

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

THB(T)039

(Question Serial No. 2898)

Head: (60) Highways Department

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

Programme: (1) Capital Projects

Controlling Officer: Director of Highways (K K LAU)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Transport and Housing

Question:

The Highways Department (HyD) stated that it will continue to take forward the Central Kowloon Route (CKR) for its early implementation. In this regard, please advise -

- (a) what is the latest estimate for this project and when will the works commence? What are the details concerning its progress?
- (b) is the latest estimate a large multiple of the 2002 estimate of \$10 billion? If yes, what are the reasons?
- (c) will district consultation exercise be conducted in the future? What are the relevant estimated expenses and plans?
- (d) will the underground strata of the buildings alongside the alignment be resumed? What are the details? Please provide in a list the names and addresses of the buildings affected, and the related impact; and
- (e) what is the estimated utilisation rate after the commissioning of the project and when was this projection made?

Asked by: Hon Claudia MO (Member Question No. 34)

Reply:

According to Rule 49 of the Finance Committee Procedures, special meetings of the Finance Committee are convened to examine the annual Estimates of Expenditure prepared by the Government in support of the Appropriation Bill. Expenditure charged to the Capital Works Reserve Fund does not form part of the Appropriation Bill. As such, questions relating to expenditure under the Fund are not relevant to the examination of the Estimates of Expenditure or the Appropriation Bill. Nonetheless, the information sought is provided below:

- (a) The CKR will link Yau Ma Tei Interchange in West Kowloon with the Kowloon Bay and Kai Tak Development in East Kowloon. It is anticipated that the commissioning of the CKR will reduce the traffic volumes along the major east-west corridors in

Kowloon, thus relieving the existing traffic congestion problem and coping with future traffic needs. We are actively planning the implementation of the CKR project for its early implementation. The construction of the CKR project takes approximately over seven years; and upon its commissioning, the journey time between West Kowloon and Kowloon Bay via the CKR would take around five minutes in busy hours, resulting in a saving of about 25 minutes when compared to the journey time without the CKR now.

- (b) The Panel on Transport of the Legislative Council (LegCo) was informed in June 2002 that a rough estimate of the project was about \$10 billion (in December 2000 prices) based on a conceptual scheme. In the course of further investigations and detailed design process, the HyD has further enhanced the design and incorporated additional requirements to meet the latest fire safety, environmental protection, building safety and technical requirements. Further strengthening of heritage and landscaping works have also been incorporated to address the concerns of the public. These factors, together with price adjustments and change in market conditions, will all affect the project cost. The rough order of cost of the CKR project in the Budget this year is only a preliminary estimate. After finalising the estimate of the project cost, the Transport and Housing Bureau and the HyD will consult the LegCo on the funding application, and seek approval from the Finance Committee when appropriate.
- (c) The HyD conducted Phase One and Phase Two public engagement exercises in 2007 to 2009 and December 2012 to March 2013 respectively to collect public views. A Community Liaison Centre in Yau Ma Tei started operation in April 2013 to enhance communication with the public on the project. These views, together with those received during the gazettal period of the project, have been taken into account where appropriate in the design development. The Chief Executive-in-Council authorised the works of the CKR on 5 January 2016, and the authorisation notice was gazetted on 15 January 2016. The HyD will continue to liaise with the relevant District Councils and the stakeholders as and when appropriate.
- (d) Since the CKR tunnel would mainly be constructed deep underground in the rock stratum, its construction would not affect the structural integrity, use of the private buildings concerned and the future re-development potential of the lots concerned under the existing laws, land leases and the Outline Zoning Plan. To allow for the construction, operation and maintenance, and usage of the CKR, the project will require the creation of easements and other permanent rights underneath about 81 private lots in accordance with the Roads (Works, Use and Compensation) Ordinance (Cap 370). The relevant statutory procedures will be carried out before commencement of the works concerned. Nevertheless, no land resumption will be required.
- (e) According to the projection conducted by the consultants of the HyD in 2012, the CKR is expected to be well used after commissioning, with a predicted average daily traffic flow of about 110 000 vehicles in 2026.

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