

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

THB(T)184

Question Serial No.

0612

Head: Capital Works Reserve Fund Subhead (No. & title):
706 - Highways

Programme:

Controlling Officer: Director of Highways

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Transport and Housing

Question:

Subhead 6101TX involves the Universal Accessibility (UA) Programme. According to the programme, improvement works on barrier-free access facilities will be carried out in the 18 districts. Earlier on, the Government announced a list of more than 230 proposed items. \$187.272 million has been allocated for 2013-14 for the barrier-free access facilities retrofitting works, which include the feasibility studies and designs for about 60 barrier-free access facilities retrofitting projects, plus the construction costs of about 60 barrier-free access facilities. It is estimated that the annual provision will be gradually increased to over \$1,000 million in the coming few years, starting from 2014-15.

- (1) What are the details of feasibility studies and construction works to be carried out in 2013-14, including location, nature of works, schedule and funding?
- (2) What are the anticipated numbers of feasibility studies and construction works of barrier-free access facilities to be completed annually in 2014-15 and onwards?
- (3) What are the anticipated completion dates of the aforesaid 230 proposed items?
- (4) Other than the 230 proposed items, there are still many antiquated pedestrian facilities territory-wide which must be improved in a swift manner. When will the Administration carry out a new round of review to look into the implementation of barrier-free access facilities at other locations?

Asked by: Hon. LEE Wai-king, Starry

Reply:

The new policy on Universal Accessibility (UA) announced by the Administration in August 2012 retrofits barrier-free access (BFA) facilities such as lifts to existing public walkways (i.e. footbridges, elevated walkways and subways maintained by the Highways Department (HyD)) so as to facilitate access of the public. Under the UA Programme, the Administration has consulted the District Councils (DCs) in the first quarter of 2013 on proposals suggested by the public involving about 250 public walkways (referred to as the Expanded Programme) on the priority for implementation, and will proceed to conduct preliminary technical feasibility studies for the selected priority projects. In parallel, we will continue to pursue the Original Programme (consisting of about 170 projects for retrofitting of BFA facilities to meet the requirements of the Equal Opportunities Commission).

(1) and (2)

The present position of the UA Programme is as follows -

Projects	Current Position
Original Programme	Construction works of ten projects are underway. The construction works of another 24 projects have just commenced. Among these 34 projects, 14 are on Hong Kong Island, ten in Kowloon and ten in New Territories. The remaining some 140 projects are at planning / design stage.
Expanded Programme	The HyD has just completed the consultation with the 18 DCs on the priority for implementation. Each DC has been invited to select three priority projects. The HyD will start preliminary technical feasibility study of the selected priority projects within 2013-14. The detailed design and construction of the projects preliminarily found to be technically feasible will be taken forward as soon as possible.

Funding of \$292.1 million in money-of-the-day prices to cover the costs of construction of ten projects and the design for other projects in the Original Programme was approved under Subhead 6167TB by the Financial Committee (FC) of the Legislative Council in July 2011. With the approval of the FC in January 2013, a new block allocation Subhead 6101TX – Universal Accessibility Programme has been created for taking forward the UA Programme, including the Expanded Programme and the remaining projects of the Original Programme. An allocation of \$187.272 million for 2013-14 was approved by the FC. We will follow the established practice of other block allocation subheads and apply to the FC every year an allocation on a lump-sum basis in accordance with the estimated expenditure for the projects of the UA programme in the coming years.

- (3) When the Administration announced the new policy in August 2012, a list of more than 230 proposals was publicised, including some 170 projects in the abovementioned Original Programme. The remaining some 60 projects in the list were preliminary suggestions raised by the DCs and members of the public in the past. We then invited the public to propose lift locations where they consider necessary for the retrofitting of lifts by

31 October 2012. Based on the suggestions from the public during the nomination period, we have compiled a list of suggestions involving about 250 public walkways in the Expanded Programme. Among these 250 proposals, we would implement the priority projects selected by individual DCs first. We would determine the implementation schedule for the other projects in the coming years in the light of the experience gained, the market situation and the views of the public.

- (4) The Government has been improving other pedestrian facilities to promote barrier-free access. For example, we have been carrying out modification works at existing at-grade pedestrian crossings to bring dropped kerbs to current standard, and to provide dropped kerbs at bus termini and public transport interchanges to enhance the accessibility of the disabled. To enhance the accessibility of visually impaired persons, the Government has been installing tactile warning strips at public walkways, pedestrian crossings, bus termini and transport interchanges. We will continue with such improvement measures.

Name in block letters:	K K LAU
Post Title:	Director of Highways
Date:	5.4.2013