

LCQ9: Cycling policy and ancillary facilities

Following is a question by the Hon Kam Nai-wai and a written reply by the Secretary for Transport and Housing, Ms Eva Cheng, at the Legislative Council meeting today (October 19):

Questions:

It has been reported that in recent years, the number of traffic accidents involving bicycles in Sha Tin District accounts for more than a quarter of the total number of such accidents each year in Hong Kong as a whole, and the several traffic accidents involving bicycles that occurred earlier in Hong Kong have aroused concern about whether the relevant policies, planning and ancillary facilities are adequate in safeguarding the safety of cyclists. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (a) of the number of traffic accidents involving bicycles in each year since 2006, and the respective numbers of persons who were slightly injured, seriously injured or even killed in such accidents, broken down by the 18 District Council (DC) districts, as set out in the table in Annex A;
- (b) of the locations and length of cycle tracks and the number of bicycle parking spaces in various districts, as well as the annual changes in the provision of such facilities since 2006, broken down by the 18 DC districts;
- (c) of the number of complaints concerning existing cycling facilities (such as cycle tracks and ancillary facilities, etc.) received by the authorities in each year since 2006, together with a breakdown of such number by the contents of the complaints; in addition, of the details of the regular inspections conducted on existing cycle tracks and ancillary facilities at present;
- (d) whether it had, in the past three years, conducted any study on the public's habit of using bicycles; if it had, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;
- (e) whether at present the Government will, when formulating transport policies and planning for Hong Kong, consider and plan for strengthening the role and functions of bicycles (such as promoting bicycles as one of the means of transport in Hong Kong),

apart from positioning cycling as a form of recreational activity; if it will, of the details and the specific timetable; if not, the reasons for that; and

(f) of the respective locations of existing waterfront promenades with and without cycle tracks; the length of such cycle tracks; whether it has considered constructing cycle tracks at those waterfront promenades without cycle tracks as well as those waterfront promenades which are under planning at present; if it has, of the details (such as the locations and length of cycle tracks, as well as the locations of entrances, etc.) and the timetable for completion?

Reply:

President,

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

(a) The breakdown of traffic accidents involving bicycles by year, District Council (DC) district and severity in the past five years is at Annex I.

(b) The length and location of cycle tracks and the number of bicycle parking spaces in various districts as at September 2011 are at Annex II. The Transport Department (TD) does not keep records of the detailed breakdown of the yearly increase or decrease (from the completion date to now) in cycle tracks and bicycle parking facilities.

(c) The numbers of complaints received by the TD concerning cycle tracks and ancillary facilities in the past five years (2006 to September 2011) are at Annex III. Cycle tracks and ancillary facilities managed and maintained by government departments such as the TD, Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) and Highways Department (HyD) are inspected regularly by the respective departments for early detection of irregularities that may cause danger or inconvenience to the public, and for arrangement of repairs and follow-up actions. Also, these departments will conduct detailed examination of cycle tracks on a regular basis to find out in detail their condition and structure for collating relevant data. Such data are used in mapping out medium to long term maintenance works under which planned maintenance works are carried out to forestall problems.

(d) The TD is conducting the Travel Characteristics Survey 2011 to collect, inter alia,

views from members of the public on the use of bicycles and related information, such as ownership and usage of bicycles as well as their opinions on issues such as locations of bicycle parking spaces and cycling safety. The data collection process will be completed in January 2012. The TD will then compile and analyse the data collected, and will complete the relevant survey report at a later date.

(e) Hong Kong is densely populated. To address the problems of traffic congestion and air pollution, the Government has been actively implementing the policy of using the public transport system as the main transport mode and encouraging the public to make use of the highly efficient mass transit transport systems and other public transport services.

Any measure to encourage cycling as a means for commuting must take into account the fact that Hong Kong is a small city with a dense population and concentrated development, and cycling safety should be the most important consideration. While we have well-developed road network and public transport system in Hong Kong, our road traffic is heavy and the roads and footpaths are highly congested, making it difficult to provide spaces to develop tracks designated for cycling. Allowing a large number of bicycles to use busy roads together with other vehicles in urban areas without providing designated cycle tracks will increase the risk of accidents.

In view of the above safety consideration, the Government does not encourage the public to use the bicycle as a transport mode in urban areas. Compared with urban areas, new towns in the New Territories or new development areas, where density is relatively low, have better conditions for using bicycle for short-distance travel. If situation permits, we will provide cycle tracks and ancillary facilities in new towns and new development areas to enable the public to cycle safely for recreational purposes and short distance travel.

The Civil Engineering and Development Department (CEDD) is currently studying the development of a cycle track network in the New Territories by phased interconnection of various new towns between Ma On Shan and Tuen Mun. It is expected that some 70 km of new cycle tracks will be provided upon completion of the network expansion. In new development areas like Kai Tak, the CEDD is actively exploring the extension of the district cycling track network within the Kai Tak new development area to cover other major leisure facilities and destinations. There is also a plan to build a cycle track at the Central Harbourfront. Details are set

out in paragraph (6) below and Annex IV. On ancillary facilities, there are currently a total of about 40,000 bicycle parking spaces throughout the territory. The TD strives to provide additional parking spaces at major transport hubs in the New Territories. For instance, a total of more than 300 additional parking spaces have recently been installed near two public transport interchanges in Tseung Kwan O and Sha Tin. The TD has also commenced the retrofitting and replacement of the existing cycle parking racks near railway stations and public transport termini. It is expected that 1 000 additional parking spaces will be provided within the next two years.

(f) According to the Development Bureau, HyD, LCSD, CEDD and TD, most of the 18 districts in Hong Kong have been provided with promenade walkways or walking trails; and cycle tracks have been built in some waterfront areas for public use. The relevant bureaux and departments are planning or studying the provision of cycle tracks at a number of waterfront sites. Details are at Annex IV.

Ends/Wednesday, October 19, 2011

Issued at HKT 15:24