

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

(Question Serial No. 0836)

Head: (60) Highways Department
Subhead (No. & title): (000) Operational expenses
Programme: (2) District and Maintenance Works
Controlling Officer: Director of Highways (Jimmy P M CHAN)
Director of Bureau: Secretary for Transport and Housing

Question:

I have received a number of complaints from the public regarding the deteriorating situation of uneven road surfaces in Hong Kong despite repeated complaints made to the Highways Department (HyD). After checking the Budget for information about the HyD, I found something very contradictory. It is estimated that the number of “complaints related to road maintenance” will increase by approximately 1 000 cases to 19 700 cases. However, the estimated expenditure on “road reconstruction, rehabilitation, resurfacing, and joint replacement works” has decreased from \$373.8 million in 2021 to \$358 million. Why did the Government reduce the estimated expenditure on road maintenance while anticipating an increase in related complaints? This is really baffling.

Asked by: Hon LAM San-keung (LegCo internal reference no.: 4)

Reply:

The Highways Department (HyD) is responsible for the repair and maintenance of public roads and ancillary facilities within its ambit. When damages of road surfaces or ancillary facilities are identified during regular road inspections or reported by the public, suitable repair works will be arranged taking into account the actual circumstances, such as the extent and severity of the damages as well as traffic condition on site, so as to keep the roads in a condition that would not hamper the safety of road users.

Due to the implementation of social distancing measures for fighting the pandemic, there was a significant reduction in overall road traffic in 2021. The HyD had thus taken the opportunity to undertake additional resurfacing and reconstruction works for busy roads in the urban areas, where temporary road closure for such maintenance works was usually difficult to arrange under normal traffic condition. As such, more road resurfacing and reconstruction works were completed than planned in 2021 and that in previous years where overall road traffic was at normal level, resulting in the actual expenditure in 2021 to be on the high side (i.e. \$373.8 million) when compared to previous years.

The estimated expenditure of \$358 million in 2022 was prepared on the assumption that

overall traffic volume in 2022 would gradually return to normal level. When compared with previous years with similar traffic volumes, a nominal increase in the quantity of road resurfacing and reconstruction works has been planned. The HyD will continue to handle public complaints in a timely manner and carry out necessary road resurfacing and reconstruction works for the upkeep of road network.

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