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Legislative Council Public Accounts Committee

Report No. 72 of the Director of Audit – Chapter 1
Planning, provision and management of public parking spaces

Opening Remarks by Secretary for Transport and Housing

Mr Chairman,

I would like to thank the Audit Commission for looking into the planning, provision and management of public parking spaces by the Government in a comprehensive manner, and providing valuable comments to us. The Transport and Housing Bureau (“THB”) and the Transport Department (“TD”) accept the recommendations in the Director of Audit’s Report (“the Audit Report”). THB is proactively steering relevant departments to take follow-up actions.

2. The Government adopts a transport policy based on public transport with railways as the backbone. The Government’s current policy in the provision of parking spaces is to accord priority to meeting the parking demand of commercial vehicles (“CVs”), and to provide an appropriate number of private car parking spaces if the overall development permits, but not to attract passengers to opt for private cars in lieu of public transport. In this connection, the Government has not set any specific targets for the provision of parking spaces.

3. From 2006 to 2018, the number of parking spaces for private cars increased by 11.2%. During the same period, the number of licensed private cars¹ increased by 53.4%, far exceeding the growth of the number of parking spaces. As a result, the ratio of private car parking spaces to such vehicles decreased from 1.51 to 1.10. Although the year-on-year growth in the number of private cars has eased slightly recently, we will continue to closely monitor the situation and take forward in an orderly manner the short,

¹ Van-type light goods vehicles (“LGVs”) might also be parked at private car parking spaces. Hence, the numbers of private car parking spaces and licensed private cars included van-type LGVs.

medium and long term measures recommended by the Transport Advisory Committee in its Report on Study of Road Traffic Congestion in Hong Kong.

4. As indicated in the 2018 Policy Address, we will follow the principle of “Single Site, Multiple Uses” to provide public car parking spaces in suitable “Government, Institution or Community” (“G/IC”) facilities and public open space (“POS”) projects. The Government will also proactively take forward automated parking systems (“APSs”).

Measures to increase parking spaces

5. THB has already promulgated to various policy bureaux/departments a series of short and medium to long term measures to suitably increase parking spaces. Examples of short term measures include -

(1) Designating night-time parking spaces at suitable on-street locations

TD has identified 515 on-street night-time parking spaces for CVs, of which 191 have been in use and 172 have been shelved due to local objections. For the remaining 152, local consultation is underway and relevant works are being arranged.

(2) Encouraging the opening up of school premises after school for parking of school buses

TD and the Education Bureau (“EDB”) launched a pilot scheme last year which yielded positive response. EDB will allow all public sector and direct subsidy schools to apply to join with effect from the new school year.

(3) Providing more parking spaces and picking up/setting down facilities for coaches

In 2018-19, TD provided a total of 41 additional on-street parking spaces for coaches and 85 picking up/setting down facilities in Tsim Sha Tsui, Southern District, Wan Chai, Eastern District, Jordan (near the Express Rail Link station), Tsing Yi, Sai Kung, etc. In

2019-20, TD has planned to provide 137 additional parking spaces for coaches and 52 picking up/setting down facilities in Tsim Sha Tsui, Kowloon City, Wong Tai Sin, Kwun Tong, Wan Chai, Southern District, North Point, Tsuen Wan, Tuen Mun, Tung Chung, etc.

- (4) Stipulating the provision of a minimum number of parking spaces for CVs in the tenancy conditions of suitable short-term tenancy (“STT”) car parks

A total of 31 STT car parks are currently required to provide parking spaces for CVs in accordance with their tenancy conditions, involving a total of around 1 800 parking spaces.

6. Medium to long term measures include -

- (1) Requiring private developers to provide parking spaces at the higher end of the parking standards under the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines (“HKPSG”) for new developments

Since last year, TD has made such requests, or followed up on such requests, in relation to a total of 25 new developments, involving not fewer than 4 000 parking spaces.

- (2) Conducting a review on the guidelines on parking of private cars with a view to updating the requirements in the HKPSG for provision of private car parking spaces for housing developments

We will take into consideration the parking policy, utilisation of parking spaces, social and economic factors affecting the growth of private cars, etc. so as to increase the number of private car parking spaces in future housing developments.

- (3) Taking forward the consultancy study on CVs

TD expects that the study will be completed by the end of this year. Suitable measures will be drawn up to cater for the parking demand of CVs. The Government has initially earmarked eight suitable

G/IC facilities and POS sites for construction of car parks which will primarily be used by CVs. These car parks are expected to provide around 2 000 parking spaces.

(4) Providing, to the extent possible, more public parking spaces in suitable G/IC facilities, POS sites and public housing developments

As at end March this year, two development projects under construction in Tai Po and Kwun Tong will provide 213 and 51 public parking spaces respectively. The POS project at Sze Mei Street, San Po Kong will also provide 306 public parking spaces. In addition, TD and relevant departments are planning for about 20 works projects, which can provide about 5 100 parking spaces.

(5) Taking forward the pilot study of APSs

Compared with conventional car parks, an APS can provide 30% to 100% more parking spaces within the same footprint. Taking into account such criteria as parking demand, geographical and planning restrictions as well as impact on local traffic, TD is progressively taking forward six pilot projects and conducting local consultation. In the light of the District Councils' recent aspirations for smart car parks, TD will continue to proactively examine in collaboration with relevant departments the implementation details, and consider providing smart car parks on suitable STT sites in other districts having regard to the effectiveness of the pilot project at the STT site in Tsuen Wan.

Management of multi-storey car parks

7. Regarding the management of car parks, since February 2019, TD has required its car park contractors to submit monthly returns on the handling of abandoned vehicles, and will conduct inspections in respect of the returns. In order to expedite the handling of abandoned vehicles, TD will from now on direct the contractors to handle abandoned vehicles according to the "Conditions of Parking and Use" of car parks direct. Under normal circumstances, it is expected to take about one month's time for a contractor to tow an abandoned vehicle away from a government car park.

Management of on-street parking spaces

8. As regards on-street parking spaces, starting from mid-2020, TD will install by batches around 12 000 new generation of parking meters to provide a number of new functions, including supporting multiple payment means for payment of parking fees and detecting the occupancy of parking spaces through vehicle sensors. Since the new parking meters can provide real-time parking data, apart from disseminating real-time parking vacancy information to the public, TD may also adjust flexibly the setting of parking meters in future to allow the charging of different fee levels at different locations and during different time periods of the day based on the utilisation rates of the parking spaces, thereby enhancing turnover of on-street parking spaces. In addition, TD will provide additional metered parking spaces at suitable places based on local needs.

Parking-related technology initiatives

9. The Government will continue to drive “Smart Mobility”, using technology to facilitate motorists in finding parking spaces and further promoting the dissemination of parking vacancy information of more car parks.

10. At the policy level, THB will continue to provide appropriate guidance and steer to the departments so as to ensure that the recommendations in the Audit Report can be effectively and fully implemented. Thank you.

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