

**Opening Remarks by the Secretary for Transport and Housing
at the LegCo Special Finance Committee Meeting (Transport)
on 18 April 2018**

Honourable Chairperson,

Today, I would like to brief Members on our work on land, marine and air transport in the new financial year.

2. For railways, the construction of Shatin to Central Link is in full swing. The “Tai Wai to Hung Hom Section” and “Hung Hom to Admiralty Section” are expected to commission in mid-2019 and 2021 respectively.

3. With regard to local major road projects, the construction of the Central-Wan Chai Bypass and the Island Eastern Corridor Link is progressing in full swing. The project is expected to be commissioned in end 2018/ the first quarter of 2019. The Southern Connection and the Northern Connection of the Tuen Mun – Chek Lap Kok Link are expected to be completed for commissioning by the first half of 2019 and 2020 at the earliest respectively. The construction of Tseung Kwan O-Lam Tin Tunnel has commenced in 2016. Site formation and tunneling works are in progress. It is anticipated that the project will be completed in 2021. The construction of the Central Kowloon Route started in December last year for commissioning in around 2025. We are seeking funding approval from the Legislative Council for the construction of Cross Bay Link, Tseung Kwan O and the widening of Tai Po Road (Sha Tin Section) with a view to commencing the works as soon as possible to meet the transport needs of different districts in Hong Kong.

4. For cross-boundary transport infrastructure, two major projects, namely the Hong Kong Section of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link (“XRL”) and the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge (“HZMB”), are expected to be commissioned this year. Major works of the Hong Kong Section of the XRL have been completed. We will continue to coordinate and monitor the remaining works, and take forward preparatory work for commissioning with September 2018 as the target for commissioning. Regarding the commissioning date of the HZMB, the governments of the three places are currently striving to improve the clearance conditions of the boundary crossing facilities. The commissioning date of the HZMB will be reported to the Central authorities and will be announced once confirmed.

5. With regard to public transport services, the Government completed the Public Transport Strategy Study which examined the roles and positioning of public transport services other than heavy rail in mid-2017. We are actively taking forward various measures recommended under the report.

6. The low-floor wheelchair-accessible light bus trial scheme has been taken forward in phases since January this year, and we will review its effectiveness in a timely manner. Furthermore, the Transport Department (“TD”) has established the Committee on Taxi Service Quality to discuss strategies and measures to drive changes to enhance taxi service quality.

7. The Government is also taking forward the preparatory work of the Public Transport Fare Subsidy Scheme with a view to implementing the Scheme in early 2019 to relieve the fare burden of commuters.

8. At the same time, the Government will cooperate fully with the work of the Independent Review Committee on Hong Kong's Franchised Bus Service set up in March with a view to ensuring the safety and reliability of franchised bus services in Hong Kong.

9. The Government attaches great importance to alleviating road traffic congestion and continues to take forward progressively the recommendations by the Transport Advisory Committee (“TAC”). The TD commenced at the end of 2017 an in-depth feasibility study on the Electronic Road Pricing Pilot Scheme in Central and its adjacent areas, and will further engage the public to develop a detailed pilot scheme and its implementation strategy. TD also commenced a consultancy study on the parking demand of commercial vehicles for completion in 2019.

10. In addition, TD is conducting a study on the rationalisation of traffic distribution of the three road harbour crossings and the three land tunnels between Kowloon and Sha Tin (viz. Tate’s Cairn Tunnel, Lion Rock Tunnel and Eagle’s Nest and Sha Tin Heights Tunnel). We will consult the Legislative Council Panel on Transport on toll adjustment proposals within this legislative session. The average annual growth rate of licensed private cars is about 4% over the past five years, which is not sustainable. We will actively explore measures to manage the fleet size of private cars as recommended by the TAC, including fiscal measures.

11. The Government will continue to take forward various “Smart Mobility” initiatives. TD will integrate three existing mobile

applications into an “all-in-one” platform to facilitate one-stop search for walking, driving, public transport and real-time traffic information by the public. In addition, the Government will complete the initial study on in-vehicle units and explore ways to promote the installation of such devices as soon as practicable. We will also prepare for the progressive installation of a new generation of on-street parking meters which can provide real-time information on vacant parking spaces and support remote payment through mobile applications from 2019-20.

12. The Government will continue to take forward “Walk in HK” and encourage people to walk more. TD will continue to study on enhancing the connectivity between Wanchai and Sheung Wan, take forward the covered walkway proposals in various districts, and select two pilot areas within this year to test out innovative measures for a comfortable walking environment. We endeavour to create a "bicycle-friendly" environment in new towns and new development areas and will continue to improve existing cycle tracks and bicycle parking facilities in new towns.

13. In respect of marine transport, the Marine Department will continue to take forward various measures and reforms to enhance marine safety, improve its work flow and procedures, as well as address the Department’s shortage of manpower in the long run.

14. As for the maritime industry, the Government will continue to work closely with the trade through the Hong Kong Maritime and Port Board to explore measures to further facilitate the development of the maritime industry in Hong Kong, and set aside additional resources to set up a dedicated team in Invest Hong Kong, so as to actively promote our maritime and port industries as well as quality high value-added maritime services, with a view to further entrenching Hong Kong’s status as an international maritime centre.

15. The Government has been identifying suitable sites to support the development of high value-added third-party logistics services. A site of about 3.2 hectares in Tuen Mun Area 49 has been put out for tender in March 2018. The Airport Authority Hong Kong (“AA”) has also made available a site of 5.3 hectares at Kwo Lo Wan of the Airport South Cargo Precinct in December 2017 for development of a modern air cargo logistics centre. We will continue to work with the relevant bureaux and departments to identify suitable sites for modern logistics facilities.

16. We will continue to take forward in phases the various recommendations made in the review of the use of port back-up land in the Kwai Tsing Container Terminals, including expanding terminal yard space and providing additional barge berths so as to enhance port operational efficiency.

17. As far as aviation is concerned, the Hong Kong International Airport (“HKIA”) is the world’s busiest cargo gateway since 2010 and handled over 5 million tonnes of cargo and airmail in 2017. The HKIA strives to maintain its leadership status as an international aviation and cargo hub in terms of both volume and value. To sustain air cargo development, we support the AA reserving land on both the landside and airside in the South Cargo Precinct at the airport to enhance its capacity and efficiency in cargo handling so as to further the growth in transshipment, cross-boundary e-commerce and high value temperature-controlled goods. The Government will continue to support the AA in implementing the Three-Runway System project

18. Honourable Chairperson, I will be happy to answer policy-related questions from Members. Controlling officers and other colleagues will answer questions pertaining to operation and the use of financial resources.

Transport and Housing Bureau
April 2018