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Clerk to Panel on Transport
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central
Hong Kong
(Attn.: Ms Sophie LAU)

By email and fax
(Fax: 2840 0716)

10 June 2020

Dear Ms LAU,

Panel on Transport

Request for extending the coverage of Universal Accessibility Programme in Kowloon East District

Thank you for your letter dated 15 January 2020. Regarding Hon. Wilson OR Chong-shing's suggestions, having consulted the Transport Department, the Highways Department and the Housing Department, our consolidated reply is as follows:

Proposals for providing additional Barrier-free Access (BFA) facilities

The Government has been striving to create a barrier-free and accessible environment and has launched the "Universal Accessibility" (UA) Programme to retrofit BFA facilities to existing walkways (i.e. footbridges, elevated walkways and subways) to facilitate members of the public crossing public roads. Meanwhile, the Government also continues to take forward current Hillside Escalator Links and Elevator Systems (HEL) proposals with a view to enhancing the accessibility of hillside areas and facilitating people to commute.

If a proposal does not involve the retrofitting of lifts at existing footbridges, elevated walkways or subways, it would not fall within the ambit of the UA Programme. That said, if the proposal may enhance the accessibility of hillside areas or achieve other policy objectives, the Government will also consider the proposal under the ambit of HEL. The Government's response to Hon. OR's various suggestions on retrofitting BFA facilities is at **Annex**.

Further expanding the ambit of the UA Programme and reviewing the feasibility of resumption of private land

Generally speaking, lift retrofitting items under the UA Programme do not involve resumption of land in order to avoid the Government's taking over of private owners' land and responsibilities to ensure proper use of public funds.

The Government announced in the 2019 Policy Address that a "Special Scheme" would be launched under the UA Programme to retrofit lifts to walkways in estates under the Tenants Purchase Scheme, the Buy or Rent Option Scheme, as well as public rental housing estates with properties divested under the Hong Kong Housing Authority (HKHA).

In expanding the ambit of the UA Programme to cover the three types of housing estates mentioned above, the Government mainly takes into account the fact that although part of the ownership of these estates have been disposed, many of their residents are still tenants of the HKHA. As these tenants are no different from those in regular public housing estates, the Government thus considers that it should facilitate the residents in these housing estates in using BFA facilities.

As for other privately-owned housing estates (including various types of subsidised sale housing, such as those under HKHA's Home Ownership Scheme, etc.), given they are private properties, it should be left to the owners of these properties to consider the retrofitting of such facilities to ensure the proper use of public funds.

Setting up a dedicated fund

We are studying the suggestion of establishing an "HEL Works Fund" with the relevant departments and examining its feasibility.

Yours sincerely,



(Austin HSU)

for Secretary for Transport and Housing

c.c.:

Director of Highways

Commissioner for Transport

Director of Housing

(Attn.: Ms FUNG Shuk-yan)

(Attn.: Mr TANG Lai-yin, Ricky)

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**The Government's Response to various suggestions
on Barrier-free Access (BFA) Facilities**

Suggestions	The Government's Response
Proposal under the Energizing Kowloon East initiative	
1. Constructing a new footbridge with BFA facilities at Exit A of MTR Kowloon Bay Station (Proposal 1)	The Highways Department (HyD) has engaged an engineering consultant in August 2019 to commence the investigation and design work for constructing a new footbridge with BFA facilities at Exit A of MTR Kowloon Bay Station. Upon completion of such work, HyD will brief the District Council (DC) on the findings and the preliminary design scheme.
Proposals related to the Universal Accessibility (UA) Programme	
2. Retrofitting lifts to connect MTR Choi Hung Station and Ngau Chi Wan Market (Proposal 9)	HyD has engaged an engineering consultant to study the location concerned and touched base with the MTR Corporation Limited. As there is inadequate and no suitable space at the ground level for the construction of a lift tower, and the underground utilities near Exit B of MTR Choi Hung Station could not be relocated due to technical problems, the proposal cannot be implemented.
3. Retrofitting lifts to the footbridge across Choi Fai Estate and Ngau Chi Wan Street, Wong Tai Sin (Proposal 10)	The proposal for retrofitting lifts to the footbridge across Choi Fai Estate and Ngau Chi Wan Street, Wong Tai Sin (Structure No. WTS01) is one of the items under the Third Phase of the

Suggestions	The Government's Response
	<p>UA Programme.</p> <p>HyD has engaged an engineering consultant to commence investigation for the proposal to ascertain its feasibility. After completion of such work, HyD will brief the DC on the findings and the preliminary design scheme.</p>
<p>Proposals related to the Hillside Escalator Links and Elevator Systems (HEL)</p> <p>As the following proposals do not involve retrofitting of lifts at existing footbridges, elevated walkways or subways, they cannot be considered under the ambit of the UA Programme. The Government's response on whether the following proposals can be implemented under the scope of HEL are as follows.</p>	
4. Retrofitting lifts to the walkway connecting Sau Mau Ming Estate and Sau Mau Ping Shopping Mall, Kwun Tong (Proposal 2)	<p>All these proposals either connect to or fall entirely within Tenants Purchase Scheme or public housing estates with properties divested under the Hong Kong Housing Authority, involving private ownership. At present, the scope of HEL does not include areas which fall entirely within or solely connect to private development/land (including the abovementioned housing estates which involve private ownership) to</p>
5. Retrofitting lifts to the walkway connecting Shun Tin Estate to Hip Wo Street, Kwun Tong (Proposal 3)	
6. Retrofitting lifts to the "zig-zag staircase" ¹ at Lok Nga Court,	

¹ The Housing Department advised that this staircase is situated within the boundary of Lok Wah North Estate.

Suggestions	The Government's Response
Ngau Tau Kok (Proposal 4)	ensure the proper use of public funds.
7. Retrofitting lifts to the staircase connecting to Ping Tin Estate at Tak Lung House, Tak Tin Estate, Kwun Tong (Proposal 7)	
8. Retrofitting lifts to the staircase off Tak Lok House, Tak Tin Estate, Kwun Tong (Proposal 8)	
9. Constructing a walkway and lifts connecting Lei Yu Mun Road and Ko Chiu Road, Yau Tong (Proposal 6)	<p>The Transport Department (TD) commenced a consultancy study in December 2017 to review and improve the assessment mechanism for HEL proposals and, based on the revised mechanism, carry out initial screening, shortlisting and prioritisation of a total of 114 HEL proposals received over the past few years. The Government reported the latest progress of the proposed revision of the assessment mechanism to the Subcommittee on HEL under the Legislative Council Panel on Transport in November 2019. Members expressed support for the revised mechanism.</p> <p>The consultant is conducting preliminary assessment on the 114 HEL proposals received over the last few years in accordance with the revised assessment mechanism. TD</p>

Suggestions	The Government's Response
	<p>plans to consult DCs within this year so as to finalise the first batch of projects for implementation.</p> <p>TD noted this proposal and will take follow up actions along with other new proposals after the first batch of projects have been smoothly implemented.</p>
<p>10. Constructing lifts and a walkway connecting Choi Hing Court and MTR Choi Hung Station (Proposal 5)</p>	<p>Choi Hing Court is a residential property under the Home Ownership Scheme, which is privately-owned. We suggest that it should be left to its owners to consider the retrofitting of such facilities to ensure the proper use of public funds.</p>