

LCQ11: Government multi-storey car parks' utilisation rates

Following is a question by the Hon Miriam Lau and a written reply by the Secretary for Transport and Housing, Ms Eva Cheng, at the Legislative Council meeting today (February 3):

Question:

It has been reported that the utilisation rates of quite a number of government multi-storey car parks under the Transport Department ("TD") are persistently on the low side. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(a) of the respective utilisation rates of the various government multi-storey car parks under TD at present;

(b) apart from the parking standards stipulated in the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines, whether the authorities have considered other factors in deciding on the number of parking spaces required to be provided in various districts; if they have, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(c) whether the authorities had, in the past two years, looked into the causes for the persistently low utilisation rates of government multi-storey car parks; if they had, of the results; if not, whether they will conduct the relevant study;

(d) whether the authorities will re-assess the respective parking requirements of different categories of vehicles in various districts in Hong Kong, so as to ascertain the actual parking requirements in various districts and if their supply of parking spaces is sufficient; if they will, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(e) whether the authorities will adopt new measures to attract more users to those government multi-storey car parks with persistently low utilisation rates (e.g. providing hourly or monthly parking spaces with parking fees lower than those in private car parks, or introducing parking schemes with longer rental periods, or relaxing the restrictions for parking medium and heavy vehicles at government multi-storey car parks); and

(f) given that some members of the transport industry have relayed to me that there is a shortage of parking spaces for medium and heavy vehicles in many districts, whether the authorities will consider altering or rebuilding some of the government multi-storey car parks with low utilisation rates, so as to increase the number of such parking spaces; if they will, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

My reply to the various parts of the question is as follows:

(a) There are 14 multi-storey car parks under the management of the Transport Department (TD). According to the TD's statistics in December 2009, the average peak-hour utilisation rates of private car/light van parking spaces in about 40% of the car parks ranged from 50% to 96%, while the corresponding rates fell below 50% in the remaining car parks. As regards motorcycle parking spaces, the average peak-hour utilisation rates in about 90% of the car parks ranged from 56% to 93%, while the corresponding rates were less than 50% in the remaining car parks. Detailed figures are set out in the Annex.

(b) When planning the number of parking spaces in various districts, apart from making reference to the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines, the Administration will take into consideration the public transport network and traffic condition of the districts concerned, as well as the demand of the local community for parking spaces.

(c) Most of the government multi-storey car parks were completed more than 20 to 50 years ago. Over the years, the Administration has amended the planning standard to require newly developed buildings or shopping centres to provide adequate parking spaces to meet the demand. This arrangement has led to an increased supply of parking spaces in various districts and indirectly affected the utilisation rate of government car parks already built.

The supply and demand of parking spaces for different types of vehicles vary among different districts. The TD has been closely monitoring the provision and use of parking spaces in different districts by such means as conducting studies and surveys to ascertain the supply and demand situation in different districts. Generally speaking, the utilisation rate of motorcycle parking spaces in government car parks remains stable and relatively high. The utilisation rate of private car/light van parking spaces in some of the car parks is however on the low side due to the car parks' geographical locations (night-time utilisation is lower for car parks located in commercial areas) and the changes in distribution of economic activities over time in nearby districts.

(d) As mentioned above, the TD has been closely monitoring the provision and use of parking spaces in various districts. For instance, to cater for the shortage of parking spaces for medium / large goods vehicles in Western District on Hong Kong Island, the TD has implemented necessary measures last year such as providing more car parking spaces for these vehicles on sites under short term tenancies; and designating more on-street overnight parking spaces for goods vehicles with a

view to increasing the supply of these parking spaces as soon as possible. The TD will conduct studies from time to time to ascertain the supply and demand of parking spaces for various types of vehicles. For example, the TD is currently conducting a survey on the demand of goods vehicles for parking and loading/unloading facilities on Hong Kong Island so as to assess the latest situation and formulate recommendations to meet the demand. The TD is also carrying out a study on the parking standards for private housing developments to review if the relevant standards in the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines are still appropriate.

(e)&(f) To enhance the utilisation rate of government car parks, the TD reduced the parking fees of the government car parks under its management in 2007 after making reference to the fee level of nearby private car parks in the same district. Apart from hourly and monthly parking, most government car parks offer concessionary rates for long-hour day/night parking. The above measures have attracted some motorists to use government car parks. In addition, the TD has converted some parking spaces for private cars to motorcycle parking spaces as there is a greater demand for motorcycle parking spaces, and introduced monthly parking concession for taxis. These measures have not only effectively relieved such problems as shortage of motorcycle parking spaces and illegal parking but also helped improve the over-supply of overnight parking spaces in the car parks. To optimise the use of surplus space in the car parks, the TD has, through the Government Property Agency, converted part of the unoccupied floors as government offices or let them out for short-term uses.

The government multi-storey car parks are currently designed for private cars, light vans and motorcycles. Since private cars differ considerably in height and size from the medium and large vehicles, the width of ramp required to accommodate vehicular movements of the latter is different. Hence, the proposal to permit parking of medium and heavy vehicles at government multi-storey car parks is technically not feasible unless the car parks are rebuilt.

The TD will continue to keep in view the utilisation and fee level of its car parks as well as nearby private car parks and review the situation from time to time. Corresponding measures will be implemented when necessary to boost utilisation of government car parks. In the long run, subject to future planning in districts concerned, the TD will review with other relevant departments if redevelopment is required for government car parks that are persistently under-utilised. For example, to tie in with the construction of Central Kowloon Route, the Yau Ma Tei Multi-storey Car Park, which has a relatively low utilisation rate, will be demolished.

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