

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

EEB(E)129

(Question Serial No. 0450)

Head: (60) Highways Department

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

Programme: (1) Capital Projects

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

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Environment and Ecology

Question:

Regarding the retrofitting of noise barriers on the existing roads in Hong Kong:

1. How many roads in Hong Kong are required for the retrofitting of noise barriers currently? What are the estimated expenditures on the retrofitting of noise barriers? What are the evaluation criteria of the Highways Department (HyD) for the retrofitting of noise barriers on roads?
2. At present, the designs of noise barriers on many roads are like uncovered tunnels or covered and enclosed corridors. The drivers and passengers often feel bored because they cannot see the streetscape on both sides of the roads but only the wall-like noise barriers. In order to add interest for the drivers and passengers while travelling, can the HyD give more thoughts on the purchase of the material of noise barriers and their designs, and select noise barriers which allow the drivers and passengers to see the streetscape on both sides of the roads or are energetic?

Asked by: Hon CHAN Han-pan (LegCo internal reference no.: 10)

Reply:

1. To mitigate the traffic noise impacts of existing roads on nearby residents, the Government began to introduce a policy in 2000, where practicable and resources available, to study on the retrofitting of noise barriers/enclosures or the use of low noise road resurfacing materials to resurface existing roads generating traffic noise above 70dB(A) L₁₀ (1 hour) to reduce the noise impacts. The existing Noise Barrier Retrofitting Programme includes a total of 41 road sections, among which the retrofitting works of 21 road sections were completed. The information of the projects currently under construction is tabulated below:

Items under construction

Road section	Commencement date (Year)	Estimated project costs (\$ million)
Po Lam Road North	2021	376.0
Po Ning Road	2021	241.7
Po Lam Road North (near King Ming Court)	2022	180.1

- Regarding the design of noise barriers, the Government would, with reference to the relevant guidelines, invite professionals to provide aesthetic design suggestions for the retrofitting of noise barriers on roads. The design would fully utilise the natural landscape and environmental features nearby. Through landscape and building designs, the appearance of noise barriers would blend into the surrounding environment and landscape elements. This would enhance the aesthetics of the appearance of noise barriers (including perspectives from both drivers and passengers), making them a part of the harmonious cityscape. Besides, the computer-simulated photomontages would be generated from the preliminary design scheme for local consultation. This would ensure that the locals can understand the appearance of the proposed noise barriers better and provide opinions and suggestions regarding the design, so that the design of the noise barriers can meet the demand and expectations of the public better. After collecting opinions from the public and making relevant modifications, the final design would be submitted to and subjected to scrutiny of the Advisory Committee on Appearance of Bridges and Associated Structures (ACABAS). Members of ACABAS include professionals from the Government and professional bodies' representatives from the Hong Kong Institute of Architects, Hong Kong Institute of Planners, Hong Kong Institute of Engineers and academic institutions (i.e. representative from either The University of Hong Kong, Chinese University of Hong Kong or Hong Kong Chu Hai College). ACABAS discusses and provides professional advice on the aesthetic issues of highway bridges and associated structures (including noise barriers). All noise barriers subjected to the scrutiny of ACABAS would have to meet the requirements of noise reduction and overcome site constraints. Moreover, the structural forms, patterns, shapes, colours and materials (including noise-absorbing, transparent or translucent noise-insulating panel materials) for noise barriers and enclosures would be carefully designed to achieve high aesthetic quality and energetic. Therefore, the design of existing noise barriers has fully considered the opinions of different stakeholders and struck a balance between various factors.

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