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Panel on Transport
Meeting on 28 January 2011

Background brief on promotion of cycling safety

Purpose

This paper provides background information on measures to promote cycling safety and summarizes the major concerns expressed by the Panel on Transport (the Panel) on the subject in its past discussion.

Background

2. 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, the Administration does not encourage the use of bicycles as a transport mode in urban areas.

3. The Administration notes that cycling has gained increased popularity in recent years. This is especially the case for residents in the New Territories. Over the years, the Government has put in place 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.

Promotion of Cycling Safety

4. According to the information provided by the Administration to the Panel in May 2010, 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 from 2005-2009 are shown in the tables at **Appendix I**. 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.

Improving design of cycle tracks

5. To enhance safety of cycling on cycle tracks, the Transport Department (TD) and the Highways Department (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 have been adopted as standard provision on the existing and new cycle tracks.

6. 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

7. The Road Safety Council, the Police and 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 **Appendix II**. Furthermore, 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.

Consultancy study to review and improve connectivity of existing cycle track networks

8. In May 2010, TD commissioned a consultancy study to review the existing cycle track networks in the nine existing new towns (the consultancy study). The consultancy 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.

9. The consultancy 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 consultancy study will also examine the adequacy and management of cycle parking facilities in the existing new towns and recommend necessary improvement measures. The consultancy study results are expected to be available by mid to end 2011.

Major concerns expressed by the Panel on Transport on promotion of cycling safety

10. When the Panel discussed general improvement measures to existing cycling facilities at its meeting on 28 May 2010, members expressed concerns about the promotion of cycling safety. Panel members urged the Administration to take measures to enhance cycling safety on public roads in consideration of the increasing use of bicycles as a transport means in new towns. These members suggested that consideration should be given to requiring people cycling on public roads to use safety equipment, such as protective helmets. The Administration advised that it had studied overseas practices and considered that the

requirement of wearing protective helmets might cause inconvenience to most cyclists who only occasionally cycled on cycle tracks as a recreational activity. It might therefore not be desirable to introduce it as a mandatory requirement.

11. The Administration further advised that the consultancy study commissioned by TD to look into the connectivity of the cycle track networks of new towns aimed to come up with recommendations on linking up isolated segments, so as to reduce the need for cyclists to ride on public roads and enhance cycling safety. Panel members welcomed the conduct of the consultancy study and requested the Administration to expedite the study.

12. Some members considered that many cyclists were oblivious of the need to observe traffic laws and commonly jumped red lights. They took the view that publicity and education efforts should be geared up to alert cyclists to the need to observe traffic laws and the consequences of non-compliance. Panel members opined that the relevant publicity and education activities should not just focus on cycling on cycle tracks as cycling accidents mainly occurred on public roads. They considered that greater efforts should be made to improve cycling safety on public roads. The Administration advised that the Road Safety Council had been allocated provisions for promoting road safety and the main theme of its publicity campaign in 2010 was cycling safety. Panel members' views would be conveyed to the Road Safety Council for consideration.

13. In response to Panel members' enquiry about the timetable for replacing existing steel bollards on cycle tracks with plastic bollards, the Administration advised that it targeted to complete the replacement works within five years, with priority given to the busier cycle tracks.

Latest developments

14. At the request of Hon WONG Kwok-hing, the Panel has scheduled to discuss the regulation of cyclists in the use of safety equipment at the next meeting on 28 January 2011.

Relevant papers and source of information

Information paper provided by the Administration for the Panel meeting on 28 May 2010

<http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr09-10/english/panels/tp/papers/tp0528cb1-1995-3-e.pdf>

Minutes of the Panel meeting on 28 May 2010

<http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr09-10/english/panels/tp/minutes/tp20100528.pdf>

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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.

**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.