

香港特別行政區政府
The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region

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Ms Sophie LAU
Clerk to Panel on Transport
Legislative Council Secretariat
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central, Hong Kong

30 April 2018

Dear Ms LAU,

Panel on Transport

**Joint letter from Hon Holden CHOW Ho-ding and
Hon CHAN Hak-kan requesting to discuss the issues
relating to the traffic congestion in Tai Po**

Thank you for your letter of 15 February 2018 to the Secretary for Transport and Housing referring the joint letter from Hon Holden CHOW Ho-ding and Hon CHAN Hak-kan on traffic congestions in Tai Po and North District. After consulting the Transport Department ("TD"), our reply is as follows.

The Government has been monitoring the traffic conditions on routes between Tai Po/North District and the urban areas, including Tolo Highway. According to information from the TD, traffic volume on both

south and north bounds of Tolo Highway is within acceptable levels, albeit approaching saturation. When there is no traffic accident, the traffic volume during peak periods is lower than the design capacity of the Tolo Highway and the southbound traffic flow is higher than the northbound traffic flow.

North District

In North District, vehicles mainly rely on So Kwun Po Road (i.e. Kai Leng Roundabout) and Po Shek Wu Road (i.e. Tai Tau Leng Roundabout) for accessing Fanling Highway to travel to/from New Territories West or Kowloon. As regards the traffic congestion in the North District on 7 March 2018, the TD speculates that there was a sudden upsurge of traffic flow compared to normal circumstances, resulting in the overloading of the above two major roundabouts which were already close to their capacities.

To improve the situation, various traffic improvement works in the North District are underway progressively. According to information from the Civil Engineering and Development Department (“CEDD”), the widening works for southbound lanes on So Kwun Po Road (i.e. Kai Leng Roundabout) and Po Shek Wu Road (i.e. Tai Tau Leng Roundabout) are expected to be completed in mid-2018 and the first quarter of 2019 respectively. As for the works for adding a southbound lane on Sha Tau Kok Road between Ma Sik Road and Sui Wan Road, as well as the improvement works at several junctions along Sha Tau Kok Road near Fanling Centre (the junctions at Jockey Club Road and Lok Yip Road), the expected completion dates fall in the first quarter of 2019.

Besides, the construction works of the connecting road for Liantang/Heung Yuen Wai Boundary Control Point and the widening of Tolo Highway/Fanling Highway – Stage 2 (a section of Fanling Highway between Tai Hang and Wo Hop Shek Interchange) are underway. Upon completion of these construction works in the fourth quarter of 2018 and the fourth quarter of 2019 respectively, the traffic congestion in the North District will be further alleviated.

To cope with the population growth in the advance and first phases of the Kwu Tung North and Fanling North New Development Areas development, the CEDD will construct the eastern section of Fanling Bypass to provide an additional trunk road in Fanling for connecting to Fanling Highway. It will also serve to divert traffic from Sha Tau Kok Road, thus reducing the traffic flow on roads in the town centres of Sheung Shui or Fanling and easing motorists' reliance on several existing major interchanges.

Tai Po and Shatin Districts

The Government has been exploring different traffic improvement measures to increase the traffic capacities of Tolo Highway as well as its connecting road sections to the urban areas via Sha Tin, and to divert some of the traffic from the Tate's Cairn Tunnel and the Lion Rock Tunnel to the Eagle's Nest Tunnel and Sha Tin Heights Tunnel. A number of measures are being implemented or have been completed.

As a short-term measure, the CEDD completed in 2015 an additional lane at the approach road (near Scenery Court) leading from Tai Po Road (Sha Tin Section) to Route 8 to attract motorists to use Route 8 and improve traffic conditions on the approach road and its vicinity.

Noting the congestion caused by traffic accidents in the past on Tolo Highway southbound near Yuen Chau Tsai, the TD has proposed to add double white lines at the merging point (including the fast and middle lanes) of the concerned section of Tolo Highway. This proposal facilitates vehicles to merge in an orderly manner. We believe that this could help reduce traffic accidents and the associated congestion caused by careless merging. The TD has studied the proposal with the Police and the Highways Department ("HyD") and considers the proposal feasible. The TD has arranged with the HyD to commence the concerned works in June this year.

Separately, to alleviate the traffic condition on Tolo Highway near Sha Tin and Tai Po Road (Sha Tin Section), we have planned to widen an approximately 1.1 kilometre-long section of Tai Po Road (Sha Tin Section)

between Sha Tin Plaza near Sha Tin Rural Committee Road and Man Wo House of Wo Che Estate from a dual two-lane carriageway to a dual three-lane carriageway. We consulted and obtained the support of the Legislative Council (“LegCo”) Public Works Subcommittee on our funding proposal on 14 April 2018. We plan to seek funding approval from the LegCo Finance Committee (“FC”).

The CEDD has also completed the traffic and transport impact assessment in Sha Tin. After conducting broad feasibility studies and exploring various proposals, the CEDD preliminarily formulated some short- and medium-term traffic mitigation measures to improve the performance of the concerned road sections or junctions. These proposed measures include improvement works to the major road junctions within Sha Tin District, the aforesaid widening of Tai Po Road (Sha Tin Section) and construction of Trunk Road T4 in Sha Tin. Upon completion of Trunk Road T4, the congestion problem of Tai Po Road (Sha Tin Section) can be further alleviated.

Long-term Planning

In the long run, the Development Bureau and the Planning Department are conducting the planning study “Hong Kong 2030+: Towards a Planning Vision and Strategy Transcending 2030” and will make recommendations on the longer-term planning of Hong Kong. In the meantime, based on the recommendations of the above planning study, the TD will collaborate with the HyD to launch the “Strategic Studies on Railways and Major Roads beyond 2030” (“Strategic Studies”) to comprehensively review the traffic demand of Hong Kong from 2031 up to 2041 (or beyond), which will advise on the necessary strategic transport infrastructure network in future and improve the performance of the current major transport corridors (including Tolo Highway and the trunk roads between Tai Po/New Territories North and the urban areas). The Strategic Studies secured support from the Panel on Transport in mid-June 2017. Subject to funding approval of the FC, we will commence the Strategic Studies as soon as possible.

The TD will continue to closely monitor the traffic conditions between Tai Po/North District and the urban areas, and consider and explore appropriate traffic management measures in a timely manner.

Yours sincerely,



(Ms Winnie WY WONG)
for Secretary for Transport and Housing

c.c.

Commissioner for Transport (Attn.: Mr Ricky HO) Fax no.: 2381 3799