

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

(Question Serial No. 0265)

Head: (60) Highways Department
Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified
Programme: (4) Technical Services
Controlling Officer: Director of Highways (YAU Kwok-ting)
Director of Bureau: Secretary for Transport and Logistics

Question:

1. The analysis of financial provision for Programme (4) "Technical Services" indicated a significant downward trend, i.e. from \$1.125 billion in 2024 to \$941.2 million in 2025 and \$901.6 million in 2026. What are the reasons? It is inconsistent with the persistent criticism of Hong Kong's uneven road surfaces and our image as an "international city". Also, it is inconsistent with the need for deep-level restoration or replacement of our aging infrastructure.

Asked by: Hon BOK Kwok-ming, Aaron (LegCo internal reference no.: 38)

Reply:

The year-on-year decrease in financial provision for Programme (4) "Technical Services" from 2024-25 to 2026-27 is mainly because the Highways Department (HyD) gradually replaces conventional road lighting with light-emitting diode (LED) lighting as planned. As a result, the number of road lights that require replacement and repairs decreases, lowering the maintenance cost of road lights. Also, the fuel cost adjustments charged by the 2 power companies were reduced during the period, which also lowered the expenditure on electricity for public lighting.

The HyD strives to maintain the safety and usability of the road network and to enhance the quality of road surface. The maintenance works of the public roads and relevant road facilities under the ambit of the HyD are under Programme (2) District and Maintenance Works. The financial provision for Programme (2) increased from \$2.322 billion (actual expenditure in 2024-25) to \$2.598 billion (revised estimate for 2025-26). The estimate for 2026-27 is further increased to \$2.912 billion.

The HyD has in place a regular road inspection mechanism, through which term contractors are engaged to carry out the maintenance and repair works for the public roads and ancillary road facilities within its ambit. Expressways carrying high-speed traffic and high traffic throughput are inspected daily, other trunk roads are inspected every week while ordinary roads are inspected every 1 to 3 months respectively. The HyD's road inspection teams are required to conduct detailed inspections on all road types once every 6 months in order to

collect information relating to surface and structural conditions of the roads for planning medium to long-term repair works. At the same time, the HyD would formulate appropriate plans and schedules for repair and maintenance of roads, taking into account factors such as wear and tear of the roads, traffic flow and the surrounding environment, and considering the inconvenience that may be caused to the public (such as arranging for temporary traffic diversion measures involved in the repair works). This is to maintain the roads in good condition, thereby ensuring the safety of road users. The HyD is currently actively studying the large-scale rehabilitation plans for the aging public roads and carrying out comprehensive assessments on traffic impact, environmental factors, resource arrangements, application of new material technology, etc. The HyD will formulate plans for the relevant rehabilitation projects in a timely manner.

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