

**A brief account of Chapter 1 of Report No. 72
“Planning, provision and management of public parking spaces”
by the Director of Audit
at the Public Hearing of the Public Accounts Committee
of the Legislative Council on Friday, 10 May 2019**

Mr. Chairman,

Thank you for inviting me here to give a brief account of Chapter 1 of Report No. 72 of the Director of Audit, entitled “Planning, provision and management of public parking spaces”.

This Audit Report comprises five PARTs.

PART 1 of the Report, namely “Introduction”, describes the background of the audit.

With a transport policy which centres on the use of public transport with railways as the backbone, the Government’s parking policy is to accord priority to considering and meeting the parking demand of commercial vehicles, and to provide an appropriate number of parking spaces for private cars if the overall development permits. Public parking spaces are mainly provided through three means: (a) incorporation of parking spaces in private, public housing and Government, Institution or Community (G/IC) developments, and open space projects; (b) short-term tenancy (STT) car parks administered by the Lands Department; and (c) government multi-storey car parks and on-street parking spaces managed by the Transport Department (TD). As at 31 December 2018, there were 744,191 licensed private cars, commercial vehicles and motorcycles (licensed vehicles), and 756,909 parking spaces in the territory. Of these parking spaces, about one-third (238,320 spaces) were public parking spaces.

PART 2 of the Report examines the planning and provision of public parking spaces.

The Audit Commission (Audit) noted a number of areas that required attention in respect of the planning and provision of public parking spaces. For instance, from 2006 to 2018, the total number of licensed vehicles increased by 44.4%, while that of parking spaces only increased by 11.6%. The overall ratio of parking spaces to vehicles (parking space ratio) dropped from 1.32 to 1.02. In particular, owing to the changing circumstances on the demand and supply of private car parking spaces, the private car parking space ratio decreased from 1.51 in 2006 to 1.10 in 2018 and will further drop to a projected ratio of less than 1 in the coming years. In other words, theoretically there will not be adequate private car parking spaces to accommodate all private cars. Audit found that from 2002 to 2018, the planning standards of ancillary parking spaces for private cars in housing developments stipulated in the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines were revised seven times, resulting in a reduction in the number of such parking spaces. However, the number of licensed private cars increased significantly by 53.4% during the period, causing a significant increase in the demand for private car parking spaces in recent years. Audit has recommended that TD should closely monitor the parking space ratio for private cars and review the planning standards of parking spaces in housing developments.

Regarding incorporation of public parking spaces in G/IC and private developments, in the absence of relevant guidelines, TD will only decide this matter on a case-by-case basis. Our case studies have revealed room for improvement in the planning and provision of public parking spaces in G/IC and private developments. In one of the cases, it took a long time for TD to propose splitting the Tseung Kwan O Town Park project for constructing an underground car park. In two other cases, Audit found that the utilisation of the parking spaces for light goods vehicles (LGVs) in a private development was low; and that some LGV parking spaces were occupied by private cars, in breach of land lease condition. In addition, Audit found that 41 STT car parks providing 6,187 parking spaces for private cars and 2,115 for commercial

vehicles would be terminated for long-term developments in the coming years. There is a need to meet the shortfall arising therefrom. Audit has recommended that TD should improve the planning and provision of public parking spaces in private developments and formulate a strategy for providing more long-term public parking spaces. Audit has also recommended that the Transport and Housing Bureau should promulgate a circular setting out the criteria for considering whether and how public parking spaces should be provided under individual G/IC developments and open space projects.

PART 3 of the Report examines TD's management of government multi-storey car parks.

Regarding management of government multi-storey car parks, the Government's policy objective is to maintain the parking space availability rate of 15%, or a utilisation rate of 85% during peak hours. However, Audit found that the average daily peak-hour utilisation rate of parking spaces in the 11 government multi-storey car parks for private cars, van-type LGVs and taxis had exceeded the target utilisation rate of 85% since 2015; whereas the monthly parking fees of parking spaces for private cars and van-type LGVs in all government multi-storey car parks were the lowest as compared with nearby public car parks. Therefore, Audit has recommended that TD should take into due consideration the high utilisation rates of parking spaces and the lower-than-market parking fees in future parking fee review exercises.

Audit also found that the 75 parking spaces on the rooftop of Kwai Fong Car Park had not been open for public use since October 2013 after the completion of the works to enhance the security of the Car Park. In addition, of the 13 abandoned vehicles in 5 government multi-storey car parks, 10 had been abandoned for more than one year to 11 years up to December 2018. Hence, Audit has recommended that TD should put the rooftop parking spaces at Kwai Fong Car Park into effective use and explore ways to remove abandoned vehicles expeditiously.

PART 4 of the Report examines management of on-street parking spaces.

Under the existing Government policy, on-street parking spaces are provided to meet drivers' short-term parking needs. On-street parking spaces should be metered and charged to ensure that about 15% of the spaces are maintained empty. However, Audit found that from 2015 to 2018, on average, the objective of maintaining the 15% parking space availability rate was not met in 15 of 37 districts. In addition, of the 10 districts which had availability rates of lower than 15% persistently since 2015, there were metered parking spaces in 9 districts charging the low rate (i.e. \$2 per 30 minutes). Moreover, TD's guidelines stipulated that for parking meters in core commercial areas, the "longest parking period" for each transaction should be set at 30 minutes. However, "core commercial areas" were not defined, and many parking meters which might be located in core commercial areas (e.g. Causeway Bay) were of 2-hour duration, rather than 30 minutes as stipulated. Therefore, Audit has recommended that TD should review the fee charging arrangements of on-street metered parking spaces.

Regarding non-metered parking places, Audit surveyed 110 such parking places between November 2018 and January 2019 and found that the high demand for motorcycle parking spaces had persisted, and that most of the non-metered parking spaces for vehicles other than motorcycles had been occupied and the target of maintaining 15% parking space availability rate was not achieved. Therefore, Audit has recommended that TD should take measures to ensure that on-street non-metered parking spaces are utilised effectively.

PART 5 of the Report examines the implementation of parking-related technology initiatives.

Since July 2016, TD has been providing locations of on-street parking spaces, entrances and exits of off-street car parks, and real-time parking vacancies at some car parks via its dedicated website and mobile application. Audit found that locations and parking vacancies of car parks provided in its

mobile application were incomplete. In addition, supplementary information of car parks, such as operating hours, parking fees, payment methods and other facilities available was rarely provided in TD's mobile application. Therefore, Audit has recommended that TD should improve the mobile application accordingly.

Regarding the work of the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) in the provision of electric vehicle (EV) charging facilities in existing government car parks, Audit found that as at 30 September 2018, EV chargers were provided in 8 of the 11 government multi-storey car parks, but not in the remaining 3 car parks. In view of the significant increase in the number of licensed electric private cars, Audit has recommended that EPD should explore the need for installing EV chargers in the 3 government multi-storey car parks.

According to TD's 2002 Study Report, one of the measures to address the parking problems in the long-term was the use of automated parking systems. However, Audit noted that TD had only commissioned a consultant to conduct a pilot study on automated parking systems in 2018. Therefore, Audit has recommended that TD should step up efforts in implementing such systems.

Our views and recommendations were agreed by the relevant bureaux and departments. I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge with gratitude the full cooperation, assistance and positive response of their staff during the course of the audit review.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.