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Replies to supplementary questions raised by Finance Committee Members in examining the Estimates of Expenditure 2017-18

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Transport and Housing

Session No. : 13

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CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

S-THB(T)01

(Question Serial No. S0035)

Head: (158) Government Secretariat:
Transport and Housing Bureau
(Transport Branch)

Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified

Programme: (2) Land and Waterborne Transport

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Transport and Housing (Transport)
(Joseph YT LAI)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Transport and Housing

Question:

After granting the Kowloon Motor Bus Company (1933) Limited (KMB) a new 10-year franchise, will the Government continue to require the KMB to open up its data? Has the Government estimated the time required to achieve the target of fully opening up traffic data?

Asked by: Hon MOK Charles Peter

Reply:

The Transport Department (TD) currently provides various kinds of traffic data through the Government's public information portal "data.gov.hk" to facilitate the development of more innovative applications by private companies and value-added service providers for public use. Such traffic data include journey time indicators, traffic speed map, routes and fares of public transport, etc. Moreover, the TD is currently carrying out the installation of traffic detectors and the upgrading of the Transport Information System. Upon completion of the projects, the TD will provide through the "data.gov.hk" more real-time information (such as traffic speed and traffic flow), free-of-charge and in open data format to facilitate the development of more innovative applications by the community for public use. Besides, the TD plans to upload the parking vacancy data of government car parks, which are currently available in the "Hong Kong eRouting" application, to the "data.gov.hk" portal in mid-2017.

With respect to the data of the Kowloon Motor Bus Company (1933) Limited (KMB), the KMB provides real-time bus arrival information for all of its regular routes to passengers through its smartphone applications and website. During the discussion between the Government and the KMB on the latter's new franchise which will commence on 1 July 2017, the KMB committed that it would partner with the TD to add a new feature to

TD's "Hong Kong eTransport" smartphone application and website, so as to enable "Hong Kong eTransport" users to obtain real-time bus arrival information of KMB's routes. The TD is currently working closely with the KMB with a view to introducing this new feature ahead of the commencement of the new franchise.

As we have mentioned before, the development and operation of real-time bus service information systems involve substantial resources of the franchised bus companies. The real-time arrival data are private property of the bus companies and pertain to their commercial operation. The KMB has indicated that it has no intention at present to make its data available for use by other application developers free of charge. Nevertheless, the TD will continue to encourage all public transport operators, including the KMB, to support the Government's open data policy by making the data in their possession available at the "data.gov.hk" portal co-ordinated by the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

S-THB(T)02

(Question Serial No. S0036)

Head: (186) Transport Department

Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified

Programme: (-) Not Specified

Controlling Officer: Commissioner for Transport (Mrs Ingrid YEUNG)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Transport and Housing

Question:

The Government has indicated that for the convenience of motorists, the Transport Department (TD) has also updated the Hong Kong eRouting application to provide information on parking vacancies of about 50 Government and private car parks. Will the Government open up the information to the public (i.e. not limited to government applications)?

Asked by: Hon MOK Charles Peter

Reply:

Currently, operators of commercial public car parks have only agreed to provide their parking vacancy data to the Hong Kong eRouting application of the TD. Since these data belong to private commercial entities, the Government cannot open up the data without their authorisation. The TD has been encouraging operators of commercial public car parks to upload their parking vacancy data to the Government's public sector information portal at the "data.gov.hk" website. The TD is also keeping in view the utilisation of parking vacancy data in the Hong Kong eRouting and plans to upload the parking vacancy data of government car parks in the application to the "data.gov.hk" website in mid-2017. Interested organisations or parties can then make use of the related data on the portal to develop applications for use by motorists.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SV-THB(T)01

(Question Serial No. SV023)

Head: (60) Highways Department

Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified

Programme: (2) District and Maintenance Works

Controlling Officer: Director of Highways (Daniel K W CHUNG)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Transport and Housing

Question:

This is a follow-up question on the reply no. THB(T)036:

Currently, there are quite a number of roads in the urban areas with damaged or defective surfaces, including openings, cracks or unevenness etc. which pose danger to road users (including pedestrians and cyclists). In this regard, what follow-up measures would the Government take?

Asked by: Hon KWOK Wing-hang, Dennis

(Asked at 6:42 p.m. on 5 April 2017)

Reply:

The Highways Department (HyD) is responsible for maintenance of all public roads and structural integrity of road surfaces to safeguard the safety of road users.

The work of road maintenance can roughly be divided into “corrective repairs” and “planned maintenance”. Corrective repair works cover rectification of defects identified through reports received or regular visits and inspections to return the road surfaces to normal conditions as soon as possible. Corrective repair works mainly involve works such as patching of pot holes or small-scale repairs to road surfaces. On the other hand, planned maintenance is preventive in nature, the priorities and programmes of which are determined on the basis of the design standard and current conditions of individual highway facilities, as well as the quality and durability of the materials employed. The aim of planned maintenance works is to allow more comprehensive rehabilitation works bringing long lasting improvement when the facilities show signs of partial wear and tear but yet to develop into extensive serious defects. Such works are usually of a larger scale and take more time to complete.

In general, for non-structural defects which affect road safety (such as uneven road surfaces, pot holes, cracks, etc.), the HyD will use bituminous material or rapid hardening material as

patching substance to rectify the defective road surfaces as soon as possible, so as to maintain the road in safe and proper conditions for public use.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**SV-THB(T)02****(Question Serial No. SV024)**

Head: (158) Government Secretariat:
Transport and Housing Bureau
(Transport Branch)

Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified

Programme: (2) Land and Waterborne Transport

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Transport and Housing (Transport)
(Joseph YT LAI)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Transport and Housing

Question:

Follow-up question to Reply Serial No. THB(T)108:

Will the Government commence new railway projects right after the completion of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link and the MTR Shatin to Central Link, so as to continue to make good use of the existing manpower and resources of other works projects? Has the Government conducted a detailed study on this regard and assessed the continuity of the railway projects?

Asked by: Hon LO Wai-kwok

(Asked at 6:52 p.m. on 5 April 2017)

Reply:

According to the MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL), the target commissioning dates of the Hong Kong section of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link (XRL) and the Shatin to Central Link (SCL) projects as at end of 2016 are tabulated below -

Project	Target Commissioning Date
XRL	Third quarter of 2018
SCL	Tai Wai to Hung Hom section: mid-2019
	Hung Hom to Admiralty section: 2021

Having regard to the indicative implementation window recommended in the Railway Development Strategy 2014, the Transport and Housing Bureau (THB) invited the MTRCL

to submit proposals for the implementation of the first batch of railway projects (i.e. the Northern Link (and Kwu Tung Station), the East Kowloon Line and the Tuen Mun South Extension). Moreover, in early January 2017, the THB invited the MTRCL to submit a proposal for the Tung Chung West Extension (and Tung Chung East Station).

The MTRCL submitted a proposal for the Tuen Mun South Extension to the Government in end-December 2016, and just submitted a proposal for the Northern Link (and Kwu Tung Station) in end-March 2017. It will also submit a proposal for the East Kowloon Line later this year. The THB, the Highways Department and relevant departments are evaluating the proposal for the Tuen Mun South Extension and have requested the MTRCL to provide additional information and supplement details of the relevant proposal in order to ensure that its proposal will be practically feasible and bring maximum benefits to the community. Meanwhile, we will also start evaluating the proposal for the Northern Link (and Kwu Tung Station).

The taking forward of new railway projects will be subject to the outcome of detailed engineering, environmental and financial studies relating to each project, as well as updated demand assessment and the availability of resources at the time. The Government will implement new railway projects in an orderly manner in light of actual circumstances including the manpower situation of the construction industry. As an established procedure, the Government will consult the public on the detailed alignment, locations of stations, mode of implementation, cost estimate, mode of financing and actual implementation timetable prior to the finalisation of any new railway scheme.

We will strive to consult the public, including the Legislative Council and the District Councils concerned, on the Tuen Mun South Extension and the Northern Link (and Kwu Tung Station) within the 2017-18 legislative year.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SV-THB(T)03

(Question Serial No. SV022)

Head: (186) Transport Department

Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified

Programme: (4) Management of Transport Services

Controlling Officer: Commissioner for Transport (Mrs Ingrid YEUNG)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Transport and Housing

Question:

Follow-up question to Reply Serial No. THB(T)149:

- (i) Will the Government provide the total number of parking spaces provided by public car parks in each of the districts in Hong Kong?
- (ii) According to the statistics compiled by the Government, the number of parking spaces provided by public car parks has been decreasing year by year since the financial year 2013-14. How will the Government make up for the shortfall in parking spaces?

Asked by: Hon CHAN Han-pan

(Asked at 6:34 p.m. on 5 April 2017)

Reply:

The Government has been adopting a transport policy that is based on public transport and has been maintaining a public transport system with wide coverage, high efficiency and diversity. In urban areas and densely developed areas, the public transport networks are relatively well-developed in general. We encourage members of the public to opt for public transport in lieu of private cars when travelling to these areas. Motorists, before making their journeys, should also consider whether there are enough parking spaces at the destinations, and if there are not, they should choose public transport or park their cars in the areas nearby and then interchange to other modes of transport. Lastly, members of the public should consider whether there are suitable parking spaces for parking before buying their cars.

Given the limited land resources in Hong Kong, it is very difficult to provide additional parking spaces in urban areas and densely developed areas. Nevertheless, the Government will continue to provide an appropriate number of parking spaces for private cars through new development projects or redevelopment projects if the overall development permits. However, we also have to consider the need for the use of land or floor area for other purposes. In fact, the supply of parking spaces for private cars could hardly catch up with

the rapid growth in private cars in recent years. Should this be pursued, it will also attract passengers to opt for private cars in lieu of public transport, thereby causing traffic congestion. How the balance should be struck would be based on the policy principles and also the actual situation in the districts.

As at end-February 2017, the total numbers of parking spaces provided by public car parks in various districts in Hong Kong are tabulated as follows:

District	Number of parking spaces provided by public car parks^{Note}
Central and Western	11 866
Wan Chai	9 999
Eastern	14 404
Southern	8 865
Yau Tsim Mong	17 606
Sham Shui Po	13 005
Kowloon City	12 571
Wong Tai Sin	7 043
Kwun Tong	15 385
Tsuen Wan	11 774
Tuen Mun	11 236
Yuen Long	10 115
North	7 212
Tai Po	7 861
Sai Kung	12 414
Sha Tin	18 878
Kwai Tsing	18 495
Islands	7 744
Total number in Hong Kong	216 473

(Note: including privately operated car parks, government car parks and on-street metered parking spaces available for use by the general public and taking into account parking spaces for private cars, goods vehicles and non-franchised buses.)

The Transport Department (TD) noted that the number of parking spaces provided by public car parks has decreased between the financial years 2013-14 and 2015-16, mainly due to the fact that some short-term tenancy (STT) car parks were taken back to make way for long-term development and some existing public car parks were closed down as a result of the redevelopment of the buildings in which the public car parks were located.

When an STT car park is to be taken back to make way for long-term development, the TD will identify other suitable sites for use as STT car parks having regard to the demand for parking space in the districts concerned, and consider requiring the new development projects on the original site to provide an appropriate number of parking spaces in public car

parks. Taking the take-back of the STT car park sites at Lei Yue Mun Path and Yan Yue Wai, Kwun Tong for residential development as examples, the Government required the developer of the new development project at Lei Yue Mun Path to provide at least 263 public parking spaces in the development, whereas the developer of the development project at Yan Yue Wai was required to provide a temporary public car park within the site of the development after the STT car park ceased operation and to provide a permanent public car park after the completion of the development project, providing parking spaces for 122 private cars, 24 light goods vehicles and 25 heavy goods vehicles/buses.

Regarding redevelopment projects, the Government will require developers to provide an appropriate number of additional public parking spaces under suitable redevelopment projects having regard to the demand for parking spaces in the districts concerned so as to make up for the loss in parking spaces. For example, after the redevelopment of Wharf T & T Square, Kwun Tong, 180 public parking spaces for private cars and 10 public parking spaces for commercial vehicles would be provided; after the redevelopment of the Tsuen Wan Transport Complex Multi-storey Car Park, 100 public parking spaces for private cars and 120 MTR park-and-ride parking spaces would be provided in the newly developed Tsuen Wan 5 development projects of the Tsuen Wan West Station; and after the redevelopment of the Middle Road Car Park, 345 public parking spaces for private cars would be reprovisioned under the project.

Through the above arrangements, there was a rebound in the number of parking spaces provided by public car parks in the financial year 2016-17.

Moreover, the TD is about to commence a consultancy study on parking for commercial vehicles in 2017 with an aim to formulate suitable measures to meet the parking need of commercial vehicles. The TD is making preparations for engaging a consultant for the study, including formulating the scope of study and drafting tender documents, and will later commence the consultant selection exercise. The study is expected to last for 2 years.

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CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SV-THB(T)04

(Question Serial No. SV021)

Head: (186) Transport Department

Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified

Programme: (2) Licensing of Vehicles and Drivers

Controlling Officer: Commissioner for Transport (Mrs Ingrid YEUNG)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Transport and Housing

Question:

Follow-up question to Reply Serial No. THB(T)166:

Currently, the Hong Kong Police Force issues closed road permits for non-cross-boundary vehicles which enter the Frontier Closed Area in accordance with the Road Traffic (Registration and Licensing of Vehicles) Regulations (Cap 374E) (the Regulations), and the Government will not charge these non-cross-boundary vehicles for the issue of the relevant closed road permits. Will the Government consider adopting the above arrangement to replace the regulatory measure under regulation 49 of the Regulations, so that the fees payable for the issue of Lantau Closed Road Permits can be waived?

Asked by: Hon LEUNG Che-cheung

(Asked at 5:53 p.m. on 5 April 2017)

Reply:

Pursuant to regulation 49 of the Road Traffic (Registration and Licensing of Vehicles) Regulations (Cap 374E) (the Regulations), any person who wishes to drive a motor vehicle on a closed road to a place outside Hong Kong, or on a closed road in Lantau, may apply to the Commissioner for Transport (the Commissioner) for a closed road permit. The Commissioner may issue closed road permits for cross-boundary vehicles or those travelling on the closed roads in Lantau. When issuing the above permits, the Transport Department is obliged under the law to charge the fees prescribed in Schedule 2 to the Regulations. On the other hand, as for the closed roads in the Frontier Closed Area, the existing legislation does not empower the Government to charge fees for the issue of closed road permits to non-cross-boundary vehicles.

Waiving the fees payable for the issue of Lantau closed road permits involves policy considerations and requires amendments to the Regulations. The Government will explore the feasibility of waiving the fees concerned.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

SV-THB(T)05

(Question Serial No. SV020)

Head: (186) Transport Department

Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified

Programme: (-) Not Specified

Controlling Officer: Commissioner for Transport (Mrs Ingrid YEUNG)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Transport and Housing

Question:

Is the operation of the vehicles of the People's Liberation Army Hong Kong Garrison (Hong Kong Garrison) in Hong Kong not subject to the regulation of the legislation and the Government of Hong Kong?

Asked by: Hon MO Claudia

(Asked at 5:40 p.m. on 5 April 2017)

Reply:

According to the information provided by the Security Bureau, Article 14 of the Basic Law stipulates that in addition to abiding by national laws, members of the Hong Kong Garrison shall abide by the laws of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR), including the applicable provisions of the Road Traffic Ordinance (Cap. 374). The Hong Kong Garrison has been strictly complying with the Basic Law, the Law of the People's Republic of China on the Garrisoning of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (Garrison Law) and the laws of the HKSAR, including the applicable provisions of the road traffic legislation.

In addition, according to Article 7 of the Garrison Law, no weapon and equipment, and no material of the Hong Kong Garrison, and no member or vehicle of the Garrison that bears a certificate or a document of certification issued by the Hong Kong Garrison showing that the bearer is on official duty, shall be inspected, searched, seized or detained by any law-enforcing officer of the HKSAR. The Hong Kong Garrison and its members shall also enjoy other rights and immunities prescribed by the laws in force in the HKSAR.

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