

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

THB(T)027

(Question Serial No. 0787)

Head: (60) Highways Department
Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified
Programme: (1) Capital Projects
Controlling Officer: Director of Highways (Jimmy P M CHAN)
Director of Bureau: Secretary for Transport and Housing

Question:

The Administration will commence the investigation and preliminary design for improvement of the Lion Rock Tunnel (LRT). Please inform this Committee:

- (1) of the details, objective, staff establishment and estimated expenditure of the improvement works;
- (2) of the implementation timetable and duration of the improvement works;
- (3) of the design capacity and peak-hour utilisation rate of the LRT at present; whether the design capacity and peak-hour utilisation rate of the tunnel will increase or decrease upon completion of the improvement works;
- (4) whether the Administration has any plan to increase the LRT toll upon completion of the improvement works; if so, what are the details?

Asked by: Hon LAU Ip-keung, Kenneth (LegCo internal reference no.: 34)

Reply:

- (1)&(2) The two existing tunnel tubes of the LRT have been in service for more than 40 years. The Highways Department (HyD) plans to rehabilitate and improve the tubes to the latest standards and extend their service life. Opportunity will also be taken to increase the capacity of the LRT with a view to alleviating traffic congestion in the tunnel and the roads in the vicinity.

The HyD will conduct an investigation study on the 'Improvement of LRT' in Q2 2019 to identify improvement measures. The investigation study aims to work out the feasible options for rehabilitation of the two existing tunnel tubes of the LRT and the associated road improvement works, as well as conduct preliminary design for the selected option. The scope of the study includes traffic modelling, traffic impact assessment, environmental impact assessment, utility impact assessment, associated ground investigation works, and providing technical advice and support during public consultation and gazettal of the proposed road scheme under the Roads (Works, Use and Compensation) Ordinance (Cap. 370) and in

resolving objections (if any), etc. The investigation study will take about 30 months to complete and will cost approximately \$29 million.

The HyD will deploy an additional Senior Engineer and an additional Engineer/Assistant Engineer in 2019-20 to oversee the investigation study. The details of the improvement works, staff establishment for and estimated cost of the works and the implementation programme are subject to the outcome of the investigation study.

- (3) The design capacity of the LRT is 2 600 vehicles per hour in each direction and the tunnel is fully utilised at peak hours.

The above-mentioned investigation study will include a Traffic Impact Assessment to look into the traffic of different options of improvement schemes. The design capacity and the forecast utilisation rate of the most feasible option will be worked out.

- (4) The Transport Department (TD) is actively preparing for the Study on “Congestion Charging” in mid-2019. The Study will adopt the principle of “Efficiency First” to examine the hierarchy and level of tolls of government tolled tunnels (including LRT) and the Tsing Ma and Tsing Sha Control Areas with a view to enabling efficient people carriers (such as franchised buses) and vehicles that support economic activities (such as goods vehicles) to enjoy lower tolls, while imposing higher tolls on vehicle types with low carrying capacity (such as private cars). The Study will also examine the scope for charging different tolls for different time periods.

The TD plans to consult relevant stakeholders on the proposed toll plans and the toll adjustment mechanism recommended by the Study in 2021.

Notwithstanding the above information about tunnel tolls, the construction cost of the LRT improvement works has no bearing on the LRT toll.

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