

LCQ6: Traffic and transport studies

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 13):

Question:

The Government conducted three comprehensive transport studies in 1976, 1989 and 1997 respectively. Some members of the public have pointed out that it has been over 20 years since the last study was completed in 1999, and during this period Hong Kong has seen substantial changes in its population, the development of various districts, and transport-related situations such as the number of vehicles and cross-boundary transport. Moreover, problems such as inadequate public transport services and road congestion have also become increasingly serious in some districts (New Territories West in particular). In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) given that the past three comprehensive transport studies were conducted at irregular intervals, of the criteria adopted by the authorities for determining the timing for conducting such kind of studies;

(2) whether it will launch the fourth comprehensive transport study in the near future; if so, of the details and timetable; if not, what mechanism is in place to ensure that the public transport services and transport infrastructure in New Territories West can cater for the development of the district; and

(3) as the Chief Executive mentioned in the 2020 Policy Address that the Government would carry out a comprehensive traffic and transport strategy study, of the aspects covered by the study and the implementation timetable?

Reply:

President,

My reply to the respective parts of the question raised by the Hon Chan Han-pan is as follows:

(1) Comprehensive Transport Studies (CTSs) aim to develop a timely transport strategy for Hong Kong, cater for the needs of social development, and respond to changes such as demographic planning. In the 1970s, in view of the development of the New Town Development in New Territories, the Government conducted the first CTS, which covered provision of roads to connect the new towns and the urban areas, construction of the Mass Transit Railway, and the electrification and double tracking of the Kowloon-Canton Railway, etc. Later in the 1980s, the Government decided to construct a new airport at Chek Lap Kok and promote port development, and therefore conducted the second CTS. After the reunification, the Government conducted the third CTS in view of the population growth in Hong Kong and the upsurge in demand for cross-

boundary traffic.

The first and the second CTS set out three principles for our transport policy: (i) improving transport infrastructure; (ii) expanding and improving public transport services; and (iii) managing road use. Based on these principles, the Government completed the third CTS. The third CTS also laid down five broad directions, including (i) better integration of transport and land use planning, (ii) better use of railway as the backbone of the passenger transport system, (iii) provision of better public transport services and facilities, (iv) wider use of advanced technologies in traffic management, and (v) implementation of more environmental-friendly transport measures. These broad directions remain applicable today.

(2) After completion of the third CTS, the Government has been conducting different studies for the various aspects of the CTS, including:

(i) planning of transport infrastructure, such as "Railway Development Strategy"; the Government also conducted regular internal reviews on the planning of strategic road projects in Hong Kong; and took forward major road projects including Central-Wan Chai Bypass and Island Eastern Corridor Link, Central Kowloon Route, and Tseung Kwan O-Lam Tin Tunnel in an orderly manner;

(ii) the "Public Transport Strategy Study" which examined the roles and positioning of public transport services other than heavy rail; and

(iii) commencement of topical transport studies, such as "Congestion Charging" which adopted the principle of "Efficiency First".

The above studies on different transport topics can basically serve the purpose of a CTS. Moreover, we can have early promulgation of the findings of each study through progressive deployment of resources and completion of the studies in an orderly manner.

We have been planning and constructing various transport infrastructures in New Territories West, e.g. Tuen Mun-Chek Lap Kok Link commissioned in December 2020, Route 11 (between Yuen Long and North Lantau) and Tsing Yi-Lantau Link which are about to be implemented, and Tuen Mun Bypass, the feasibility study of which is planned to commence this year. Moreover, the Government plans to implement new major roads and railways under the Lantau Tomorrow Vision which will also relieve the current congestion situation at peak hours at West Rail and major roads linking Northwest New Territories and Hong Kong Island.

In the long term, we commenced the "Strategic Studies on Railways and Major Roads beyond 2030" to investigate the layout of railway and major roads infrastructures, such that the planning of large scale transport infrastructures can facilitate or even reserve capacity to satisfy Hong Kong's overall long term demand on land supply.

The Government will continuously enhance the public transport networks in the districts to meet passenger demands, having regard to the local developments, demographic changes, completion of transport facilities, and

the operation and service levels of the existing public transport services in the districts, etc.

In taking forward land/housing development projects, the relevant departments or developers should conduct a traffic impact assessment (TIA) to suitably adjust the scale of development or implement suitable traffic improvement and mitigation measures to maintain smooth traffic flow in the district.

(3) At present, the TD is formulating the scope and the detailed arrangements for the traffic and transport strategy study (TTSS), and is planning to conduct a travel characteristics survey in order to enhance the CTS Model in 2024 based on the data collected from the survey; and makes use of the new information and models to complete the remaining sections of the TTSS, so as to formulate the blueprint on future traffic and transport policies.

The TTSS will make reference to and introduce suitable innovative transport models and technology to promote green transport and reduce emission, making Hong Kong a more livable city. Besides, it will also explore the enhancement of public transport services and encourage the public to use public transport, thereby relieving the traffic congestion situation in urban areas. Our goal is to set out a forward-looking long-term traffic and transport strategies for ensuring that Hong Kong can maintain a safe, reliable, environmentally friendly and efficient traffic and transport system in the future. This can not only satisfy the public's needs in terms of economy, social and leisure, but also support the sustainable development of Hong Kong and facilitate the flow of people and goods in the Greater Bay Area. Once the thorough plan is finalised, we will report the details to the Legislative Council.

Thank you, President.