

For Discussion
23 April 2010

Legislative Council Panel on Transport

**Traffic and Transport Arrangements in South Lantau
Including Tung Chung Road**

Purpose

The paper briefs Members on the findings on the review conducted by Transport Department (“TD”) on the traffic and transport arrangements on the improved Tung Chung Road (“TCR”) and south Lantau.

Background

2. We briefed Members on the proposed traffic and transport arrangements for south Lantau upon the completion of the improvement works on TCR at the meeting of the Legislative Council Panel on Transport (the “Transport Panel”) held on 1 April 2008 (LC Paper No. CB(1)1125/07-08(05)). The Administration was asked to report the outcome of a review after the proposed arrangements and measures had been implemented.

Traffic and Transport Arrangements upon the Full Opening of the Improved TCR

3. Having considered the planning principle of nature conservation and sustainable recreational development in south Lantau as well as the views from the concerned parties, the following traffic and transport arrangements were implemented upon the full opening of the improved TCR in February 2009:

- (a) maintain all roads in south Lantau and TCR south of Shek Mun Kap as closed roads. Motor vehicles accessing TCR and roads in

south Lantau are required to obtain Lantau Closed Road Permits (“LCRP”);

- (b) maintain TCR between Shek Mun Kap and south Lantau Road as a prohibited zone -
 - 24 hours daily for goods vehicles over 5.5 tonnes, except those with permits issued by TD; and
 - from 8.00 am to 6.00 pm daily for all motor vehicles except franchised buses, Lantau taxis, and those with permits issued by TD;
- (c) maintain existing public road transport arrangements in south Lantau (including franchised buses and Lantau taxis);
- (d) allow 24-hour use of TCR by motor vehicles of south Lantau residents and business operators by issuing them with a LCRP and Tung Chung Road Prohibited Zone Permits (“TCRPZP”) when an address proof is provided¹; and
- (e) allow the access of 30 tour coaches or below per day to south Lantau via TCR.

The Review and Findings

Road conditions and traffic flow at the improved TCR

4. The improved TCR, which had been open in two phases², was widened from a 3.5m wide single-lane carriageway to a 7.3m wide single two-lane carriageway for two-way traffic, with provision of footpath.

¹ In principle, each residential unit or shop in south Lantau will be issued with one LCRP and one TCRPZP.

² The northern section (between Pak Kung Au and Shek Mun Kap) was open on 18 March 2008 and the southern section (between Pak Kung Au and South Lantau Road) was open on 6 February 2009.

5. With the improved TCR, the overall traffic conditions were satisfactory and the traffic was smooth at peak hours during the 12-month period after its full opening (as shown at **Annex**). Since its full opening, two traffic accidents occurred on TCR, which were both caused by the loss of control of the vehicle. The first case resulted in having the driver and the passenger seriously injured, whilst in the second case the driver was slightly injured.

Speed limit at the improved TCR

6. The Islands District Council and local residents had asked for relaxation of the speed limit from 30 km/h to 50 km/h since the opening of the first phase improved TCR (the northern section) in March 2008. In response to the request, we had conducted speed limit reviews for both the northern and southern sections of TCR. The reviews recommended that the speed limit of TCR be raised to 50 km/h. After notifying the Islands District Council, we raised the speed limit of the northern and southern sections of the improved TCR on 9 April and 17 July 2009 respectively.

Cycling on the improved TCR

7. TCR is the only vehicular access connecting south and north Lantau, and its road conditions have been much improved upon the completion of the improvement works on TCR. As such, similar to the previous arrangement, cycling is allowed on the improved TCR. There has been no traffic accident involving cycling on the improved TCR since the opening of its northern and southern sections.

Use of the old sections of TCR

8. With the full opening of the improved TCR, the two old road sections of TCR³ (the sections between Tai Tung Shan Reservoir and Pak Kung Au, and between Pak Kung Au and south Lantau Road) have lost their function as an access connection between south and north Lantau. However, these road sections would be maintained as a service road for the Water Supplies Department, the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department and utility companies. They would also serve as diversion routes in case of any incidents

³ The concerned road sections are now the work site of Highways Department.

when TCR has to be closed temporarily. To ensure that these two old sections can serve the above purposes, they will be designated as prohibited zones. Prohibited zone permits will be issued to motor vehicles if justified by absolute operational need, such as for utility services and slope maintenance works.

24-hour use of TCR by motor vehicles of Lantau residents and business operators

9. Previously, motor vehicles of south residents and business operators issued with a LCRP can only use TCR outside the prohibited period from 6.00 pm to 8.00 am. After the full opening of the improved TCR, they are allowed 24-hour use of TCR by being issued with TCRPZP. The measure is welcome by the locals and, as at end January 2010, about 2,400 TCRPZP were issued.

Cancellation of the prohibition zone at the improved TCR

10. Since TCR is both a closed road and a prohibited zone, motor vehicles accessing south Lantau via TCR would have to obtain both LCRP and TCRPZP. Comments have been received from locals about the redundancy of the dual-permit system, in particular as the locals are now allowed 24-hour use of TCR. Having considered the improvement of both road capacity and safety, the effectiveness of using only closed roads as a traffic management tool, as well as the need to avoid confusion with the proposed prohibited zones in the old road sections, we propose cancelling the existing prohibited zone on TCR, such that only LCRP is required for access to TCR and south Lantau.

Arrangements for tour coaches accessing south Lantau

11. With the full opening of the improved TCR, a maximum of 30 tour coaches⁴ are allowed to access south Lantau via TCR. We have developed an application and allocation system on a “first come, first served” basis by using dedicated facsimile lines. All applications faxed to TD are automatically stamped with a date and time to ensure that the system is fair. To enhance the transparency of the permit application system, TD uploads the information on

4 Among the daily maximum of 30 daily quotas for tour coaches, in principle, 15 are for local visitors and 15 are for overseas and mainland visitors. To fully utilize the 30 daily quotas, any unused quota for one group will be flexibly re-allocated, after the closing date of application, to the other group if the latter has applications exceeding its own quota limit.

the application status (including applications received, being processed, approved or rejected) onto TD's website on a daily basis for a designated period of time for public information. So far, the application system has operated smoothly and we have not received any major comments from the trades.

12. During the 12-month period after the full opening of the improved TCR, the average number of tour coach quota approved was 11 on Sundays and public holidays and 5 on weekdays. Among the approved applications, 65% of coaches are for local tours.

13. Taking into account that the existing 30 daily coach quota is able to cater for the demands of tour groups to south Lantau, we recommend that the current arrangement of allowing maximum of 30 coaches daily to access south Lantau via TCR remains unchanged.

Public transport services

14. Since the full opening of the improved TCR, the franchised bus and Lantau taxi services in south Lantau have continued to maintain their smooth operation. The improved TCR with more smooth traffic flow has enhanced the operating efficiency of franchised bus and taxi services. In this connection, we will keep the public road transport arrangement (including franchised buses and Lantau taxis) in south Lantau unchanged and continue to encourage the public to make use of these services to access south Lantau. The operators will strengthen the service level and implement special arrangements during holidays to cater for the upsurge of resident and tourist demand.

Summary of Review Findings

15. To sum up, we recommend maintaining the following existing traffic management and public transport arrangements:

- (a) roads in south Lantau and the improved TCR remain as closed roads;
- (b) to maintain the speed limit at TCR at 50 km/h;

- (c) to maintain the existing land public transport arrangements (including franchised bus services and Lantau taxis);
 - (d) to continue to allow not more than 30 tour coaches daily to access to south Lantau via TCR; and
 - (e) to continue to allow cycling on TCR.
16. On the other hand, the following new arrangements are proposed:
- (a) to cancel the prohibited zones at TCR; and
 - (b) the old sections of TCR will be maintained as diversion routes during contingencies, and prohibited zone will be designated.

Consultation

17. In January 2010, we consulted the relevant stakeholders on the review findings and proposals, including the Traffic and Transport Committee of Islands District Council (“Islands DCTTC”), the transport trades, the Hong Kong Tourism Board, the Travel Industry Council, and green groups. The major responses received are summarized below:

- (a) they all either show support or have no adverse comments on the recommendations for maintaining TCR and roads in south Lantau as closed roads and cancelling the prohibited zone on TCR. On the Islands DCTTC’s request for issuing closed road permits to vehicles of the residents in the traditional villages lying outside the closed roads, TD has agreed to issue ad-hoc permits to these vehicles flexibly to cater for genuine needs, such as during events organized by rural committees in south Lantau;
- (b) they have no comment on maintaining the existing public transport arrangements (taxis and franchised bus) in Lantau. As for the access of tour coaches, most do not have comment for maintaining the existing access arrangements. While the New Lantao Bus Company (1973) Limited strongly objected to any further

relaxation of the existing 30 coaches per day, the Hong Kong Tourism Board considered that tour coaches in Lantau should not be limited by a “quota” system. One of the green groups considered that access of tour coaches should not give rise to unfavourable environment impact; and

- (c) generally, there is no major adverse comment on allowing cycling on the improved TCR, except that there is a suggestion from the Islands DCTTC to restrict cycling at the southern section of the improved TCR where alternative is available by using the southern old section of TCR. However, there is no sufficient justification to restrict cycling on the southern section of the improved TCR at this stage. We will continue to monitor road safety situations and review the cycling arrangement when necessary.

Implementation

18. Since the review findings are in general supported by all the concerned stakeholders, we plan to implement the two new arrangements as follows:

- (a) to cancel the prohibited zones at TCR with effect from 1 June 2010; and
- (b) to designate prohibited zones at the two old sections of TCR in about mid-2010 subject to the completion of the engineering works by Highways Department.

Advice Sought

19. Members are invited to note the outcome of the review on the traffic and transport arrangements on the improved TCR and in south Lantau.

Transport Department
April 2010

**The volume /capacity (V/C) ratio on Tung Chung Road
since full road opening**

	Mar 2009	May 2009	Jul 2009	Aug 2009	Nov 2009	Dec 2009	Jan 2010
Weekday	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.27	0.29	0.26	0.26
Weekend	0.23	0.24	0.26	0.32	0.27	0.24	0.26

Note: The above figures are the peak V/C ratios as recorded during the date of monitoring.