

LCQ6: Expansion of the footbridge system in Mong Kok

Following is a question by the Hon James To Kun-sun and a written reply by the Secretary for Transport and Housing, Ms Eva Cheng, at the Legislative Council meeting today (April 21):

Question:

In his 2008-2009 Policy Address, the Chief Executive stated that the Government would "take forward pedestrian schemes to minimise vehicle-pedestrian conflicts and improve roadside air quality" and also plan to extend the footbridge system in Mong Kok to cover central Mong Kok and the Tai Kok Tsui area. The Government anticipated that the technical feasibility study on the extension of the footbridge system would be completed in early 2010. Meanwhile, it has been reported that in respect of the re-provisioning of the government facilities at Sai Yee Street to dovetail with the extension works of the footbridge system, the Secretary for Development has indicated recently the plan to relocate the offices of the Water Supplies Department (WSD) at Sai Yee Street to a factory building, so as to vacate the site for commercial and public transport interchange purposes, etc. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(a) of the latest progress of the above feasibility study; when it anticipates to complete the study as well as draw up the design of the plan and the construction schedule;

(b) of the progress of relocating the offices of WSD, and when it anticipates to formally implement the relocation plan; as the representatives of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) indicated earlier at a meeting of the Yau Tsim Mong District Council that a suitable location had been identified for re-provisioning the facility of FEHD adjacent to the offices of WSD, whether the Government anticipates that

the relocation timetable for the facilities of the two departments can dovetail with each other, so as to vacate the two sites for combined development;

(c) given that the extension works of the Mong Kok Road footbridge system across Nathan Road were originally scheduled to commence in 2007, and have so far been delayed for quite some time, and that the Government has indicated recently that the works can commence in the fourth quarter of this year, of the reasons for repeated delays in commencing the works, the latest progress, whether the works can commence as scheduled, and when they are expected to complete; and

(d) apart from the above plan, whether the Government currently has other plans to minimise vehicle-pedestrian conflicts in the Mong Kok district, so as to improve pedestrian environment and safety; if so, of the details?

Reply:

President,

(a) Following announcement of the plan to extend the footbridge system in Mong Kok in the Policy Address delivered by the Chief Executive in October 2008, the Transport Department (TD) engaged a consultant in March 2009 to conduct an initial study on the expansion of the existing footbridge system in Mong Kok. Apart from examining various options for the footbridge proposal, the study also involved the collection of views of the relevant District Council and area committees. The study is near completion, and the Government consulted the Legislative Council Panel on Transport and the Transport Advisory Committee on the proposed initial options on January 22 and February 5, 2010 respectively. Following conclusion of the study in end April 2010, the Highways Department will proceed with the detailed technical feasibility study. We will draw up the works programme after completion of the study and confirmation of the feasibility

of the works in question.

(b) According to the information provided by the Development Bureau, the Water Supplies Department (WSD) is exploring the relocation of their office to a suitable industrial building in New Territories West so as to take forward the relocation of their Sai Yee Street office in Mong Kok. At the same time, the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) is studying the feasibility of relocating their Sai Yee Street facilities to West Kowloon, and a preliminary planning of the facilities is underway. After they have decided on the new sites, the WSD and FEHD will work closely with various departments concerned, in particular the respective District Offices, on the relocation timetable so as to tie in with the overall redevelopment of their existing sites in Mong Kok.

(c) The westward extension of the Mong Kok Road footbridge system straddling Nathan Road is the remaining part of the Mong Kok Road and Sai Yee Street footbridge system, which is to be constructed by a private developer. The developer has completed the preliminary investigation works for the project earlier. However, as there are legal procedures remaining to be completed, and as the works involve diversion of underground public utilities which requires careful examination of various relocation options, the construction works for the proposed footbridge could not commence as scheduled. In the interim, the Administration has kept the Legislative Council and the relevant District Council posted on developments.

The Administration and the developer have now broadly agreed on the necessary arrangements for the advance works for construction of the footbridge (including the diversion of underground public utilities), and the works are expected to commence in around the fourth quarter of this year. The relevant government departments will liaise with the developer and the public utility companies to take forward the preparatory work required prior to the commencement of

works. Diversion of underground public utilities will take roughly three and a half years, while the construction of the footbridge will take about two and a half years. The Administration has informed the District Council of the latest works schedule, and will continue to liaise closely with the developer for an early start of the works.

(d) The TD will continue to monitor the traffic situation in Mong Kok. Apart from actively following up on the extension proposal for the footbridge system in Mong Kok, where necessary, it will also propose improvements and take follow-up actions to enhance the pedestrian environment in the district.

Ends/Wednesday, April 21, 2010