

立法會

Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(4)139/20-21(05)

Ref. : CB4/PL/TP

Panel on Transport Meeting on 20 November 2020

Updated background brief on "Universal Accessibility" Programme

Purpose

This paper provides updated background information on the "Universal Accessibility" ("UA") Programme and summarizes the major views and concerns expressed by Legislative Council ("LegCo") Members on the subject.

Background

New policy for providing barrier-free access facilities

2. The Administration announced a new policy on UA in August 2012. The policy aims at expanding the scope of the Administration's original programme to retrofit barrier-free access ("BFA") facilities to existing public walkways (i.e. footbridges, elevated walkways and subways) ("the Original Programme") so as to facilitate access of the public. Since then, when considering retrofitting BFA facilities to existing or newly constructed public walkways, the Administration would treat *lifts* and *ramps* equally (unless the site conditions dictate one form over another), which is a change from the past practice which gives priority to ramps. As long as site conditions permit, the Administration will still consider installing lifts at walkways where there is already a standard ramp installed. After a lift has been installed, the Administration will evaluate whether to keep the ramp or demolish it for more spacious pavement or to make way for roadside greening.

3. When announcing the new policy, the Administration at the same time invited members of the public to propose by the end of October 2012 locations of public walkways where they considered necessary to retrofit lifts. During the nomination period, the Administration received suggestions involving over

250 suggested locations/public walkways within the ambit of the policy¹ ("the Expanded Programme"). The Administration invited all the 18 District Councils ("DCs") to prioritize the new items in their districts proposed by the public in the first half of 2013. Each of DCs selected three public walkways (locations) for priority implementation, viz. a total of 54 public walkways (locations). Among them, some public walkways (locations) involved more than one structure number (item), resulting in a total of 57 priority items.

The Second Phase

4. Following the announcement of the initiative to further expand the ambit of the UA Programme in the 2016 Policy Address, from December 2016 to mid-2017, the Highways Department ("HyD") had invited 18 DCs to further nominate not more than three existing walkways in each district for implementation in the next phase of the UA Programme ("the Second Phase"). The walkways eligible for consideration by DCs in the Second Phase were no longer confined to public walkways maintained by the HyD, provided that four criteria² were met and no land resumption would be involved to ensure the proper use of public funds. HyD has carried out the investigation or design work for the 47 items³ selected under the Second Phase, with a view to commencing the construction works progressively starting from the first half of 2019.

The Third Phase

5. As the UA Programme has been widely supported by the community, it was announced in the 2018 Policy Address that the Administration would commence a feasibility study in the first half of 2019 on lift retrofitting proposals for the remaining some 120 walkways under the current ambit of the programme across various districts with a view to taking forward the feasible items expeditiously so as to benefit the elderly and people in need ("the Third Phase"). HyD appointed consultants in the third quarter of 2019 to

¹ The list of suggested locations can be found at LC Paper No. PWSC21/12-13(01) issued by the Transport and Housing Bureau on 7 January 2013.

² The four criteria are:

- (a) the walkways span across public roads maintained by HyD;
- (b) they are open for public access from public roads at all times;
- (c) the walkways are not privately owned; and
- (d) the parties responsible for the management and maintenance of these walkways agree to such lift retrofitting proposals and are willing to co-operate with the Administration during the implementation of the said lift retrofitting works as well as the subsequent management and maintenance works of the lifts.

³ According to the information provided by the Administration (LC Paper No. CB(4)179/18-19(03)), two items were confirmed to be technically infeasible after investigation. The number of items under the Second Phase is now 45.

progressively start the investigation for the items under the Third Phase so as to ascertain their technical feasibility. If the lift retrofitting items are confirmed to be technically feasible, HyD would commence the design work and conduct public consultation. Subject to the support of the respective DCs, the relevant construction works are anticipated to commence progressively from 2021.

Special Scheme

6. As announced in the 2019 Policy Address, the Government decided to expand the ambit of the UA Programme, with a view to providing more BFA facilities for convenient access to walkways by pedestrians, following a review. A "Special Scheme" has been launched to retrofit lifts at walkways in or connecting to the common areas of the following three types of estates, namely 39 estates under the Tenants Purchase Scheme and three estates under the Buy or Rent Option Scheme with some of their residential flats sold, as well as 98 public rental estates with non-residential properties divested. HyD planned to consult DCs in 2020 on the lift retrofitting items for the Special Scheme and the priorities for implementation. Following the completion of the DC consultation, HyD planned to start in 2021 the feasibility study and design work for the items under the Special Scheme with a view to commencing construction works for these new items as soon as possible.

7. Members were advised that similar to the Second and Third phases of the UA Programme, lift retrofitting items under the Special Scheme could only be taken forward provided that the relevant owner(s) or parties responsible for the management of the concerned land/walkways agree to such lift retrofitting proposals and are willing to cooperate with the Government in subsequent management and maintenance of the lifts, and that no land resumption would be involved.

Funding applications

8. On 11 January 2013, the Finance Committee ("FC") approved the Administration's application for creating a new block allocation Subhead 6101TX—"Universal Accessibility Programme" under Capital Works Reserve Fund Head 706—"Highways" to fund the implementation of the UA Programme.

9. On 22 February 2019, FC approved an allocation of \$610 million in 2020-2021 to implement the UA Programme. Allocations approved since 2012-2013 are given in the following table:

Years	Allocations approved by FC
2012-2013	\$2.449 million
2013-2014	\$187.272 million
2014-2015	\$567.696 million
2015-2016	\$803.980 million
2016-2017	\$770.900 million
2017-2018	\$850.000 million
2018-2019	\$730.000 million
2019-2020	\$650.000 million
2020-2021	\$610.000 million

Major views and concerns of Members

10. At the meetings of the Council, FC, Public Works Subcommittee and Panel on Transport ("the Panel") held in the Fifth and Sixth LegCo, Members generally expressed support to the Administration's new policy and urged the Administration to speed up the funding arrangements and works schedule. During the previous discussions, Members also expressed views on the design, specifications and facilities for the lifts.

Progress of the UA Programme

11. A number of members expressed concern over the slow implementation progress of the UA Programme. They considered that the Administration should make known to the public the relevant information. In order to expedite the retrofitting works, they made several suggestions, such as streamlining some preparatory works of the projects, screening out infeasible items during the feasibility study stage, adopting the design-and-build approach in carrying out the UA Programme and using default accessories so as to speed up construction. A member also enquired about the measures to be adopted by HyD to expedite the implementation of the lift retrofitting items to be proposed under the Special Scheme.

12. The Administration explained that during the implementation of the UA Programme, considerable time had to be spent on administrative and technical aspects of the works according to the established procedures, in particular the diversion of congested underground utilities affected by the proposed retrofitting of lifts. HyD had been working closely with utilities companies and would

excavate trial pits under pre-construction contracts at the design stage to ascertain the actual position and condition of underground utilities as early as possible, such that the projects could be taken forward more smoothly during construction stages. HyD would commence the retrofitting works as soon as possible upon obtaining public support for such works and completing the detailed design and tendering procedures. Additionally, HyD was considering adopting the Modular Integrated Construction method under which the design of the lift towers and lifts would be standardized to reduce the time for construction. Furthermore, HyD would award contracts in batches for items which were ready for implementation, such that the implementation programme of those items would not be affected by hiccups in individual items.

Criteria for selecting projects for priority implementation

13. Some members expressed concern about the criteria for selecting projects by DCs for priority implementation and queried the appropriateness of the allocation of a maximum of three walkways equally to each district. A member considered that population size and structure, pedestrian flow and geographic location of public walkways differed across districts, hence the number of nominations made by each DC should be in proportion to the abovementioned factors. Flexibility for DCs to nominate more than three items should be allowed to reflect the genuine needs of the community. The Administration advised that in order to facilitate the reaching of consensus over the set of criteria for expanding the scope of the UA Programme and hence expedite the progress of implementation, the Administration had decided to use the criteria (including the allocation of a maximum of three walkways for each district) adopted in the previous round of consultation, and would take into account members' views and review the selection criteria and the allocation to each district in future as appropriate.

Scope of the UA Programme

14. Members had been urging the Administration to further expand the funding scope of the UA Programme to cover private estates, Home Ownership Schemes estates (such as Po Pui Estate), Tenants Purchase Scheme estates under the Hong Kong Housing Authority ("HKHA") and Housing Department (such as Kwong Yuen Estate and Chuk Yuen North Estate). It was also suggested that the Administration should expand the scope to cover walkways connecting to MTR stations and those in the estates managed by the Link Real Estate Investment Trust ("Link REIT").

15. The Administration advised that for walkways which involved private ownership, although they fell outside the ambit of the UA Programme, the

Administration would refer those proposals to the relevant organizations for consideration and follow-up. Those organizations including HKHA, Link REIT and the MTR Corporation Limited had considered and would implement some of the proposals referred to them.

16. Members expressed appreciation that the Administration had decided to expand the ambit of the UA Programme and to launch a Special Scheme for retrofitting lifts at walkways in or connecting to the common areas of three types of housing estates, i.e. estates under Tenants Purchase Scheme, the Buy or Rent Option Scheme and public rental estates with non-residential properties divested. Some members urged the Administration to consider invoking the Lands Resumption Ordinance (Cap. 124) to resume land on the presumption of public interests in order to resolve the issue of complicated property rights and expedite the implementation of lift retrofitting projects.

17. The Administration advised that given that the ambit of Subhead 6101TX—"Universal Accessibility Programme" under Head 706 – "Highways" covered projects costing up to \$75 million each, one of the criteria for the selection of walkways for inclusion in the UA Programme was that no land resumption would be involved in order to ensure the proper use of public funds. Besides, as the Administration would fully finance the retrofitting of barrier-free access facilities, local disputes on lift retrofitting proposals might be considerably reduced. Land resumption would not be envisaged under the UAP.

18. In response to some members' views that walkways located at private estates and were open for public use should be covered by the UA Programme, the Administration advised that it was important to identify whether the walkways concerned were within the precincts of the private estate as stipulated in the land lease. If they were, they would fall outside the ambit of the expanded UA Programme. However, for walkways which were not privately owned but were managed and maintained by other parties, they could be covered under the UA Programme without the need for the Government to take over the management and maintenance responsibilities concerned. In such cases, the lift retrofitting and maintenance work would be carried out by the Government whereas the walkways concerned would continue to be managed and maintained by the relevant parties stipulated in the land lease. The Administration considered that to ensure the proper use of public funds, the responsibility of providing barrier-free facilities in private premises should be borne by the owners concerned.

Financing of the UA Programme

19. A member was concerned if the Administration would consider lifting the financial cap of \$75 million per project under the UA Programme so as to obviate the need for applying funds from LegCo to implement projects costing above \$75 million. The Administration advised that it might not be necessary to review the said threshold for the time being as no project had exceeded the cost of \$75 million since 2013.

Manpower supply and lift maintenance

20. Noting that there were succession problems of construction and lifts workers, some members were concerned about whether there was sufficient manpower to implement the proposals under the UA Programme and to carry out the maintenance works in the future. They therefore urged the Administration to ensure sufficient manpower for implementing the UA Programme on schedule, and the maintenance works thereafter. The impact of suspension of lift service due to the need for maintenance and repair should be minimized.

21. At the Panel meeting held on 17 November 2017, the Administration advised that based on the fact that the current number of lifts to be installed under the UA Programme would be about 250, in comparison with the current number of about 60 000 lifts in the territory, the additional manpower requirement for lift installation should be insignificant and that the existing manpower supply should not be over-stretched. The Administration supplemented that the Development Bureau and Construction Industry Council had been organizing relevant training programmes to meet the manpower demand.

22. At the Panel meeting held on 16 November 2018, some members enquired about the number of contractors and workers involved in the UA Programme and whether the number was sufficient. The Administration responded that more than 10 contractors had been involved in the works contracts under the UA Programme, which were still far below the number of contractors on the List of Approved Contractors for Public Works. There were some 8 000 lift workers in the market. Besides, works contracts would be let out progressively under the Third Phase, i.e. when a batch of items was ready to start construction, a works contract would be tendered out. Therefore, the resources of contractors and lift workers in the market should not be affected by the staged implementation of the Third Phase.

Lift design and facilities

23. Some members previously expressed concern about whether the provision of air-conditioning service was a standard provision for all lifts. They suggested that while the provision of air-conditioning service for lifts with heavy utilization was reasonable, the provision of such service for those with low usage rates was not environment-friendly. Also, they considered that the provision of air-conditioning service undesirable as there were times when the air-conditioners were out of order and the lifts became stuffy inside. Instead, they suggested providing natural ventilation for lifts and adding sunlight films as most of the lifts were made of transparent glass panels.

24. The Administration responded that there was no set policy for providing air-conditioning service for lifts. In addition, measures had been adopted to reduce sunlight and heat at lifts. They included the adoption of concrete walls at the side of the lift facing strong sunlight, low-emissivity glass panels, energy efficient fluorescent tubes and mechanical ventilation systems. The Administration noted that users were generally satisfied with the temperature inside the lifts.

25. Apart from the provision of air-conditioning service, members expressed that some facilitates like the elevator buttons and tactile guide paths were not provided in the design to cater for those in need and the space in the vicinity of some footbridges were not spacious enough to facilitate the turning of wheelchairs. The Administration advised that when designing BFA standard, it had already consulted relevant stakeholders, including persons with disabilities. The Administration added that it would carry out technical feasibility study before commencing the design and construction works of each retrofitting project.

26. On the suggestion that some green features or district characteristics should be added to enhance the appearance of the lifts, the Administration responded that DCs would be consulted on the lift design and the Administration would take forward DCs' comments as far as practicable. If each lift carried special design or appearance, the construction or maintenance costs might be increased in view of the number of lifts to be installed.

Relevant questions raised at Council meetings and other relevant papers

27. The hyperlinks to the questions relating to UA Programme raised at Council meetings in the sixth LegCo and other relevant papers are in the **Appendix**.

Latest position

28. The Administration plans to report on the latest progress of the UA Programme at the Panel meeting to be held on 20 November 2020.

Council Business Division 4
Legislative Council Secretariat
13 November 2020

"Universal Accessibility" Programme**List of relevant papers**

Date of meeting	Meeting	Minutes/Paper	LC Paper No.
2.11.2016	Council meeting	Hon WU Chi-wai raised a question on public walkways	http://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/201611/02/P2016110200688.htm
18.11.2016	TP	Administration's paper on "Universal Accessibility" Programme	CB(4)108/16-17(03) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr16-17/english/panels/tp/papers/tp20161118cb4-108-3-e.pdf
		Paper on "Universal Accessibility" Programme prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat (updated background brief)	CB(4)108/16-17(04) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr16-17/english/panels/tp/papers/tp20161118cb4-108-4-e.pdf
		Administration's supplementary information	CB(4)258/16-17(01) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr16-17/english/panels/tp/papers/tp20161118cb4-258-1-e.pdf
		Minutes of meeting	CB(4)612/16-17 http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr16-17/english/panels/tp/minutes/tp20161118.pdf
22.2.2017	PWSC	Administration's paper on Capital Works Reserve Fund	PWSC(2016-17)37 http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr16-17/english/fc/pwsc/papers/p16-37e.pdf

Date of meeting	Meeting	Minutes/Paper	LC Paper No.
17.11.2017	TP	Administration's paper on "Universal Accessibility" Programme	CB(4)182/17-18(03) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr17-18/english/panels/tp/papers/tp20171117cb4-182-3-e.pdf
		Paper on "Universal Accessibility" Programme prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat (updated background brief)	CB(4)182/17-18(04) http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr17-18/english/panels/tp/papers/tp20171117cb4-182-4-e.pdf
		Minutes	CB(4)705/17-18 http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr17-18/english/panels/tp/minutes/tp20171117.pdf
6.12.2017	Council meeting	Hon CHAN Han-pan raised a question on provision of barrier-free access to Tenants Purchase Scheme estates	https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/201712/06/P2017120600540.htm?fontSize=1
31.1.2018	PWSC	Administration's paper on Capital Works Reserve Fund	PWSC(2017-18)25 http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr17-18/english/fc/pwsc/papers/p17-25e.pdf
		Minutes of meeting	PWSC136/17-18 http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr17-18/english/fc/pwsc/minutes/pwsc20180131.pdf
23.3.2018	Finance Committee	Recommendation of PWSC on Public Works Programme and capital subvention projects	FCR(2017-18)63 http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr17-18/english/fc/fc/papers/f17-63e.pdf

Date of meeting	Meeting	Minutes/Paper	LC Paper No.
		Minutes of meeting	FC113/18-19 https://www.legco.gov.hk/yr17-18/english/fc/fc/minutes/fc20180323.pdf
18.4.2018	Finance Committee (Special meeting)	Replies to initial written questions raised by Finance Committee Members in examining the Estimates of Expenditure 2018-2019 (Session No.: 9) (Questions Serial Nos. 0904, 1280, 1742, 1923, 2879, 3164, 3794, 4268, 4403, 5476, 5659, 5661, 5664, 5869, 6090)	https://www.legco.gov.hk/yr17-18/english/fc/fc/w_q/t_hb-t-e.pdf
2.5.2018	Council meeting	Hon James TO raised a question on barrier-free facilities in commercial premises	https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/201805/02/P2018050200458.htm
4.7.2018		Hon LAM Cheuk-ting raised a question on hillside escalator links and elevator systems	https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/201807/04/P2018070300759.htm
16.11.2018	TP	Administration's paper on "Universal Accessibility" Programme	CB(4)179/18-19(03) https://www.legco.gov.hk/yr18-19/english/panels/tp/papers/tp20181116cb4-179-3-e.pdf
		Paper on "Universal Accessibility" Programme prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat (updated background brief)	CB(4)179/18-19(04) https://www.legco.gov.hk/yr18-19/english/panels/tp/papers/tp20181116cb4-179-4-e.pdf

Date of meeting	Meeting	Minutes/Paper	LC Paper No.
		Administration's supplementary information	CB(4)406/18-19(01) https://www.legco.gov.hk/yr18-19/english/panels/tp/papers/tp20181116cb4-406-1-e.pdf
		Minutes of meeting	CB(4)1172/18-19 https://www.legco.gov.hk/yr18-19/english/panels/tp/minutes/tp20181116.pdf
30.1.2019	PWSC	Administration's paper on Capital Works Reserve Fund	PWSC(2018-19)35 https://www.legco.gov.hk/yr18-19/english/fc/pwsc/papers/p18-35e.pdf
		Minutes of meeting	PWSC142/18-19 https://www.legco.gov.hk/yr18-19/english/fc/pwsc/minutes/pwsc20190130.pdf
22.2.2019	Finance Committee	Recommendation of PWSC on Public Works Programme and capital subvention projects	FCR(2018-19)84 https://www.legco.gov.hk/yr18-19/english/fc/fc/papers/f18-84e.pdf
		Minutes of meeting	FC80/19-20 https://www.legco.gov.hk/yr18-19/english/fc/fc/minutes/fc20190222.pdf
27.2.2019	Council meeting	Hon Wilson OR raised a question on Universal Accessibility Programme	https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/201902/27/P2019022700363.htm

Date of meeting	Meeting	Minutes/Paper	LC Paper No.
9.4.2019	Finance Committee (Special meeting)	Replies to initial written questions raised by Finance Committee Members in examining the Estimates of Expenditure 2019-2020 (Session No.: 9) (Questions Serial Nos. 0149, 0151, 0375, 0928, 1024, 3172, 3548, 3599, 4306, 4774, 4775, 5076)	https://www.legco.gov.hk/yr18-19/english/fc/fc/w_q/t_hb-t-e.pdf
25.10.2019	TP	Administration's paper on Transport-related Policy Initiatives in 2019 Policy Address	CB(4)13/19-20(01) https://www.legco.gov.hk/yr19-20/english/panels/tp/papers/tp20191025cb4-13-1-e.pdf
		Minutes of meeting	CB(4)280/19-20 https://www.legco.gov.hk/yr19-20/english/panels/tp/minutes/tp20191025.pdf
15.11.2019	TP	Administration's paper on "Universal Accessibility" Programme	CB(4)114/19-20(03) https://www.legco.gov.hk/yr19-20/english/panels/tp/papers/tp20191115cb4-114-3-e.pdf
		Paper on "Universal Accessibility" Programme prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat (Updated background brief)	CB(4)114/19-20(04) https://www.legco.gov.hk/yr19-20/english/panels/tp/papers/tp20191115cb4-114-4-e.pdf

Date of meeting	Meeting	Minutes/Paper	LC Paper No.
		Administration's response to the motion passed under the agenda item of "6101TX - "Universal Accessibility" Programme" at the meeting on 15 November 2019 as set out in LC Paper No. CB(4)128/19-20(01)	CB(4)226/19-20(01) https://www.legco.gov.hk/yr19-20/english/panels/tp/papers/tp20191115cb4-226-1-e.pdf
		Minutes of meeting	CB(4)281/19-20 https://www.legco.gov.hk/yr19-20/english/panels/tp/minutes/tp20191115.pdf
26.2.2020	PWSC	Administration's paper on Capital Works Reserve Fund	PWSC(2019-20)23 https://www.legco.gov.hk/yr19-20/english/fc/pwsc/papers/p19-23e.pdf
		Minutes of meeting	PWSC200/19-20 https://www.legco.gov.hk/yr19-20/chinese/fc/pwsc/minutes/pwsc20200226.pdf (English version to follow)
11.3.2020	Finance Committee	Administration's paper on Capital Works Reserve Fund	FCR(2019-20)47 https://www.legco.gov.hk/yr19-20/english/fc/fc/papers/f19-47e.pdf
		Minutes of meeting	FC279/19-20 https://www.legco.gov.hk/yr19-20/english/fc/fc/minutes/fc20200311.pdf

Date of meeting	Meeting	Minutes/Paper	LC Paper No.
6.4.2020	Finance Committee (Special meeting)	Replies to initial written questions raised by Finance Committee Members in examining the Estimates of Expenditure 2020-2021 (Session No.: 9) (Questions Serial Nos. 0007, 0267, 0897, 1450, 4762, 5423)	https://www.legco.gov.hk/yr19-20/english/fc/fc/w_q/t_hb-t-e.pdf
19.6.2020	TP	Administration's response to the letter from Hon Wilson OR Chong-shing requesting to extend the coverage of Universal Accessibility Programme in Kowloon East	CB(4)694/19-20(01) https://www.legco.gov.hk/yr19-20/english/panels/tp/papers/tp20200619cb4-694-1-e.pdf

Council Business Division 4
Legislative Council Secretariat
13 November 2020