

LCQ17: Road infrastructure and traffic congestion

Following is a question by the Hon Chan Han-pan and a written reply by the Secretary for Transport and Housing, Mr Frank Chan Fan, in the Legislative Council today (January 6):

Question:

Regarding road infrastructure and traffic congestion, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the numeric and percentage growth in the aggregate length of the roads, road tunnels and flyovers in Hong Kong in each of the past 10 years, as well as the relevant number and percentage estimated for each of the coming five years (set out in a table);

(2) of the average vehicular speeds of the various trunk roads during the morning and evening rush hours in each of the past 10 years; and

(3) given that in recent years, the number of private cars has substantially increased and that traffic congestion has frequently occurred on a number of trunk roads during rush hours, of the Government's new measures to address the situation where road infrastructure is unable to catch up with traffic demand?

Reply:

President,

Hong Kong is a densely populated city with scarce land resources. Owing to limited road space, the Government can hardly resolve the traffic congestion problem solely by the continuous construction of roads. Over the years, the Government has adopted a multi-pronged strategy to alleviate road traffic congestion, encompassing efforts to improve transport infrastructure, expand and enhance the public transport system, and manage the use of roads. Having consulted the Transport Department (TD), my reply to the various parts of the Hon Chan Han-pan's question is as follows:

(1) The aggregate length of roads, road tunnels and flyovers in Hong Kong and the relevant year-on-year numeric growth and percentage growth in the past 10 years are tabulated below:

Year	Length of roads (Note)		
	Aggregate length (km)	Numeric growth (km)	Percentage growth (per cent)

2009	2 050	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
2010	2 076	26	1.27
2011	2 086	10	0.48
2012	2 090	4	0.19
2013	2 093	3	0.14
2014	2 099	6	0.29
2015	2 101	2	0.10
2016	2 107	6	0.29
2017	2 112	5	0.24
2018	2 123	11	0.52
2019	2 127	4	0.19

Note: Public roads maintained by the Highways Department.

The Government has been taking forward transport infrastructure projects progressively to cope with traffic needs. Major roads of which construction works have just been completed or those which are scheduled for implementation or completion in the coming five years include Tuen Mun-Chek Lap Kok Link Northern Connection, Tseung Kwan O-Lam Tin Tunnel, Cross Bay Link, Tseung Kwan O, Central Kowloon Route, Trunk Road T2 and Cha Kwo Ling Tunnel. The above-mentioned major roads add up to more than 19 kilometres in length.

Moreover, the Government is planning for various major road projects to address the traffic needs in the longer term. They include Fanling Bypass, Trunk Road T4 in Sha Tin, Route 11 (between North Lantau and Yuen Long), Tsing Yi-Lantau Link, etc.

(2) The car journey speed at major roads in various districts during the morning and afternoon peak hours in the past 10 years is as follows:

Year	Speed (km/hour)			
	Hong Kong Island	Kowloon	New Territories	Overall
	Morning/afternoon	Morning/afternoon	Morning/afternoon	Morning/afternoon
2010	19.8/14.0	23.7/18.4	39.9/48.5	30.1/19.4
2011	20.1/14.1	24.2/18.2	40.2/45.0	30.5/19.3
2012	20.8/14.3	23.9/20.5	40.4/51.4	30.7/20.6
2013	21.4/15.1	23.5/19.6	39.9/49.6	30.5/20.2
2014	20.4/19.3	21.5/22.1	36.3/48.2	27.9/21.8
2015	21.2/19.8	21.7/21.2	39.5/46.4	29.3/21.9
2016	20.2/17.6	21.2/18.3	38.3/40.2	28.3/21.8
2017	21.0/17.3	20.9/20.3	37.9/38.1	28.3/21.9
2018	20.6/17.7	21.5/27.1	38.4/45.8	28.6/30.8
2019	21.5/18.9	20.6/24.4	38.3/46.1	28.6/30.8

(3) Given that there are only limited land and road space in Hong Kong, in order to reduce road-based traffic, the Government will continue to develop a transportation system which is central upon public transport with railway as the backbone. We will continue to pursue improvement to transport infrastructure, including development of major roads and railway network, enhancement of road infrastructure under various highway and development projects, and facilitation of non-vehicular means of commuting by, for instance, constructing hillside escalator links and elevator systems as well as improving pedestrian facilities, existing cycling tracks and bicycle parking facilities.

In fact, about 90 per cent of passenger trips in Hong Kong are made on public transport every day, the usage of which is one of the highest in the world. The Government will continue to improve public transport so that the public can enjoy efficient, convenient and diversified public transport services.

Moreover, the Government will continue to take forward progressively short-, medium- and long-term measures recommended by the Transport Advisory Committee in its Report on Study of Road Traffic Congestion in Hong Kong, with a view to optimising the use of road space and alleviating traffic congestion.

Meanwhile, the TD is undertaking a study on "congestion charging" to comprehensively review the toll levels of all government tolled tunnels. The objective of the study is to adjust traffic flow and alleviate traffic congestion through appropriate adjustment of tolls. The Government is also actively pursuing the Free-flow Tolling System to enable motorists to pay tolls remotely and more conveniently using toll tags, thereby minimising disruption to traffic flow caused by vehicles stopping or slowing down at toll booths for manual toll payment.

Besides, the Government is taking forward a host of short- and medium- to long-term measures to increase car parking spaces as appropriate. We have been encouraging other government departments and operators of non-government car parks to disseminate more parking vacancy information with a view to reducing the traffic caused by cars circulating on roads in search of parking spaces. To reduce the number of cars driving into congested areas, the Government will continue to encourage various organisations (including MTR Corporation Limited) to promote wider use of the existing Park-and-Ride (PnR) facilities, and explore the expansion of such facilities to car parks that have yet to provide PnR concessions. The Government will also monitor the growth rate and size of private car fleet closely so as to formulate corresponding measures in a timely manner.