

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

TLB005

(Question Serial No. 0087)

Head: (60) Highways Department

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

Programme: (2) District and Maintenance Works

Controlling Officer: Director of Highways (YAU Kwok-ting)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Transport and Logistics

Question:

Due to the previous complaints about the poor quality of the road surfaces of expressways, I would like to enquire about the repair works of the road surfaces of expressways in Hong Kong:

1. Over the past 3 years, what were the expenditures used by the Highways Department on the road resurfacing works of expressways in Hong Kong? What was the trend of the tender prices for these works?
2. Regarding the quality of the road surfaces, does the Government have in place any mechanisms to monitor the quality and durability of the bitumen for road resurfacing?

Asked by: Hon CHAN Han-pan (LegCo internal reference no.: 3)

Reply:

1. Over the past 3 years (i.e. 2022 to 2024), the expenditures used by the Highways Department (HyD) on road resurfacing works were approximately \$130 million, \$200 million and \$250 million respectively. The increase in the costs of works is mainly due to the increase in the quantity of works. The trend of the tender prices of works were generally stable.
2. Road surfaces of road facilities wear and tear alongside daily use. There will also be damage of different extents (such as the existence of potholes or localised cracks, etc.) due to other unforeseen circumstances, including traffic accidents and inclement weather. The HyD is responsible for the maintenance and repair of the public roads and ancillary road facilities within its ambit. It has in place a regular road inspection mechanism through which term contractors are engaged to carry out the relevant works. When damages of road surfaces or ancillary road facilities are identified during regular road inspections or are reported by the public, the HyD will request the contractors to repair any damages that might cause road safety concerns as soon as possible. For damages that do not pose immediate danger to road safety, the HyD will formulate appropriate maintenance plans and schedules for those damages having regard to different factors.

For example, the resurfacing works for road surfaces will be carried out at an appropriate juncture.

The HyD attaches great importance to the quality of road surfacing works, and has a strict regulatory mechanism to ensure the quality and durability of road resurfacing. When the road resurfacing works are underway, the HyD would deploy its staff to conduct comprehensive supervision, as well as conduct tests and examinations on the materials and construction quality to ensure compliance with the standard stipulated by the contracts. In case the working performance of the contractors during works does not meet the stipulated standard, the HyD would take appropriate follow-up actions in accordance with the requirements of the contract and established mechanisms. Moreover, the HyD would continue to strictly monitor the working performance of the contractors to ensure that the contractors record all damages according to the relevant requirements when conducting regular and detailed inspections, and complete the relevant repair works in a timely manner.

Besides, the HyD continues to develop and introduce bituminous materials with higher durability for road paving in order to enhance the road surface quality and reduce the frequency of repair. Between 2018 and 2022, the HyD collaborated with the Hong Kong Polytechnic University to conduct trials on over 30 busy road sections using a new bituminous material – “Highly Modified Stone Mastic Asphalt”. The trial results revealed that the said material has better anti-deformation, anti-aging and anti-fatigue performance than the traditional bitumen, thus enhancing the durability of the roads and reducing the frequency of repairs effectively. Based on the positive test results, the HyD has formally used the said new material on road works (including repair works) since 2023. The new material is applied on over 200 road sections at present.

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