

LCQ6: Transport infrastructure in Kowloon East

Following is a question by the Hon Wilson Or and a reply by the Secretary for Development, Mr Michael Wong, in the Legislative Council today (December 9):

Question:

The Chief Executive indicated in the 2020 Policy Address that the Government had largely completed the detailed feasibility study on the Environmentally Friendly Linkage System (EFLS) for Kowloon East. The study suggested implementing a "multi-modal" EFLS, which would be more effective and desirable than a standalone infrastructure. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether it has decided to give up constructing an EFLS comprising an elevated monorail; if so, of the reasons for that; if not, the details of the latest proposal;

(2) of the implementation timetable of the multi-modal EFLS; what new measures it will, prior to the completion of the system, put in place in the short and medium term to alleviate the traffic congestion situation in Kowloon East; and

(3) of the measures in place to ensure that the transport infrastructure of Kowloon East can cater for the needs of the development of Kowloon East into Hong Kong's second Core Business District?

Reply:

President,

With the gradual development and transformation of Kowloon East (KE) into the second Core Business District (CBD), the residential and working populations in the area are progressively increasing. We are fully aware that the developments would generate additional traffic demand to the area. Relevant government departments have been striving hard to the timely provisioning of comprehensive railway and road infrastructure facilities, as well as proper public transport services to cope with the traffic demands in the area, thus meeting the travelling needs of the public.

Regarding railway connectivity of the area, with the commissioning of the Tuen Ma Line Phase 1, including Kai Tak Station, in early this year, and railway service has extended to cover Kai Tak Development (KTD) area. Franchised bus and green minibus services are currently provided in the area taking people to nearby railway stations and other districts. The entire Tuen Ma Line, including the remaining "Kai Tak to Hung Hom Section", will be

commissioned by the third quarter of 2021. Upon its commissioning, Tuen Ma Line will include Kai Tak Station, Sung Wong Toi Station, To Kwa Wan Station, Ho Man Tin Station and the Hung Hom Station Extension; and will enhance the transport connectivity and accessibility of KE.

On the provisioning of inter-district roads, we are proactively taking forward the Route 6 project to directly link up Kowloon West and Tseung Kwan O, thus relieving the traffic burden along the major east-west road corridors in Kowloon and Tseung Kwan O. We also take the opportunity of developing the Kwun Tong Action Area (KTAA) and Kowloon Bay Action Area (KBAA) to further improve the traffic condition thereat, which include building a new road extending from Kei Yip Lane in KTAA to divert traffic away from the Wai Yip Street/Hoi Yuen Road roundabout, and convert the roundabout into a signal-controlled junction to rationalise traffic flows. As for the area around KBAA, the Government is studying the widening of Sheung Yee Road and improving the Hoi Bun Road/Cheung Yip Street junction to increase the traffic capacity. In addition, a number of traffic improvement measures would be implemented under the Kwun Tong Town Centre Redevelopment by the Urban Renewal Authority in phases, including the provision of a left-turn lane from Hip Wo Street to Kwun Tong Road at the Hoi Yuen Road/Kwun Tong Road roundabout.

Apart from the above, most of the traffic improvement schemes formulated under the two feasibility studies on improving the pedestrian environment in the Kwun Tong Business Area and the Kowloon Bay Business Area have been completed, such as provision of kerbside loading and unloading bays and enhancement of road junction layouts, etc., which are conducive to improving the traffic operations and junction capacity. The relevant government departments strive to complete the remaining improvement works as soon as possible.

We also continue to carry out in a progressive manner various road infrastructure works in KTD. Apart from the commissioned Shing Kai Road and Kai Sun Road as well as the widened Shing Cheong Road and Shing Fung Road, Road D3 (Metro Park Section) has commenced construction in full steam for completion by 2022, providing connection to Shing Kai Road, the Kai Tak Cruise Terminal and the Hong Kong Children's Hospital. Upon completion of the said road works, the transport infrastructure of KTD will be further improved.

As regards the proposed Environmentally Friendly Linkage System (EFLS) for KE, the Civil Engineering and Development Department has substantially completed its detailed feasibility study. The study suggests implementing a "multi-modal" EFLS in the district, which will be more effective and desirable than a standalone infrastructure.

Our responses to various parts of the question raised by the Hon Or, having taken into account the inputs of relevant policy bureaux and departments, are as follows:

(1) and (2) The detailed feasibility study for EFLS reveals that,

technically, provisioning of a single elevated system in the area will be severely constrained by the adjacent congested developments, very costly and not financially viable, thus not a sustainable and pursuable option.

To facilitate the further development of KE, the study suggests that, on the basis of an increasingly comprehensive road and railway infrastructure facilities, as well as convenient public transport services provision in the area, implementing a supplementary "multi-modal" EFLS, which comprises a package of green initiatives that serve complementarily to enhance connectivity in KE, should be more effective and recommendable. The "multi-modal" EFLS includes deployment of electric buses/mini-buses to run new routes in the area, developing a travellers network linking up the former airport runway of Kai Tak, KBAA and KTAA, building a GreenWay network throughout the promenades and open spaces of KTD for shared use of pedestrian and cycling, forming an elevated landscaped deck to enhance connections to the MTR Kwun Tong Station and providing a water-taxi service point in KTD.

Through the "multi-modal" EFLS, which provides various environmentally friendly measures to conveniently connect with railway stations and public transport interchanges in Kai Tak, Kwun Tong, Ngau Tau Kok and Kowloon Bay etc., we wish to encourage people in the district to walk and cycle more and help to shape a green community.

We will listen to and collect views of the public to optimise the various recommended measures and initiate the implementation work, striving to complete in a progressive manner the various recommended measures in the next few years.

(3) As stated in the preamble above, to cater for the gradual development and transformation of KE into a CBD, the relevant government departments have been striving hard to the timely provisioning of comprehensive railway and road infrastructure facilities, as well as proper public transport services to cope with the traffic demands in the area, thus meeting the travelling needs of the people. Besides, the Energizing Kowloon East Office (EKEO) has been actively enhancing the pedestrian and traffic connections in the district, including completion of more than 70 quick-win/short-term improvement measures, and progressively implementing a number of medium to long-term proposals. The EKEO has also formulated traffic improvement measures for three potential development areas in the district, namely KTAA, KBAA and Kai Tak Runway Tip.

Overall speaking, the future developments in KE will not result in adverse traffic impact. The proposed "multi-modal" EFLS will, on the other hand, strengthen the overall transportation system in the district and further facilitate the transformation of KE into the second CBD.

Thank you, President.