

LCQ19: Cancellation of metered parking spaces

Following is a question by the Hon Audrey Eu Yuet-mee and a written reply by the Acting Secretary for Transport and Housing, Mr Yau Shing-mu, in the Legislative Council today (November 23):

Question:

The Government has designated some of the previous on-street metered parking spaces as "no parking areas" with yellow markings in recent years, and drivers who continue to park their vehicles in these areas will be prosecuted. Yet, many vehicles are still illegally parked in such areas with yellow markings where parking has already been prohibited, and some of these areas are even occupied for operating valet parking business, but the offenders are not prosecuted. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(a) of the general reasons why the Transport Department (TD) cancelled some of the previous on-street parking spaces and meters;

(b) of the number of meters cancelled by TD and the Government's revenue from on-street metered parking spaces respectively in each of the past ten years; of the number of Fixed Penalty Notices against parking offences issued by the Hong Kong Police Force each year between 2001 and 2007, with a breakdown of the figures by item; and

(c) whether the Government will consider stepping up law enforcement, including increasing the number of law-enforcing officers and frequency of patrols, and stepping up prosecution against drivers who commit parking offences, in order to achieve a deterrent effect; if it will, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

(a) to (c) To meet the parking demand, the Transport Department (TD) provides on-street parking spaces where they do not obstruct the traffic. It also provides parking meters where the demand is relatively high to deter prolonged occupation so

that the spaces can be used by more vehicles. Currently, there are about 18,000 on-street metered parking spaces in Hong Kong. In the light of district developments and changes in the traffic situation, parking spaces will be added or cancelled by the TD. In areas with increased parking demand, additional metered parking spaces will be provided by the TD as far as practicable; while on road sections with persistent traffic congestion, some parking spaces will be cancelled to make way for smoother traffic.

In recent years, the TD has erected traffic signs bearing the words "Vehicle waiting will be prosecuted without warning" and painted yellow hatched markings at locations with keen demand for loading and unloading spaces to remind drivers not to park or wait there. The traffic sign clearly indicates to drivers that parking is strictly prohibited on the road sections concerned, and illegally parked vehicles may be prosecuted by the Police without warning. Over the past three years, the TD converted only one designated parking area with metered parking spaces to a no-parking area with the above traffic sign, mainly in response to the local community's request for more loading and unloading spaces to meet the need of residents and business operators in the neighbourhood.

The number of metered parking spaces cancelled by the TD in each of the past ten years is at Annex A. The public revenue generated yearly by metered parking spaces is at Annex B.

The Police conduct patrols on major roads to maintain a smooth traffic flow. Depending on the actual prevalence of illegal parking in various police districts, enforcement action through the issue of Fixed Penalty Tickets will be taken by police officers on beat patrol, police officers from district traffic teams, and traffic wardens. Enforcement is taken at locations including the above-mentioned yellow hatched no-parking areas and other illegal parking black spots so as to ensure that the roads in the districts are not blocked and other road users are not jeopardised by illegally parked vehicles. The Police will review from time to time the prosecution policy in respect of illegal parking and, if necessary, strengthen the manpower and deployment to step up enforcement at illegal parking black spots. The number of Fixed Penalty Tickets against parking offences issued yearly by the Police in the past decade is at Annex C.

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