

**For discussion  
on 21 June 2024**

## **Legislative Council Panel on Transport**

### **Transport Arrangements for Connection to Land-based Ports**

#### **Purpose**

This paper aims to report to the Panel the latest overview of various measures relating to the transport arrangements for connection to land-based ports.

2. The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) has been striving to implement and take forward various cross-boundary transport measures, including “Northbound Travel for Hong Kong Vehicles”, increasing regular quotas for cross-boundary private cars, arrangement for Hong Kong-Macao cross-boundary goods vehicles using the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge (HZMB), strengthening public transport services for connection to land-based ports, as well as enhancing the application procedures for closed road permit (CRP) etc., thereby promoting the convenient flow of people and vehicles among Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao, which in turn promoting economic integration of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA) and deepening the connectivity in the GBA.

#### **“Northbound Travel for Hong Kong Vehicles”**

3. “Northbound Travel for Hong Kong Vehicles” (the Scheme) is a policy breakthrough which allows eligible Hong Kong private cars to travel between Hong Kong and Guangdong via the HZMB without the need to obtain regular quotas. It facilitates Hong Kong residents’ self-driving to Guangdong for business, visiting families or sightseeing on a short-term basis, further making good use of the HZMB and promoting the development of the GBA. Since the

implementation of the Scheme in July 2023, it has become a major drive for promoting the increase in the vehicular flow of the HZMB. At present, over 60 000 Hong Kong single-plate private cars have completed the application with valid permits and are eligible for travel via the HZMB. The usage of the HZMB has also recorded new highs, with its two-way vehicular flow of a total of about 360 000 vehicles in May 2024, a daily average of about 12 000 vehicles, representing an increase of about 120% as compared to the same period in 2023; among which vehicles under the Scheme account for about 36% of the HZMB's daily vehicular flow.

4. The HKSAR Government has all along been monitoring and listening to the opinions from applicants and users about the Scheme while maintaining close communication with the relevant Mainland authorities to implement enhancement measures in a timely manner with a view to providing citizens with better convenience and travel experience. Such measures include:

- (i) on accepting the applications, the number of applications accepted per working day was increased from 200 during the initial period when the Scheme was open for application to 300, and has further increased to currently 400 applications (including new applications and renewals) to be accepted per working day since June this year. Moreover, the arrangements for renewal applications have been refined since May 2024, whereby eligible renewal applicants<sup>1</sup> may submit their renewal applications online during the application period allotted by the Transport Department (TD) without having to participate in a computer ballot, while the computer ballot registration period has also been relaxed from 30 days to 60 days before the expiry of the CRP<sup>2</sup>;

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<sup>1</sup> The refined arrangements are only applicable to renewal applications under the Scheme that meet the following criteria: the applicant remains unchanged; the vehicle remains unchanged (including vehicle registration mark, colour and chassis number/vehicle identification number); and the designated drivers remain unchanged (including the number of designated drivers and their Hong Kong identity card numbers).

<sup>2</sup> Starting from May 2024, the TD has been sending emails in phases to holders of CRPs for the Scheme which will expire in or after July 2024, inviting them to submit the renewal applications for the Scheme. Upon receiving invitation emails from the TD, eligible renewal applicants may use the passcode provided in the emails and their personal

- (ii) on vehicle inspection, the number of vehicle inspection centres in Hong Kong designated for the Scheme has increased from one at the beginning to three at present, and the service hours have also been extended to cover evenings and weekends. Starting from March 2024, vehicle inspection is exempted if the applicant and the vehicle remain unchanged when resubmitting applications for the Scheme within two years of passing the vehicle inspection and within the validity of the applicant's Mainland electronic vehicle licence; and
- (iii) on travel booking, the periods of booking for departure and cancellation of booking for departure have been shortened since February 2024, from no less than two and three calendar days respectively to at or before noon on one calendar day before departure.

5. We will continue to closely monitor the implementation of the Scheme, so as to continue to provide applicants with convenience on one hand, and better manage their travel experience on the other. We will also continue to work with the relevant Mainland authorities to provide information on applying for the Scheme and driving on the Mainland, as well as to step up publicity, with a view to attracting and facilitating more drivers to participate in the Scheme.

6. Moreover, the Government has been closely monitoring the operation of the HZMB, especially the clearance and traffic conditions at the HZMB ports during peak days and periods, and has been discussing with the relevant Mainland authorities on enhancing port clearance arrangements. For the Hong Kong Port, relevant departments have been taking various measures to enhance the control

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information to submit renewal applications on the designated website within the allotted designated application period specified in the invitation email. The designated application period has relaxed from three calendar days in the past to six calendar days, allowing sufficient time for renewal applicants to prepare the necessary application documents. If eligible renewal applicants do not submit the renewal applications within the designated period allotted, they will be required to participate in the computer ballot again to obtain an application quota and submit the application as a new application within the allotted designated period. To further facilitate holders of valid licences to enquire whether they are invited to submit renewal applications, their allotted application periods, their passcodes, etc., the TD has launched a new function, "Enquire Renewal Application Invitation Details", on the designated website for applicants to check by themselves.

points' handling capacity, such as deploying manpower flexibly, optimising workflow and making use of information technology etc., as well as operating more private car clearance kiosks during peak periods to meet the cross-boundary demand; TD's mobile application "HKeMobility" has also added real-time traffic snapshots of the HZMB Hong Kong Port clearance plaza, allowing travellers to more easily obtain the port situation and hence travel flexibly. For the Zhuhai Port, it is reported that the relevant Mainland authorities are enhancing the facilities and arrangements at the Zhuhai Port, including increasing the clearance lanes for private cars, increasing the facility clearance efficiency, stepping up publicity to guide travellers to avoid travelling during peak periods and arranging on-site dispersal etc. The HKSAR Government will continue to maintain close liaison with the relevant Mainland authorities to closely monitor the operation of the HZMB as well as continue to study and take forward feasible enhancement measures with a view to ensuring smooth traffic flow at the HZMB and better use of the HZMB.

### **Regular quotas for Hong Kong-Macao private cars**

7. Since the commissioning of the HZMB in October 2018, the governments of Hong Kong and Macao have been working closely to increase the number of vehicles using the HZMB in a progressive and orderly manner, taking into account the capacity of relevant boundary control points (BCPs) and the respective connecting roads. At present, the quota system for Hong Kong-Macao private cars is jointly administered by the governments of Hong Kong and Macao, and the quotas are categorised into company quotas and individual quotas<sup>3</sup>. Private cars allocated with Hong Kong quotas are permitted to make multiple access to the city centre of Macao via the HZMB within the validity period of the quotas. Up to 2023, the TD has allocated a total of 2 800 regular quotas for Hong Kong private cars to travel between Hong Kong and Macao according to the agreed arrangement by the governments of Hong Kong and Macao, for a validity of not more than three years. To enhance the application

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<sup>3</sup> Company quotas are open for companies registered in both Hong Kong and Macao, or companies registered in Hong Kong that are associated with another company registered in Macao, while individual quotas are open to permanent residents of Hong Kong employed with remunerations in Macao or those who have established a registered company in Macao.

process, the TD has simplified some of the application documents for the Hong Kong quotas since June 2024, which include waivers of documentary proof of the relationship between the applicants and the designated drivers, and the relevant taxation proofs of companies.

8. The governments of Hong Kong and Macao agreed to further increase the quotas, including 5 000 Hong Kong quotas, and to allocate in phases according to the demand and implementation situation. On the arrangement for the allocation of the additional quotas, we will generally maintain the existing quota eligibility criteria to ensure that applicants' actual needs for travelling between Hong Kong and Macao for work and/or business activities are met, thereby promoting the economies of the two cities. To further optimise the use of the HZMB and facilitate the flow of people between Hong Kong and Macao, we are now considering allocating part of the additional quotas for which application will be open for all Hong Kong permanent residents and companies registered in Hong Kong (that is, these applicants will not be subject to the existing eligibility criteria). Details of the application will be announced in due course.

### **Hong Kong-Macao cross-boundary goods vehicles using the HZMB**

9. The cross-boundary logistics transfer facility at the HZMB Macao Port (the Macao Port transfer facility) began operation in August 2023. The governments of Hong Kong and Macao have signed an agreement on the arrangement for Hong Kong-Macao cross-boundary goods vehicles. Hong Kong goods vehicles can transport goods from Hong Kong to the Macao Port transfer facility using the HZMB, and transport goods from Macao back to Hong Kong. Macao goods vehicles can transport goods to the logistics facilities at the Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA) via the HZMB, and transport goods from Hong Kong back to Macao. This arrangement provides greater convenience for the trade to transport goods between Hong Kong and Macao, thus facilitating the business development of various industries in Hong Kong and benefiting the general public with easier and faster delivery of goods of the two places. The clientele of the logistics facilities of the HKIA can also be expanded with the usage by the Macao goods vehicles. As at the end of May 2024, more than 300 Hong Kong goods vehicles have been approved to transport goods between Hong Kong and Macao using the HZMB.

## **Public transport services for connection to land-based ports**

10. With more frequent flow of people among Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao, to address the travel demand of Hong Kong people and cross-boundary travellers during festive holidays, regarding the arrangement of public transport services, the TD will liaise with the relevant units in Hong Kong and the Mainland as well as Hong Kong public transport operators to formulate additional plans for the passenger and vehicular flow during peak periods with a view to strengthening the services as well as implementing traffic diversion measures at various BCPs/ports as and when necessary, including:

- (1) on public transport services, the TD will issue additional ad-hoc quotas to enable cross-boundary coach (CBC) operators to increase service frequency as and when necessary during festive holidays, and set up additional temporary CBC stops in Hong Kong urban areas as appropriate to facilitate dispersal of cross-boundary travellers. The frequency of Lok Ma Chau – Huanggang cross-boundary shuttle bus (Yellow Bus), HZMB shuttle bus (Gold Bus) and relevant franchised bus services will also be enhanced. The MTR will also strengthen services as and when necessary to facilitate the travelling of passengers;
- (2) on traffic arrangements for ports, the TD will co-ordinate with relevant government departments, including the Hong Kong Police Force, to make appropriate traffic arrangements at Lok Ma Chau/Huanggang Port and Shenzhen Bay Port when necessary to separate various types of vehicles heading for the ports, thereby providing a dedicated passage for public transport vehicles. The TD will also closely monitor the traffic condition of the HZMB Hong Kong Port and nearby roads, and maintain close liaison with the relevant Mainland authorities so as to adopt corresponding traffic diversion and control measures as and when necessary; and
- (3) the TD's 24-hour Emergency Transport Co-ordination Centre will operate to monitor the traffic conditions of different districts, especially the ports and major stations, implement response

measures in a timely manner and disseminate the latest traffic information through various channels, including radio broadcast, the TD's mobile application "HKeMobility" and the TD's website.

### **Proposed legislative amendments in relation to CRPs**

11. As stipulated in the relevant subsidiary legislation under the Road Traffic Ordinance (Cap. 374), a vehicle must be issued with a valid CRP for access to closed roads. To expedite the processing of CRP applications, the TD has been adopting measures, including deploying and recruiting additional staff, to enhance the handling capacity. The TD needs to ensure that all applications meet the requirements of the governments of Guangdong and Hong Kong, and will review the application situation as appropriate for streamlining the application procedures. To provide convenience to the applicants, the TD will roll out electronic services in the third quarter of 2024. Applicants can submit applications and make payments for the CRP fees through electronic methods; and eligible applicants will be issued an electronic CRP upon successful application.

12. To more effectively respond to citizens' growing cross-boundary travel needs, the Government has been reviewing the arrangements of further improving the services. Since the traffic flow among Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao is becoming more frequent, coupled with various cross-boundary schemes being actively taken forward, the demand for CRP applications has been rising. In this regard, the Government will amend the relevant sub-legislations with a view to enhancing the application requirements of the CRPs, including (i) extending the validity period of a CRP from originally not more than 12 months to not more than 60 months, such that regular quota holders will not need to apply for the CRPs annually; and (ii) considering to exempt vehicles participating in certain suitable cross-boundary schemes from applying for the CRPs based on risk control consideration. We strive to submit the legislative amendment proposal to the Legislative Council in late 2024 or early 2025. After passing the relevant legislative amendments and completing system enhancement, new arrangements will be implemented progressively within 2025.

## **Conclusion**

13. We will continue to work closely with the governments of Guangdong and Macao to enhance various cross-boundary transport measures and transport arrangements for connection to land-based ports, with a view to providing better and more convenient travel experience for Hong Kong citizens and cross-boundary travellers, thereby promoting the integrated development of the GBA.

**Transport and Logistics Bureau**

**Transport Department**

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