

Panel on Transport

Meeting on 28 May 2010

Information note on facilities of cycle tracks in Hong Kong

The subject of facilities of cycle tracks has not been discussed by the Panel on Transport before. To facilitate members' discussion on the item "General improvement measures to cycle tracks" at the meeting on 28 May 2010, the following extracts from relevant documents are attached for members' reference -

(a) Legislative Council question on "Facilities of cycle tracks and promotion of cycling tourism" raised at the Council meeting on 12 November 2008 and the Administration's reply [LC Paper No. CB(2)2250/07-08(01)];

(b) Legislative Council question on "Cycling facilities and promotion of cycling" raised at the Council meeting on 30 April 2008 and the Administration's reply [LC Paper No. CB(2)2250/07-08(01)];

(c) Legislative Council question on "Development of cycle tracks in urban areas" raised at the Council meeting on 11 March 2009 and the Administration's reply [LC Paper No. CB(2)2250/07-08(01)]; and

(d) Referral from the Panel on Development on issues relating to promotion of cycling as a means of transportation [LC Paper No. CB(2)2470/08-09].

Legislative Council Secretariat

Council Business Division 1

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LCQ9: Cycle track facilities

Following is a question by the Hon Lau Kong-wah and a written reply by the Secretary for Development, Mrs Carrie Lam, in the Legislative Council today (November 12):

Question:

Regarding the facilities of cycle tracks and the promotion of cycling tourism, will the Government inform this Council:

(a) of the number of complaints about the existing ancillary facilities of cycle tracks it received over the past three years, with a breakdown by the subject matter of such complaints; whether it has regularly inspected the existing facilities of cycle tracks and carried out improvement works with reference to public views;

(b) whether it will, by making reference to the efforts of other places (for example Taiwan and Europe) in encouraging cycling tourism activities, study ways to promote cycling tourism, including providing cyclists with information such as suggested routes and notes for guidance; and

(c) as there were several fatal traffic accidents involving bicycles in recent years, whether it has examined the ways to ensure the safety of cyclists when developing cycle track networks; if it has, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

(a) The number of complaints received on the ancillary facilities of cycle tracks in the past three years is as follows:

Facilities	Number of Complaints
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Bicycle parking spaces	81
Traffic signs	60
Railings	83

Bicycle rental/repair kiosk * 2

* operated by Leisure and Cultural Services Department

The Government regularly inspects the cycle tracks and ancillary facilities under its maintenance purview to ensure that they are maintained in good condition for public use. For instance, the Highways Department inspects the cycle tracks under its ambit at least once every half a year. In addition, the Government reviews from time to time the adequacy of these facilities taking into consideration the usage of the cycle tracks and the adjacent road traffic as well as public opinions, and will make improvements wherever appropriate and practicable.

(b) According to overseas experience in developing cycling tourism, cycling routes usually link up various sightseeing spots, or integrate with nearby sightseeing spots to form a cluster of attractions. Safety is fundamental to well-developed cycling routes, along which ancillary facilities and services, such as safety and sanitary facilities, signage and convenient bicycle rental services, should be provided to travellers. The Government is liaising closely with the tourism industry and the Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB) on promotion of cycling tourism. HKTB is actively developing new tourism products including cycling tourism by making reference to the experience of other regions in the world.


Having regard to the planning of the relevant cycle track networks and the development of the local ancillary facilities, the Government will, in collaboration with the tourism industry and HKTB, study the demand for cycling tourism in the key source markets and the feasibility of developing cycling tourism. Starting from November 2008, HKTB together with the tourism industry will launch guided cycling tours under the Nature Kaleidoscope Programme to promote cycling travel activities around the Deep Bay and Mai Po areas in Northwest New Territories to overseas visitors so as to test out the market.

(c) In developing the cycle track networks, the Government will give due consideration to the design of the cycle tracks, including alignment, curvature, gradient, width, sight distance as well as connectivity with existing cycle tracks. Adequate lighting, traffic signs, road markings and railings will also be provided along cycle tracks to safeguard the safety of cyclists and other road users.

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LCQ20: Cycling facilities and promotion of cycling

Following is a question by the Hon Frederick Fung and a written reply by the Secretary for Transport and Housing, Ms Eva Cheng, at the Legislative Council meeting today (April 30):

Question:

Regarding cycling facilities and the promotion of cycling, will the Government inform this Council:

(a) of a breakdown by district council district, of the locations of all public cycle tracks, bicycle parking spaces and cycle parks, the responsible government departments (including the design, planning, construction and management of these facilities), as well as the respective numbers of traffic accidents involving bicycles in various districts last year and the resultant casualties;

(b) whether it has assessed if there is any overlap in the functions of the above government departments, and how these departments should be coordinated to make them accountable to the public for their work in ensuring the safety of cycling facilities and reducing traffic accidents involving bicycles, and whether it will consider formulating a central policy on cycling and setting up an inter-departmental committee to coordinate the management of cycling facilities and promotion of cycling; and

(c) whether it will consider studying the effect of encouraging the public to cycle on air quality and health, and whether it will cooperate with local cycling organizations to offer cycling training courses to all primary school pupils for free or at low fees?

Reply:

Madam President,

(a) & (b) The total length of public cycle tracks, the number of bicycle parking spaces and leisure venues with cycling facilities in Hong Kong, with a breakdown down by district council district, are set out at Annex 1. The locations of cycle tracks are at Annex 2, and those of leisure venues with cycling facilities are at Annex 3. Since the number of bicycle

parking spaces is very high and such spaces are widely distributed in each district, we have not set out all the information and the detailed locations. If Members would like to know the locations of the bicycle parking spaces in public places and within public housing estates of individual districts, we can provide the detailed information.

The number of traffic accidents and casualties involving bicycles in 2007, with a breakdown by district, is at Annex 4.

The functions of the various government departments in the design, planning, construction, management and maintenance of cycling facilities are set out at Annex 5.

We consider that while the functions of the various departments are finely delineated, there is no overlap in these functions. The departments have also been cooperating closely in the planning and design of cycling facilities. In addition, Transport Department is responsible for coordinating the safety of cycling facilities. At this stage, we do not consider there is a need to set up an inter-departmental committee to coordinate the management of cycling facilities.


(c) Hong Kong is densely populated. To strike a balance between the need to alleviate traffic congestion and air pollution, we have all along been actively pursuing the policy of having the public transport system as the main transport mode and encourage the public to make use of the mass public transport system and other public transport services. Railway is the backbone of our transport system, with franchised buses and public light buses providing feeder services to the railway network so as to reduce vehicles on road and their impact on air quality. As the road network and public transport system in Hong Kong are well developed, the general road traffic is heavy and road space is limited, under our transport policy and based on road safety and traffic considerations, we do not encourage the use of bicycles as a transport mode in the urban areas.

Cycling is a recreational activity which is good for both physical and mental health. Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) provides subvention to the Hong Kong Cycling Association on a yearly basis under the School Sports Programme for organisation of cycling training courses and activities for primary and secondary students in Hong Kong. The Programme includes the Demonstrations, the Easy Sport Programme and the Outreach Coaching Programme. Participating schools may conduct their training and demonstration in their school campuses or in LCSD venues where bicycles are provided. In 2007-08, LCSD organised a total of 59 training courses for about 3,200 participants and the subvention accounted for about 70% to 85% of the programme expenses.

LCSO also provides subvention to the Hong Kong Cycling Association on a yearly basis for the organisation of Cycling Proficiency Course for members of the public aged between 6 and 55 in all districts. The content includes basic cycling skills and knowledge on the structure of bicycles so as to enhance the participants' interest in cycling.

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Annex 1

**Total Length of Public Cycle Tracks,
Number of Bicycle Parking Space and
Leisure Venues with Cycling Facilities**

District	Total Length of Public Cycle Tracks (km)	Number of Bicycle Parking Spaces	Number of Leisure Venues with Cycling Facilities
<i>New Territories</i>			
Sha Tin	40.8	10,617	2
Tai Po	33.9	3,475	0
North	21.2	3,185	1
Sai Kung	9.8	3,016	0
Kwai Tsing	0	0	0
Tusen Wan	0	30	1
Tuen Mun	15.2	3,893	2
Yuen Long	32.3	11,554	0
Islands	3.9	5,047	0
<i>Kowloon</i>			
Yau Tsim Mong	0.5	0	1
Sham Shui Po	0	60	1
Kowloon City	0	0	1
Wong Tai Sin	0	0	0
Kwun Tong	0	0	2
<i>Hong Kong Island</i>			
Eastern	0	8	3
Wanchai	0	0	1
Central & Western	0	0	0
Southern	0.6	0	0
Total	158.2	40,885	15

Locations of Public Cycle Tracks

District	Location of Public Cycle Tracks
<i>New Territories</i>	
Sha Tin	Tolo Highway; Shing Mun River Channel; Shek Mun; A Kung Kok; Ma On Shan; Wu Kai Sha; Siu Lek Yuen; Yuen Chau Kok; Fo Tan; Wo Che; Tai Wai
Tai Po	Tai Wo Road; Ting Kok Road; Tolo Highway
North	Pak Wo Road; Wo Hop Shek; Shek Wu Hui; Luen Wo Hui; Sha Tau Kok Road – Lung Yeuk Tau
Sai Kung	Po Lam; Hang Hau; Tiu Keng Leng; Wan Po Road near Tsueng Kwan O Industrial Area
Tuen Mun	Wu King Road; Lung Mun Road near Butterfly Beach Park; Tuen Mun River Channel near Wu Shan Riverside Park; Tuen Mun Station; Tin King; Lam Tei
Yuen Long	Hung Shui Kiu; Ping Shan; Wang Chau; Castle Peak Road – Yuen Long section; Kam Tin Road; Tin Shui Wai
Islands	Tung Chung Road; Yu Tung Road
<i>Kowloon</i>	
Yau Tsim Mong	West Kowloon Waterfront Promenade
<i>Hong Kong Island</i>	
Southern	Cyberport

Locations of Leisure Venues with Cycling Facilities

District	Location of Leisure Venues with Cycling Facilities
<i>New Territories</i>	
Sha Tin	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Siu Lek Yuen Road Playground◆ Sha Tin Road Safety Park
North	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Pak Wo Road Playground
Tsuen Wan	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Tsuen Wan Park (for Children)
Tuen Mun	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Tuen Mun Park◆ Wu Shan Recreation Playground
<i>Kowloon</i>	
Yau Tsim Mong	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ West Kowloon Waterfront Promenade
Sham Shui Po	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Lai Chi Kok Park (Skateboard Ground)
Kowloon City	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Carpenter Road Park
Kwun Tong	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Kung Lok Road Playground◆ Kowloon Bay Park
<i>Hong Kong Island</i>	
Eastern	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Quarry Bay Park◆ Yee Shing Lane Temporary Sitting-out Area◆ Siu Sai Wan Road Garden
Wanchai	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Morrison Hill Road Playground

Annex 4**Number of traffic accidents and casualties
involving bicycles in 2007**

District	Number of accidents involving bicycles	Number of Casualties		
		Death	Injury	Total
<i>New Territories</i>				
Sha Tin	387	1	401	402
Tai Po	357	1	384	385
North	128	2	127	129
Sai Kung	28	1	29	30
Kwai Tsing	26	0	26	26
Tusen Wan	23	0	24	24
Tuen Mun	124	1	128	129
Yuen Long	242	4	246	250
Islands	71	0	74	74
<i>Kowloon</i>				
Yau Tsim Mong	58	1	58	59
Sham Shui Po	34	1	33	34
Kowloon City	14	0	15	15
Wong Tai Sin	9	1	8	9
Kwun Tong	18	0	19	19
<i>Hong Kong Island</i>				
Eastern	13	0	19	19
Wanchai	26	0	29	29
Central & Western	12	0	13	13
Southern	2	0	2	2
Total	1,572	13	1,635	1,648

**Functions of Various Government Departments
in Providing Cycling Facilities**

Public Cycling Facilities		Design, planning and construction	Management	Maintenance
Cycle Tracks	New towns and individual new development projects	Civil Engineering and Development Department	Transport Department	Highways Department
Bicycle parking spaces	Housing Authority public housing estates	Housing Department	Housing Department	Housing Department
	Leisure venues provided with cycling facilities	Leisure and Cultural Services Department	Leisure and Cultural Services Department	Leisure and Cultural Services Department
	Others	Transport Department *	Transport Department	Highways Department
Leisure venues provided with cycling facilities		Leisure and Cultural Services Department	Leisure and Cultural Services Department	Leisure and Cultural Services Department

* Some bicycle parking spaces are planned and constructed together with the cycle tracks by Civil Engineering and Development Department.

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LCQ17: Cycle tracks network

Following is a question by the Hon Kam Nai-wai and a written reply by the Secretary for Development, Mrs Carrie Lam, in the Legislative Council today (March 11):

Question:

The Cycling Study Final Report, which was published by the Transport Department in 2004, pointed out that any proposals to expand the role of cycling in the urban areas of Hong Kong and Kowloon must first remedy the very vulnerable condition of cyclists in these areas which arose due to factors such as high traffic flows and speeds on many roads. On the other hand, there are very few cycle tracks on Hong Kong Island, and also the Government has no plan to construct cycle tracks on the Island at present. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(a) apart from confirming to study the provision of cycling facilities along the Hong Kong Island East harbourfront for leisure and recreational purposes, whether it will expeditiously study the feasibility of constructing cycle tracks along other harbourfront areas on Hong Kong Island;

(b) of the criteria and mechanism the authorities will adopt for considering the priorities of various proposals to construct cycle tracks in various locations in urban areas, when the proposals are received at the same time; and

(c) how various government departments will complement the intentions of District Councils to use the funds for district minor works projects programme to construct harbourfront cycle tracks, so as to achieve optimum use of resources?

Reply:

President,

The Government is developing a cycle track network with a total length of about 82 kilometres in the New Territories for enhancing the quality of living as pledged in the Policy Agenda for 2008-09. The Government will also give appropriate consideration to providing cycle tracks and ancillary facilities in planning new towns and new development

areas. For instance, the Kai Tak Planning Review proposes the construction of a cycle track of about 6,600 metres in length to link up a multi-purpose stadium complex and various tourist attractions.

My reply to the three-part question is as follows:

(a) The Planning Department will start the Hong Kong Island East Harbourfront Study in mid-2009 for completion in end 2010. The scope of the study will include exploring whether a waterfront promenade can be constructed along the waterfront to connect the proposed waterfront park in Wan Chai Development Phase II in the west and Siu Sai Wan Promenade in the east, as well as whether cycle tracks can be constructed at suitable locations along the promenade. The Planning Department is also conducting the Urban Design Study for the New Central Harbourfront for completion in end 2009 to refine the urban design framework and to prepare planning/design briefs for key sites in the new Central harbourfront. The study also explores proposal for providing an environmentally-friendly transport system in the new harbourfront, including proposals of cycle tracks or electric trolley buses and associated facilities.

(b) Upon receiving proposals for constructing cycle tracks in urban areas, the Government will carefully consider their feasibility. The Government will examine the relevant factors in this process, including compatibility with overall development of the districts and adjacent land uses, ancillary facilities, geographical conditions, road safety, traffic management arrangements and public opinion. If the proposed cycle tracks are found to be feasible, they will usually be implemented through the Public Works Programme. We will examine the justifications for the projects, urgency and cost effectiveness so as to determine their priorities for implementation.


(c) If District Councils intend to fund the development of waterfront cycle tracks through the District Minor Works Programme, I believe the Home Affairs Department which is responsible for coordinating this type of projects will liaise with the relevant Government departments in identifying suitable sites in the planning stage and in offering advice so as to dovetail the proposed cycle tracks with adjacent facilities and land uses thus facilitating optimum use of resources. Upon approval of these projects by District Councils, their design and construction may be undertaken by works agents including term consultants of the Home Affairs Department or relevant works departments of the Government. The relevant Government departments will continue to provide appropriate advice and support during the implementation stage to ensure smooth implementation and

appropriate management as well as repair and maintenance of the projects upon completion.

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發展事務委員會2009年4月28日會議紀要的摘錄

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經辦人／部門

V 工務計劃項目第259RS號"連接新界西北及新界東北之單車徑"

(立法會CB(1)1347/08-09(04)號文件——政府當局就工務計劃項目第259RS號——連接新界西北及新界東北之單車徑提交的文件

立法會CB(1)1347/08-09(05)號文件——立法會秘書處就香港的單車徑擬備的文件(背景資料簡介))

30. 委員察悉在會議席上所提交的無障礙社區關注組的意見書。

(會後補註：有關意見書(立法會CB(1)1453/08-09(01)號文件)已於2009年4月29日以電子郵件方式送交委員參閱。)

31. 因應發展局局長提出的建議，主席同意無須作簡介，以便有更多時間進行討論。

興建單車徑的目的

32. 葉偉明議員表示，香港工會聯合會的議員支持政府當局的建議，因為他們曾建議興建單車徑，振興本港經濟。他詢問，擬議單車徑是否只作消閒用途，以及政府當局有否任何計劃推動單車旅遊並在市區興建單

車徑網絡。他繼而建議，當局可考慮將有關單車徑網絡接駁深圳的單車徑網絡。

33. 發展局局長回應表示，雖然在市區興建單車徑網絡有困難，但政府當局會盡量探討有關做法是否可行。舉例而言，政府當局現正研究可否在港島中區及東區的海濱用地興建單車徑。推廣單車旅遊超出發展局的職權範圍，她會向相關的決策局轉達葉偉明議員的意見。如有需要，立法會的相關事務委員會可討論有關事宜。

34. 梁劉柔芬議員表示，她與部分其他議員參加了在2009年4月25日舉行的與現行建議相關的實地視察活動，並支持政府當局的建議。她建議，當局可沿單車徑網絡若干地點設置住宿和小食亭等設施，並邀請非政府機構或社會企業參與有關設施的運作。有關住宿設施可推廣親子騎單車的樂趣。發展局局長感謝梁劉柔芬議員提出的意見。

35. 陳鑑林議員支持政府當局的建議，因為建議可推廣騎單車。他詢問，政府當局會否興建單車運動場地及為國際單車比賽而設的單車徑。發展局局長回應表示，運動政策屬民政事務局職權範圍。據她所知，將軍澳及葵涌將會興建單車運動場地，當局亦會不時舉辦公路單車賽事。土木工程拓展署新界西及北拓展處處長補充，作體育用途的單車徑與康樂單車徑的設計要求不同。擬議單車徑會作康樂用途，政府當局已就所需的附屬設施諮詢多個單車團體。遇有任何國際單車比賽或賽事，政府當局會實施封路等特別交通安排，協助有關賽事順利進行。

36. 葉國謙議員促請政府當局盡快興建擬議的單車徑。他表示，香港可於4年內建成長115公里的單車徑，但深圳在1年內已建成長135公里的單車徑。他支持有關單車徑作康樂用途。他建議，擬議單車徑的設計可便利到達新界的文物地點，單車徑沿途應栽種更多樹木以提供遮蔭。

37. 發展局局長贊同當局應考慮使單車徑更方便前往附近的文物地點。舉例而言，騎單車人士可前往活化歷史建築伙伴計劃第二批建築物的王屋村古屋參觀。發展局首席助理秘書長(工務)2補充，在釐訂擬議單車徑的路線時，政府當局已考慮附近景點及文物地點的位置。當局會豎立指示牌，以便騎單車人士前往有關景點及文物地點參觀，並在單車徑沿途進行合適的美化工程，提供較佳的騎單車環境。根據現行的建議，當局將會栽種約900棵樹木。

有關可興建的單車徑的建議

38. 甘乃威議員支持政府當局的建議。他詢問，為何中區及東區的擬議單車徑須進行可行性研究。他建議，政府當局應考慮興建一條由南區至中西區的單車徑，並與南區區議會討論有關事宜。他進一步建議，政府當局應考慮為港島發展一個單車徑網絡。

39. 陳淑莊議員表示，公民黨的議員支持政府當局的建議。她亦詢問，政府當局會否在南區與中西區之間興建一條單車徑。至於啟德發展計劃，政府當局應預留地方興建單車徑，啟德發展區內的道路設計應有助達致此目的。

40. 陳偉業議員歡迎政府當局的建議，並促請政府當局盡快落實有關建議。由於現時的單車徑並不連貫，他認為政府當局應處理有關情況，提供一個連貫不斷的單車徑網絡。

41. 發展局局長回應表示，興建所有單車徑均需要進行可行性研究，這項要求並非限於在中區及東區興建的單車徑。關於在南區與中西區之間興建一條單車徑的建議須予審慎考慮，而政府當局目前並無這樣的計劃。然而，當局可探討在港島興建個別路段的單車徑是否可行。政府當局現行的政策是興建單車徑，以便在新界建立連貫不斷的單車徑網絡。關於啟德發展計劃，政府當局會在推行道路基礎設施及落實興建單車徑兩方面加以協調。

42. 張學明議員支持政府當局的建議，因為可在短期內增加就業機會，長遠而言則可改善市民的生活。由於現時並無單車徑連接大埔與粉嶺，他支持興建擬議的單車徑，把兩個地方連接起來。他詢問，根據現行建議所進行的工程，會否與路政署所推行的工務工程項目(例如吐露港公路擴闊工程第二期工程)配合。由於單車是在郊區使用的一種交通工具，他詢問政府當局的建議會否包括通往附近村落的接駁單車徑的興建工程。

43. 土木工程拓展署新界西及北拓展處處長回應表示，當局已就現行建議諮詢路政署，現行建議下的工程將會與路政署管理的工程妥為配合。政府當局會致力把施工期間對交通和居民造成的影響盡量減至最少。擬議單車徑的路線已有顧及附近郊區的實際情況，前往村落的通道會時刻保持暢通。

安全事宜

44. 劉秀成議員表示，他亦參加了2009年4月25日舉行的實地視察活動。他詢問，300萬撥款是否足以改善現有單車徑選定路段的情況。他認為，單車徑途經的部分行人天橋及隧道的斜路頗為陡峭和危險，政府當局應加以改善。他詢問，政府當局會否檢討全港現有單車徑的安全情況。

45. 土木工程拓展署新界西及北拓展處處長回應表示，現行建議下的改善工程主要集中在擴闊現時位於上水、粉嶺、大埔及沙田的單車徑主要路段，並且豎設指示牌。就本港現有單車徑的改善工程而言，運輸署是負責定期監管及進行改善工程的有關方面。

46. 有鑒於此，劉秀成議員要求政府當局在相關的工務小組委員會會議前，提供有關運輸署在現有單車徑進行改善工程的資料，並列出預計所需的時間和費用。

(會後補註：政府當局的補充資料(立法會CB(1)1607/08-09(01)號文件)已於2009年5月18日送交委員參閱。)

交通事宜

47. 陳淑莊議員表示，雖然她知悉在市區騎單車可能會有危險，但她希望政府當局會依循推廣以單車作為交通工具的方向，推動可持續發展的生活。

48. 發展局局長表示，推廣以單車作為交通工具是一項交通政策事宜，如有需要，交通事務委員會可考慮有關事宜。政府當局知悉，新界部分居民以單車為接駁交通工具。因此，擬議的匯合中心會提供單車停放處，盡量方便市民在停放單車後轉乘其他交通工具。政府當局會視乎情況，把推廣騎單車的 concept 融匯其中。

49. 陳鑑林議員認為，除非屬短途旅程，否則難以單車作為交通工具。內地及台灣過往以單車作為市區的交通工具，曾造成許多交通混亂的情況。

50. 陳偉業議員表示，由於單車停放處不足，違例停放單車的情況普遍，在港鐵站附近的位置尤其嚴重。他建議，政府當局應檢討規管騎單車的相關法律條文，使其更簡便易行。舉行而言，根據現行法例，即使沒有行人經過，騎單車人士如在行人道交匯處不下車，便有可能遭受檢控。他建議，可把委員在是次會議席上提出屬其他事務委員會職權範圍的多項關注事宜，轉介予有關事務委員會，以便採取適當的跟進行動。

秘書

51. 發展局局長回應表示，各種問題例如通過法例規管騎單車人士及為往來固定地點的人士提供單車停放處等，超出發展局的職權範圍，有關事宜亦非發展局能單獨處理。她會向相關決策局轉達委員在會議席上提出的意見，如有需要，立法會的相關事務委員會可討論該等事宜。

52. 主席表示會在工務小組委員會相關的會議席上匯報委員的意見。

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**Extract from the minutes of meeting of the
Panel on Development on 28 April 2009**

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Action

V PWP Item no. 259RS "Cycle tracks connecting North West New Territories with North East New Territories"

(LC Paper No. CB(1)1347/08-09(04) -- Administration's paper on PWP Item No. 259RS -- Cycle tracks connecting North West New Territories with North East New Territories

LC Paper No. CB(1)1347/08-09(05) -- Paper on cycle tracks in Hong Kong prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat (Background brief)

30. Members noted the submission from 無障礙社區關注組 tabled at the meeting.

(Post-meeting note: The submission (LC Paper No. CB(1)1453/08-09(01)) was issued to members by email on 29 April 2009.)

31. At the suggestion of SDEV, the Chairman agreed that no introduction would be necessary so as to allow more time for discussion.

Purposes of constructing cycle tracks

32. Mr IP Wai-ming said that Members of the Hong Kong Federation of Trade Unions expressed support for the Administration's proposal because they had previously suggested constructing cycle track networks to boost the local economy. He asked whether the proposed cycle tracks were for recreational use only and whether the Administration had any intention to promote cycle tourism and construct cycle track networks in urban districts as well. He further suggested that consideration could be given to connecting the cycle track network with that in Shenzhen.

33. SDEV responded that although it was difficult to construct cycle track networks in urban districts, the Administration would explore its feasibility as far as possible. By way of illustration, the Administration was studying the feasibility

of constructing cycle tracks in the harbourfront areas of Central and Eastern Districts on Hong Kong Island. Promotion of cycle tourism was outside the purview of the Development Bureau and she would relay Mr IP Wai-ming's views to the relevant bureau. The relevant Panel of the Legislative Council could discuss the issues concerned if necessary.

34. Mrs Sophie LEUNG said that she had joined the site visit on 25 April 2009 with some other Members in relation to the present proposal, and she supported the Administration's proposal. She suggested that the Administration could consider constructing lodging and refreshment facilities at certain locations along the cycle track network and engaging non-government organizations or social enterprises to operate those facilities. Such lodging facilities would promote parent-child cycling. SDEV thanked Mrs Sophie LEUNG for her views.

35. Mr CHAN Kam-lam expressed support for the Administration's proposal because it would promote cycling. He asked whether the Administration would construct cycling sport venues and cycle tracks for conducting international cycling competitions. SDEV responded that the policy on sports was under the purview of the Home Affairs Bureau. According to her understanding, there would be cycling sport venues in Tseung Kwan O and Kwai Chung, and road cycling races were organized from time to time. The Project Manager (NTN&W), Civil Engineering and Development Department (PM/NTN&W) added that cycle tracks for sports and recreational purposes had different design requirements. The proposed cycle tracks would be constructed for recreational use and the Administration had consulted various cycling associations on the associated facilities required. Should there be any international cycling competitions or races, the Administration would facilitate the events as usual by making special traffic arrangements for road closure.

36. Mr IP Kwok-him urged the Administration to implement the proposed cycle tracks as soon as possible. He remarked that while Hong Kong could complete the construction of 115 kilometres of cycle tracks in four years, Shenzhen could complete 135 kilometres in one year. He expressed support for recreational use of those cycle tracks. He suggested that the proposed cycle tracks could be designed to facilitate access to heritage sites in the New Territories, and that more trees should be planted along the cycle tracks to provide shading.

37. SDEV concurred that consideration should be given to facilitating access to nearby heritage sites from the cycle tracks. By way of illustration, cyclists could visit Old House at Wong Uk Village under Batch II of the Revitalizing Historic Buildings Through Partnership Scheme. The Principal Assistant Secretary for Development (Works) 2 added that in determining the alignment of the proposed cycle tracks, the Administration had considered the locations of nearby scenic spots and heritage sites. Direction signs would be erected to facilitate cyclists to

visit those scenic spots and heritage sites. There would be suitable landscaping along the cycle tracks to provide a better cycling environment and about 900 trees would be planted under the current proposal.

Suggestions on possible cycle tracks

38. Mr KAM Nai-wai expressed support for the Administration's proposal. He asked why the proposed cycle tracks at the Central and the Eastern Districts required feasibility studies. He suggested that the Administration should consider constructing a cycle track from the Southern District to the Central and Western District and discuss with the Southern District Council on the matter. He further suggested that the Administration should consider developing a cycle track network for the Hong Kong Island.

39. Miss Tanya CHAN said that Members of the Civic Party expressed supported the Administration's proposal. She also asked whether the Administration would construct a cycle track between the Southern District and the Central and Western District. For the Kai Tak Development, the Administration should reserve space for cycle tracks and the design of the roads therein should facilitate achieving this purpose.

40. Mr Albert CHAN welcomed the Administration's proposal and urged the Administration to implement it as soon as possible. As the existing cycle tracks were segregated, he considered that the Administration should tackle the situation so as to provide a continuous cycle track network.

41. SDEV responded that it was necessary to conduct feasibility studies for the construction of all cycle tracks and this requirement was not limited to construction of cycle tracks at the Central and the Eastern Districts. The suggestion of constructing a cycle track between the Southern District and the Central and Western District would need careful consideration and the Administration had no such plan at present. Nevertheless, the feasibility of constructing individual sections of cycle tracks on Hong Kong Island could be explored. The Administration's current policy was to construct cycle tracks to create a continuous cycle track network in the New Territories. As regards Kai Tak Development, the Administration would coordinate the implementation of road infrastructure and cycle tracks in Kai Tak Development.

42. Mr CHEUNG Hok-ming expressed support for the Administration's proposal because it would increase job opportunities in the short run and enhance the life of the public in the long run. As there was no cycle track between Tai Po and Fanling at present, he expressed support for constructing the proposed cycle track between the two places. He asked whether the works under the current proposal would dovetail with the works projects to be implemented by the Highways Department, such as Widening of Tolo Highway Phase 2. As bicycles

were used as a means of transportation in rural areas, he asked whether the Administration's proposal included the construction of feeder cycle tracks to nearby villages.

43. PM/NTN&W responded that the Highways Department had been consulted on the current proposal and there would be good coordination between the works under the present proposal and the works managed by the Highways Department. The Administration would endeavor to minimize the effects on traffic and residents during the construction period as far as possible. The alignment of the proposed cycle track under the current proposal had taken into account the actual circumstances of the nearby rural areas and access to villages would be maintained at all times.

Safety issues

44. Prof Patrick LAU said that he had also participated in the site visit on 25 April 2009. He asked whether the \$3 million provision under the current proposal would be sufficient for improving the selected sections of existing cycle tracks. He considered that the ramps of some footbridges and subways through which cycle tracks would pass through were quite steep and dangerous and the Administration should improve them. He asked whether the Administration would review the safety conditions of the existing cycle tracks in the territory.

45. PM/NTN&W responded that the improvement works under the current proposal mainly focused on local widening of existing cycle tracks in Sheung Shui, Fanling, Tai Po and Sha Tin along the artery section and erection of direction signs. For the enhancement works of the existing cycle tracks in the territory, the Transport Department would be the responsible party to carry out regular monitoring and improvement works.

46. Noting this, Prof Patrick LAU requested the Administration to provide, before the relevant meeting of the Public Works Subcommittee, information on the enhancement works that would be carried out by the Transport Department to existing cycle tracks with estimated timing and costs involved.

(Post-meeting note: The Administration's supplementary information (LC Paper No. CB(1)1607/08-09(01)) was issued to members on 18 May 2009.)

Transport issues

47. Miss Tanya CHAN said that while she was aware that cycling could be dangerous in urban districts, she hoped that the Administration would follow the direction of promoting cycling as a means of transportation to promote sustainable life.

48. SDEV said that promoting cycling as a means of transportation was a transport policy issue and the Panel on Transport could consider the issue if necessary. The Administration was aware that bicycles were used by some residents in the New Territories as a means of feeder transportation. Therefore, the proposed entry/exit hubs would provide cycle parking spaces to facilitate park-and-ride as far as possible. The Administration would integrate the concept of promoting cycling where appropriate.

49. Mr CHAN Kam-lam considered it difficult to use bicycles as a means of transportation except for travels of short distance. Bicycles had caused a lot of traffic chaos in Mainland China and Taiwan when they were used as a means of transportation in urban districts in the past.

50. Mr Albert CHAN said that illegal parking due to the lack of sufficient cycle parking spaces was a common problem, especially at locations near Mass Transit Railway stations. He suggested that the Administration should review the relevant legislative provisions governing cycling to make them more user-friendly. By way of illustration, under the current legislation, cyclists could be prosecuted if they did not alight at pedestrian junctions even if no pedestrians were passing by. He suggested that the various concerns raised by members at this meeting that fell under the purview of other Panels be referred to those Panels for appropriate follow-up actions.

Clerk

51. SDEV responded that issues such as regulation of cyclists through legislation and provision of cycle parking spaces for commuters were outside the purview of the Development Bureau and those issues could not be handled by the Development Bureau alone. She would relay members' views expressed at the meeting to the bureaux concerned and the relevant Panels of the Legislative Council could discuss those issues if necessary.

52. The Chairman said that members' views would be reported at the relevant meeting of the Public Works Subcommittee.

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