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Hong Kong is ready for Electronic Road Pricing

Regarding the government's public engagement document on "Electronic Road Pricing Pilot Scheme in Central and its adjacent areas", CAN welcomes the move from the government as we believe this consultation is long overdue.

For the past decade, the growth of private vehicles per year was 4.6%. On major traffic routes in Central, the travelling speed dropped to 10km per hour during peak time, thus not only resulting in notorious traffic congestion, but also contributing to worsening air quality.

Demand-side transportation management is the world trend and to inhibit private car growth or use, we need to make that a less attractive option. Electronic Road Pricing is one of the measures that has been proven effective elsewhere.

Hong Kong conducted a similar pilot program in 1983-85 years. The results was quite promising as there was a 20-24% reduction in travel time, average speed during peak hours increased by 10% and air pollution emissions reduced by 17% with 6-9% of fuel savings. The plan fell through due to privacy issue back then.

The scheme is even more viable now with the availability of alternative route "The Central-Wan Chai Bypass". Motorists who are not going to Central will have the choice to detour around the charging area.

CAN pointed out that with the potential traffic reduction in the area if the scheme is implemented, other complementary planning such as Des Voeux Road Central Tram & Pedestrian Precinct will further reduce traffic flow and reduce air pollution in the area.

It is high time for Hong Kong to act upon this long discussed plan. We need to change our mindset from accommodate more cars to develop a more sustainable transportation mode.

CAN will submit more detailed responses towards specific questions in the coming months.

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