

LCQ4: Ancillary transport facilities in Tuen Mun

Following is a question by the Hon Holden Chow and a reply by the Secretary for Transport and Logistics, Mr Lam Sai-hung, in the Legislative Council today (March 13):

Question:

It is learnt that the daily traffic flow in the vicinity of Lung Fu Road, Lung Mun Road and Wong Chu Road in Tuen Mun is enormous. There are views pointing out that due to the future development needs of Tuen Mun West, which include bringing in advanced manufacturing industries and modern logistics industries, the traffic flow of goods vehicles in particular is expected to increase substantially, and will bring about an even greater traffic load for the aforesaid roads. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) in order to ensure that the future traffic needs of the multitude of new economy industries in the vicinity of Lung Kwu Tan in Tuen Mun West can be met, whether the authorities will conduct studies and assessments on the traffic carrying capacity of Lung Fu Road, Lung Mun Road and Wong Chu Road; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(2) whether it has plans to build a new trunk road or a green mass transit system for connecting Tuen Mun East and Tuen Mun West; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(3) whether it will consider substantially lowering the tolls of the Tai Lam Tunnel after taking over the tunnel in 2025, so as to divert the heavy vehicular flow from Tuen Mun Road; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

The Government's vision is to build a livable, competitive and sustainable Hong Kong through driving development by transport infrastructure by adopting the planning principles of "infrastructure-led" and "capacity-creating", under the objective to drive development, effectively connecting the new development areas to existing or future transport infrastructure to unleash the development potential of areas along and adjacent to the alignment of transport infrastructure.

The Transport and Logistics Bureau promulgated the Hong Kong Major Transport Infrastructure Development Blueprint in December 2023, which formulates a planning framework for the city's future transport infrastructure development, and outlines the strategic railway and major road networks which can meet the transport and logistics demand up to 2046 and

beyond. Taking into account the available planning data on land development, the Blueprint has duly considered the transport and logistics demand brought about by population growth, employment and economic activities in the Northern Metropolis, Kau Yi Chau Artificial Islands and other major planned development areas, and prioritised the projects based on traffic analysis.

Amongst which, in order to meet the transport and logistics demand arising from the progressive development of Northwest New Territories, the Government has been taking forward a group of major transport infrastructure projects to connect Northwest New Territories with Lantau Island and the urban areas, including Route 11 (section between Yuen Long and North Lantau), Tsing Yi–Lantau Link, Tuen Mun Bypass, and Widening of Yuen Long Highway (section between Lam Tei and Tong Yan San Tsuen). In the meantime, the Government is also exploring the proposed Hong Kong Island West–Northeast Lantau Link and Hong Kong Island West–Hung Shui Kiu Rail Link under the studies related to Kau Yi Chau Artificial Islands. Upon the progressive commissioning of the aforementioned major transport infrastructure projects, we anticipate that the transport infrastructure network will have sufficient capacity to drive developments in those areas, offer more commuting options, relieve the pressure of existing major roads including Tai Lam Tunnel and Tuen Mun Road, reduce journey time, and bring about long-term socio-economic benefits.

My reply to the questions raised by the Hon Holden Chow is set out as follows:

(1) and (2) The Development Bureau commenced the planning and engineering study for Lung Kwu Tan (LKT) reclamation and the re-planning of Tuen Mun West (TMW) area at the end of last year to consider existing and planned road and water transport connections in these areas with a view to developing modern industries such as advanced construction and logistics, together with some residential development and community facilities. Detailed traffic impact assessments will be carried out under the study. Besides looking into the feasibility of constructing a new road within the LKT reclamation area to connect with other areas, the study will consider the feasibility of widening Lung Mun Road, which connects LKT and TMW areas to Tuen Mun town centre; the connectivity of LKT and TMW with existing and planned road and railway networks, including the proposed Route 11 and Tuen Mun Bypass; and the feasibility of extending the Hong Kong Island West–Hung Shui Kiu Rail Link as proposed under Kau Yi Chau Artificial Islands to TMW from Tuen Mun East. The Development Bureau expects to put forth initial land use proposals for LKT reclamation and the re-planning of TMW by 2025. More concrete associated traffic improvement proposals will be suggested by then for public opinions.

(3) As for the Tai Lam Tunnel, the Build-Operate-Transfer franchise will expire in May 2025, after which it will be taken over by the Government to become a government tunnel. The Transport and Logistics Bureau and the Transport Department have set up an inter-departmental working group to carry out the necessary preparatory work for the takeover of the tunnel, including the preparation for setting up HKEToll facilities in order to launch free-flow tolling service as soon as the Government takes over the tunnel. The Government is also reviewing the future toll levels of the Tai Lam Tunnel,

and will take account of the relevant factors such as traffic management needs, the capacity and capability of the road network in the vicinity as well as the impact to the alternative routes.

Road pricing is an essential traffic management measure which can effectively regulate traffic and optimise the use of limited road space. At present, although motorists can use the free Tuen Mun Road as an alternative route, the traffic flow of the Tai Lam Tunnel during peak hours is already at a very high level, with the utilisation rate of the tunnel exceeding 80 per cent. Therefore, we need to set the toll levels of the Tai Lam Tunnel judiciously so that they will not induce excessive additional traffic flow which will cause traffic congestion and affect the traffic conditions of the tunnel and its connecting roads, in particular the Ting Kau Bridge, which is already very busy. We will review the toll levels of the Tai Lam Tunnel in the light of the latest traffic data and consult the Legislative Council in mid-2024 on the takeover arrangements as well as the toll proposals for the tunnel.

Thank you, President.