

LCQ5: Park-and-ride facilities

Following is a question by the Hon Chan Han-pan and a reply by the Secretary for Transport and Housing, Mr Frank Chan Fan, in the Legislative Council today (January 30):

Question:

In recent years, more and more members of the public have moved to reside in remote rural areas in the New Territories. Owing to a lack of public transport services in such areas, they need to commute, by private cars, to and from the nearby town centres for meeting their daily needs, or to and from the urban areas for work. In order to relieve the pressure generated by the growing number of private cars on the road networks in the urban areas, the Government has over the years implemented park-and-ride (PnR) schemes, which offer concessionary parking fees to encourage members of the public to park their private cars near public transport hubs or railway stations and then take public transport to go to the urban areas. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the public transport hubs and railway stations at which a PnR scheme is currently implemented; the number of parking spaces, their utilisation rates during peak and non-peak hours, the percentage of time when such parking spaces were fully occupied, the levels of parking fees charged and the concessions offered, at each of such locations in each of the past three years;

(2) given that the problem of road congestion in the urban areas is worsening, whether the Government will increase substantially the number of parking spaces and parking fee concessions provided under PnR schemes; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(3) as there have all along been suggestions from members of the public for implementing an extensive PnR scheme at the Tuen Mun Road Bus-Bus Interchange and the Tai Lam Tunnel Bus-Bus Interchange as well as increasing the number of parking spaces provided under the PnR schemes near Kam Sheung Road Station of the West Rail Line and Sheung Shui Station of the East Rail Line, whether the Government has followed up those suggestions; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

The Government has been adopting a public transport-oriented policy, which encourages the public to make good use of the public transport network for their journeys as far as possible and minimise their reliance on private cars. Railway provides high capacity and convenient services. It is a green and efficient mass transit. Thus, the Government has all along adopted railway as backbone of the public transport system, while coordinating the

complementarity among different public transport services, including franchised bus services with high capacity, and public light buses which provides supplementary feeder services. In fact, over 12 million passenger trips, accounting for nearly 90 per cent of the total passenger trips, are made on public transport every day, the usage of which is the highest in the world.

On this basis, the Government supports the provision of park-and-ride (PnR) facilities at or near suitable railway stations to encourage drivers to take the train after parking their vehicles, hence reducing the road traffic entering congested areas.

My reply to the various parts of the Hon Chan Han-pan's question is as follows:

(1) Currently, there are 25 car parks providing PnR concessions in Hong Kong, nine of them are managed by the Housing Department and the MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL), 12 are managed by the Link Asset Management Limited (the LINK) and four are managed by other private companies, providing a total of around 10 000 parking spaces.

Among the aforesaid car parks, the nine car parks with PnR services managed by the Housing Department and the MTRCL provides a total of 3 513 PnR parking spaces. These car parks are located at or near MTR stations, including the Hong Kong Station, Ocean Park Station, Kowloon Station, West Kowloon Station of the High Speed Rail, Hung Hom Station, Tsing Yi Station, Choi Hung Station, Sheung Shui Station and Kam Sheung Road Station, to make it convenient for drivers to switch to MTR. Drivers who park their cars and switch to MTR to travel to their destinations can enjoy a parking fee discount of about 50 per cent on average at these car parks. The PnR rate of each car park and relevant details have been uploaded to the MTRCL's website for public reference.

In the third quarter of 2018, the parking spaces in the nine car parks mentioned above were patronised by nearly 2 980 users per day on average, with PnR users accounting for about 60 per cent of the total number of users, see Annex 1 for details. The Transport Department (TD) has not kept the relevant usage figures in the past three years.

As regards the car parks managed by the LINK or other private companies, the provision of PnR concessions is a matter of commercial decision. The Government does not have statistics on utilisation in this respect. The number of parking spaces in these car parks with PnR concessions are tabulated in Annex 2.

(2) and (3) Regarding enhancing the PnR facilities near Sheung Shui Station and at Kam Sheung Road Station, there is a public car park in Po Shek Wu Estate at Choi Yuen Road, Sheung Shui. After the completion of all the works, a total of about 220 private car parking spaces will be created, 60 per cent of which, i.e. about 130 private car parking spaces, will be PnR spaces. The first phase car park was commissioned in August 2018 and provides 166 private car parking spaces, of which 100 are PnR spaces. The TD will continue to

monitor the usage pattern of the PnR facilities in the above car park.

The existing PnR facilities at Kam Sheung Road Station of the West Rail Line will be permanently reprovisioned in Package 1 of the property development project at that station. The car park offering PnR concessions at the station is expected to commence operation in 2025 and provides 610 PnR spaces.

Moreover, regarding the Member's suggestion for new PnR schemes for private cars for the Tuen Mun Road Bus-Bus Interchange and the Tai Lam Tunnel Bus-Bus Interchange respectively, the TD will continue to monitor the demand closely. With the principle of "single site, multiple uses" in mind, the TD will explore and identify available sites with a view to providing the parking facilities and associated link road facilities required.

Looking ahead, the Government will continue to make reference to the recommendations in the Report on Study of Road Traffic Congestion in Hong Kong released by the Transport Advisory Committee in December 2014, including adjusting the first registration tax and annual licence fee for private cars, reviewing the parking policy, in order to reduce private car usage and alleviate road traffic congestion. In taking forward individual railway projects, as well as urban renewal and new development projects, the Government will also consider introducing more PnR facilities at suitable locations. When proceeding with railway projects, the Government will request the MTRCL to conduct an assessment of how stations are to be connected with other modes of public transport and the interchange arrangements involved. Where conditions of individual railway projects are deemed suitable, the Government will ask the MTRCL to consider various options for adding PnR facilities to facilitate the use of the mass transit system.

From the angle of practical consideration, it is often not easy to identify suitable sites for new car parks nowadays. Another concern that needs to be addressed would be the traffic impact of additional parking spaces on the local road network. Given the principle that our transport policy is to develop a public transport oriented system with railway as the backbone, the TD will continue to optimise public transport services. This will encourage more motorists to change their travel pattern and switch to public transport services directly, thereby enabling more efficient use of our limited road space. Thank you President.