

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**THB(T)264****(Question Serial No. 3360)**

Head: (60) Highways Department

Subhead(No. & title): (-) Not Specified

Programme: (2) District and Maintenance Works

Controlling Officer: Director of Highways (K K LAU)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Transport and Housing

Question (Member Question No.69):

Does the Administration have any plan to discuss with disability rights organisations ways to improve the barrier-free access facilities in the Wan Chai District, and to implement feasible options such as installing lifts at footbridges? If yes, what are the details and expenditure? If no, what are the reasons?

Asked by: Hon. SIN Chung-kai

Reply:

The Government has been installing barrier-free access facilities at public walkways (i.e. public footbridges, elevated walkways and subways), where technically feasible, for years (i.e. the Original Programme). The Original Programme is to provide lifts or standard ramps to existing public walkways which are not equipped with standard barrier-free access facilities and there is no proper at-grade crossing facilities available within about 100 meters. Currently, there are 158 items which are technically feasible under the Original Programme. The works of these items will be completed by phases from 2014 to 2018.

In August 2012, the Government launched the new policy on Universal Accessibility which aims at further enhancing the barrier-free facilities for existing public walkways. The new policy received overwhelming responses from the public and lift installations at about 250 public walkways were proposed (i.e. the Expanded Programme). The Government consulted the 18 District Councils (DCs) in the first half of 2013 on the priority for implementing these suggestions for retrofitting of lifts. Technical feasibility studies for the three priority projects identified by each DC are largely completed and the Government is consulting DCs concerned on the study findings. After consultation with the DCs, the Government will proceed with the detailed design for the items confirmed to be technically feasible and supported by the district.

Of the selected priority items under the Expanded Programme and the technically feasible items under the Original Programme, 20 are located in the Wan Chai District. Construction works for seven of these items have already commenced at a total estimated cost of \$205 million. Technical feasibility studies or detailed designs are being conducted for the

remaining items.

To ensure that the barrier-free access facilities meet the needs of service users, the Government has been liaising with stakeholders concerned, including organisations such as the Rehabilitation Alliance Hong Kong and The Hong Kong Society for the Blind.