has conducted assessment on the impact of the inadequate ancillary transport facilities and road planning issues relating to HKCH as well as the completion of the Kai Tak Hospital on traffic in the vicinity, and formulated corresponding traffic enhancement and road planning proposals; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(2) of the construction progress of the Central Kowloon Route and Trunk Road T2, and whether the projects can respectively be completed in 2025 and 2026 as scheduled; apart from the operation of two new franchised bus routes, whether the Government has any other proposal at this stage to alleviate the traffic issues arising from the commissioning of the Kai Tak Hospital; and

(3) as the Civil Engineering and Development Department (CEDD) indicated in May this year that regarding the proposal to extend the Smart and Green Mass Transit System in Kai Tak to the Kai Tak Hospital, CEDD would need to conduct further studies to explore the technical feasibility of the proposal, whether the Government will complete the studies before the commissioning of the Kai Tak Hospital; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

Having consulted the Health Bureau, Highways Department, Civil Engineering and Development Department and Transport Department (TD), my reply to the question raised by the Hon Chan Hoi-yan is as follows:

(1) To tie in with the traffic arrangements for the Kai Tak Development Area

(KTDA), the Government has provided additional trunk roads in the overall transport planning, including the Central Kowloon Route (CKR) linking West Kowloon with the KTDA, and the Trunk Road T2 and Cha Kwo Ling Tunnel connecting the CKR with the Tseung Kwan O-Lam Tin Tunnel, which are expected to be commissioned in 2025 and 2026 respectively. The Government has also constructed new roads and widened existing roads in the KTDA, enabling vehicles to have direct access to the Hong Kong Children's Hospital (HKCH) and the New Acute Hospital (NAH) through Shing Fung Road or Cheung Yip Street.

The road network in the KTDA, which has been largely completed, is adequate for meeting the traffic needs arising from the existing and future developments in the area. Currently, the overall traffic is generally smooth in the KTDA. The Government will continue to monitor the traffic conditions in the area and consider making improvements when necessary.

Moreover, the Government and the Hospital Authority (HA) have conducted a number of traffic impact assessments for the KTDA and NAH. The assessment results show that there will be an increase in traffic flow on the roads leading to the hospital during the construction and operation of the hospitals. Nevertheless, the total traffic flow after the increase will not exceed the capacity of the traffic network in the area even during the peak periods.

As for public transport services, following the established practice for other new developments and infrastructure projects, the TD has been maintaining close liaison with the relevant departments on the HKCH and NAH, with a view to planning in advance the provision of appropriate public transport services to meet passengers' needs, having regard to the progress and anticipated completion dates of the two projects.

There are currently four franchised bus routes and five green minibuses (GMB) routes serving the HKCH, connecting the hospital with districts such as Kwun Tong, Kowloon City, Mong Kok and Tsim Sha Tsui, as well as nearby MTR stations including Kai Tak Station, Sung Wong Toi Station, To Kwa Wan Station, Kowloon Bay Station, Ngau Tau Kok Station, Kwun Tong Station, etc. The TD has also planned to introduce an additional bus route that will pass through the areas of To Kwa Wan and Hung Hom, and extend a bus route that runs through Yau Tsim Mong, Sham Shui Po and Cheung Sha Wan this year to serve the area of the HKCH. Moreover, the TD is considering introducing an additional GMB Supplementary Route No. 88A running to/from Wong Tai Sin to facilitate local residents' visits to the HKCH. Upon commissioning of the NAH, the TD and operators will make arrangements for the above franchised bus and GMB routes to call at the hospital, providing convenience to its visitors.

Meanwhile, the HKCH has arranged to provide its staff with free of charge employees' service operated by non-franchised buses running to/from the MTR Kowloon Bay Station, Ngau Tau Kok Station and Kai Tak Station. Apart from the above public transport services, Rehabus operators also provide services for mobility impaired persons commuting between MTR stations and the HKCH.

The TD will continue to closely monitor the progress of the NAH project and the development of the area, with a view to adjusting or enhancing the local public transport services when necessary to meet passengers' demand. The HA will also continue to maintain communication with other relevant departments in a bid to further improve the road traffic network and transport system in the vicinity of the NAH.

(2) The Government is pressing ahead with the CKR project as well as the Trunk Road T2 and Cha Kwo Ling Tunnel project. The target commissioning of the two projects in 2025 and 2026 respectively remain unchanged.

The overall progress of the two projects is satisfactory. On the CKR, the structural works for most of the tunnels, slip roads and tunnel buildings have been completed while the associated electrical and mechanical works are in full swing. It is on target to be commissioned in 2025. On Trunk Road T2 and Cha Kwo Ling Tunnel, the construction of the two tunnel tubes is underway while the works for the two ventilation buildings and ancillary facilities are also progressing steadily. Based on the current progress, the project will be able to cope with the anticipated completion of the NAH in 2026 and its traffic needs.

Upon completion of the works, the journey time from Yau Ma Tei Interchange to Kai Tak Interchange during peak hours can be significantly reduced from about 30 minutes to about five minutes.

(3) One of the stations of the Smart and Green Mass Transit System in Kai Tak is proposed to be located in the residential area of the former runway area, which is about 500 metres in walking distance from the HKCH and NAH. The alignment, if extended to both hospitals, will be constrained by the existing or planned development sites in the residential area of the former runway area, while the residential buildings there are densely built without sufficient space for the proposed System to pass through. The proposal will also have considerable impact on the project's implementation, operational efficiency and overall cost-effectiveness and its feasibility is yet to be established.

The Government will invite suppliers and operators of relevant systems to submit Expression of Interest in the second half of this year to exchange views on the feasibility of extending or adjusting the alignment of the System. We will also request the consultant to make reference to the views of suppliers and operators when reviewing the overall feasibility of the proposed provision of a station at the NAH during the investigation stage. We will strive to invite tenders for the project in 2026 with an aim to awarding the contract in 2027. We will complete the review before commencing the tendering exercise.

Thank you, President.