For discussion
28 May 2010

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL PANEL ON TRANSPORT

General Improvement Measures to Existing Cycling Facilities

Purpose

This paper aims to inform Members of the various measures that are being taken or considered by the Transport Department (TD) to improve existing cycling facilities and to promote cycling safety in Hong Kong.

Background

2. Hong Kong is densely populated. The Government's policy is to use 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. As the road network and public transport system in Hong Kong are well developed, and the general road traffic is heavy and road space is limited, based on road safety consideration, we do not encourage the use of bicycles as a transport mode in urban areas.

3. The above considerations notwithstanding, cycling is a healthy recreational activity that has gained increased popularity in recent years. This is especially the case for residents in the New Territories. Indeed, over the years, the Government has put in phase the necessary facilities. For example, there are about 170 km of public cycle tracks and over 40,000 public cycle parking spaces mostly at railway stations, in the New Territories.

4. More recently, the Civil Engineering and Development Department (CEDD) is constructing a trunk cycle network with ancillary facilities linking the existing new towns between Ma On Shan and Tuen Mun (with possible extensions to Tsuen Wan and Sai Kung) in phases. The TD is taking forward various measures with a view to enhancing the connectivity of cycle tracks in existing new towns, providing more cycle parking spaces at major transport hubs, and promoting cycling safety. Further details of these measures are given in paragraphs 5 to 14 below.

Improve Connectivity of Existing Cycle Track Networks

5. In May 2010, the TD commissioned a consultancy study to review the existing cycle track networks in the nine existing new towns. The Study will identify deficiencies of the existing cycle track networks, propose remedial measures for improvements with reference to overseas experience and local situation, and recommend an implementation programme for the proposed improvement works.

6. The Study will look into the connectivity of the cycle track networks of existing new towns with a view to linking up isolated segments. This will help reduce the need for cyclists to ride on public roads, thus enhancing cycling safety. The Study will also examine the adequacy and management of cycle parking facilities in the existing new towns and recommend necessary improvement measures. The Study results are expected to be available by mid to end 2011. Stakeholders will be consulted during and after the completion of the Study.

Additional Cycle Parking Spaces at Major Transport Hubs in the New Territories

7. The TD has been making continuous effort in providing additional cycle parking spaces at major transport hubs. Recently, TD has provided over 300 new cycle parking spaces near two public transport interchanges in Tseung Kwan O and Shatin. In addition, TD has started a two-year retrofitting programme under which the existing cycle parking racks near railway stations and public transport termini will be replaced by new parking racks based on newly designed guidelines. An additional 1,000 parking spaces will be provided as a result of the programme.

8. Furthermore, the Highways Department (HyD) and TD are looking into new and innovative cycle parking systems such as double-deck parking systems and automated mechanical parking systems. These systems may increase the capacity of cycle parking spaces within limited space, and enhance security of parked bicycles.

Establishment of an Internet-based Cycling Information Centre (CIC)

9. Besides improving cycling infrastructure, we believe providing a one-stop information centre on cycling will bring convenience to the cycling public. To this end, TD is considering the establishment of an internet-based Cycling Information Centre (CIC) to provide a central point for the public to find information relating to cycling, including cycle track

locations, cycle parking sites, major cycling projects, and temporary closure/diversion of cycle tracks, etc. Links to other relevant Government departments which are responsible for the management of cycling facilities/venues will be provided. It will also provide information on riding rules, safety tips, and relevant laws governing cycling.

Promotion of Cycling Safety

10. Cycling accounts for about 0.5% of the total daily passenger trips in Hong Kong. On average, there are about 1,600 cycling accidents a year, which accounts for 11% of the total number of traffic accidents. 1,400 cyclist casualties are resulted in a year, and among whom about 190 are seriously injured; while 10 are killed, mainly on cycle tracks or public roads. The detailed breakdowns of cycling accidents and casualties statistics in the past five years are shown in the tables at **Annex A**. A two-pronged approach is adopted to promote cycling safety, viz. through improved design of cycle tracks and the stepping up of publicity and education.

Design of Cycle Tracks

11. To enhance safety of cycling on cycle tracks, TD and HyD have reviewed the design of bollards, which are widely used on cycle tracks to cause cyclists to slow down at pedestrian crossings or near the end of cycle tracks. Currently, the bollards are made of steel. The two departments have implemented field trials on the use of plastic collapsible bollards with distinctive lane markings, which are safer to cyclists when they accidentally hit the bollards. The new bollard systems are well received by the cycling public and have been adopted as standard provision on the existing and new cycle tracks. Except for those at locations where the steel bollards are considered useful to cause cyclists to stop and dismount (such as at terminating points of cycle tracks and at approaches to carriageway), all of the existing steel bollards will be gradually replaced by plastic collapsible bollards. The steel bollards that are to be retained would be painted with reflective white colour such that they would be more conspicuous to cyclists especially during night time.

12. Separately, TD has developed a new design guideline for cycle tracks, cycling ramps and subways. The new guideline requires the provision of footway alongside new cycle tracks, more user-friendly geometrical configurations including more gentle gradients, smoother curvatures, and better signage and road marking systems on approaches to long steep ramps and pedestrian crossings.

Publicity and Education

13. In the past five years, the Road Safety Council, the Police and the TD have been joining hands to promote cycling safety, focusing in particular on promoting the use of safety equipment (including protective helmets, elbow pads and knee pads). The major educational activities and publicity events are set out at **Annex B**. We will continue to work with relevant parties on these and similar educational measures and publicity in future.

14. Further, the TD and other relevant Government departments will continue to hold regular meetings with the cycling associations to ensure that users' views on cycle tracks and other cycling facilities are obtained. Such communication and dialogues provide us with useful user feedbacks which in turn help us maintain the good conditions and standards of cycling infrastructure and facilities.

Advice Sought

15. Members are invited to note the contents of this paper.

Transport and Housing Bureau
May 2010

Annex A

Table 1 – No. of Cycling Accidents by Severity, 2005 – 2009

Year	Fatal	Serious	Slight	Total
2005	8	225	1413	1646
2006	9	216	1334	1559
2007	13	212	1347	1572
2008	11	207	1372	1590
2009	10	227	1556	1793
Average #	**10**	**217**	**1404**	**1632**

Table 2 – No. of Cyclist Casualties by Degree of Injury, 2005 – 2009

Year	Killed	Serious	Slight	Total
2005	8	194	1205	1407
2006	9	184	1161	1354
2007	12	195	1191	1398
2008	10	178	1251	1439
2009	10	202	1369	1581
Average #	**10**	**191**	**1235**	**1436**

Table 3 – No. of Casualties in Cycling Accidents by Role, 2005 – 2009

Year	Cyclists	Pedestrians	Others*	Total
2005	1407	233	64	1704
2006	1354	206	78	1638
2007	1398	175	75	1648
2008	1439	178	67	1684
2009	1581	200	87	1868
Average #	**1436**	**198**	**74**	**1708**

Note: # Figures may not add up to the total due to rounding of the average figures.
* "Others" refers to casualties of passengers and drivers of other motor vehicles.

Annex B

Major Educational Activities and Publicity Events to Promote Cycling Safety

(i) publishing and distributing "Cycling Safety" pamphlets, leaflets and Road Safety Bulletin on "Safety Tips for Cyclists";

(ii) launching territory-wide "Safe Cycling Campaign" during summer holidays and some long school holidays; and holding safety roadshows at cycling hotspots;

(iii) delivering talks in schools and local communities on a regular basis;

(iv) arranging the Road Safety Bus to visit kindergartens and primary, secondary, and special schools;

(v) giving talks to students and organisations visiting the four Road Safety Towns and providing practice sessions;

(vi) producing television and radio Announcements for the Public Interest (APIs) under the theme of "Cycling Safety Gear";

(vii) mounting signages along cycle tracks to remind the public on the proper use of cycle tracks;

(viii) posting messages on taxis to remind drivers to be aware of cyclists;

(ix) organising safe cycling events jointly with District Councils;

(x) engaging youth organisations such as Junior Police Call, the Boy Scouts and the Boys' Brigade to promote awareness on safe cycling; and

(xi) organising cycling courses jointly with the Hong Kong Cycling Association.