

LCQ9: Closed roads in South Lantau

Following is a question by the Hon Wilson Or and a written reply by the Secretary for Transport and Housing, Mr Frank Chan Fan, in the Legislative Council today (December 16):

Question:

The Government has designated the roads in South Lantau as closed roads. Any person must possess a valid Lantau Closed Road Permit (LCRP) before he/she may drive a vehicle onto those roads. Some residents in South Lantau have pointed out that the Transport Department (TD) currently issues a maximum of only one LCRP for each residential or commercial unit in South Lantau, which has caused inconvenience to them. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) of the justifications for designating the roads in South Lantau as closed roads; when the Government made such a decision, and since when the roads in South Lantau have been designated as closed roads;
- (2) of the current number of LCRPs issued by the TD, with a breakdown by vehicle class;
- (3) as some residents in South Lantau have pointed out that the leases for some pieces of land in South Lantau sold by the Government stipulate that a newly built residential unit in South Lantau with a total area of over 2 200 square feet must be provided with at least two car parking spaces, of the justifications for the TD issuing a maximum of only one LCRP for each residential unit; whether the TD will consider issuing more than one LCRP for each residential unit; and
- (4) whether it will open up the roads in South Lantau progressively to cater for the development needs of South Lantau?

Reply:

President,

Currently, the roads on South Lantau are designated as closed roads. All vehicles travelling on the closed roads on Lantau have to possess valid Lantau Closed Road Permits (LCRPs) issued by the Transport Department (TD), and drivers of the vehicles concerned shall comply with the conditions stated in the LCRPs and the relevant approval letters.

After consulting the TD, my reply to the various parts of the Hon Wilson Or's question is as follows:

- (1) Given the Government's designation of South Lantau as a nature conservation area, since the 1970s, the roads on South Lantau have been designated as 24-hour closed roads in order to control the number of vehicles

entering South Lantau.

(2) In 2019, the TD issued a total of about 23 100 LCRPs, including long-term permits and temporary permits. The breakdown of the number of LCRPs by class of vehicles is tabulated below:

Class of Vehicles	Number of Permits (Note)
Private cars	About 15 000 (65 per cent)
Light goods vehicles	About 3 000 (13 per cent)
Public transport vehicles (e.g. taxis, franchised buses and non-franchised buses)	About 2 000 (9 per cent)
Medium/heavy goods vehicles and special purpose vehicles	About 1 400 (6 per cent)
Motorcycles	About 700 (3 per cent)
Other types of vehicles (e.g. government vehicles)	About 1 000 (4 per cent)

Note: Figures in brackets denote the proportion out of the total number of permits.

(3) All along, the TD approves and issues LCRPs having regard to the genuine needs of the applicants to enter the closed roads and in accordance with the established policy. Residents on South Lantau can drive their vehicles issued with LCRPs to access the closed roads including Tung Chung Road, South Lantau Road, etc. On the consideration of environmental protection and nature conservation on South Lantau, each residential flat on South Lantau can be issued with one LCRP at present. This arrangement has already taken into account the transportation needs of families in general.

Regarding parking spaces, the development projects on South Lantau will provide the required number of parking spaces in accordance with the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines. If a resident of South Lantau owns more than one vehicle, those vehicles will have to share the same LCRP, i.e. only one of the vehicles specified in the LCRP will be allowed to enter the closed roads at any time. This arrangement has also been drawn up in the light of the development and planning principle applicable to South Lantau.

(4) In the 2015 Policy Address, the then Chief Executive announced that the Government would conduct a review on the arrangements of the closed roads on Lantau and the issuance of LCRPs to cope with the short-term economic and social development on Lantau. After balancing the need to implement relaxation measures and such relevant factors as the prevailing planning intention of preserving South Lantau as a nature conservation area and the capacities of the ancillary tourism facilities, the TD put forward a proposal in mid-2015 to increase the maximum number of tour coaches permitted to enter South Lantau from 30 to 50 per day and to allow 50 private cars to enter the

closed roads on South Lantau per day from Mondays to Fridays (except public holidays) for recreational and leisure purposes. In the light of the views gauged from relevant stakeholders during consultation, the TD decided to implement the relevant measures by phases. Arrangements for the first phase included increasing the maximum number of tour coaches permitted to enter South Lantau from 30 to 40 per day starting from December 2015; and providing a daily quota of 25 for private cars to enter closed roads on South Lantau from Mondays to Fridays (except public holidays) under the Driving on Lantau Island Scheme (DLS) starting from February 26, 2016.

With continuous improvement of the traffic conditions and road facilities on South Lantau, the TD has recently reviewed the implementation of the first phase of DLS and is exploring the feasibility of implementing the second phase of DLS having regard to the utilisation of quotas, public demand, conditions of roads and transport facilities on South Lantau as well as environmental concerns.