

Legislative Council Panel on Transport

Supplementary Information on Electronic Audible Traffic Signal

Background

On 26 April 2002, Members considered vide LC Paper No. CB(1)1558/01-02(04) the Administration's proposal to replace the existing electro-mechanical audible traffic signals (ATS) installed at some signalised pedestrian crossings with electronic audible traffic signals (e-ATS) and to install e-ATS at all other signalised pedestrian crossings currently without ATS. With Members' support, the Finance Committee (FC) approved on 10 May 2002 the funding of \$52.7 million for the e-ATS project. The Transport Department (TD) is now proceeding with implementation of the project.

2. This paper provides supplementary information on the issues raised by Members at the Panel meeting.

The e-ATS project

3. While Panel Members supported the e-ATS project in general on 26 April 2002, the Administration was requested to revert to the Panel on the following:

- (a) to further examine some Members' suggestion on the use of a remote sensor to activate the e-ATS and to provide relevant information on overseas experience;
- (b) to disclose the findings of the relevant survey indicating a "satisfactory" response from nearby residents in the pilot scheme;
- (c) to provide the view of the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) on the fact that in some cases, the e-ATS output level might exceed the statutory limit of 70 dB; and
- (d) to consider conducting further application tests on the e-ATS.

4. The above issues were also raised at the FC meeting on 10 May 2002 and the Administration's response given at the FC is recapitulated below:

(a) Remote sensor for activating e-ATS

Representatives from Transport Department (TD) attended the International Conference on Transport for the Elderly and Disabled (TRANSED) 2001 held in Poland last year. Remote activating systems as well as other sophisticated facilities for the disabled were discussed at that Conference. It was noted at the Conference that such remote systems were either at a conceptual stage or being tried out in small-scale application overseas, hence, not mature enough for wide applications. The Administration will continue to keep in view the development of such systems and examine the feasibility of their adoption in Hong Kong in future.

(b) Findings of the e-ATS pilot scheme

During the initial stage when a small number of e-ATS were tried out at four junctions, namely To Kwa Wan Road/Mok Cheong Street, Tat Chee Avenue/Dianthus Road, Nathan Road/Man Ming Lane and Chuk Yuen Road/Fu Mei Street, TD received about 20 complaints concerning the noise level at night time at some locations. In response to these complaints, adjustments were made to the sound level output of the e-ATS. No further complaints had been received by TD over the last 14 months.

(c) EPD's view on the output sound level of e-ATS

The e-ATS is capable of adjusting the output level automatically with respect to ambient noise level within an output range between 55dB and 90dB. However, we would limit the output level of the e-ATS to ensure that the nearest noise sensitive receiver, i.e., local residents in the vicinity would be subject to a noise level of 70dB or below. On consultation, EPD did not have any adverse comment on the e-ATS project.

(d) Further application tests on e-ATS

TD is undertaking further application tests at another 30 road junctions over the territory including Aldrich Bay, Sham Shui Po, Kwun Tong and Hung Hom, etc. The results so far have been satisfactory to the Government, residents nearby and the organisations representing the visually impaired.

Transport Bureau
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