

LCQ1: Regulation of paragliding activities

Following is a question by the Hon Chan Pui-leung and a reply by the Secretary for Transport and Logistics, Mr Lam Sai-hung, in the Legislative Council today (October 18):

Question:

There are views pointing out that while paragliding activities have become increasingly popular in Hong Kong in recent years, such activities entail a certain level of risk as improper operation will impact on other users of airspace and the public on the ground, and will even lead to casualties in severe cases. Regarding the regulation of paragliding activities, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) given that currently only persons offering air service performed by paragliders for hire or reward are required to apply for a permit from the Civil Aviation Department (CAD), and other paraglider users are not required to make the relevant applications, whether the authorities will consider also requiring all paraglider users to apply for a permit; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(2) given that currently paragliding activities in Hong Kong are usually carried out in eight sites, yet it is learnt that such sites are not under the direct management of the CAD which is responsible for regulating aviation safety, how the authorities will enhance the CAD's regulatory role on paragliding activities in a comprehensive manner from the aspects of law enforcement, inspection, investigation and publicity, etc.; and

(3) whether the authorities will, in collaboration with the two major local paragliding organisations, consider formulating a central registration scheme for local paraglider pilots and paragliding equipment in the future, so as to administer and develop local paragliding activities in a systematic manner, as well as enhance aviation safety; if so, of the details and timetable; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

Paragliding is a sport and recreational activity which involves a certain level of safety risk. In view of its potential impact on the use of airspace, the Civil Aviation Department (CAD), as the regulator of Hong Kong's civil aviation affairs, reviewed the relevant regulatory regime in 2018. After consulting local paragliding associations and making reference to the practices in other regions, the CAD published the Safety Guidance on Paragliding Activities to enhance aviation safety.

In consultation with bureaux and departments including the Culture,

Sports and Tourism Bureau, the CAD, the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) and the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department, my reply to the question raised by the Hon Chan Pui-leung is as follows:

(1) Hong Kong's civil aviation legislation is designed specifically to regulate civil aircraft, and the provisions therein generally do not apply to the regulation of paragliding activities. However, paraglider is by definition considered as a type of aircraft, and its operation is therefore regulated by the Air Navigation (Hong Kong) Order 1995 (Cap. 448C) which stipulates that no person shall recklessly or negligently cause or permit an aircraft to endanger any person or property. On the other hand, the Air Transport (Licensing of Air Services) Regulations (Cap. 448A) stipulates that anyone who uses aircraft to provide hire or reward services in Hong Kong airspace shall apply to the CAD for a permit before operation. The purpose is to regulate the relevant licensing requirements for operating hire or reward civil aviation services, implementation of air services agreements and financial capabilities of operators, etc. For paragliding activities for hire or reward, the persons providing the relevant activities must also apply to the CAD for a permit.

The CAD has made reference to the regulatory regimes in regions where paragliding activities are more popular, including Mainland China, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Australia and New Zealand. The regulatory regimes in these regions vary, including the development of a qualification and rating system for paraglider pilots by non-governmental organisations. Therefore, the CAD currently has no plan to expand the scope of the Air Transport (Licensing of Air Services) Regulations (Cap. 448A) to cover paragliding activities which are not for hire or reward.

(2) To ensure aviation safety of airspace users, the CAD has listed eight airspace areas which could be used by paraglider pilots in the Hong Kong Aeronautical Information Publication since the 1990s, including the site boundaries, operating altitudes and related guidance for the reference of relevant parties. Paragliding activities may also be associated with the regulatory areas of other government departments. In view of this, the CAD has been proactively liaising with relevant departments to discuss and co-ordinate arrangements for strengthening patrols within the areas under the departments' purview (e.g. country parks and public beaches).

Furthermore, there are currently two major paragliding organisations in Hong Kong, namely the Hong Kong China Paragliding Association and the International Paragliding Association (hereinafter referred to as Paragliding Organisations), which are responsible for the promotion and development of paragliding activities. The Paragliding Organisations also collaborate with the Government in formulating measures to enhance the safety level of paragliding activities.

On law enforcement, for any reported paragliding occurrences allegedly involving incompliances, the CAD and the department involved in the occurrences will co-ordinate with the Police in accordance with the established mechanism so as to take appropriate follow-up actions. If the department concerned finds any breach of the relevant legislation, the

department may instigate prosecution.

On investigation, in order to strengthen the investigation of occurrences, the Paragliding Organisations will conduct investigation on paragliding occurrences involving their members and/or reported to them by third parties in accordance with their operations manuals. Upon completion of investigation, the Paragliding Organisations will provide the CAD with the investigation results, which would facilitate the CAD to record and analyse the occurrences concerned, and to recommend improvement measures. The CAD will also assist the Paragliding Organisations in refining their operations and safety management system manuals, and providing these organisations with recommendations related to aviation safety, including areas such as report of occurrences, risk assessment, and safety promotion.

On publicity, the CAD has produced a promotional video based on the highlights of the Safety Guidance on Paragliding Activities as well as the permit system, which has been uploaded on the CAD's website for public reference since July last year. At the same time, the CAD has also produced a promotional leaflet for distribution during site inspection, and posted the leaflet inside relevant country parks, with a view to reminding the public and the paragliding community of the importance of aviation safety for paragliding.

(3) In May this year, LCSD has approved the 2023-24 funding to the Hong Kong China Paragliding Association under the Pilot Scheme on Subvention for New Sports, with a view to supporting the association in promoting paragliding, including enhancing the safety awareness of participants and introducing the relevant equipment of paragliding activities.

At the same time, the Paragliding Organisations will implement the Real-name Registration for Paragliding Activities system starting from October 31 this year, and will be responsible for maintaining and updating the register as well as providing registered pilots with labels containing registration numbers which can be affixed to their paragliding equipment for display. The implementation of the Real-name Registration for Paragliding Activities and the labelling arrangement would facilitate the identification of paraglider pilots during rescue missions, investigations and law enforcement actions, and enable the Government and the Paragliding Organisations to carry out more effective publicity and education campaigns.

Thank you, President.

LCQ5: Strengthening child care services

Following is a question by the Hon Stanley Li and a reply by the

Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Mr Chris Sun, in the Legislative Council today (October 18):

Question:

The Planning Department updated the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines in 2020 to, in respect of community facilities, incorporate a population-based planning ratio for child care centres (including the provision of 100 aided service places per 25 000 persons), as well as update the floor areas of child care centres. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the respective numbers of communities in the 18 districts across the territory whose child care centres have met or are striving to meet the aforesaid standards through various programmes so far, and set out the details of the relevant programmes by community;

(2) under the aforesaid planning ratio, whether the Government has estimated the additional manpower required for the provision of child care services and whether recruitment difficulties will arise, and whether it has assessed how such planning ratio will alleviate the waiting situation of such services; and

(3) whether it will consider conducting supply and demand surveys in respect of child care services in each district on a regular basis, so as to provide timely support to families in districts where such services are inadequate through service integration?

Reply:

President:

The reply to the Member's question is as follows:

(1) The Government incorporated the population-based planning ratio for aided child care centres (CCCs) (i.e. 100 aided CCC service places for children aged below three for every 25 000 persons) into the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines in March 2020, with an aim to reserve suitable premises for operating CCCs in different development projects. The standard of this planning ratio mainly applies to new housing development areas. The Government will set up aided standalone CCCs in phases according to the aforementioned planning standard.

For developed areas, apart from referring to the above planning standard, the Social Welfare Department (SWD) will consider the child care service provision in the districts and individual district characteristics such as CCC places, service utilisation, land supply situation, demand for services arising from changes in demographic structure, etc, in planning aided CCCs.

(2) The Government will continue to reserve suitable premises for operating CCCs in different development projects, in accordance with the population-based planning ratio for the provision of aided CCCs, and to require service

operators to hire sufficient qualified child care workers (CCWs) to provide services in accordance with the Child Care Services Ordinance (Cap. 243) and Child Care Services Regulations (Cap. 243A). In 2022-23, there are around 1 600 newly registered CCWs. It is estimated that the number of new registrations in the coming year will be similar and should be able to cope with the additional manpower required for the CCCs that are newly set up in the next two years. The SWD will continue to keep in view the demand and supply of manpower situation of registered CCWs and encourage various institutions/organisations to run relevant programmes or to increase the capacity in accordance with the service demand, in order to meet the service needs. There is no central waiting arrangement for CCC service. Parents can directly apply for the service from CCC service operators according to their needs, and the applications are handled by respective operators.

(3) The Government commissioned the University of Hong Kong to conduct the Consultancy Study on the Long-term Development of Child Care Services (the Study), which took stock of the existing day child care services, made reference to the experiences of other places, gathered the opinions of stakeholders, conducted in-depth analyses on different aspects of child care services, such as objectives, contents, targets, financing modes, service models, demand and supply situation, facility planning, manpower planning and training, and made recommendations on the long-term development of the services. With reference to the main recommendations of the Report of the Study, the Government has implemented a series of new measures in strengthening child care services since 2019-20, including the continuous increase of service places of aided standalone CCCs; the enhancement of Neighbourhood Support Child Care Project in 2020, and the re-engineering of Mutual Help Child Care Centres in phases to provide after school care service for pre-primary children between 2021 and 2024, in order to strengthen the long-term development of child care services. The Government will continuously monitor the operation of various day child care services, understand the demand for such services from members of local communities through District Social Welfare Offices of the SWD, in order to ensure such services can meet the needs in different districts.

LCQ11: Electric vehicles

Following is a question by the Hon Edmund Wong and a written reply by the Secretary for Environment and Ecology, Mr Tse Chin-wan, in the Legislative Council today (October 18):

Question:

Regarding electric vehicles (EVs), will the Government inform this Council:

(1) given that the Government launched the "One-for-One Replacement" Scheme (the Scheme) in 2018, under which car owners who scrap their old private car (PC) and then purchase a new electric PC (e-PC) can enjoy a higher first registration tax (FRT) concession, of the total amount of FRT concessions granted to EV owners under the Scheme each year since its launch;

(2) as it has been reported that due to the huge amount of tax concessions under the Scheme, quite a number of people have purchased quotas of eligible old PCs (i.e. PCs with internal combustion engines or e-PCs) in order to obtain tax concessions under the Scheme, of the number of newly purchased EVs whose registered vehicle owners changed within one month of registration since the implementation of the Scheme;

(3) whether the Government knows the situation mentioned in (2), and whether measures are in place to plug the loophole concerned; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(4) given that the Government has provided free EV charging facilities in many of its public car parks, of the expenditure on electricity tariffs incurred by the Government in each of the past three years;

(5) as the Government has earlier indicated that tests on the imposition of EV charging fees are expected to be first conducted at Kwai Fong Car Park in the first half of this year, but it is learnt that these tests have not yet commenced, of the reasons for that; the earliest time for the introduction of EV charging fees as planned by the Government, as well as the level of such fees; and

(6) as it is learnt that with more and more members of the public purchasing EVs, the EV charging facilities in public car parks under the Government are insufficient to meet the demand, whether the Government has plans to further increase such facilities in its public car parks; if so, of the details?

Reply:

President,

At present, transport makes up around 20 per cent of total carbon emissions in Hong Kong. To work towards the goal of achieving carbon neutrality before 2050 in Hong Kong, development of green transport is paramount. The Government has been striving to promote the use of electric vehicles (EVs) to reduce the emission of air pollutants. The Government has implemented various measures in recent years to encourage citizens switching to EVs while avoiding vehicular growth. An example is the provision of first registration tax (FRT) concession arrangement for EVs, which includes the "One-for-One Replacement" Scheme.

Hong Kong has made notable progress in promoting the popularisation of EVs in recent years. The percentage of electric private cars (e-PCs) among all newly registered private cars (PCs) has soared from 6.3 per cent in 2019 to 64.3 per cent in the first eight months of this year.

In consultation with the Transport and Logistics Bureau, the reply to the question raised by the Hon Edmund Wong is as follows:

(1) The amount of FRT concessions granted to e-PC owners in each year since the launch of the "One-for-One Replacement" Scheme on February 28, 2018 is tabulated below:

Year	Amount of FRT concessions granted (\$ million)
2018	65
2019	452
2020	955
2021	2,381
2022	5,295
2023 (January to August)	4,850
Total	13,998

(2) and (3) According to the record of the Transport Department (TD), as at October 10, 2023, the number of e-PCs purchased through the "One-for-One Replacement" Scheme over the past five years with ownership transferred within one month after first registration is 30 752.

The objective of the scheme is to provide existing vehicle owners with incentive to opt for EVs when they replace their cars on the premise of not increasing the total number of PCs, in order to improve roadside air quality. The TD ensures that an applicant for the scheme meets all eligibility criteria, including that the vehicle owner must have been the registered owner of the "old PC" (PC with an internal combustion engine or e-PC) for 18 months or more without interruption, and the registered owner of the old PC must be identical to the first registered vehicle owner of the "replacement e-PC" (a new e-PC).

The TD handles matter in relation to transfer of vehicle ownership in accordance with the Road Traffic (Registration and Licensing of Vehicles) Regulations (Cap. 374E). New vehicle owner must submit to the TD a notice of transfer of ownership, completed and duly signed by the existing owner and the new owner, together with relevant documents such as the registration document relating to the vehicle, in order to complete the transfer of vehicle ownership procedures. If the TD suspects someone to have committed illegal acts such as forgery and using a false instrument, they will refer these cases to the Police for investigation and follow up.

The Government has been paying attention to the trading of e-PCs in the second-hand market, and is aware of the transfer of ownership not long after the registration of newly purchased EVs. We will review the situation and make adjustments as needed.

(4) and (5) The government expenditures on electricity incurred by provision of free charging services for EVs in the past three years are tabulated as follows:

Year	Electricity expenditure (thousand dollars)
2021	3,200
2022	8,900
2023 (January to August)	14,000

The Government announced the Hong Kong Roadmap on Popularisation of Electric Vehicles (the EV Roadmap) in March 2021. The EV Roadmap specified that the Government would begin to impose charging fees in government car parks from 2025 to marketise EV charging services, so as to promote their sustainable development in the long run. To expedite the initiative, the Government will advance the marketisation of EV charging services provided in government car parks progressively, starting before end-2023.

The Government has completed the installation of self-service payment kiosks for EV chargers and related tests at Kwai Fong Car Park and Kennedy Town Car Park, and is preparing for a tender exercise to engage operators to progressively take over the operation of public EV charging facilities in government car parks, and impose charging fees. The related fee levels will be set by the operators, with reference to the fee of charging services offered in the same district, upon the Government's approval.

(6) Charging at home or usual parking spaces are sufficient to meet general daily operational needs of e-PCs. Therefore, the EV Roadmap set out that owners should mainly charge their e-PCs at home, work place or places they travel to or park at regularly, while public charging facilities mainly provide ad hoc top-up charging services for e-PCs in need while driving.

To expand the EV charging network in private buildings, the Government, through the measure of gross floor area concessions, encourages the installation of EV charging-enabling infrastructure (EVCEI) in parking spaces of newly built private buildings. As at September 2023, the Government has approved over 78 000 relevant parking spaces, of which about 30 800 parking spaces have been completed and equipped with EVCEI. As for existing private buildings, the Government has launched the \$3.5 billion EV-charging at Home Subsidy Scheme to assist owners in installation of EVCEI. We anticipate that the entire subsidy scheme will support some 140 000 parking spaces in around 700 car parks of existing private residential estates to install EVCEI by the scheme's completion in 2027-28.

As for enhancing charging facilities in parking spaces in government buildings, the Chief Executive's 2022 Policy Address sets out the target of providing 7 000 additional parking spaces with EV charging facilities in

government buildings in the following three years. Government buildings under construction or planning will provide EV chargers so long as the provision is technically feasible and will not affect the progress of the works. As at the end of June 2023, over 6 100 public chargers were provided by the Government and private organisations, achieving ahead of schedule the EV Roadmap target of having at least 5 000 public chargers by 2025. In addition, the Government endorsed in July this year the refinements to the land lease conditions for petrol filling stations (PFSs). The aim is to incentivise PFS operators to install EV charging facilities in available space within the about 180 existing PFSs in Hong Kong. Preparatory work for tenders is also underway for conversion of two PFS sites into quick charging stations.

LCQ18: Measures to cope with discharge of nuclear wastewater by Japanese Government

Following is a question by the Hon Martin Liao and a written reply by the Secretary for Environment and Ecology, Mr Tse Chin-wan, in the Legislative Council today (October 18):

Question:

On July 4 this year, the International Atomic Energy Agency released its final report on Japan's nuclear wastewater discharge plan (the discharge plan). In its response to the report on the same day, the Government indicated that it was reviewing the content of the report and would make further risk assessment regarding the discharge plan. On the other hand, in the light of the discharge plan, the Hong Kong Observatory, the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department and the Centre for Food Safety regularly publish on their websites the test results of radiological levels on seawater in Hong Kong waters, fishery products and food imported from Japan respectively. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether the Government's risk assessment has made comprehensive consideration from a scientific perspective, including the impact of the discharge plan on public health and safety, as well as environmental conservation; if so, of the details, and whether it will collaborate with the Mainland Government and experts to jointly assess the risks of the discharge plan;

(2) given that the discharge plan will last for 30 years, arousing concern among some members of the public about the cumulative risk posed by the discharged nuclear wastewater, whether the Government will draw up a response

plan in the event of abnormal results detected in the radiation monitoring of seawater samples collected in local waters in the future; if so, of the details; and

(3) in addition to the regular publication of monitoring results by the aforesaid government departments, of the measures put in place by the Government to step up public education, so as to avoid undue worries in society?

Reply:

President,

The Japanese Government insisted on commencing, from August 24, 2023, the discharge of the nuclear-contaminated water which had been in contact with the nuclear fuel inside the Fukushima Nuclear Power Station (FNPS). The decision of conducting such an unprecedented and large scale discharge of nuclear-contaminated water into the ocean, which would last for 30 years, has blatantly ignored the inevitable risk on food safety and the irreversible contamination and damages to the marine environment. It is an irresponsible act which shifts the issue from oneself to another. The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government strongly opposes such move.

The reply to various parts of the question raised by the Hon Martin Liao is as follows:

(1) The HKSAR Government's inter-departmental taskforce has reviewed the final report of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and relevant information provided by the Japanese authorities from a scientific perspective. Having considered the final report of the IAEA, information provided by the Japanese authorities, opinions of the experts in the Mainland and risk assessments, the HKSAR Government has come to the view that there is currently no guarantee from the Japanese authorities that their purification and dilution system can operate continuously and effectively in the long term after the commencement of the discharge plan, and that the plan will not pose any potential risks to food safety and marine ecology.

In more specific terms, the nuclear-contaminated water in the FNPS had direct contact with active nuclear fuel and thus contains a high concentration of radioactive substances, involving at least 30 radionuclides. The total discharge volume is over 1.3 million cubic metres. During such a long period of over 30 years, purification would primarily be relied on for reducing radioactive substances in the nuclear-contaminated water. If the relevant system fails to operate effectively, food safety and marine ecology would be at significant risk.

Safeguarding food safety and public health in Hong Kong is the responsibility of the HKSAR Government. In view of the potential serious risk, the HKSAR Government must take corresponding precautionary measures to safeguard food safety and ensure citizens' health. The Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene issued a Food Safety Order (FSO) on August 23, 2023 to

prohibit the import of aquatic products originating from 10 Japanese metropolis/prefectures with higher risks. For other aquatic products from Japan that are not prohibited from being imported, the Centre for Food Safety of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department performs its gatekeeping role at the import level by conducting comprehensive radiological tests to verify that the radiation levels of these products do not exceed the guideline levels before they are allowed to be supplied in Hong Kong. Tests on relevant processed food are also enhanced.

The HKSAR Government will observe for some time after the commencement of the discharge to obtain more monitoring and scientific data in order to further examine the impact of the Fukushima nuclear-contaminated water discharge plan on food safety, and keep under review relevant counter measures. Should anomalies be detected, the HKSAR Government does not preclude further tightening the scope of the import ban. The HKSAR Government will continue to maintain close communication with the Japanese authorities, closely monitor the latest situation regarding the import of food from Japan and the discharge plan of the FNPS, and perform risk assessments to safeguard food safety and citizens' health in Hong Kong.

(2) In response to Japan's discharge of nuclear-contaminated water, the Hong Kong Observatory (HKO) has enhanced its radiation monitoring of seawater samples collected in local waters. So far no anomaly has been detected. Should any anomaly be detected, the HKO will analyse its cause and assess its impact, and then notify relevant departments for follow-up action, including stepping up the radiation monitoring of seawater, local catch and imported food, expanding the scope of FSO's applicability and disseminating information on food safety and public health to members of the public.

(3) With a view to enabling members of the public to have a better grasp of the latest safety information on imported Japanese food products, the Environment and Ecology Bureau (EEB) has been making public announcements every working day regarding the radiological testing results of imported Japanese food samples, the radiological levels of samples of local catch, and the radiation measurement results of seawater samples in Hong Kong waters since the commencement of the discharge. The HKO and the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department will also announce the relevant testing results on their websites. At the same time, the Government will closely monitor the latest developments, explain the matter to the public via different social media platforms, and make clarifications on possible public misconceptions on the nuclear-contaminated water discharge. In addition, the EEB has liaised with the Education Bureau to arrange for the distribution of materials to primary and secondary schools in Hong Kong to explain Japan's nuclear-contaminated water discharge plan, thereby helping students to have a more comprehensive, accurate and in-depth understanding of the issue.

LCQ 20: Alleviating congestion problem at road harbour crossings

Following is a question by the Hon Chan Han-pan and a written reply by the Secretary for Transport and Logistics, Mr Lam Sai-hung, in the Legislative Council today (October 18):

Question:

In order to alleviate the congestion problem at and in the vicinity of the various road harbour crossings (RHCs) in Hong Kong, the authorities have been implementing in phases large-scale improvement measures including HKeToll (i.e. a free-flow tolling service), the "633" fixed toll plan and the time-varying toll plan. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) as there are views that the time-varying toll plan planned to be implemented within this year is relatively complicated, and the implementation time of the plan is only several months away from now, whether the authorities have put in place specific publicity measures to enable members of the public to gain a clear understanding of the details of the plan; if so, of the details and timetable; if not, the reasons for that;

(2) as there are views pointing out that after the implementation of the "633" fixed toll plan, congestion often occurs at the Hong Kong Island exit of the Western Harbour Crossing in the direction of Central and Sheung Wan, and it is expected that the vehicular flow will further increase after the implementation of the time-varying toll plan, whether the authorities will consider constructing an additional lane leading to Central and Sheung Wan, so as to divert traffic in the vicinity; if so, of the details and timetable; if not, the reasons for that; and

(3) of the respective areas of land to be released as well as the plot ratios and gross floor areas for development after the demolition of toll booths at the portals of the various RHCs as estimated by the authorities; whether there are development plans for such lots, including whether "park-and-ride" (PnR) facilities that help alleviate congestion at tunnels or on urban roads will be built; if so, of the details and the timetable; if not, the details and progress of the development of PnR schemes across the territory at present?

Reply:

President,

Cross-harbour traffic congestion during peak hours is a problem that needs to be tackled effectively. The Government has been adopting a multi-pronged strategy to alleviate traffic congestion, including through upgrading

the transport infrastructure, expanding and improving public transport services, and managing the use of roads.

In consultation with the Transport Department (TD), my reply to the question raised by the Hon Chan Han-pan is as follows:

(1) The coming implementation of time-varying tolls at the three road harbour crossings (RHCs), namely the Cross-Harbour Tunnel (CHT), the Eastern Harbour Crossing (EHC) and the Western Harbour Crossing (WHC), is a new measure to suppress and divert cross-harbour traffic during peak hours. The Government attaches great importance to publicity and education so that motorists can grasp the details of the toll plans and make early preparations, thereby maximising the effect of time-varying tolls on traffic management.

To this end, since the announcement of the toll plans of the three RHCs in March this year, the Government has been actively launching a series of publicity and education efforts, including press conferences, press releases, TV/radio interviews, social media/online promotions, information packs, mobile application messages, tunnel broadcasts and variable message displays, etc., with a view to enabling motorists to have a deeper understanding of the policy intent, as well as the arrangements for the "633" toll plan during the first stage.

To tie in with the coming implementation of time-varying tolls, we are making a series of preparations to ensure that members of the public and motorists are able to obtain information on the tolls of the RHCs through different channels. Upon completion of the legislative procedures when the commencement date of time-varying tolls is fixed, the Government will further step up publicity so that the public would be fully aware of the specific charging arrangements, which include the following:

(i) to conduct press conference timely, together with Announcements in the Public Interest on TV and radio, the above-mentioned multi-media publicity, etc.;

(ii) to launch a new toll enquiry function on HKeMobility mobile application and website to enable motorists to obtain real-time and forecasted cross-harbour toll information before going on their journey;

(iii) to set up new "toll information displays" at the RHCs, which will come into operation upon the implementation of time-varying tolls and will show the prevailing tolls and locations of the toll points to motorists on a journey; and

(iv) to allow motorists to check the toll payable/paid via the HKeToll mobile application or website after passing through the tunnel.

(2) The construction of an additional lane at the Hong Kong Island exit of the WHC in the direction of Central and Sheung Wan will increase the capacity of the road section and facilitate smoother traffic flow at the tunnel exit. The TD is liaising with the relevant government departments to examine the matter. If it is proven to be technically feasible, the Government will

proceed with the detailed design and draw up a timetable for taking it forward.

(3) As a result of the removal of all manual toll booths upon the implementation of HKeToll, we estimate that about 12 700, 4 500 and 5 800 square meters plot of land will be released at the WHC, CHT and EHC respectively. In the short run, those spaces will be used for improving the traffic at the tunnel entrances and exits, including widening the existing space for loading/unloading of buses and access to bus stops, increasing the number of lane-side buffer zones to ensure the safe operation of the tunnels, as well as rationalising traffic lane arrangements, etc. In the long run, the development of such released spaces can tie in with that of the neighbouring areas, and the Government will take this into account when carrying out the relevant planning work.

The Government has been adopting a public transport-oriented policy, encouraging the public to make good use of public transport services for their journeys as far as possible and minimise their reliance on private car use. The Government is committed to providing park-and-ride (PnR) facilities at or near suitable railway stations to encourage motorists to take the train after parking their vehicles, hence reducing the road traffic entering relatively busy areas. At present, there are 24 car parks providing PnR concessions in Hong Kong, offering a total of about 9 700 parking spaces. To further increase the provision of PnR facilities, the TD is exploring the inclusion of terms offering PnR concessions for suitable short-term tenancy car parks, the targeted locations of which are Tsuen Wan, Tsing Yi and Ma On Shan, etc., as well as public vehicle parks newly developed under the principle of "single site, multiple use". Looking ahead, the Government is considering the development of a new generation of transport interchange hubs under the Traffic and Transport Strategy Study based on the principle of "single site, multiple use", and will explore the provision of PnR facilities at suitable transport interchange hubs.